

# God Creates Evil (!!!)

*What Is The Reformed Faith?*

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**Bible Text:** Isaiah 45:1-7

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## Reformation Church

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Please turn to Isaiah, the 45<sup>th</sup> chapter. I am going to read the first verse for a moment, although that is not the subject of this sermon, but I want to point something out about Isaiah 45 in this verse. Verse one:

“Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut.”<sup>1</sup>

The two leaved gates are gates of Jerusalem. Now Cyrus was the great Persian conqueror and he did come to Jerusalem and had conquered so many lands before him, he was very much feared. When he got to the gates of Jerusalem the priests of the Lord came out to the gates and showed him this verse in the Scriptures -- and he did not attack Jerusalem.

Why? Because the Lord names Cyrus here. This was written at least 118 years before Cyrus was born, but the Lord named him in the Scripture over a century before he was born. That is what rocked Cyrus, and he knew he was dealing with something more powerful than his army -- and so he didn't touch Jerusalem.

Now please look at verse five through seven of Isaiah 45. The Lord is still speaking to Cyrus:

“I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me.”<sup>2</sup>

That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.<sup>3</sup>

So in case Cyrus didn't get the message he says to him directly, “**I am the Lord, and there is none else.**” "Cyrus, I am the only God there is." In verse four he says, “ I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me." In

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 45:1.

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 45:5.

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 45:6-7.

the NKJV: I have even called you (Cyrus) by your name. I have surnamed you. I have named you.” The Lord says, **“I named you”!**

Did you know that the name you have is not really given to you by your parents? They were the vehicle the Lord used. The Lord picked out your name. As he says, “I have surnamed you, Cyrus. I have named you, though you have not known me.” And then he says, “I am the Lord and there is none else. There is no God besides me. I girded thee.” In other words, “I gave you your strength. I gave you all your armies. I gave you all your success, though you haven’t even known me.”

That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.<sup>4</sup>

This passage is so wonderful. It is one of the most profound and clearest passages that teach God's absolute sovereignty in the Scripture.

But many people have trouble with the sovereignty of God, don't they? And many people who go to a lot of different Christian churches don't hear about the sovereignty of God, their churches don't teach the sovereignty of God or even outright deny it. They hear things like, "you have to accept Christ, give Him a chance, listen to the claims of Christ and make a decision about whether you think it is right for you," etc. That is not a sovereign God, is it? No, certainly not a God who gives you your name.

And certainly not a God who says,

“I make peace, and create evil.”<sup>5</sup>

That's crystal clear. No way around it. "I make peace, and create evil." No room for misunderstanding, is there?

Oh, but perhaps the Bible version you use doesn't say that.

if you are looking at different Bibles they have different ways of writing that, different ways of translating that word. Instead of "evil" some use "calamity" or "disaster." But calamities and disasters are evil, are they not? But that is not what the King James says from the received text. It says, “I create evil.”

So how can that be that God creates evil? God is all-powerful and all-good, but yet there is evil in the world, and here he says he creates it! How can a good God create evil? Or even allow it? This has perplexed people for centuries. It's called "the problem of good and evil." And people have come up with some pretty fantastic ways to try to deal with it, usually either denying His goodness or His sovereignty. Neither are Biblical.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 45:7.

The "problem" has shipwrecked a lot of people's faith. They cannot reconcile the fact that there is evil in the world AND an all-good, absolutely sovereign God.

Or they take a path that leads them far away from God's Word. They twist the Scripture and interpret it the way they think that justice -- their *own* sense of justice -- demands.

If God is all-powerful and he is all-good, why is there evil, why is there sin and suffering, in the world?

If He is all good, He would not want sin and suffering to exist. And if He is all-powerful he would prevent it. So how do we make sense of that?

Well, there is about... I count about half a dozen ways that people have tried to understand this. None of them are Biblical, but I will give you the seven ways that I have found. There are probably others.

One way is to say that God is not really all-good. He doesn't really want to end sin and suffering.

The second way is to say that God isn't all-powerful. Therefore, even though He may want to end evil, he cannot.

Third is to deny that there is a God at all.

Fourth is to claim there are many gods, but none of them are good enough or powerful enough or any combination of that to prevent evil in there world.

Fifth, God is all-powerful and God is all-good, but he is not really involved in human affairs. He lets people use their own free will to commit evil if they wish. This is the Deist argument: God wound up the universe like an old-fashioned alarm clock and now He's on a long vacation. It is up to man to take care of the world.

Sixth, God is an impersonal force in the universe. This impersonal force in the universe has no purpose, no intelligence. Good and evil mean nothing to it.

Seventh, evil, sin and suffering don't really exist. They are an illusion. Most forms of Buddhism teach that, most forms of Hinduism.

They even deny that there is such a thing as logic.

