

Good Works/Evil Works III

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Before we get into the sermon I want to cover a few basic things, a few main things that are very important for us to understand. John 14—here is a promise that Jesus Christ gave to us. We will have to see, how this is done. How does it work in our lives? This is really quite an all-powerful, all encompassing statement. Now first of all, before you can get to the condition to where this thing will take place...I just want to summarize some basic things.

John 14:15: “If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments.” That is a very basic important thing. I want to emphasize that, which is true, *there is nothing that we as individuals can do to compel God to give us eternal life!* I’m not saying by any means that we are not to keep the commandments of God. Keeping the commandments of God

- show that you love Him
- show that you are loyal to Him
- show your response to God

Verse 23. “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word...’ It goes to more than just commandments. As we’ve already seen, commandment-keeping without the right heart is as worthless as sinning with an ignorant heart. It really is. It accomplishes nothing. That’s why when you get to Isa. 1, He says, ‘the sabbaths, the new moons, away with it,’ *because their hearts aren’t right with God!*

Here is the key of having our hearts right with God. All too many times we let other people come in between us and God; this is the thing that cuts people off from God. So, if you personally do this:

“...and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the Word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s, Who sent Me. I have spoken these things to you while I am yet present with you. But *when the Comforter comes, even the Holy Spirit, which the Father will send in My name, **that One shall teach you all things...***” (vs 23-26). But what is the condition before that will take place?

- that you love God
- that you keep His commandments
- that you realize that this comes from God the Father

“...**that One shall teach you all things...**” This is why we want to get into God’s Word so that

it will teach us. Remember what it says about the Words of Jesus? *These are Spirit and these are Truth, and these are spiritually discerned!*

Let’s see how, then, we can let the Holy Spirit teach us all things. I think we’ve been experiencing in some degree some of what this says. It’s a promise. God says that the Holy Spirit will teach us all things. How is this accomplished? It’s accomplished in very basic ways:

2-Timothy 2:15^[transcriber’s correction]: “Diligently study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who does not *need to be* ashamed, **rightly dividing the Word of the Truth.**”

That is a very basic thing. Another thing is that God is able to use so that we can understand God’s Word and *so God’s Spirit can teach us all things!* It has to do with the way that we are living, and it has to do with the way that we are thinking.

- *if* the Holy Spirit is in our mind, which it is
- *if* the Holy Spirit is to teach us all things, which is a promise that it will

What are the ingredients that we need to put into that formula?

- we have to love God
- we have to study
- we should walk (Psa. 1)
- we need to put into our mind

In other words:

- What can we meditate on unless there’s something there to meditate on?
- How can we think on God’s Word or think on God unless we’ve studied God’s Word?

Psalm 1:1: “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked...” That is part of the blessing that God gives. Sometimes it’s not easy. Sometimes we may think it is not a blessing to walk in God’s ways just because of circumstances that take place. But there is a blessing. That’s where faith comes in. That’s where faith comes in, that ***we walk by faith in every circumstance.***

I was explaining to this person I was talking to on the phone that that’s what we are really learning, that we are:

- a) saved by grace
- b) we have to walk in faith

The more that you really study the Word of God, the more you have to realize that you have to walk in faith. That God’s Word is true and right. God is there to:

- back it up
- to enforce it
- to carry it out
- to love us
- to watch over us

He is:

- merciful
- gracious
- longsuffering

So, there is a blessing that you don't "...walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in **the way of sinners...**" (v 1). There is the way we are to follow. Who is the way? **Christ is 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life.'**

"...nor sit in the seat of the scornful. But **his delight is in the Law of the LORD...**" (vs 1-2).

I'll tell you one thing about the Law of the Lord. When you see the goodness of it, the blessings of it, and the reason for it, then you are also going to understand why God has to enforce the penalty of the breaking of the Law, as well as give the blessing for the keeping of the Law.

"...and in His Law does he meditate day and night" (v 2). Here's the key: if you are **loving God, studying His Word, meditating in His Laws and Word, then the Holy Spirit can reveal whatever the Holy Spirit wants to reveal to you!** That's why a skeptic out here can never understand God's Word. Because there's a certain way to do it, and there's a certain way that must be done with God's Spirit so it will activate in our mind.

Just like electricity. In order for these lights to work you must have electricity. In order for God's Spirit to work in us we must also have the components. So if we could say the electricity is likened to God's Spirit, and you cannot have an electrical fan working without electricity; likewise you cannot have the fan working without the components for the fan.

You can have the electricity, which is God's Spirit, but unless you have the components it isn't going to work. If we have God's Spirit but we don't study and we don't meditate and we don't pray, then the components to be led to all things are not there. It doesn't mean that God is rejecting us or God is putting us aside. But it just means that we cannot grow in grace and knowledge as God would have us grow in grace and knowledge unless we put these components together. If we do, then it's no great thing because we're following what God has said. We can't go along and say look how great a scholar, great this, great that, great anything else. No, it just won't be.

"...and in His Law does he meditate day and night" (v 2). There are a lot of people who like to meditate. Unless you have something to meditate with, what good is your meditation? Isn't the whole object to have God's Word written in our heart and mind and our inward parts? *Then we have the tools whereby God's Spirit can work with us*, and work with anybody, because God's Spirit is not limited.

We've heard it said in past time that only the ministers would be the ones revealing knowledge. That is not true. **God is the One Who reveals knowledge!**

- Can He reveal knowledge to anyone? *Yes!*
- Does that mean that there need not be any teachers? *No, because God's Word says, 'How shall they hear unless a preacher be sent' (Rom. 10) and teach the Word of God?'*

Everything fits into a tremendous picture that God is presenting for us!

