

# THE PATHFINDER

#317

## THE GOD OF GOOD AND EVIL

Part 1

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"I form the light, and **create darkness**: I make peace, and **create evil**: I the LORD do all these things." ***Isaiah 45:7***.

This is a verse that is seldom mentioned in churches, and it is the same with Christian books, literature, or Bible studies. For that matter, there are not many who know it is in the Bible, and a number of those that are aware of it have difficulty reconciling it with the image they have of God. It is simply irrational to them that He could, or would, create darkness and evil. Notwithstanding, this is a very real verse, and as we look into it, we will find a treasure trove about our **faithful Creator**.

We will see why horrible things come upon good people as well as upon

those who are called by His name. When suffering comes, especially when we have lived our lives as good as we know how, we might blame it on sins we've committed, even sins we don't know about. If not that, we are known to believe it is the fault of a devil that finds pleasure in making our lives miserable.

If it is the devil, is he on his own, or is he in cahoots with God that uses him to harshly judge everyone that falls into the countless snares of carnal temptations? Or does He reserve His judgment for specific ones like murderers, child molesters, rapists, drug lords, wife beaters, and politicians? Hopefully, this study will help answer some of these questions, and more.

Even though evil and sufferings have swept over most of us in some fashion or another, the apostle Paul left us with a great hope that outweighs it all:

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed **in us.**" ***Romans 8:18***. This should be a hint that the sufferings are working something **IN US** that is very good.

Also, in the oldest book of the Bible, Job said that **there is hope for a tree if it is cut down** and its stock withers away. At the appointed time and the scent of water, **it will live again**, and like a plant it will come forth in a new and living way (***Job 14:7-15***).

How assuring it is for those who see God in everything, who credits all things as being of Him, who receive all things as from Him. They walk in peace who recognize, like Job, that even the works of the devil are of God, and they too can say: "**Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?**" ***Job 2:10***.

It was Satan who was bringing evil upon Job; yet Job refused to recognize him while attributing it all to God. So the man who was perfect and upright, who

feared God, and eschewed evil, knew from where everything came, including evil.

Our problem is often ignorance and/or patience, or the lack thereof. **1st Corinthians 13:4** says that Love is patient, and John identified love by saying: "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. **God is love**; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him." **1 John 4:16**.

Therefore, if we are to have more patience, we need more love, and to have more love means that we must experientially be more in God who is Love. "And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." **Philippians 4:7**.

When we are consumed by Christ, filled with His love and patience, it will bring peace to our troubled souls. Although we may not see an immediate balance of good and evil, we can rest assured that there is not one hurt or injustice that will not be made right. Moreover, those suffering and dying will reap an incomprehensible life of the ages in Jesus Christ.

Many are perplexed and left without answers, as they see all over the earth unparalleled wickedness in both high and low places, not to mention natural disasters like hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, heat waves, plagues, and the pestilence of locusts that is presently sweeping over parts of East Africa, especially in Ethiopia, Samalia, and Kenya, and stands to become exponentially worse by June.

And this is the year that the whole world has stood still! The *Covid-19 Coronavirus* pandemic brought practically everything and everybody to a standstill. The lock-down has forbade anyone from leaving their home except for emergency or essential reasons; such as, groceries and toilet paper. Margit has been needing a spinal injection for her dire sciatic nerve condition for over a six weeks; but this is not considered an emergency or essential, so five drugs enables her to walk without a walker until the

injection.

Dread and fear have been planted into wearied minds. Some wonder if this is the end of the world, or at least the end of a freedom and a secure livelihood they had always known. With the powers that be having been so successful in seizing the people worldwide, making them prisoners in their own homelands, many question if this death grip will ever be relaxed?

Even so, it isn't uncommon for people of religious persuasions to believe that Satan is the instigator behind it all. They are concerned that along with his demons and *political minions*, he may win the war. But rest assured, dear friends, **this is God's doing**, and as it was with Jerusalem in A.D. 70, this visitation is **also** from **the God of good and evil**, and is ultimately for your good and mine, and the rest of the world. Of course, not so good for a season, but ultimately, very good in the end.

