**I Make Peace, And Create Evil**

*Isaiah 45:7*

**Introduction**

1. ***“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.” (Isaiah 45:7, KJV)***
2. Did God create evil? Skeptics have pointed out this verse in an attempt to dispel the moral value of belief in God – many atheists are very animated in their convictions that the greatest threats to civilization are those who are religious.
3. What is this verse actually saying? How do we deal with the problem of evil existing from the framework of the Bible’s revelation of our morally perfect and holy God?
4. The Context of Isaiah 45:7
5. Remote
   1. **Isaiah 45:7** – ***“evil” (KJV)*** – *ra* – cannot possess a moral sense in this context.
      1. **Isaiah 6:3** – He is holy.
      2. **Deuteronomy 32:3-4** – He is perfect, just, true, righteous, and upright.
      3. **James 1:13** – evil is entirely against God’s nature.
      4. Evil in the moral sense is sin – **1 John 3:4** – by definition, such is against the very ruling of God – He certainly didn’t create it if He prohibits it.
   2. *Ra* – not limited to the moral sense of evil.
      1. **Deuteronomy 30:15-20** – the choice between ***“life and good, death and evil (ra)”*** is ultimately a choice between ***“life and prosperity, and death and adversity” (NASB)***
         1. **(vv. 16-18)** – contrasts abundant life upon obedience, and death upon rebellion.
         2. **(v. 19)** – contrasts blessing and cursing.
      2. **1 Kings 22:8, 18** – Ahab hated Micaiah because he only prophesied ***“evil”*** of him – he means adversity and misfortune.
         1. (**v. 17**) – the prophesy which preceded Ahab’s confirmation – failure in the attempt to take Ramoth Gilead – defeat.
   3. What does God create according to **Isaiah 45:7**?
      1. Hebrew parallelism – light/darkness, peace/calamity – not a contrast in morality, but a in physical circumstances.
      2. ***“calamity” (NKJV, NASB, ESV); “good times and bad times” (NLT)***
   4. Evil exists, not because God created it, but because men chose it – free-will – **Romans 5:12**
6. Immediate
   1. God’s people punished by Babylon – **Isaiah 39:5-7**
   2. God’s prophesied deliverance of Israel from Babylonian captivity – **Isaiah 44:24-28** – Using Cyrus, king of Persia to defeat Babylon, and allow the Jews safe return to Jerusalem to rebuild. (ab. 150 yrs before Cyrus was born)
   3. God’s sovereign control of nations to carry out His will – **Isaiah 45:1-7** – God is going to use Medo-Persia to destroy Babylon and bring Israel back, just as He used Babylon to punish Judah for her sins.
      1. Babylon had its peace, but through Cyrus God would bring calamity/destruction/adversity.
   4. **Isaiah 47:11** – use of *ra*, translated ***“evil” (NKJV)***, in parallelism explains what is meant – context of the humiliation of Babylon by Cyrus and the Medo-Persions. (***“evil”*** (ra) = ***“trouble”*** = ***“desolation”)***
7. The text does not indicate that God is the author/creator of moral evil, but that He rules in the kingdoms of men – **Daniel 5:21**
8. God, and the Problem of Evil
9. Still, the existence of evil posits a problem of contradiction in the mind of the skeptic when considering the question of the existence of the God of the Bible.
   1. God is almighty – El Shaddai – **Genesis 17:1** – Omnipotent
   2. God is perfectly good – **Psalm 25:8** – Morally Perfect
   3. Yet, suffering and evil exist – **Romans 3:10-18** – (**v. 23** – all have sinned)
      1. Even righteous followers of God have struggled with this – **Habakkuk 1:13**
10. Three Options
    1. God is willing to stop evil, but He is not able? – impotent. (I.e. not God)
       1. Is there anything too hard for God? – **Jeremiah 32:27**
    2. God is able to stop evil, but He is not willing? – malevolent. (I.e. not God)
       1. **Habakkuk 1:13** – this is something he knows of God, by teaching and experience.
       2. Why did He send Jonah to Nineveh? – **Jonah 1:2**
       3. **What the skeptic surely is not aware of is that the whole focus of the Bible is the antithesis of this option.**
    3. God is willing and able to stop evil? – then why does evil still exist?
11. Justice, Judgment, and Justification
12. The Skeptic’s Outcry Against Evil is a Mirage of Desired Justice
    1. I.e. they are claiming it is unjust for God (if He exists and is who He says He is) to let evil continue.
    2. The skeptic’s perception of justice is borrowed – the atheistic/materialistic worldview cannot account for non-physical, moral concepts such as justice – **cf. 2 Peter 2:12** – Peter’s point only makes sense if animal creation is different from those made in the image of God.
       1. ***“like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed” (NASB)***
    3. The skeptic’s concept of justice is merely a mirage because they are trying to adapt it to a worldview that is irreconcilable with its very demand – **Ecclesiastes 3:16-22**
