

Summary

Chapter 1 has outlined the 'big picture' concerning the origin of evil in this world: evil was/is created by the entirely Good God. Yet, in this Biblical reality, God is not responsible for any of the bad evil experienced in our world. We accept the privilege of believing our Creator's explanation, even while we have questions about it.

Helping us embrace the literal truths of Isaiah 45:7, we remember the three components of the evil that God created – the three nouns defining evil – and we properly divide the responsibility for evil between God and humans: God has four major responsibilities, and we humans have three.

Our God-created reality is that people freely choose from their available options, and that bad human choices cause every damage to the earth – never God.

When considering evil in our world, each person should

- ♦ embrace the Bible's definition/description of evil,
- ♦ know the free ability to choose from options available to each person, and
- ♦ accept personal responsibility for each choice ... to choose the good option.

The entire answer to evil is found only in the Bible, where we find our Creator's description of this world's reality and how it works for every person. The Bible helps us too by declaring many good options, and in instructing us to choose more of them; right words and right actions are needed in order to expand life and blessing in our world and to shape our world for the better. The Bible also identifies bad words and bad actions to avoid, and declares the corresponding evil consequences that damage our world if we choose such options. Honoring the Bible is also a vital part of relating properly to God, Who will prompt us in right ways and help us walk in them. With the Bible, and with God's direction and help, we learn to live in sync with His creation.

This understanding of evil makes our 'whys' manageable, but there is more to the answer. Chapter 2 addresses many questions about the origin, definition, and responsibilities for evil. Knowing some basics about evil does not answer why God created our world to work this way, or keep us from imagining other types of worlds that a good God could have, or should have created, or why specific evils happen in our world. Not every relevant question of every person will be considered, and no question will be fully answered, but we do not have to know everything in order to avoid evil and to choose good options.

Beginning with Chapter 3, the reality of our good and Almighty God not being responsible for the evil that harms our world, is considered extensively.

Chapter 2:

Questions Concerning The Nature and Origin of Evil

The Questions considered in this chapter are listed below. They build upon the definition and description of evil in Chapter 1. Some Responses are only begun, and are expanded in the coming chapters or in Books 3 and 4.

The questions are:

1. Even knowing why evil exists, we want to ask, "Why did God create evil at all?"
2. For God to create every bad option, always, for everyone, is questionable.
Do not bad people, who go their own way, create their own bad options?
3. Q: Why is evil so compounded in our world? Why are there such horrible effects – endless and worsening? Why did God create such a severe consequence – death – to enter the world should Adam choose that first bad option?
4. Why did God create this world with so much evil possible ... even pervasive? Why create any bad option or evil consequence? or the potential to rank one option as superior to another? Would not an infinite number of equally good options be enough to honor the freedom God created in us, or to express ourselves and make choices? Could God create evil, but not give humans or any other being the ability to choose the bad option?
5. How can the God of the Bible be good? Is not this God – flooding the world, authorizing genocide, etc. – a bad or evil God? Who wants to serve a God responsible for creating a world that becomes such a mess, and even worse, at His direction?
6. Can those who do not choose their situation, be held responsible too?
7. Is this view of evil too simplistic? How is one choice different from any other choice in quality or effect?
8. Why does God allow so much evil to happen and to continue?
9. How do we explain natural disasters and other evils that have nothing to do with human choice?
10. Is it mechanical? Is God simply a rule-enforcer? Once He established that the proper consequence happens when humans make a choice, does God sit back and watch, having no further part in what happens on the earth?
11. Why did God not tell Adam all that would happen when he sinned?

12. *Did Satan or Lucifer create any evil? how did that being come to have the option to rebel against God? was that option 'automatic' as an alternative to serving God? what was this evil option?*

Is not Satan responsible for much evil in the world?

13. *How "evil" are Satan and the fallen angels?*

14. *Is any evil or evil option independent of God?*

15. *Is not evil a part of a cosmic battle or rivalry against good / God?*

16. *If God created evil, is He not responsible for it?*

17. *Cannot God destroy all evil now, and be done with it once and for all?*

18. *Does God influence the choices humans make? to what degree?*

1. Q: *Even knowing why evil exists, we want to ask, "Why did God create evil at all?"*

R: Part of the answer, previously mentioned, is that neither the bad option nor the evil consequence could exist unless God created them. God is entirely good. Evil is not found in God. If any option to God or good, if anything evil were to exist, then God must create it.

This applies as well to God's continual creation of bad options for each individual; they would not exist if God did not create them. If God were to stop this ongoing creation of bad options and their consequences, then bad options would come only from the pre-defined natural and spiritual laws that allow, for example, the harmful effects of a physical fall or of a fall precipitated by pride. These would still include much in attitude and action, as in the Book of Proverbs.