Most all of us know the spiritual law of sowing and reaping, that saints and sinners alike reap what they sow, whether it is good or evil, health and sickness, wealth and poverty; but when sowing does not seem to be a factor, it still rains good and evil on everyone, on both the just and the unjust. But there are also seasons when it is pure judgment from on High:

"...When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." **Isaiah 26:9**.

"The LORD will be awesome to them, for He will reduce to nothing all the gods of the earth; people shall worship Him, each one from his place, indeed all the shores of the nations." **Zephaniah 2:11**.

And as severe as His judgments can be, it is all done in love. The evil that He brings is to correct and make right that which is wrong regardless of how long it may take. We see the depravity of man which seems to be at its zenith and feel that such never deserves His gracious rain; but then we hear Jesus saying, **"Father, forgive them."** With these three prayerful words uttered at the apex of His most horrific hour, perhaps we get a glimpse of

how deep and far-reaching God's love is. And when we look at the awesome darkness that shrouds the world, it shows us the awesome light that will someday shine in and upon every man, every woman, and every child. When we look at the terrible things that happens to precious people all over the earth, we can be encouraged that ***where evil abounds grace will much more abounds, Romans 5:20***.

Thus, it's part of the process in creating humanity into His image and likeness! What a mystery! There are times when waves of sorrow overtake certain ones, and even though we may not know the victims of these terrible afflictions and tragedies, we mourn with and for them, and for ourselves also when we are the afflicted. We are at a loss for what to do or say. It is then that "The Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." ***Romans 8:26***. Our sorrow becomes more than human compassion. It is spiritual intercession which works a far greater thing than we could possibly know or imagine.

In the natural, such things are enigmas that can take more than a lifetime to understand or come to grips with. Even though understanding may not be known at the time, with God being infinite love and wisdom we can rest assured that everything is well and will be well. Even though we all walk at times through the valley of the shadow of death, it is all well, and not only for us, but also the world as they are also mysteriously in the process of being formed into God's image.

Corruption and injustices cover the earth like storm clouds; but we are pleased to know that our God delights in equity and justice which He will impose upon every sin and situation, as seen in ***Proverbs 11:1***, "...A just weight is his delight." And "A just weight and balance are the LORD'S: ***all the weights of the bag are His work.***" ***Proverbs 16:11***.

It is not always easy for us to believe that everything in the *bag* of the world is God's work; but let us be reminded again of what the prophet wrote: "I form the light, and **create darkness**: I make peace, and **create evil**: I the

**LORD do all these things." Isaiah 45:7. And, of course, this as well: "Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy." Isaiah 54:16 KJV.**

Let us note a couple of other translations:

"Listen carefully, I have created the smith who blows on the fire of coals And who produces a weapon for its purpose; And I have created the destroyer to inflict ruin." Amplified.

"Lo, I have prepared an artizan, Blowing on a fire of coals, And bringing out an instrument for his work, And I have prepared a destroyer to destroy." Young's Literal Translation.

It seems that very few understand that God created the devil for His purpose that brings forth instruments worthy of his work. Therefore, "Beloved, **think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you**, as though some strange thing happened unto you." 1 Peter 4:12.

Very often problems come when we find ourselves in the fires of refinement, and we reject them! We ask or wonder: "We are good people, so why would God let us go through something so terrible when He could prevent it?"

This is a question which is easily answered: **He is not "LETTING" us go through it — He is "MAKING" us go through it! He is driving us through it as surely as the Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan. (Mark 1:13-14).**

No one escapes ***the commissioned smith that blows upon the coals***. That essential part of ***creating the many membered body of the last Adam*** is in order for every soul that has been a member of the first Adam. And as in Adam ALL DIE, in Christ Jesus, ALL WILL LIVE! Truly — "This is the day which the LORD hath made...rejoice and be glad in it." Psalm 118:24.