If we put it all together and rather than, as so many scholars do, take part of God's Word and fight it with the other part of God's Word. They never come to an understanding because they're fighting God's Word. That isn't what God wants us to do. *He wants us to take all of it and to understand it in the whole context!* Then we can be led more and more of God's Spirit into all things.

It says that the Holy Spirit will teach us all things! I think it's really tremendous that most of the opening prayers that we have for our Sabbath services, we ask God's Spirit to be here so that Christ will teach us. It isn't going to do any good if I teach you *my* thoughts, ***unless those thoughts are anything but the thoughts of God, or the thoughts in God's Word.*** This is how this is able to happen. It's really a tremendous thing. I hope you can think on that and meditate on it. Hopefully, with God's Spirit we can come to something to understand here.

With that preface—and I know that's an awful long preface to a sermon—I want to present just a couple things here so that we can understand more about God. There are certain things in the Bible that, in our own mind without God's Spirit, are completely contradictory things because of a limited knowledge of God.

We need to reconcile 1-John 4 with Isa. 45. Today we are going to see how God, Who is love, can also be God Who creates good and evil. The logical conclusion would be—in the way that most people understand God—is that if God is love, which it says so here:

1-John 4:8: "The one who does not love does not know God **because God is love.**" Isn't that

an interesting statement? How do you understand?
First, you love God and keep His Word!

If God is love, how then can He create good and evil? if love is the opposite of evil? We're getting into areas that philosophers—they're mostly Greek—which Paul said that *'the wisdom of man is the foolishness of God, and the foolishness of God is greater than the wisdom of man.'* So, even the Greek philosophers were not able to understand what we're going to understand today.

It's like everything else. The key is very simple: You've heard of *the simplicity of Christ?* That's part of it. God is love; we know that.

James gives us a little understanding, gives us something to think on. This tells us how God uses what He calls the creation of evil. God is *not* evil, but *He has created good, and He has created evil!*

Did He not in the Garden of Eden create the two trees, the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil? *Yes, He did!* Actually, you know what this will help us do when we come to a full understanding of what we're going through? ***This will help us to trust God more and to put everything in His hands!***

Many times we get all upset because things don't work out the way *we think* that God should work them out. That's a contradictory statement with the knowledge you have. Things may not work out the way ***we think*** God should have them worked out. We're going to see how God will actually use what is an evil circumstance *and turn it for good.* To give us just a little greater understanding:

James 1:12: "Blessed *is the* man who endures trials..." There is a blessing for enduring temptation and resisting evil. See how all these things fit together? We do have choices; people in the world have choices. I'm not so inclined to say that this world is totally Satan's world. It is not totally God's world, *yet!* But God is more involved in the world than perhaps we have thought of in the past. Just to give you an example, during a hostage thing:

- What was it that most people did, or said?
- What is it that was said to have been the greatest comfort for the pilot? *His faith in God!*
- What did he say carried him through? *Reading God's Word!*
- Did He pray? *Yes!*
- Did all of the hostages pray? *Yes!*
- Did people pray and look to God who had not prayed and looked to God before, maybe in a long, long time, if ever? *Yes!*
- Did God hear and answer their prayers? *Yes!*

- Are they going to be in the Kingdom of God?
- Has God called them for salvation?
Probably not at this point!

But it falls into that category that we discussed earlier, *'He who is not against Me is with Me.* And he who honors Me I will honor.'

There are a lot of people out there who, though they have not been called for salvation any more than ancient Israel was, but if they, like ancient Israel, have a certain amount of faith in God, have a certain amount of trust in God, God will honor that. In the confines of a very narrow interpretation of how God works with people that might seem somewhat unrealistic. But I think it is true.

"...because after he has been proved he shall receive a crown of life..." (v 12). That means we're all going to go through trials.

- Are trials easy? *No!*
- Are trials in some cases evil to endure?
Yes!
- What does it help us do? *Draw close to God!*
- How does God try us? *He gives us choices!*
✓ ***to choose good***
✓ ***to choose evil***

He does not try us with evil alone. *God does not tempt any man with evil.* He gives us the choice to follow Him, *or not.* That's how the trial comes. ***If you endure,*** then you shall receive the *crown of life.*

As a matter fact, since Abraham endured (Gen. 22) the blessing of God to the descendants of Abraham became irrevocable. God bound himself irrevocably from that point. He could not change it, because of what Abraham did.

"...he shall receive a crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him" (v 12). Notice again how that love for God has got to be there. Almost every circumstance, even with the fires that we have here, what did it do for all those people living up in the mountains? *They prayed!* They helped one another. So, out of that catastrophe good came. That's a key that we're going to see all the way through.

Verse 13: "Do not let anyone who is tempted say, 'I am being tempted by God,' because God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself tempts no one *with evil.* But each one is tempted when he is drawn away and is enticed by his own lust" (vs. 13-14).

This shows the operation of sin; it begins with lust, *which is in the mind!* Who is the one who tries to accentuate and thrust lust into your mind even more and more? *Satan the devil, through the*

operation of the spirit of the power of the air, through the operation of all the visual things that we have in today's society, along with all radio and television and everything all combined!

We're living in a tremendously intense time to live, intense mentally. There's nowhere you can go without some kind of sound, a sight, a book, a record, a tape, a radio, a television, a movie or a newspaper. *It's very intense!*

Go back to the time of Jonah; his time was not too intense. He even sat down and let God create a gourd behind him, and then had a worm chew it down just to teach him a lesson. Today God might do that on television. It'd be entirely different. So, it's a very intense time!