       1. His whole point is that justice is corrupted under the sun – **(v. 16)**
       2. Ultimately, God will bring true justice in the end – **(v. 17)**
       3. Until that time, God is impressing men with how they are no different than animals – **(vv. 18-22)**
          1. I.e. true justice is not found under the sun – just rejoice as much as you can as God gives opportunity.
          2. However, justice will be served by God **(v. 17).**
             1. **YET, THE SKEPTIC’S WORLDVIEW FORFEITS ANY HOPE OF AN ULTIMATE JUSTICE TO WHICH THIS SPEAKS.**
             2. **RATHER, VERSE 16 IS COMBINED WITH VERSE 19 AND NOTHING ELSE IS AVAILABLE.**
    4. God is willing and able to stop evil? – then why does evil still exist?
       1. This is a lazy argument which fails to consider what God has revealed about Himself and fails to consider the proper perspective in the context of belief in the God of the Bible.
       2. **YES He is willing and able to stop evil, but who’s to say WHEN is the appropriate time to do so?**
          1. His judgment does not sleep – **2 Peter 2:3** – i.e., don’t you doubt that it’s coming.
          2. His promise to put an end to evil is for the future – **2 Peter 3:3-9** – the same concept expressed in the days of Noah is true now.
13. Ultimate Justice Can Only Exist in Final Judgment
    1. Back to **Isaiah 45:7** – the creation of God here is not moral evil, but devastation/destruction for those who are deserving.
       1. God brought judgment on Israel by Assyria
       2. God brought judgment on Assyria by Babylon.
       3. God would bring judgment on Babylon by Medo-Persia.
       4. GOD IS THE SOVEREIGN HAND IN THIS ALL.
          1. Though other wicked nations were used, these instances are judgments for the sin of the nation being overthrown. (**cf. Proverbs 14:34)**
          2. **ALL THESE JUDGMENTS IN TIME ANTICIPATE AND FORESHADOW A JUDGMENT OUTSIDE OF TIME.**
          3. **As God created calamity for wicked Babylon, so He has created calamity for all the wicked for eternity.**
    2. There is a time and place prepared for ultimate justice – **Matthew 25:31-32, 41** – it is prepared, but yet to be inhabited because ultimate justice must wait.
    3. The conclusion of the whole matter is the meting out of justice – **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**
    4. The comprehensive nature of final judgment, coupled with the flawless standard of God, His impartiality, and the totality of the life of each individual amounts to an ultimate, perfect judgment – **Romans 2:6-11**
14. The Reality of Ultimate Justice Brings Us Face to Face with Our Own Evil and Need for Justification
    1. Like Felix – **Acts 24:25**
       1. ***“The faith in Christ” (v. 24)*** tells us we’ve all committed evil, and are worthy of the just punishment of eternal death – **Romans 6:23**
       2. **Truly, the use of evil’s existence (usually the worst cases) to disprove God is simply an attempt to use evil in general as a means of continuing in your own evil without the consequences from God.**
    2. The lack of consistent and sufficient justice in this life, and the persistence of evil and suffering, indicates to the honest heart that the thirst for justice must be quenched in a setting beyond this physical world – this is at the judgment seat of Christ – **cf. 2 Corinthians 5:10**
    3. The rejection of God is not the answer to evil and our longing for justice, but turning to God is – **Proverbs 16:1-6**
       1. **(v. 1)** – our duty is to prepare, and find the right plan, but at the end of the day we find it where God speaks.
       2. **(vv. 2-3)** – regardless of our rationalization of our actions, God knows our hearts, and instead we should just commit to His way.
       3. **(vv. 4-5)** – if we don’t commit to His way, God doesn’t let us choose what the outcome will be – THE WICKED ARE FOR THE DAY OF DOOM – not one will go unpunished.
          1. He doesn’t make the wicked like the skeptic suggests He does.
          2. The wicked make their free-will decision to walk in wickedness.
          3. Knowing this, the Lord prepared an end for them – doom.
       4. **(v. 6)** – when this is all considered with the fact that all have gone their own way, the only escape from the just punishment of God is the atonement He provides.
15. God is willing and able to stop evil, and has already taken action – **Romans 8:1-4**
    1. Those who reject Christ reject their only escape from the punishment that justice requires.

**Conclusion**

1. That evil and suffering exist is not disputed. That injustice is rampant is easily observed.
2. The fact that these things continue though we have a clear sense for justice that cannot find a full satisfaction on this earth tells us that there will be an ultimate reckoning beyond this life.
3. For this reason, God should not be rejected, but understood and followed in order to find atonement for our own sins to escape His judicial wrath.