Many still ask: "Why does God allow such terrible things to come upon His own?" A Similar answer as above — **He does not "ALLOW IT" — He "BRINGS IT UPON THEM!"**

You see, *there is no place in the Bible that says that God "allows" evil things to happen to His own or anyone else.* He is not a complacent bystander that *allows* things to happen. He decrees what is best for the saint and sinner, and it is done. Period! It has nothing to do with God *allowing* or man's supposed sacred "*freewill.*" Surely, this is difficult for some to believe; but please note that we are presenting the scriptures and letting them speak for themselves while agreeing with the truth that they express.

### **Partaker of His Sufferings**

The whole of humanity has partaken of, or will partake of, the sufferings of Jesus Christ, especially His elect who have been specifically called to be the manifested sons of God as the apostle wrote in *Romans 8:19-23.*

Also, "...rejoice, inasmuch as **ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings;** that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." *1 Peter 4:13.* "And we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God." *Acts 14:22.* Dear friends, we cannot *name and claim* otherwise! So let us walk in that which brings us to the throne of God and His glory! This is the plan and purpose of *the God of good and evil.* Trials and tribulations are in store for each of us which prepares us for our destined place in His glorious kingdom.

Since evil is familiar with man, do you think God should spare his own sons and daughters from this common denominator? He did not spare His uniquely first begotten Son from it, so I doubt that any of us will merit special favor and avoid the baptism of fire with which Jesus said in *Mark 9:49* we will all be salted. The fact is, it would do us a great disservice to be spared this evil. We would never mature enough to be of service or help to anyone, including ourselves.

There are countless things in our lives designed to test every facet of our being.

Our longtime friend, J. Preston Eby, said this about it:

"Each of us has had a unique set of tests and trials to go through to build the character of Christ in our lives. Our trials have not been harder than anyone else's, just different. We are distinct members of the Christ body, and the Lord's processings for each one varies according to His purpose in us and the place we shall fill."

These trials are necessary evils ministered to each of us, and I could much more about it. However, I doubt that it would be possible for me to express it nearly so well as another writer has already done concerning ***what God has to do with good and evil***. Therefore, permit me, please, to conclude this paper by borrowing from A.P. Adams, the great-grandson of President John Quincy Adams:

### **Divine Thought and Revelation**

Everything in creation expresses a divine thought, and this divine thought is its spirit or true meaning in God's universe. In other words everything is a revelation of God, which proposition necessarily follows from the great truth we have already learned that God is in everything, or ***"all things are of God"*** (II Corinthians 5:18).

Everything in nature reveals God: every rock, every blade of grass, every plant, the very weeds that grow in our gardens as well as the grander and mightier works of nature. I cannot think that anything is so small or so insignificant that its existence is purposeless. Whatever is, is for a purpose, and that purpose is God's thought in its creation. There is something of God in all things, and that is its spirit.

So, too, all truth and knowledge is of God whether it be the truths of mathematics or of revelation, or whether it be the knowledge of how to tell the age of a horse by looking into his mouth, or the knowledge that fits the saint to ***"judge angels"*** as in I Corinthians 6:3.

Thus all truth is sacred. He who plies a mechanical trade or fills a



school-teacher's place, or honestly endeavors it, to alleviate the physical sufferings of his fellows, is engaged in a work as holy as he who preaches the gospel. All truth in every department should be pursued with the object to "*find out God*" (Job 11:7). When it is thus sought the secular and the sacred will be blended into one, and head and heart shall be united.

### **The Goal of All Creation**

Surely the advanced Christian is conscious of life that began in Him, which is "*in the inward man,*" and it is being "*renewed day by day*" (II Corinthians 4:16). It is a secret, a hidden life that makes him totally different from the natural man. Everything looks different to him from what it does to the one who is destitute of this life. The interpretation that he would put on events and the conclusions he would draw from there are entirely different, and, in fact, oftentimes directly opposite to the worldly man's interpretations and conclusions.