God *does not* tempt with evil, ***He tempts with choices!*** The choice is to obey God or not. But if your lusts get involved—and this is where people begin falling; drawn away of his own lusts—and begin thinking of his own way rather than God's way, and is enticed. So, there is an *ensnarement*, an entrapment that comes along.

Verse 15: "And after lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is completely finished, brings forth death." *The wages of sin is death.*

You're going to notice that we are going over Scriptures that we've gone over in the past. But I don't know about you, there's a lot more meaning in every one of these Scriptures, though we've gone over them in the past. It's like that 'precept upon precept,' or concept, or 'line upon line,' all that together.

Exodus 34:5: "And the LORD came down in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy to the thousandth *generation*, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but Who will by no means clear *the guilty*... [without repentance] ...visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, to the third and to the fourth generation'" (vs 5-7).

This was right at the time when God said to Moses, 'Because these people have sinned, let Me destroy them and I will continue My plan with you.' Moses prevailed upon God so that God would change His mind. God is merciful and kind and ready to forgive.

Whenever you feel down and kind of bad, and you've sinned, and just wonder, 'Well, am I worth it?' *or* 'Is God even interested in me anymore?' Whatever, as long as you are not turning

your back on God, as long as you are seeking God, go to Him. *He'll forgive.*

One of the best examples in the Bible is Manasseh. Read the indictment against Manasseh, what an evil, *evil, evil* person he was. For how long? *Fifty-five years!*

Listen to this prayer beginning in Psalm 86:1: "Bow down Your ear, O LORD, answer me, for I am poor and needy."

Part of the understanding of God and how great God is, is that you realize how weak and puny and infinitesimal and needy that we are of God.

Verse 2: "Preserve my soul, for I am Holy; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You... [there's got to be that trust; you can't have faith without trust] ...Be merciful to me..." (vs 2-3). Isn't that what we just read, that God said that His name is *gracious, merciful and longsuffering?*

"...O LORD, for I cry unto You all day long. Rejoice the soul of Your servant, for to You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul, for You, LORD, are good and **ready to forgive...**" (vs 3-5). You can tie that in with what Jesus said about:

- forgiving your brother seven times seventy.
- to whom sins you forgive they are forgiven

God is interested in forgiveness! This is the key to understanding how God can be **good, Holy, loving, merciful and kind**, and yet, at the same time:

- execute vengeance
- bring about wrath
- create evil against the wicked

Now we can understand both concepts.

"...and rich in mercy to all those who call upon You. Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer, and attend to the voice of my supplications" (vs 5-6). *He was weeping, crying unto God!*

That's why God puts us in circumstances, that sometimes the only thing we can do is just go to God and weep and cry and say, 'God, I'm here,' and maybe open the Bible to Psa. 86 and read, study and pray about that as you go along. **God will answer!** I absolutely guarantee—not because I can guarantee it, but because God has already guaranteed it; so, my guarantee is not on me, but on the Word of God—that *He will hear* and that *He will forgive.*

Verse 7: "In the day of my trouble..." How many hostages said, 'We prayed. We sat there and prayed'? I imagine after they saw one of them beaten up—kicked and killed—everyone was praying, 'O God, save me. O God, that is terrible. We are in their hands; deliver us from their hands.'

That's one of those episodes that one of those times we can ask God, 'How involved were the angels in working this thing out? What happened?' *It even changed old President Assad of Syria's mind!* He's the most blockheaded, hard-headed, stubborn, unresilient person in the world. Even He was changed.

Verse 7: "In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, for You will answer me."

Verse 15. "But You, O LORD, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and Truth. Oh, turn to me, and have mercy upon me; give Your strength to Your servant and save the son of Your handmaid" (vs 15-16). *Quite a tremendous and moving Psalm!*

Just keep in mind what the children of Israel had done, what they had gone through, what they had done to God. Remember that the cloud was there every day, the pillar of fire every night. They didn't need streetlights and all that sort of stuff.

Numbers 14:1: "And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried. And the people wept that night."

That was after they sent the spies into the land. This was after a year and a half in the wilderness. You think a year and a half in the wilderness would have been enough for anybody. They were ready at the second Feast of Tabernacles time to go into the land, because they came out at Passover time.

By the second Passover they finished the tabernacle of the congregation and everything was ready to go. Then now at this time they were ready to go into the 'promised land.' So, Moses sent in the spies, they brought back the grapes. Joshua and Caleb told how great God would be, what a fine land it is. The other ones came back and said, 'Oh no, they're giants!' So, all the people wept and cried all night. ***They didn't have faith in God that He would deliver them!***

Verse 2: "And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron. And the whole congregation said to them, 'Oh that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or, Oh that we had died in the wilderness! And why has the LORD brought us into this land to fall by the sword...'" (vs 2-3)—*accusing God!*

Then when God has given all this mercy and graciousness, sometimes God will judge us back with the judgment we judge God. This is not what God said. He said, 'I've done it for your good. I've done it so that you can have a land flowing in milk and honey, for blessing, for everything that you want.' So, they turned that all around backwards.

"...so that our wives and our children should be a prey? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?' And they said to one another, 'Let us make a leader, and let us return to Egypt.' And Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel" (vs. 3-5).

I guess so! Bow down, put your face right to the ground. 'O God, what a terrible situation this is.' Moses prayed to God and he said, 'You know, God, what if the Egyptians hear this? They'll say that You're really not a God, You couldn't really bring them out of the land. They got stuck in the desert and You couldn't do it.'

