

## TOPIC XVII

# THE SLAUGHTER OF THE CANAANITES AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

## ADDENDUM

PREMISE: “GOD IS NEITHER EVIL NOR THE SOURCE OF EVIL”!

We may not believe God is evil or the source of evil, but we might have an uncertain assurance. Here are some verses to consider. Are they true? Or not?

“This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.” I John 1:5  
Darkness is a metaphor for evil.

“For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You.” Psalm 5:4

"For I proclaim the name of the LORD; Ascribe greatness to our God! The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He." Deuteronomy 32:3-4

“Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is compassionate.”  
Psalm 116:5

“Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.”  
James 1:13-14

Here is another way of saying it as John states the nature and character of God in a different way, a way we describe God all the time:

“The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.” I John 4:8

Leading to this question: If God were the source of evil, then how could the following passages apply?

“(love) does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth.”  
I Corinthians 13:6

“Does a fountain send out from the same opening *both* fresh and bitter *water*? Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor *can* salt water produce fresh.” James 3:11-12

"You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn *bushes* nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit." Matthew 7:16-18

“But when the Pharisees heard *this*, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons." And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?"  
Matthew 12:24-26

The answer is that there is no way God could be evil or the source of evil and still have these verses be true.

I want you to consider the following e-mail that has been circulating for some time.

Consider if you will, if you are comfortable with the understanding that this is the way God thinks and works.

### **Here is the e-mail:**

“Death is certain but the Bible speaks about untimely death! Make a personal reflection about this....Very interesting, read until the end.....It is written in the Bible (Galatians 6:7): “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sow, that shall he also reap.” Here are some men and women who mocked God.

John Lennon (Singer): Some years before, during his interview with an American Magazine, he said: 'Christianity will end, it will disappear. I do not have to argue about that. I am certain. Jesus was ok, but his subjects were too simple, today we are more famous than Him' (1966). Lennon, after saying that the Beatles were more famous than Jesus Christ, was shot six times.

Tancredo Neves (President of Brazil ): During the Presidential campaign, he said if he got 500,000 votes from his party, not even God would remove him from Presidency. Sure he got the votes, but he got sick a day before being made President, then he died.

Cazuza (Bi-sexual Brazilian composer, singer and poet): During A show in Canecio ( Rio de Janeiro ) while smoking his cigarette, he puffed out some smoke into the air and said:'God, that's for you.' He died at the age of 32 of LUNG CANCER in a horrible manner.

The man who built the Titanic. After the construction of Titanic, a reporter asked him how safe the Titanic would be. With an ironic tone he said: 'Not even God can sink it.' The result: I think you all know what happened to the Titanic.

Marilyn Monroe was visited by Billy Graham during a presentation of a show. He said the Spirit of God had sent him to preach to her. After hearing what the Preacher had to say, she said, 'I don't need your Jesus.' A week later, she was found dead in her apartment.

Bon Scott (Singer) the ex-vocalist of the AC/DC. On one of his 1979 songs he sang: 'Don't stop me; I'm going down all the way, down the highway to hell'. On

the 19th of February 1980, Bon Scott was found dead, he had been choked by his own vomit.

In Campinas (2005), Brazil a group of friends, drunk, went to pick up a friend....The mother accompanied her to the car and was so worried about the drunkenness of her friends and she said to the daughter holding her hand, who was already seated in the car: My Daughter, Go With God And May He Protect You.

She responded: 'Only If He (God) Travels In The Trunk, Cause Inside Here.....It's Already Full ' Hours later, news came by that they had been involved in a fatal accident, everyone had died, the car could not be recognized what type of car it had been, but surprisingly, the trunk was intact. The police said there was no way the trunk could have remained intact. To their surprise, inside the trunk was a crate of eggs, none was broken

Christine Hewitt (Jamaican Journalist and entertainer) said the Bible (Word of God) was the worst book ever written. In June 2006 she was found burnt beyond recognition in her motor vehicle.”

### **End of e-mail**

Comment:

What is inferred from the content of the stories and the quotation from Galatians? And, is this an accurate description of how God deals with those who mock and sneer at Him?

And which of us has not sinned in a similar way? God knows our hearts and the scripture says that the heart of man is wicked above all things and that there is none righteous, none not one. Let's compare the inferences this e-mail presents with the following passages.

"Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord GOD, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?' Ezekiel 33:11

"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him." John 3:17

"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance." II Peter 3:9

"Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?" Romans 2:4

"This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." I Timothy 2:3-4

*Remembering the premise we agreed with. "God is neither evil nor the source of evil",*

*So, which view of God's dealing with man's sneering and mocking is more in keeping with the nature and character of God?*

Comment

Finally, when people mocked and sneered at Jesus during and after He was being crucified, His response was, "Father ...?"

Remember we are not taught not to return evil for evil, but to overcome evil with good. It is difficult to imagine God telling us to be like this when He himself returns evil for evil. Evil seeks to destroy Good. Good seeks to save and redeem evil.