Where the latter sees chance, or wicked men, or perhaps the devil, the former sees only God. Where the latter man feels fretted, perplexed, angry, indignant, rebellious, the former finds reason for praise, gratitude and thanksgiving. To him "*all things are of God*" (II Corinthians 5:18); hence all things are good, and will result in good. There is nothing that can possibly take place in all of the wide circle of the universe that shall not in the end to God's honor and glory, and the highest welfare of all His creatures.

Now mark! All of this is part and parcel of the creative process, bringing the creature to the life of the Creator, which is the end of all creation. There is no pleasure in lifeless things or things non-intelligent except as they contribute in some way to the enjoyment and development of life. Hence I repeat, **life or "*the life of God*" is the consummation of all creation.**

We see also in this view how **all things contribute to the perfection of creation, and how all things are so needful to that end.** Everything gives God occasion and opportunity to reveal Himself to man. **For this purpose**

**nothing comes amiss. All things to this end can be utilized, the evil as well as the good. The Bible is full of illustrations of this truth, that is, how God reveals Himself to man by means of all things, and, on the natural plane, especially by evil things.**

For this purpose He manifested His power and wrath on Pharaoh and the Egyptians (Exodus 7:5, 17; 14:4, 18), hardening his heart that he should not let the people go, that He might work all His pleasure on that devoted people, *"To the end you may know that I am the Lord."* (Exodus 8:22).

For the Scripture said of Pharaoh, *"Even for this same purpose have I raised you up, that I might show My power in you, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth."* (Romans 9:17).

*"Nay but, O man, who are you who replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to him who formed it, 'Why have You made me thus?' Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honor, and another to dishonor?"* (Romans 9:20-21).

Here again is a very striking illustration of how *"all things are of God."* He is the Potter; man is the clay in His hands (Isaiah 64:8). Also we see how, *"He works all things after the counsel of His Own will"* (Ephesians 1:11), and, *"He does according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say to Him, 'What are You doing?'"* (Daniel 4:35).

This case also illustrates how God controls and makes use of evil, and for what purpose. Surely this whole matter of Israel's slavery in Egypt was a great evil, and their haughty taskmasters were exceedingly wicked in their cruelty and injustice, and the king endorsed it all, and he and his subjects were justly punished. Yet the whole thing was *"of God."*

Centuries before, God had foretold that His people would go down into Egypt and be afflicted for four hundred years (Genesis 15:13). When the time came, God sent them down there (Genesis 46:3). It was God also Who

turned the hearts of the Egyptians to hate His people and to deal deceitfully with them (Psalms 105:25). He it was Who hardened Pharaoh's heart that he should not let them go until He had wrought out all of His mighty judgments on them. Eleven times in this account it said that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Paul makes the general statement,

*"Therefore has He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardens"* (Romans 9:18).

The apparent injustice of this entirely disappears in the light of the divine plan of the ages. From the standpoint of orthodoxy the account cannot be reconciled with justice, equity and righteousness, but in the light of the Bible teaching of the redemptive work of the promised Seed in the future ages, all may be adjusted and readily explained, as the intelligent and thoughtful reader will doubtless perceive.

Finally, the purpose of all of this was that *"all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord"* (Joshua 4:24). It was an occasion especially prepared beforehand (*"for this same purpose have I raised you up"*) to the end that God might reveal Himself, in certain aspects of His character, to man. If the reader will follow out this thought throughout the Bible, he will be surprised, if he has not studied it before, at the amount of Scripture bearing this truth.

Thus God reveals Himself in all things, making Himself known. Thus to know God is life, and life is the end purpose, the goal of all creation. Hence all things contribute to the creation of man. All things tend to bring us to God's image and likeness. If all things make God known, as they certainly do, since He is in all things, then all things tend to life, since to know God is life, and this is the consummation of all creation. Thus, we arrive at the true idea of creation, and are able to perceive its process through the natural as well as the spiritual.