Another part of the answer is God's desire for relationship: a major purpose for creating humans in His image. People and God can relate to each other, and do so intimately. The nature of that relationship would be different if we were not able to choose a bad option or to experience a damaging consequence. Our lives could devolve into living from a list, and even become mechanical. We need to draw near to God for wisdom when faced with difficult choices.

God knows the kind of relationship He was making possible, and how to give it the best potential, therefore the ability to choose freely from available options is essential. We accept God's way in creation; we choose God's way in relationship. If we reject God's way, and choose bad options, then we and our world turn ugly. Instead, we learn more of God's ways, and choose better.

2. Q: *For God to create every bad option, always, for everyone, is questionable.*

Do not bad people, who go their own way, create their own bad options?

R: God's command to Adam is clear: do not eat from one special, created tree, or you will die. God's specific command created both the option and the consequence. But for God to create every bad option in the future may be difficult to see in Isaiah 45:7. God says that He is the One "creating evil", an action that is ongoing ... does that mean every bad option and consequence?

In the entire Bible, only Isaiah 45:7 mentions the creation of evil, which is a common Hebrew word also meaning wickedness, calamity, etc. The evil that God creates is the non-moral bad option, its consequence, and people free to choose a bad option, by which people cause visible, damaging effects on the earth.

The world changed after Adam's sin: Adam was made by God from dust, but every other person, except Jesus, is corrupted at conception (Romans 5:12). In addition, *"I have writhed in depravity, and in sin has my mother conceived me."* (Psalm 51:5) and *"The heart is deceitful above all ..."* (Jeremiah 17:9)

The question is: Where do bad options originate now? from corrupted humans or from God or both? The downward progression of Romans 1 seems to indicate both: God gradually abandons those who are ungrateful and choose not to acknowledge Him. First, He does not confront their corrupt fleshly lusts, but *"gives them up"* to their lustful uncleanness. Second, *God gives them up to their vile affections*, and their corrupt desires rule them. Finally, *God gives them over to their reprobate minds*, and their distorted thinking goes unchecked.

The downward progression in Romans 1 happens because God stops creating bad options for a person. God's bad options would come from His good and gracious heart and from His all-wise perspective on the best bad options for a person to reject. When God creates a bad option, a person can learn the good choice – hopefully by talking with God; God guides in the best paths.

The declining person in Romans 1, having rejected the good God, makes bad choices as directed by a corrupted flesh, heart, and mind ... with no check on proud, selfish lusts. Life without God as a good, loving Shepherd is miserable,

With this understanding, this book has God creating all the bad options and consequences. It is hoped that every one reading this acknowledges the Good Creator and His Revelation, thanks Him, and talks with Him about their available options, to learn and choose the best options.

3. Q: *Why is evil so compounded in our world? Why are there such horrible effects – endless and worsening? Why did God create such a severe consequence – death – to enter the world should Adam choose that first bad option?*

R: One part of the answer is the great potential for the human as created by God – a potential that must be at least as high for good as it is for evil. The

world, too, has good potential. Although we view this world as being tragic, and hopeless, and on an ugly downhill path sinking deeper into misery, I believe that the God of the Bible sees better for our world ... blessings beyond its tragic potential. Fulfillment of that may require some judgment upon evil, and the church acting like Jesus' body, even Jesus actually reigning on earth. God has really good plans for us and for our world.

With the potential for good, we should consider that the severe consequence of death and decay could be countered. Although we remain mortal and see these evil effects happen, life and good and blessing are available for the choosing. We could live our days with hope, and confidently seek the blessed ways of our God.

But this, and all answers, must be based on the clear Biblical reality that God creates evil: evil is the option to good, the appropriate bad consequence, and each person able to choose a bad option. We believe the Bible and start there.

4. *Q: Why did God create this world with so much evil possible ... even pervasive? Why create any bad option or evil consequence? or the potential to rank one option as superior to another? Would not an infinite number of equally good options be enough to honor the freedom God created in us, or to express ourselves and make choices? Could God create evil, but not give humans or any other being the ability to choose the bad option?*

R: Ideas such as these envision a 'better' world, where no evil consequence is seen or experienced. In such a world there are no negative consequences for actions or no way to cause them to happen. We would not need to deal with evil if we had no freedom to be bad, or no ability to choose against good, or if no choice had evil consequences. These worlds, and others we may imagine, have no evil or no potential evil, and we consider them attractive from our place of freedom on this planet. They sound nice, but are all unknown to us

When considering such possibilities, many questions are raised:

Would we be created in the image of God? Would we have a real choice? or the same potential for good if not able to make choices having bad consequences? How would it change people, culture, family, relationships? What would be a virtue, or an honor, or a challenge in such a world? What would responsibility look like? Could we be the same kind of person in a world without actual or manifest evil, or the potential for more evil?

Considering Cain again, he acted with immaturity and became visibly bad. This was him choosing bad options and experiencing harmful consequences. What might he have been without this evil ... what would Cain's life be like if he had not been able to choose with harmful effect? or if he could not be bad?