Verse 15: "And will You kill this people as one man? Then the nations who have heard Your fame will speak, saying, 'Because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which He swore to them, therefore, He has slain them in the wilderness.' And now, I beseech You, let the power of my Lord be great, according as You have spoken, saying... [Moses referred back to this time when he heard God say]: ...I beseech You, pardon the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your mercy, and as You have forgiven this people from Egypt even until now" (vs 15-19).

Verse 20: "And the LORD said, 'I have pardoned according to your word.... [so He forgave] ...But truly, *as I live*, all the earth shall be filled *with* the glory of the LORD. Because all those men who have seen My glory and My miracles which I did in Egypt...'" (vs 20-21). That must have been awesome, to see all that going on.

"...and in the wilderness, and have tempted Me now these ten times... [God really endured a lot with those people] ...and have not hearkened to My voice, Surely they shall not see the land, which I swore to their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked Me see it. But **My servant Caleb, because he had another Spirit with him and has followed Me fully**, I will bring him into the land..." (vs 21-24)

Then God gave their own judgment, v 28: "... 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'as you have spoken in My ears, so I will do to you. Your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, who have murmured against Me, you shall certainly not come into the land, which I swore to make you dwell in, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. But your little ones, which you said should be a prey, I will bring them in and they shall know the land, which you have despised. But *as for* you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. And your children shall feed in the wilderness forty years and bear your whoredoms until your dead carcasses

have been consumed in the wilderness. According to the number of the days in which you searched the land—forty days—each day for a year you shall bear your iniquities, forty years; and you shall know My displeasure *of this generation*. I the LORD have spoken it; I will surely do it to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. They shall be destroyed in this wilderness, and there they shall die” (vs 28-35).

Isaiah 45:7: “I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and **create** evil....”

- Why does God create evil?
- For what purpose?

in doing so

- Why is God still Holy, righteous, good and true?
- Why is He not in the same category as Satan the devil?

I don't think you've ever heard anyone ask the question straight that way, because *we know* that Satan is evil. We know that he is wicked and he brings evil upon people. But he also appears *as an angel of light*. We will see an example here as to why God brings the evil.

Ezekiel 14:1. “And some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me. And the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I at all be inquired of by them?’” (vs 1-3).

Here again, **God looks to the heart!** I want to emphasize that over and over again. They are coming trying to be religious, trying to be nice, **but their heart is evil!** That's why those in the New Testament worship God in Spirit and in Truth! Didn't it say of Caleb that he was of *another Spirit*? *He had the right attitude, the right Spirit to God*. So, here they all come.

Verse 4: “Therefore, speak to them and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Every man of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and comes to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him according to the multitude of his idols.””

God has to answer back, kind in kind. Why? *If you don't answer back kind in kind*, then who is greater? God? *or* man? Righteousness? *or* sin? **God** has to answer kind in kind!

Verse 5: “So that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart because they have deserted Me for their idols—all of them. Therefore, say to the house of Israel, “Thus says the Lord GOD,

‘Repent...’” (vs 5-6). That's why God brings evil, **so there can be repentance!** The key is **repent!**

The difference between the evil that God creates and brings and what Satan does is this: God sends the evil as a correction for their sins. If they will not repent, ‘the wages of sin is death,’ so God carries out His Word. If God doesn't carry out His Word, God is no longer God.

Therefore, *He will execute the wicked*, and to the wicked that is an evil thing. **God is giving them a chance to repent**, which is a good thing, and to eliminate the wicked if they won't repent. I'm very thankful that is true. I'm very thankful that people like Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin and Mao Tse-tung—and we could probably go on down the line of all human, great, whatever—that they die so that evil can stop.

They have also found that this law works. When there is a recession—happens every time, they can prove it by statistics—if you are out of work, to you that is evil, it's hard, it's tough and it's difficult on the nation and the people. What happens? *Stealing goes way down*; you would think it would be the other way around. *Adultery goes way down*. Why? *Because people in their hardship stop the sinning!* Keep that in mind.

“...‘Repent and turn yourselves from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations’” (vs. 6). What are all the abominations to God? *That which is a blessing to man may be an abomination to God!*

Now let's see what it says that God is going to do, but notice why He brings the evil; v 12: “The Word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, when a land sins against Me...’” (vs 12-13).

Jeremiah 18:1: “The Word, which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, ‘Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words.’ Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he was working at his wheel. And the vessel that he made of clay was ruined in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it” (vs 1-4).

He just took that, you know, if you seen that, you can just take a wad of clay and if it's no good, then you just mash it all up and you put it on the wheel and you make a new one.

(go to the next track)

Verses 5: “Then the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘O house of Israel, can I not do with you *even* as this potter?’ says the LORD. ‘Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hands, *so are* you in My hand, O house of Israel. If at any time I

shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck it up and to pull it down, and to destroy it” (vs 5-7).

To destroy a nation, for those on the receiving end of it, *that is evil!*. There was a time when God said to the children of Israel, ‘When you go in the land you are to destroy everyone: man, woman and child.’

After seeing that report on satanism—Baalism is satanism—you know why God said to kill the children. We also have to keep in mind that God is eventually going to resurrect all of them. But God has to deal with the here and now. If you don’t get rid of evil here and now when God says to get rid of it, it’s going to come back and plague you later. We saw in a satanism report, little kids of ten and twelve can be so infected with it that it ruins their entire lives. That’s why God said to do it.