## God's Original Plan Will Be Carried Out

Thus, moreover, we may perceive how certain it is that the original plan of God, which has never been altered or disarranged in the least degree, will be carried out. It is because Christians fail to see that God is not yet finished with man, and that everything around him is part and parcel of the creative process, that they practically make his salvation depend on himself. According to the common idea, God started everything all right. It was by the sin of man that everything was made all wrong, and it is a great mercy on the part of God, entirely unmerited by man, that He has made any provision at all whereby even a portion of the race may be saved. If our theology is based on such an error as this, it is no wonder it is still further made ineffective by the idea that man's salvation depends on himself.

Yet we have seen how false and misleading this idea is. We are God's workmanship. We are God's husbandry, God's building, clay in the hands of the Potter — that is, so far as the final accomplishment of the purpose of God is concerned. *"I am the First, and I am the Last, saith the Lord,"* and all of this is the creative process.

If Christians could only see this, they would never think of such a thing as making man's perfection depend on himself, for surely in His creative work God needs no assistance. If man's salvation is a new creation, the consummation of which is life, then surely it must be all of God, and every son and daughter of the race may rest assured that God's purpose in them individually will be ultimately accomplished. God's offspring (Acts 17:28 compared with Psalm 82:6) may be absolutely sure that their Father and their Creator will eventually bring them into harmony with Himself. For it is impossible to believe that any portion of His creation will be out of harmony or at variance with Him through all eternity. Especially so, since He plainly declares that He will ultimately *"reconcile all things to Himself"* (Colossians 1:20).

God has a definite purpose in the creation of everything, a definite end

in view, and that end is certain to be reached sooner or later. In other words, every creature ultimately fulfills the purpose of the Creator in its creation. For us to suppose otherwise would be to suppose a failure on the part of the Creator, which is unthinkable. *And this not only speaks of every failing soul that has ever been or will be; but also speaks of every failing nation that has been or will be.*

### **The Present World Failure**

So let us now consider how constant and universal failure is indicated in worldly matters, not only in the lives of individuals, but of nations. The history of nations is a history of failure. We need only mention the names of ancient nations and cities to prove this to anyone familiar with history: Egypt, Nineveh, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome all stand for failure, decay and ruin. So also with human organizations of every kind — political, religious, commercial, or any other.

So it was in the lives of the so-called great reformers, philanthropists, religious leaders, statesmen, etc. They have always failed to effect those changes that they attempted. Some good has been accomplished — local improvements have been brought about, temporary advantage has been gained — but in the run of years conditions have dropped back into the same old ruts, and not in a few instances the last state has been worse than the former.

Take, for instance, the so-called social evil. The most strenuous efforts to abolish this evil have been made in all civilized countries from time almost immemorial down to the present, and yet the evil is still rampant and uncontrollable. The evil is ingrained in man's nature and can never be eradicated except through the resurrection. This brings us again to present times and conditions.

In the foregoing brief summary I am not trying to prove the proposition with which I started out, i.e., that man's way is downward, universally and inevitably leading to failure. I write for those who are familiar with this fact

and accept it. The point is this: Such failure is normal and intentional on the part of the Creator, a part of the process of creation — a process which will end in absolute success. In this success God is the One chiefly interested and responsible. Its non-attainment would involve His discomfiture and defeat — an outcome that is unthinkable. Temporary and intermediate failure as a means to an end is explicable and admissible, but final and eternal failure is impossible, because the ultimate issue depends on Him and on no other.

Are we living in a time of universal failure? Yes, most surely. I have no controversy with those who think otherwise. I write not for those who have no eyes to see and no mind to perceive and understand. This failure may continue for quite a long time with variations, for there has always been failure in the past, and there will be more failure in the future.