Of course, if anybody says there is no such thing as logic they are using logic to make the claim. If you say "there is no such thing as logic," you are contrasting that with the idea "there is such a thing as logic." Or, "A is not B," which is the fundamental logical construction. In fact, you cannot think or say anything that can be understood if you do

not use logic. So to say "there is no such thing as logic" is as ignorant as saying "there is no such thing as speech."

Christian Science, among other cults, deny that there is such a thing as sin and suffering. It is all an illusion. Disease is an illusion of the mind. That is why they don't believe in going to doctors. They don't believe in medicine. I don't know why they decided to call themselves Christian Scientists. They are not Christians and they don't believe in science.

The problem with each of these theories is that they are not describing the Lord God who reveals himself in the Bible.

The Bible presents God as all-powerful and all-good. Any attempt to harmonize the God of the Bible with the existence of evil can't deny his all-powerfulness and his all-goodness.

The God of the Bible is all-powerful, and our text says so in Isaiah 45:

"I am the LORD, and there is none else."<sup>6</sup>

"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things."<sup>7</sup>

And He is all good, 1 John 1:5:

"God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."<sup>8</sup>

Luke 18:19:

"None is good, save one, that is, God."<sup>9</sup>

And the God of the Bible is a personal God—we know that—who cares deeply about his people and events on earth. This whole book is about God's involvement with people on earth.

1 John 4:16:

"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love."<sup>10</sup>

Exodus 34:7 says He has:

"...mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Isaiah 45:5.

<sup>7</sup> Isaiah 45:7.

<sup>8</sup> 1 John 1:5.

<sup>9</sup> Luke 18:19.

<sup>10</sup> 1 John 4:16.

<sup>11</sup> Exodus 34:7.

Acts 17:25:

“He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.”<sup>12</sup>

Romans 11:36:

“For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.”<sup>13</sup>

Daniel 4:35:

“He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?”<sup>14</sup>

Nobody can say "why are You doing this?" to the Lord. He does whatever he pleases. He doesn't need a reason, and certainly doesn't need to explain Himself to his creatures.

The Westminster Confession of Faith chapter two, section two (on your handout) says about the Lord, “He is the alone fountain of all being of whom, through whom and to whom are all things and has most sovereign dominion over them,” that is, his creatures, “to do by them for them or upon them whatsoever he himself pleases. In his sight all things are open and manifest. His knowledge is infinite, infallible and independent upon the creature so as nothing is to him contingent or uncertain.”

The Lord is not a God of damage control who says "Oh! I didn't expect you to do that! So you are going to walk in front of a truck now, and I expected you to cross on the other side of the street, so I am going to have to get that truck driver to do something else so he doesn't hit you, but if he does that then he might hit someone else, so I have to get them to stop..." Of course the Lord doesn't operate that way, and when I characterize it like that, it's obvious how silly it is to think He does. Yet denying His sovereignty is thinking He does operate that way.

The Bible teaches very clearly that nothing is contingent to Him. Everything is ordered according to his will, including everything everyone does. Even my throwing my hand up in the air at this moment is foreordained from the foundation of the world.

The Bible teaches that God not only permits evil, but ultimately ordains it. That is very difficult for people to believe, but what is the alternative? A god who is surprised by evil? A god who let things happen that he doesn't will? That's not the God of the Bible.

Now, the Westminster Confession says he is not the author of sin. I'm not sure what the Confession means by "author." If it means God cannot sin, it is true. He is not the author of sin because God cannot sin. Even when God creates evil, as he says in our passage,

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<sup>12</sup> Acts 17:25.

<sup>13</sup> Romans 11:36.

<sup>14</sup> Daniel 4:35.

when he inclines a man's heart to evil, when he hardened Pharaoh's heart to not let the people go, which was an evil thing, when he formed Judas to betray Christ, which was the most evil thing a man could do -- and Scripture plainly says Judas did that by "the determinate counsel" of God, "counsel" being His will, Acts 2:22,23:

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know :

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain :

even in all these events the Lord didn't sin, because the Lord cannot sin.

Think about it. If the Lord sinned what would be His punishment? Would He have to go to hell? Would He have to be saved by Jesus Christ? You can see that "sin" has no meaning applied to what the Lord wills. He cannot sin by definition. *We* can sin. The Lord cannot.

To say He can sin is to say that He must obey His own commandments, which makes His commandments above the Lord Himself, thus His commandments are God, not the Lord.

**The alternative to this is impossible. If anything happens, including evil, that is not ultimately under his sovereign will, then He is not the God of the universe that the Bible describes. Therefore he is not really God. That is the impossible alternative.**

Unlike the unbelievers who have all these theories to explain the problem of evil, theologians who regard themselves as Christians have two opposing theories to explain how sin and suffering coexist with the God of the Bible.

Some argue that man has free will. He sins and he creates suffering. God is good. He hates sin and suffering, and he could stop it, but he has a hands-off policy. He lets men act without his influence in order to put the entire responsibility on man. We choose evil of our own free will. God doesn't make us do so, therefore, we alone are responsible and not God. That is the Arminian argument.