Concerning a nation, v 8. “If that nation, against whom I have spoken, will turn from their evil...” It says He’s going to destroy it. Now just keep in mind the city of Nineveh—the nation of Assyria and Jonah—*repented*. Even the king made all the animals go without eating and drinking for three days. I imagine at the end of the third day there was a lot of bellowing, crying, bleating and everything going on, not only from the animals, but from the people.

God said He would spare them. Just like with people who like to have God do it the way they want it done, Jonah was all upset. It shows that Jonah complained against God, ‘O God, I knew that You would do this. You sent me all the way up here...’ But God told him, He said, ‘Jonah, I wanted you to go. I have sent you. I made you go and to do that.’ Because there is something called, ‘the wicked have to be warned *before* it comes.’ *God will send someone to do the warning!*

Verse 8: “If that nation, against whom I have spoken, will turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do to them.”

That’s the exact verse that ties in with Isaiah 45:7: “...I make peace and create evil...” God uses the force of evil to destroy itself, or bring repentance. If they repent, God is merciful, gracious and ready to forgive. *If it’s from the heart, God does not turn down repentance!*

Now, there’s a superficial repentance where God says, ‘I am weary of repenting.’ People come along and then they do what appears to be a good work with an evil motive: ‘I’ll repent because God will forgive.’ *God doesn’t want that kind of repentance!* ‘Oh well, once I’m forgiven I can go out and do it again, and then I’ll repent, and then God will forgive me.’ *God doesn’t want that kind of*

repentance! That is an evil repentance! God wants repentance from the heart; *that you fully turn to God with all your heart!*

Jeremiah 18:9: “And if at any time I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build it and to plant it; if it does evil in My sight, that it not obey My voice, then I will repent of the good with which I said I would do them good” (vs. 9-10).

That’s how God works! It can work with nations; and you can go back and read Ezek. 13 where God said that He gave everything into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar was not a Godly man. God still dealt with him. He said, ‘Every nation that doesn’t submit themselves to Nebuchadnezzar, I will destroy.’ Then He says, ‘When his time has come to the full, I’ll send the hand to correct him.’

Ezekiel 14:13: “Son of man, when a land sins against Me by trespassing grievously...” {note Gen. 19 and Sodom and Gomorrah} All the verses where Abraham came up and said, ‘Lord, if there are 50...? 45...? 40...? 30...? 10...?’ So it’s *grievously*.

“...and **I stretch out My hand** on it, and break the staff of its bread...” (v 13). Now granted, that’s probably what’s happening in Ethiopia. But isn’t it interesting that all the Americans and the Britons are the ones—even the worst people in this society, the rock stars—you could say the worst people in this society are at least doing something good? It’s in Britain and America. Interesting, if you know Biblically what that means.

“...**I stretch out My hand** on it, and break the staff of its bread and send famine on it, and will cut off man and beast from it... [God is doing it] ...and *though* these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver *only* their own lives by their righteousness,’ says the Lord GOD” (vs. 13-14).

God is saying that it’s an individual judgment upon everyone. God looks to the heart of everyone. We can’t collectively go to God and maintain an evil heart and say how good we are. *No way!*

Here are the four things that God does, v 15: “ ^[#1] **If I cause wild beasts to come through the land**, and they spoil it and it becomes desolate, so that no one may pass through because of the beasts, *though* these three men were in its midst, *as* I live,’ says the Lord GOD, ‘they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters. They only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate. Or ^[#2] **if I bring a sword** upon that land, and say, “Sword, go through the land”...” (vs 15-17).

We’ll see how God says for the sword to go

through the land. God will raise up armies, and He will have power behind those armies.

“...so that ^[#3]**I cut off man and beast from it;** though these three men *were* in it, *as I live,*’ says the Lord GOD, ‘they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they *only* shall be delivered themselves” (vs 17-18).

Here again it’s still a call to repentance. Even in the worst thing that God is saying, there is still a hand being held out for *repentance!* *You as an individual get right with God!* ‘I will deliver you from it.’ Even in the midst of the worst thing.

Verse 19: “‘Or ^[#4]**if I send a pestilence into that land,** and pour out My fury upon it in blood, to cut off man and beast from it; though Noah, Daniel, and Job *were* in it, *as I live,*’ says the Lord GOD, ‘they shall deliver neither son nor daughter. They shall *only* deliver their own lives by their righteousness.’.... [the righteousness of God] ...For thus says the Lord GOD, ‘How much more when I send **My four evil judgments against Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the destroying beast, and the pestilence,** to cut off man and beast from it?’” (vs 19-21).

But what did God say before He’d bring it? He said to *repent!* God is interested in repentance. At any time **God will turn His hand from evil when there is repentance,** because God only brings the evil in hopes that there will be repentance. If not, ‘Vengeance is Mine,’ says the Lord, ‘and judgment belongs to Me’ He is the One Who does it.

I draw your attention to Deut. 28. Go back and study Deut. 28-31, and just read through it and see the whole thing there. God is interested in every case that people repent.

Deuteronomy 28:1: “And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD your God to observe *and* to do all His commandments, which I command you today, the LORD your God will set you on high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you **if you will obey the voice of the LORD your God**” (vs 1-2). God said He would bring these blessings *for obedience.*

We see that **if** you do not do the things that God says, He will bring the curses. He says so directly.

Verse 15: “...all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.”

Verse 20: “The LORD shall send on you cursing, vexation...”

Verse 21: “The LORD shall make the pestilence cling to you...”

Verse 22: “The LORD shall strike you with lung

disease and with a fever, and with an inflammation...”

