

THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God
IN CHRIST JESUS.**
(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)*

#03-09122

Why God Created Good and Evil

May 8, 2009

This issue is a follow up to issues #03-09120, May 4, 2009, and #03-09121, May 6, 2009.

Considering what I previously wrote regarding God creating matter out of His light and creating the crooked, ancient serpent a sinner and the father of lies, there are a few loose ends to tie up, especially in regard to the reason for God injecting evil into His creation in the first place.

Of course, I realize that the suggestion that God created evil goes against the grain, so to speak, of most Christian theology, which, unfortunately, seems to ignore Scripture. After all, it is commonly taught that God created beings, whether heavenly or earthly, with free will to choose to sin or not to sin, or to rebel or not to rebel. I won't go into free will in this issue, so I refer you to Article #5, January 2008, *Being Ignorant, in Unbelief, Yet the Grace*.

It is as if God, knowing full well that His creation would revolt against Him, had to make plans to correct this aberration once it occurred. Even among commentators that I share much in common with as far as interpreting Scripture, I get the distinct impression that many of them see evil and sin as an aberration that came into creation that somehow put a damper and a delay on God's purpose and plan for mankind and all creation. Some acknowledge that God knew it would happen; nevertheless, sin entering into creation was still not in the plan of God. I don't agree; I see sin and failure, that is, all falling short of the mark or glory of God, in full accord with the purpose and plan of God.

In writing of the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, Paul declared that **God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all** (Romans 11:32 NASB). I have written more extensively on this verse in my book *The Purpose and Plan of the Eons*, Volume 1, Chapter 8, *Locks Up All Together In Stubbornness*, but it is clear to me that He purposely brought forth the devil and mankind with failure in mind in order to reveal His glory and His very essence of spirit, life, light, and love. Simply, the plan of God has been and will continue to be until the consummation of the eons that creation must come to know God the Father and His Son by seeing and experiencing that which is in opposition or antagonistic to His very nature and essence, that is, the very antithesis to who He is.

It is with this thought in mind that God created the crooked, ancient serpent, the devil, as an adversary not only to mankind but to Himself. May the spirit of God open our eyes!

To repeat what I mentioned in the previous issue, Isaiah gave us a truth that many have not fully understood. **Former of light and Creator of darkness, Maker of good and Creator of evil** (Isaiah 45:7 CV). I trust that you see the significance of this word. God is the Creator of evil. He alone is responsible for evil. Consider Solomon's wisdom: **The Lord has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil** (Proverbs 16:4 NASB). God is not evil in any sense of the word. He is merely the Creator. He could be likened to a chef baking a cake. The chef can bake a cake without ever eating it. He knows what went into the cake, and it comes out in the form he planned for it, but if he never takes a bite of it, he has no idea what the cake tastes like. Likewise, God does not partake of evil in any manner whatsoever, but He is still its Creator, for all comes forth from Him.

Seeing that out of Him and through Him and for Him is all: to Him be the glory for the eons! (Romans 11:36 CV)

What is evil? Is it not the antithesis of good? Only God is good (Matthew 19:17)! Consequently, the devil was created to be the adversary of God, His evil antagonist, so that mankind would have a stark contrast to God, not in God but in His adversary. By having a contrast, mankind would come to know the one true God of love and light, in whom there is no darkness (1 John 1:5). Every step that God has taken has

been followed by Satan. Satan is like a shadow; for every step God takes in the light, there is a shadow of darkness cast upon creation in general and mankind in specific. This is by God's design. If it were not so, how would we know good from evil, or light from dark, or love from hate, or peace from war, or life from death? Mankind needs the contrast to know God. This is the glorious wisdom of God that answers the age-old question of why things are as they are. It is God's doing until the consummation when God will be *All* in all.

You might retort that mankind was never created to know evil; but Scripture surely does not state this. On the contrary, God placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden with full expectation that Adam and Eve would partake of the tree. It was no accident that the tree was placed in full view of mankind's parents and that the serpent of old was waiting for its moment of deception. After all, if we accept that God is the Supreme and the Sovereign of all, and all things come through Him, then we must conclude that the whole drama played out in the garden was written and directed by God.

Some believe that prior to his fall, Adam was in the age of innocence, and that he had to be tested to see if he would obey God's one command. If this is true, then it sure sounds like a formula for failure. The serpent, the father of lies, was not ignorant of God's ways, and it had a purpose to fulfill as part of God's plan. The eternal God knows all and sees all, and He knew that in their current state, Adam and Eve were no match for the devil. Besides, God put them in the garden with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil staring them in the face, as if to say, "Go ahead and eat!" Adam, the new kid on the block, so to speak, had no experience with death, so how was he to know what it meant to die? God's plan for man to reach the tree of life is to live for a long season by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Adam was simply outgunned and destined to fail. Plus, Eve was out of his body, bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh. Based on God's absolute law of love, Adam had to love his body. He had to follow his wife in eating of the forbidden fruit because he loved her as his own body. This is what Paul tells us in his Ephesians epistle as he compares Christ and His body to Adam and his body. **For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it** (Ephesians 5:29 NASB). Of course, there are many types and antitypes in the account of Adam and Eve, but in its primal presentation, it reveals failure as ordained by God. Adam had no choice but to sin because God had given him no choice in the matter. If he had left Eve alone, Adam would have broken the much higher law of love.

After our first parents partook of the tree, what did God declare? **"Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil"** (Genesis 3:22). Man was created to be perfected into the image of God, and this requires that he have knowledge of both good and evil. But this knowing was only the beginning of the process to conform mankind into the image of the Son. It was God's full intention that mankind would not only partake of this tree but also live by this tree, at least for 6,000 years. However, mankind requires more than mere knowledge of good and evil. He must experience both. He must have the contrast of the two, just as he must experience the countless contrasts found throughout God's creation (e.g., light and dark, love and hate, victory and defeat, peace and war, life and death, health and sickness, up and down, hot and cold, soft and hard, wet and dry, to name a few). Prior to their fall, Adam and Eve had no knowledge of the contrast of God their Creator.

Some state that Adam and Eve were created perfect and that they were in the perfect image of God right from the start. I contend that they were incomplete, for if they were perfect, they never would have partaken of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They would have had all the intelligence and knowledge to recognize that when the serpent said they would not die, it was a lie. But they fell for the lie, and death entered into all mankind from that day forward. Then why was Eve first deceived by the serpent, and then Adam followed? In my opinion, the answer is that they were not created perfect; they had to be *perfected*, as all of us do, and that requires failure. We are to learn to become like God by experiencing not only the glorious attributes of God but also the antithesis of His attributes. When the consummation of the eons comes, all mankind and all creation will know that God the Father and His Son alone were responsible for the outcome and that nothing that occurred was outside the will of God but all planned to bring about His intended purpose for glory. Truly, **at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father** (Philippians 2:10-11 NASB). Oh, the wisdom of God!