

# EVIL

Where did evil come from?

What is evil, in the Scriptures?

Who/what is responsible for there being evil?

There is a theological term that addresses this subject: theodicy.

Random House Unabridged Dictionary gives this meaning of theodicy: a vindication of the divine attributes, particularly holiness and justice in establishing or allowing the existence of physical and moral evil.

Philosophers and theologians have debated this topic for centuries. Will we here come to a consensus? I doubt it. But perhaps our understandings can be mutually expanded in this friendly discussion.

From the above definition, it is obvious that men have associated God, and His attributes, with the subject of evil. A common question often goes like this: "How can a good God allow the existence of evil?" Or, "How can God allow all the pain and suffering that befalls mankind?" Most folks just push thinking about this out of their minds. But there are a few, as those who participate in these discussions, who want to understand the place of evil in the divine economy of creation, and the plan of the ages.

So, what IS evil, according to the Scriptures?

The Heb. word is ra. Its primary meanings are: evil; bad; badness; bad quality (Brown, Driver & Briggs Heb. Lex., & Gesenius' Heb.-Chaldee Lex.; Strong's #7451). From these root meanings, translators have expanded the English definitions to fit their interpretations of the contexts.

This word is from raa, a verb that primarily means: to spoil; to make good for nothing. (Strong's #7489)

The LXX (Sept.) translates ra by both kakos and poneros.

kakos: bad; of a bad quality or disposition; worthless (opposite of: kalos: beautiful; fine; ideal)

poneros: bad condition; bad situation; evil; wrong; laborious; miserable (from a root meaning: toil; work)

In Gen. 2:9 we have the tree of knowledge of good and ra

In 6:5 every imagination... (was) only ra continually

In 13:13 we see that the men of Sodom [were] ra

In 19:19 Lot is worried about some ra taking him, and he die

In 37:2 Joseph brings a ra report to his father regarding his brothers

In 37:20 his brothers speak of killing Joseph & blaming it on some ra beast

In 38:7 Er, Judah's first born, was ra

In 44:4 Joseph speaks of rewarding ra for good

In 47:9 Jacob says to Pharaoh, "few and ra have the days of my life been..."

In 48:16 Jacob speaks of "the Messenger which redeemed me from all ra

In 50:15 Joseph's brothers thought that he would requite them all the ra which they did unto him

In 50:20 Joseph says: "... you thought ra against me; God meant it unto good."

Here we have the majority of the uses of ra in the book of Gen. to give us a sense of its beginning usage.

Josh. 23:15 says, "therefore it shall come to pass, that as all good things are

come upon you, which Yahweh your God promised you; so shall Yahweh bring upon you all ra things, until he has destroyed you from off this good land..."

In Jud.2:11 the children of Israel did ra in the sight of Yahweh

In 2:15 the hand of Yahweh was against them for ra (and we know the ensuing cycles)

In 1 Sam. 16:14, 15, 16, 23, we read of a ra spirit from Yahweh (also in 19:9)

Jer. 6:27-29 refers to those who are "hardened rebels, going about to slander.... the bellows blow fiercely to burn away the lead with fire, but the refining goes on in vain, the ones who are ra are not purged out."

Let's pause and consider:

- a. ra is first seen as a quality of a tree in Eden
- b. men's hearts can have ra imaginations
- c. reports can be about a ra incident
- d. wild animals can be ra
- e. ra is the contrasting counterpart of "good"
- f. Joseph's brothers did ra acts
- g. Yahweh can bring ra upon His people
- h. Israel did ra
- i. Yahweh can send a ra spirit from Himself upon a man
- k. men can be considered ra

Now let's look at ra in Job's life:

ch. 2:10-11, "... shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive ra? In all this, Job did not make a mistake (fail to hit the target) with his lips."

ch. 42:11 speaks of "all the ra that Yahweh had brought upon [Job]."

David believed that the Lord would "reward ra unto all [his] enemies: cut them off in [God's] truth." (Ps. 54:5)

Ps. 78:49 reads, "He cast upon them the fierceness of His anger, wrath, indignation, and trouble, by sending ra agents (messengers; angels) [among them]."

Then there is Isa. 45:7,  
"I form the light, and create darkness;  
I make peace, and create ra; I Yahweh do all these [things]"

Jer. 6:19, "... behold, I will bring ra upon this people, [even] the fruit of their thoughts..."  
and ch. 19:3, "... Behold I will bring ra upon this place..."

And then, Amos 3:6, "... shall there be ra in a city, and Yahweh has not done [it]?"

Micah 1:12, "... but ra came down from Yahweh unto the gate of Jerusalem."

So, we have ample witness that God is a source of ra . The question remains, did ra originate in God?

We are told in Rom. 11:36 that "all things" are forth from out of God. What does that leave out? 1Cor. 8:6 tells us, "But for us [there is] one God, the Father, from out of the midst of Whom [are] all things..."

Col. 1:16 says, "because within Him was created The Whole (all things)... The Whole (all things) has been created and continues founded and framed through means of Him, and [proceeds, or, was placed] into Him." And again, in 2 Cor. 5:18 Paul says, "Yet The Whole (all things) [are] forth from out of the midst of God..."