Verse 24: “The LORD shall make the rain of your land powder and dust...”

Verse 25: “The LORD shall cause you to be stricken before your enemies....”

Verse 27: “The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt...”

Verse 28: “The LORD shall strike you with madness and blindness and astonishment of heart.”

Verse 35: “The LORD shall strike you in the knees and in the legs with an evil ulcer...”

Verse 36: “The LORD shall bring you, and your king, which you shall set over you, to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known....”

The point I want to make is, **the Lord is bringing it!** How does the Lord bring it? *He’s responsible for it!* God says, ‘**I create peace and evil.**’ How does the Lord bring it?

1. **The execution of law; blessing for law-keeping, cursing for law-breaking**

That is automatically built in, just like the law of gravity. Or if you don’t drink poison you won’t die of poison. Same thing! Garbage in/garbage out. Even the world knows that.

The book of Proverbs is filled with the simple day-to-day operation of the Law, good and evil. Because where there is a positive part of the law: blessed will you be for doing this. There is the penalty for those who don’t. Otherwise, why would you have any incentive to do anything? *You would have no incentive to do anything right!*

I heard a report, that because of all of the venereal diseases, people are getting back to the old-fashioned thing of one husband and one wife. There is even a book out, which I heard about on one of the talk shows, which is, *How To Love One Mate Forever.* Put out by one of the experts at the sex therapist clinic of Masters and Johnson.

So, the correction of the evil, the automatic wages of sin being the evil of the sickness has brought a better standing for the whole society, beginning to get the point. *One husband/one wife!* That’s not such a bad idea; it was God’s idea in the first place. The truth of the matter is that you can never get along with one person tremendously all the time. That’s what God wants us to learn in the marriage estate. There are going to be ups, there are going to be downs. If you can’t make that work, which you can by following the principles and Laws of God, being as God: merciful, kind, understanding, not self-seeking, and all that sort of thing! Isn’t that how marriage counselors say how people ought to

get along? They've come to the great conclusion that it is good for one man to have one woman, remain married all their life. They even have a book to tell you how to love one person forever. God had that all along.

The operation of law! That's how God does it. He doesn't have to come down and personally do it. For example, if you eat raw pork or raw bear: I know group of hunters, they went up into Idaho and they shot a bear and all nine of them died of trichinosis. The law is there. That's why God says, 'You shall not eat these things.' Some of them you can, but by taste you can't. God is straightforward in what He says. He gives His laws clear and easy to understand.

He lets you know about everything if you want to know. Satan then, on the other hand, will take part of the good... For example, God can change anything He wants to, which is a true statement, and then say that the laws of 'clean and unclean meats no longer apply,' which is not a true statement. That's where you have evil/evil that *appears* good. The source is evil, which takes part of a good statement and makes it sound good, and then comes to an evil conclusion. That's part of the unconscionable evil of Satan the devil, that he will have the counterfeit that looks good, which he knows is going to cause God to bring the penalty of sin upon them.

What else does God use to enforce the correction, or to bring about evil that He creates?

2. Satan the devil!

The book of Job is a classic example of it. But even with using Satan the devil, what was the end result of the book of Job? *Repentance!*

- What about those people who have turned their backs on God and are no longer in the Church of God? *God is not done with them, yet!*
- When God brings the evil in their life, will they repent? *Chances are, yes!*
- Will God forgive them? *Yes!*

God says He is ready to forgive, provided it's true repentance!

Job was perfect, Job 1:1: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job. And that man was **blameless and upright**, and one who feared God and turned aside from evil."

Verse 6: "Now, there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD. And Satan also came among them. And the LORD said to Satan, 'From where do you come?' Then Satan answered the LORD and said, 'From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up

and down in it.' And the LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered My servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and turns away from evil?'" (vs 6-8).

I think sometimes in our life Satan does this to God and to us, and we go through certain trials; I'm sure that is true. We know that God tempts no man with evil. So, when you get tempted with evil, guess who it's coming from? *Satan!*

Verse 9: "And Satan answered the LORD and said, 'Does Job fear God for nothing?' *You've given Him everything. Take it from him.*

Verse 11: "But put forth Your hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse You to Your face. And the LORD said to Satan, 'Behold, all that he has *is* in your power. Only do not lay your hand upon him.' And Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD" (vs 11-12).

Satan can only do what God explicitly allows, provides for. You know, then it went down to where he took everything, his sons and his daughters. That is evil! Isn't that an evil thing? *But in the end Job repented; and God blessed him with far greater, far better!* Plus, all of his sons and daughters can be resurrected in the second resurrection, and they'll have a chance for salvation. Maybe we can get a greater view of God, a greater appreciation of God, of how that God works. That ended in repentance.

3. Angels and Demons

Revelation 12:7—we know it's talking about Satan, and God, and Israel, and Christ: "And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels warred against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels warred."

There are the agencies that God uses, His own angels. How about the times where it shows the vision of the throne of God, where there are angels, ten thousand times ten thousand: There are the twenty-four elders. You wonder what the twenty-four elders do? *They talk with God on how to carry out the things on the earth, very obviously.* 'How should we do it? What should be done?'

2 Chron. 18—when Ahab, who was noted for his wickedness, got together in a league with Jehoshaphat. They were to go fight the king of Syria. I will just make a long story short and won't read through all the Scriptures; except to say that Ahab said, 'Let's talk to the prophets and see whether we will be successful in this battle.'

So, all the false prophets came and said, 'Yea, the Lord says go on up against the battle in Syria and you will prevail.' Then Jehoshaphat asked,

‘Is there not a prophet of the Lord around here? I want to check with the prophet of the Lord.’

