



Dear Phil

**“Please explain Isaiah 45:7, ‘I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.’ Does this really mean that God creates evil? Help!”**

—Adam

Dear Adam,

Good question! While we’re dealing with Isaiah 45:7, let’s include Amos 3:6, “Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?” The problem with these two verses is that they seem to say that God, who is holy, also creates and does evil.

The answer lies in understanding two things (1) who God says He is; and (2) the words the KJV translates peace (*shalom*) and evil (*ra’*).

First, God tells us that He is holy and that means, among other things, that God is pure and sinless. Habakkuk says it this way: “Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, and You cannot look on wickedness with favor” (1:13). John says, “God is light and there is no darkness in him at all” (1 John 1:5). James says, “God cannot be tempted with evil, nor does He tempt anyone with evil” (James 1:13). (p19)➡

➡(continued from page 4)

**PHILIPPINES.** “We deeply appreciated Dr. Michael Avery and the God’s Bible School team (along with Rev. Parker, of course) for their ministry in the Philippine church. In each of the four camps they gave their very best under quite primitive conditions, and because of their sacrifice, the church here was greatly encouraged. I think the team said the highlight for them was the ministry in Jabez Conference, where around 500 very receptive people turned out to stay there for one day. We all went home greatly inspired and renewed.” —**Tim Keep, Newsletter, Philippine Bible Methodist Mission**

**RUSSIA.** “Our Tenth Anniversary JUBILEE celebration was a great success. More than 100 people came to hear more than 25 presentations, including many beautiful musical specials. The climax was the testimony of Viktor Bouroulyov [who] was without friends, family, finances, or hope...When he heard the Good News and responded, his whole life changed. His almost forgotten talent

of piano playing suddenly returned, and now Viktor plays classical and Christian music for the Lord instead of nightclub numbers for the world. Dr. Bill Saxon came all the way from Florida to congratulate Vyborg Christian Center and to introduce us to the new name of our parent organization. After 56 years as Florida Evangelistic Association/FEA Ministries, our new family name is Hope International Ministries—HIM.” —**Richard Grout, Russian Lifeline (HIM).**

**UKRAINE.** “After [we made] several long trips to Nova Odessa...[we’re] in the process of purchasing a two story home (and a sturdy outhouse) with many prospects for ministry. Along with the possibilities goes a major amount of work. Something will have to be done with the bare, powdery cement floors. Heating and a bathroom will have to be put in on the second floor. A well has to be drilled in order to have a dependable source of water...We thank God for His provision.” —**Drummond Newsletter (Bible Holiness Church), Independence, Kansas** ■

➡(p3) the academic excellence and ministry opportunities at GBS. They see the value of student residence life in the maturing process. They also want their offspring to be around other kids who share their values and faith so they will have appropriate choices for a life partner. GBS, they believe, also provides an atmosphere where students can make themselves available for full-time Christian ministry and respond to whatever God’s call is for them.

All this is true even for many parents who know that their children will only be here for a couple of years and then move on to a college that offers training for a career field

we do not and could not offer. Such parents do not see coming to GBS as wasted time, but rather as one of the best investments they can make in the future of sons and daughters they want to see maintain their faith and become effective Christian servants, no matter what other calling they may follow in life.

*Nothing is more important to parents than their children. Nothing is more important to Christian parents than the spiritual welfare of their children. If that is so, why don’t you do whatever it takes to get your children in that 98% group who keep the faith and bless God’s Kingdom?* ■

➔(p14) Psalm 92:15 says, "The LORD is upright...and there is no unrighteousness in Him." From Scriptures like these, we can conclude that God is not the creator of sin or evil.

Second, to most people, the word peace in English means "the absence of conflict" or "quiet restfulness." Although the Hebrew word *shalom* has these meanings, as well, it more frequently has the sense of "well-being, prosperity," even "completeness."

The Hebrew word *ra'* has the meanings "evil" and "calamity, disaster, or hurt." The KJV translators recognized that *ra'* could mean "hurt" and translated it that way 20 times (see, for example, Ecclesiastes 8:9; Jeremiah 7:6; 25:7).

Now take a look at Isaiah 45:7. It is important to see that the Lord sets up a pair of contrasts in this verse.

He contrasts light with darkness and *shalom* with *ra'*. What is the opposite of well-being (*shalom*)? Isn't it calamity or harm? Interestingly, modern translations consistently translate this verse with words like "calamity" (NASB, ESV, NET), "disaster" (NIV, NJB), "woe" (NAB, RSV, NRSV, Tanakh) or "bad times" (NLT). The New King James reads: "I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the LORD, do all these things."

This is what Isaiah and Amos are both saying: *God is responsible not only for the prosperity that we enjoy, but also for the calamities that we endure.*

You might say, "But Philip, why would God create calamity?" Remember, the Bible tells us various reasons why God creates calamity: (1) God punishes sin with calamity (Deuteronomy 31:29); (2) God uses

calamities to chasten his people, e.g., Jonah (Jon. 1:4, 7); and (3) God uses calamity to try His servants and refine them (e.g., Job; James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:7). In the case of Job, we learn that God was not directly responsible for Job's tragedy, but He did permit it. This highlights the wonderful truth of God's sovereignty: *nothing can or ever will enter the life of God's children without first receiving His stamp of permission.* In the light of Romans 8:28-29, we can rest assured that if God permits calamity or tragedy in our lives, He will also be at work to form in us the character of His Son through it.

Resting in Him,  
PHILIP ■

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