When God brought ra upon Israel, to judge and correct them, it often came through the Philistines, the Babylonians, etc., and in the form of death, slavery, loss, destruction, hard toil, etc. With the scenario which God instigated about Job, we see God put Job in satan's power, with certain limitations. Now we see that the ra, which Job attributes to God, comes first through the Sabeans. Next, in ch. 1:16, it is "the fire of God" (lightning?) which fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and all but one of the servants. Satan, here, in control of God's power: an interesting thought. Next it is the Chaldeans stealing the camels & killing the servants. Then a great wind hits a house and Job's sons and daughter are killed when the house collapses.

The story continues and ra comes upon Job's body: painful sores, head to foot.

Consider all that God brought upon Egypt, through Moses' use of "the rod of God," when God delivered Israel from Egypt. Recall that this rod, a symbol of authority, became a serpent when God had Moses cast it to the ground. In Ex. 11:4-5, Yahweh said, "About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die..." The Passover was so called because God "passed over" (Ex. 12:13) the houses which bore the blood of the lamb, and did not kill the firstborns there. In vs. 23 it says, "... Yahweh will pass over the door, and will not permit the destroyer to come in unto your house to strike." Then, in vs. 29, "... at midnight Yahweh struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt." Whether ra comes through satan, through people, through nature, or whatever this "destroyer" of vs. 23 was, it is seen to be Yahweh who does it. God is behind, and is the ultimate cause of, everything. In the Scriptures, man understands that all source and power originates in and has its cause in one sovereign God. Outside of Scripture, man cannot accept that God creates and causes ra. Ra must come from somewhere else - a good God cannot be responsible for it: so they reason. Thus we have the theology of God, who is admitted to be supreme, but not in total control. We have dualism: a good God, and an evil god. The devil, or man, is responsible for ra. But this is not in accord to Scripture, as we have seen, above.

There is no proof in Scripture that there was once an angel who rebelled and became the devil. Isa. 54:16 tells us that God "created the waster to destroy," just like a smith brings out an instrument for some work from the hot coals and beats it into the proper shape. God is in control of all "wasters." This word, "waster," in the KJV, is the same word for "destroyer," in Ex. 12:23. In referring to the devil, in John 8:44, Jesus says, "That one was existing being a murderer (a man-killer) from [the] beginning, and has not stood within the Truth." He was never within the Truth. He is used by God to be OUR adversary; his purpose is to attempt to devour and destroy. Our assignment is to overcome this adversary.

In the imagery of Rev. 12:7-17 we see a picture of "war in heaven." Here Michael (a symbol of Christ) and His agents (a symbol of Christ's body) fight against the dragon and his agents. This dragon symbol is the same thing as the devil, the serpent of Eden and on the pole in the wilderness, and satan: God's instruments which He created for destroying and bringing judgment, and to be "the

accuser of the brothers." He is here said to be "cast down" and overcome by them (Christ's body) "by the blood of the Lamb (the work of the cross) and by the word of THEIR testimony (witness)." We saw a preview of this in Lu. 10:17-18, when the seventy returned proclaiming that "the devils are subject unto us through Thy name!" Jesus responds to them that He saw satan as lightning fall from heaven. I suggest that, seeing in the realm of spirit (or, seeing this as a sign), He was seeing the demons being cast out of the minds of the men whom the disciples were liberating, and this figured the end of satan's power in mankind's thinking (heaven).

Evil (ra) is the opposite of, and contrast to, good. God created it to be something that brought pain and destruction. He created tools to bring it to bear within situations within His plan of the ages. Yet, He, in viewing this plan, said that it was "very good." (Gen. 1:31)

God brought a curse upon mankind and upon creation due to man partaking of the knowledge of the contrasts of good and evil. This curse brought death, decay, disease, ruin. God created enmity as a part of this curse, yet this very enmity was to be the cause of the bruising of the head of the serpent by the promised Seed. This curse also brought sorrow and subjection; a curse of the ground and the field; toil and sweat. From these seeds grew every evil that mankind has known. God caused all this. It would seem that evil came into our present existence with the coming of judgment of God upon mankind.

"13. No one, being continuously put to the proof, must be saying that "I am continuously being put to the proof (tested; tried) from God," for God is not put to the proof (is untestable, untemptable) pertaining to things of bad quality (worthless situations; evil or mean things), and He Himself is continually putting no one to the proof.

14. Yet each one is repeatedly put to the proof (tested; tried), being continuously dragged (or: drawn) out and entrapped under his own over-covering passion (by his own craving or lust; by what he sets his desires upon).

15. Thereafter, the over-covering passion conceiving (seizing together) continuously gives birth to failure (brings forth an offspring of missing the target; bears sin). Now the failure (error; sin; missing of the target), being brought to full term (being finished off; being fully formed with all its parts; being brought to its goal) continues producing (keeps generating; from pregnancy progressively bears forth) death." (Jas. 1:13-15)

Yet before the life in Eden and creation were cast down, the Lamb was slain: the End was in view; victory and blessing were prepared.

Jonathan