So the prophet of the Lord—Micaiah—came and he told them what they didn’t want to hear. Because Ahab considered Micaiah, who was also contemporary then with Elijah out of the school of the prophets, as an enemy, and that he said, ‘This person hates me.’

So here’s what he told both of them. 2-Chronicles 18:18: “Again he said, ‘Therefore, hear the Word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting upon His throne, and all the host of heaven were standing on His right hand and *on* His left.’”

I would refer you to Rev. 4 & 5 so you can get a good view of what that looks like.

Verse 19: “And the LORD said, ‘Who shall tempt Ahab king of Israel so that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead?’ And one spoke saying in one way, and another saying in another way. Then a spirit came and stood before the LORD and said, ‘I will tempt him.’ And the LORD said... [How will you do this?] ... ‘With what?’ And he said, ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ And *the LORD* said, “You shall tempt him, and you shall also prevail. Go out and do so.” And now behold, **the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these your prophets**, and the LORD has spoken evil against you” (vs 19-22).

God uses law, Satan and angels! We know that in the book of Revelation it talks about *the seven spirits of God* that go to and fro in all the earth. We have that in Zech. 4, Rev. 1; 4 & 5. So, God is able to carry this out through the agencies of His creation, where:

- God will directly do it
- He will use Satan the devil
- He will use the demons
- He will use His angels

Dan. 10—Gabriel was explaining why he delayed coming. Poor old Daniel, he set his face to seek God, he fasted and prayed ten days. *No answer!* Then all the sudden Gabriel shows up and he says:

Daniel 10:12: “Then he said to me, ‘Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you **set your heart** to understand and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard. And I have come because of your words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days. Then lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; for I had been there alone with the kings of Persia” (vs 12-13).

That is showing the struggle that goes on. This then is between the angels of God and the

angels of Satan; obviously a struggle right there. So, God uses the angels.

The whole book of Revelation shows the use of angels in carrying out the will of God, all the way through. Let’s just go and take a quick survey of Revelation so you can see how the angels of God are so involved in carrying out the will of God.

- Rev. 1—the vision of Jesus Christ. John sees the seven candles, which are the seven angels of the Churches. ***There are angels that God uses to carry out that portion of His plan.***
- Rev. 2 & 3—the seven angels, one to each of the Churches.
- Rev. 4 & 5—the vision of all the angels of God, the seraphim and the cherubim, all of the 10,000 times 10,000.
- Rev. 5 & 7—then Christ opens the seals and the prophetic things coming out of the seals. God is making it happen, everyone of them!
- Rev. 8-10—angels with the seven trumpet plagues.
- Rev. 11—the seventh angel that sounds.
- Rev. 16—the seven last plagues come and ***angels that do it!*** So, that’s how God is able to enforce it.

The wrath of God, from a human point of view, is going to be very evil. But it’s going to accomplish repentance. If they repent, they will be spared! If any man worships *the beast or his image* he will die! I imagine there will be people getting rid of that as quick as they can. In using these agents, ***God will send a strong delusion***, just like He sent a lying spirit.

2-Thess. 2 talks about the man of sin, ***the one who will be personally possessed of Satan the devil!*** This ties right in with Rev. 13, about *the beast*. Who is able to make war against the beast?

2-Thessalonians 2:9: “*Even* the one whose coming is according to *the* inner working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders.” People are going to think this is great. They will believe what they want to believe rather than believe the Truth.

Verse 10: “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who are perishing because **they did not receive the love of the Truth**, so that they might be saved.... [here is an automatic thing that takes place]: ...And for this cause...” (vs 10-11).

In other words, there comes a time, and the time when it looks like the world is going to solve all of its problems, the time when it looks like the world is coming together and great love and understanding,

“...because they did not receive the love of the Truth, God will send upon them a powerful deception that will cause them to believe the lie” (v 11).

That’s going to be awesome! That’s how God works in bringing the good and bringing the evil and working these things out. That’s why God says, ‘Vengeance is Mine. Don’t go execute your own judgment. I will take care of it.’ God will have a better plan. He’ll entrap them in their own evil. Let them alone! I think in our circumstances that we’ve seen that’s exactly true.

Let’s look at an example in Gen. 50 about a very evil circumstance, *which God turned around and used for good!* This is the story of Joseph. And remember what happened to Joseph? Just put this in the context of a family. Here’s the youngest one coming around bragging to the older brothers; said, ‘I had a dream. All you bowed down to worship me.’ That was the sum of the dream. He wore this favorite jacket. His dad thought he was the greatest thing that walked the face of the earth. Joseph’s brothers were going to kill him, then they decided not to kill him; they decided to sell him off to the Arabs and bring back the jacket.

For how many years this thing went on, where Jacob thought his son was dead, you talk about an evil thing. You talk about a difficult thing. You know what happened to Joseph: He went in, and he was sold as a slave, and then he went into jail. On one day God raised him up out of the dungeon and seated him as #2 next to the throne of Pharaoh.

After this was all done, after all the blessings that had been given, the bringing of Jacob down to Egypt, and Ephraim and Manasseh and the whole thing, right here just as he concluded here:

Genesis 50:15—after Jacob, Joseph’s father, died and they took them over and buried him: “And when Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, ‘Joseph will perhaps hate us, and will certainly repay us all the evil which we did to him.’” They were beginning to think a little rationally here. But also very carnally in revealing their own heart, that they figured that Joseph would do evil to them for the evil that they had done.