After hearing of someone's collapse or catastrophe in some way, have you ever

heard the expression, "They certainly didn't deserve that". Could this be a subtle accusation against some cosmic force (not to mention the possibility that God might be included here) of the lack of justice in the universe. Would the same be true of the expression, "They got what they deserved?" Is our idea of "justice" ever the standard of how and why we view events, and as Christians, do we place God in the middle of it? May I suggest that man cannot determine what is right by his own standards and then assume God agrees and acts accordingly by what man thinks is right. In other words, man's philosophical and theological presuppositions about all this do not necessarily reflect what God deems to be right and just. The proof is the crucifixion, where the Son of God paid the penalty for our sins. Justice would have been the eradication or eternal damnation of all mankind for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God...And the wages of sin is death. Who would have ever thought that God's justice would be accomplished by Him paying the price for our redemption on the cross? Would it have been more in keeping with the e-mail that God prompted someone to shoot us as John Lennon was shot?

Generally referring to pain, tragedy or evil in one's life we hear these common phrases:

"God will never give us more than we can handle!"

"God is testing me!"

"God is in control and has a purpose in all of this!"

"God is doing this for one's own good!"

"God took it away to give me something better!"

"Everything has a purpose"

"God permitted (or allowed) this for a higher purpose" or "This was due to God's 'permissive will'"

"There is a reason for everything"

"God did this for a Reason" or "has a purpose in all this", or

"God is in charge of, in control of, everything?"

Comment

The implication is that somehow God has brought this into our lives for a higher or more beneficial purpose and these are some of the phrases often used to explain why evil, pain, suffering, tragedy, horror and catastrophe come

into the lives of people, subtly implying that God either did it, allowed it or didn't prevent it for some higher purpose. Right now, some of you are arguing about this with me in your mind. Please be patient. In reference to the common idea that "God allows or permits" evil in our lives, the scripture never says this and in fact says the exact opposite; God will NOT allow us to be tempted beyond our ability to endure and will NOT allow us to become spiritually disintegrated.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps all this can be summed up with a traditionally theological statement:

*"God is orchestrating all of this for His glory!"(or for some other beneficial purpose)*

We must deal with the contrasting issues I have presented here. Let me also say that there are more than adequate scriptural responses to all the objections and questions that have been raised in our minds. My question is, why do these things persist in our minds and why is the truth or validity of them never questioned?

Let me suggest that many of these kinds of expressions and this kind of thinking is based on Romans 8:28, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose."

What we assume, but what is neither stated nor implied, is that the "all things" is also from God.

For example, here is a classic: "God has brought this into my life (or permitted or allowed it) to make me stronger." God, because of His power, grace and mercy will work to make you stronger, but it doesn't mean that he brought you the disaster in the first place. After God works it out for your good you can praise Him for His love and care of course, but I wouldn't credit Him with the evil that started it all in the first place if I were you, unless of course, the afore reviewed passages are untrue.

Now as to scriptural foundations of these glib statements. There are none. However, in several places the Bible does mention that God will not allow us

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Exodus 12:23; Psalm 66:9; Proverbs 10:3; Acts 13:35; I Corinthians 10:13

to suffer to the point of spiritual disability or disintegration which is quite different than God brings suffering into our life for some divine purpose.

And, can we reconcile all this common confusion with what the scripture clearly says about the nature and character of God? Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope."

I am suggesting that God does not create the evil so that He can make something good from it. If this was the case, I would wonder about the sanity of those who think of our God like this, and wonder why, like Job, anyone in their right mind would worship a God like this. Yet many have commented to me these same sentiments, and seem unable to get past them.

Have you ever heard a non-believer say, "Well, if that's the kind of God you worship, count me out!" Well, I agree.

Now where do these ideas come from? This kind of convoluted thinking comes from the Reformed churches steeped in Calvinistic theology: Presbyterian, Baptist, United Church of Christ, Congregationalists, Reformed church of America, some of the German Reformed churches, and so on.

Now a partial answer.

"We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in *the power of* the evil one." I John 5:18-19

But the question is, "Why does the world lie in the power of the Evil One?" Most theologians and churches have no idea even though it is clear in Scripture.

Related questions:

1. Why doesn't God prevent evil if He is good?
2. What about God's pouring out His wrath on Sodom and Gomorrah, the Canaanites, the Egyptians and so on?



3. How come God doesn't answer the prayers of the suffering and hurting if He loves them?
4. What does it mean that God "hardens hearts"?
5. Why is the world evil (or under the power of the Evil One)?
6. What is the source of evil? Is it God? Is it Satan?
7. How do we understand a statement like, "If God is willing?" as it relates to the "permissive will" question.
8. How do we understand "God's will" for our lives and our plans?
9. And, in this light, how do we understand "God's plan" for our lives?
10. How do we understand the matter of "free will"?
11. If God doesn't "permit" or allow "suffering" in the world, then why do we suffer? (converse of question 1)
12. If God doesn't "control" everything, what does He control, and why can't we say He controls everything?
13. How do we reconcile God's sovereignty with the idea of God's control?
14. What does it mean to pray according to "God's will"?
15. How do we reconcile the idea of God testing us if God doesn't bring evil into our lives to accomplish the testing?
16. Doesn't God have control over Satan and the demons and thus over evil?
17. If God knew all this horror would occur by creating man, why did He do it?

Note: These questions assume the basic question, "If God is so powerful and loving then why...?"

Do we ever consider the question, "If man were not disobedient to God or evil then what kind of a world would we live in?"