The outlook is by no means pessimistic. On the contrary, the brightest and most pronounced optimism may be indulged, for following the night comes the morning, the dawn, leading on to the perfect day.

*The world has been led into a great darkness so it may see a great light* (Isaiah 9:2). In the meantime, blessed are the eyes that perceive the present darkness as well as the oncoming light. Mind you, all of this is of God, for all things, absolutely all things, work together for good. The ruin that man brings on himself is made the occasion and the means of his extrication from that ruin. As it is written,

*Your own wickedness shall correct you, and your backslidings shall reprove you ...* (Jeremiah 2:19).

*O Israel, you have destroyed yourself; but in Me is your help* (Hosea 13:9).

God's way to light is through darkness. God's way to perfection is through error, defeat and deterioration. God's way to life is through death.

## God's Plan in Me

The believer's attitude toward God then might be thus expressed: God has also created me for a definite purpose. That purpose I shall ultimately fulfill in His economy. It is a wise and good purpose, one with which I should be perfectly satisfied and contented, if I only understood it all. Toward that end I am continually moving. All things tend to advance me in that one direction, and I shall surely arrive. I shall surely fulfill the purpose of my creation, and all I have to do is to leave myself in His hands as clay in the hands of the Potter to be fashioned according to His will.

It is a great satisfaction and pleasure to think of our relationship to God in this light, for God has something in His mind to make of me, and I shall surely become that something. Furthermore, since God is wise and good, that something will please and satisfy me perfectly. When

I reach the place for which God created me, and for which He has fitted me, then I shall have no regrets that it is not another place, but I shall realize that it is my place and shall be satisfied, perfectly satisfied with the accomplishment of the ever blessed and good will of God in me.

I am a seed, destined to a certain result ultimately. The seed may pass through many unexpected changes in reaching that result, like the seed in the hand of an Egyptian mummy lying dormant for a thousand years, but still its end is fixed, and that end it will reach, and none other. I may frustrate the grace of God, as in Galatians 2:21, but I cannot frustrate His will. I may be disappointed many times in failing to be what I would like to be, and what I imagine I might have been: but I know all the experiences of my life is a part of my training, and by them I am continually being advanced toward what in the providence of God declares I am to be. Therefore, with us all, our place is kept, and will wait, ready to be fulfilled whether soon or late.

Let no one say, "This is *fatalism*." Nay, it is "*Godism*" if I may reverently use such an expression. And none needs to fear that which makes God supreme, absolute, almighty.

In the foregoing remarks I am dealing with finalities. God is the First and the Last, and He has His way ultimately. *He is able to subdue, that is to harmonize, all things to himself* (Philippians 3:21). He Himself is love, and love has only one way of subduing: by harmonizing. *This glorious consummation will be reached when all are gathered together in one* (Ephesians 1:10) and **God is "All in all"** (I Corinthians 15:28).

Thus may the trusting child rest in God both for himself and for the "*whole creation*" (Romans 8:22), and with the utmost confidence that he may commit all of his interests to Him "*as to a faithful Creator*" (I Peter 4:19). — Arthur P. Adams (1848 - 1920) ***The Purposes of God and The True Basis of Redemption.***

Surely, we can say AMEN to the renowned brother's faithful words. Thereby, we can be assured that: ***our God of good and evil forms the light, and creates darkness, that He not only makes peace, but also creates evil. He does all these things according to His purpose that works for the good of not only those who believe, but also for the rest of the world.***

What a wonder, what a comfort it is to know this wonderful truth, and that He stands responsible for our glorious completion that we could never do ourselves.

He truly is ***A FAITHFUL CREATOR***, and now we know, or in someways have always known, ***HE IS TRUSTWORTHY!***

So sleep in peace tonight, dear friends, and we are sure you will; for greater is He that **IS** in you than the "*Coronavirus*" that is in the world!

To be continued...

Elwin R. Roach

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