Verse 16: “And they sent a message to Joseph, saying, ‘Your father commanded before he died, saying, “Thus shall you say to Joseph, ‘I beseech you now, forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin, for they did evil to you.’” And please now forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father.’ And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. And his brothers also went and fell down before his face. And they said, ‘Behold, we

are your servants.’ And Joseph said to them, ‘Do not fear, for *am* I in the place of God?’” (vs 16-19).

Joseph could have said, ‘Aha! Now I’m going to get you dirty rats. My father is dead, and now I’m going to swing the sword, boys!’ *But he didn’t!*

Verse 19: “And Joseph said to them, ‘Do not fear, for *am* I in the place of God? But as for you, you thought evil against me, **but God meant it for good to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save a great many people alive**” (vs 19-20).

That’s why Jesus said, ‘When they speak evil of you, or do evil to you, *rejoice!*’ God will turn it to good. This is the thing that got me started on this whole thing. *It was evil!*

- Was God behind it? *Yes!*
- Was it miserable for everybody? *Yes!*
- Did it turn out good in the long run? *Fantastic! Yes!*

It saved all of Israel. That’s great! That’s how God can take something that is evil and make it good, because God is in it. But quite a statement that Joseph said: “...you thought evil against me, **but God meant it for good...**” *Quite a tremendous thing!*

This helps us have a whole lot more peace of mind when we can put it in God’s hands and just know that that is the way it is. It saves a whole lot. I don’t know about you, but it sure has just opened my eyes a lot to really have more faith and trust in God, and let Him do it when the circumstances get difficult to trust in God even more.

It’s the other way around sometimes; when circumstances get difficult we begin to doubt and not trust in God. It ought to be the other way around. When it’s difficult, say, ‘God, You know it’s difficult, it’s hard,’ and have more trust in Him. Then He’ll work out.

This gives us a good summary of the whole thing, Romans 2:1. “Therefore, you are without excuse, O man, everyone who judges *another...*”

Now you understand why judging your brother becomes so bad? When you think evil against your brother and you do things against them that are evil, then you are taking into your hands something that God alone should do. Let them alone and let God take care of it. If they are interfering in your life, then just don’t have them associate in your life so much that it’s going to hurt you. But don’t come back with a vengeance upon them.

“...for in that in which you judge the other, you are condemning your own self; for you who judge *another* are doing the same things. But we

know that the judgment of God is according to Truth upon those who commit such things” (vs 1-2).

That’s where we have to be. God will take care of it according to Truth. Though our circumstances look evil in the moment, if we turn to God it will be good in the long run. I can say I have personally experienced that. Leave it in God’s hands, let him judge.

Verse 3: “Now, do you think yourself, O man, whoever is judging those who commit such things, and you are practicing them *yourself*, that you shall escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that **the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?**” (vs 3-4). That’s what God is concerned about, **repentance**.

Verse 5: “But you, according to your own hardness and unrepentant heart, are storing up wrath for yourself against *the* day of wrath and revelation of God’s righteous judgment, who will render to each one according to his own works... [God is going to do it] ...on the one hand, to those who with patient endurance in good works are seeking glory and honor and immortality... [to those then He’s going to give]: ...eternal life” (vs 5-7). Whether it’s good times or bad times, we’re seeking that.

Verse 8: “On the other hand, to those who are contentious and who disobey the Truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath... [there’s the operation of law, automatic] ...tribulation and anguish—upon every soul of man who works out evil, both of *the* Jew first, and of *the* Greek; but glory and honor and peace to everyone who works good, both to *the* Jew first, and to *the* Greek, because there is no respect of persons with God” (vs. 8-11).

Just one other thing that I want to cover has to do with righteousness. I have listed four kinds of righteousness:

1. **Godly righteousness** that comes from God
2. **human righteousness**, which is our own self-righteousness that may or may not be based on God’s Law.
3. **vain righteousness**, which in most cases is righteousness based upon God’s Law

Making the Law an idol or god, and worshiping the Law instead of God, then you come to the stature of the Pharisees. They take good that was intended by God to be good *and they make it evil*, because they’ve left God out of the picture by worshiping the Law *instead of worshiping the Lawgiver!* Vast difference! If you worship the Law then you are going to take the Law and use it in an evil way. ***There is good being put to an evil use!***

4. **satanic ‘righteousness’** in the sense that *it appears righteous*, because of Satan appearing as ‘an angel of light’

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 14:15, 23-26
- 2) 2 Timothy 2:15
- 3) Psalm 1:1-2
- 4) 1 John 4:8
- 5) James 1:12
- 6) Exodus 34:5-7
- 7) Psalm 86:1-7, 15-16
- 8) Numbers 14:1-5, 15-24, 28-35
- 9) Isaiah 45:7
- 10) Ezekiel 14:1-6, 12-13
- 11) Jeremiah 18:1-8
- 12) Isaiah 45:7
- 13) Jeremiah 18:9-10
- 14) Ezekiel 14:13-21
- 15) Deuteronomy 28:1-2, 15, 20-22, 24-25, 27-28, 35-36
- 16) Job 1:1, 6-9, 11-12
- 17) Revelation 12:7
- 18) 2 Chronicles 18:18-22
- 19) Daniel 10:12-13
- 20) 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11
- 21) Genesis 50:15-20
- 22) Romans 2:1-11

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Isaiah 1
- Romans 10
- Genesis 22
- Ezekiel 13
- Genesis 19
- Deuteronomy 29-31
- Revelation 4; 5
- Zechariah 4
- Revelation 1-11; 16; 13

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