*Even if it is true that man has free will, that doesn't solve the problem.* Free will is supposed to relieve God of the responsibility for sin, but it doesn't do the job. Let me explain. Suppose you see somebody about to step into the path of an oncoming car, and instead of grabbing him or yelling at him to get out of the way you just stand there and you don't do anything. You just watch him get run over.

Then you say, "He exercised his free will when he stepped into the street. I am not responsible for his death."

I don't think you would say that. Of course you know you bear responsibility even though the person acted from their own free will. The point is that giving somebody permission to do something that turns out to be wrong doesn't relieve you of responsibility. If God lets men be engulfed in sin of their own free will, it does not relieve him of, quote, "responsibility" as the Arminians define the word. God made the man. He made the street. He made the car and the driver. He could have made the car break down or he could have made the man hear the car and get out of the way. He could have done a lot of things to stop it. The Arminian argument is, "Free will relieves God of responsibility for sin." It doesn't.

If the Bible is the Word of God, then free will doesn't exist. God's Word consistently denies that man has free will.

The other camp of theologians are called Calvinists, or Reformed. They say God ultimately determines every thought and action of every person. Arminians say that no human choice is determined by God. Calvinists say all human choices are determined by God. Some people try to take a middle ground deal and that some choices are determined by God and some are not, but that is just watered-down Arminianism.

A question you should ask Arminian friends is, "Could Judas have chosen not to betray Christ?" They claim it is necessary that Judas or anybody else has a choice, since a choice establishes moral responsibility, or so they say. They say that if you don't have a choice, then you can't be responsible for your actions.

But the Calvinists who know their Bible better than Arminians point out that if Judas had a choice, the Bible is wrong for it says the opposite. We looked at this before, but it is so critical, let's revisit it for a moment.

The question is, did Judas have free will? Acts chapter one verse 16, Peter says:

"Men and brethren..."<sup>15</sup>

"...this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas..."<sup>16</sup>

He is talking about Psalm 41:9, "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me," and Ps. 53.

"...which was guide to them that took Jesus."<sup>17</sup>

"...the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas."<sup>18</sup>

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 26 at the last supper:

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<sup>15</sup> Acts 1:16.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

“Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.”<sup>19</sup>

Now that was before Judas had finished his evil work. So did Judas then have free will to stop it and repent and not do it? No, Jesus said, “You *will* betray me.”

Could Pilate or Herod or the others have chosen to release Jesus? Look at Acts four verse 26.

The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, **For to do whatsoever thy hand [the Lord’s hand] and thy counsel determined before to be done.**<sup>20</sup>

It was all determined -- the persecution of Christ, the betrayal of Christ by Judas, what Pilate did in condemning him, what Herod did, what the Gentiles did, what the Jews did, was all determined beforehand by God. No free will there, nobody could surprise the Lord by their free will and stop it. If they could have, then the Bible passages that prophesied it all would have been wrong. As a Christian, you cannot possibly believe that could be.

So these men’s choices were determined ahead of time by God; Scripture is crystal-clear on that. They were a necessary part of God’s plan for redemption. What would have happened if Judas had free will and decided not to betray Christ and Christ kept on living and never went to the cross? Where would we be? These men were a necessary part of God’s plan of redemption. They had no "free will" to do anything else.

This does bring up other questions. If your choices are already determined by God, how can he hold you responsible for sinning? Now that is a whole different subject. Paul addresses that subject in Romans. His answer is essentially, “Shut up!” Essentially, “Who are you to argue against God, you worm?” Romans 9:20-24:

Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God ? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made methus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel untohonour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make hispower known , endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had aforeprepared unto glory,  
Even us, whom he hath called , not of the Jews only, but also of theGentiles?

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<sup>19</sup> Matthew 26:21.

<sup>20</sup> Acts 4:26-28.



The question before us is: How can an all-powerful, all-good God be harmonized with the existence of evil. Why does a good God allow evil in the world?

Now we are not meant to know the answer exclusively, exhaustively. We know three things for certain. God is all-good. He is all-powerful. There is evil in the world.

Just because we can't reconcile these completely does not mean that all three are false. For example, do you know calculus? Most of us don't. Does that mean that there is no such thing as calculus? Does that mean it is gibberish? That nobody understands calculus? Or if you pick up a book written in Arabic or Chinese and you don't know the language, would be accurate to say, "This is just a bunch of squiggles. This doesn't mean anything."

No. Calculus and Arabic and Chinese aren't nonsense. The problem is your lack of knowledge about them (mine, too). So if we look at the things God does and we say, "I don't understand how can there be evil in the world if God is all-good and all-powerful," Paul's answer might well be, shut up, you haven't been given the capacity to understand it completely. But we can make some attempts to understand it.

What we can be sure of is God never would have allowed sin to enter into the world unless he had a good purpose for it, because we know God is all-good.

Good is made to result from evil. Good is made to come out of evil.

Now throughout the Scriptures we find numerous instances in which sinful acts were used by God for good. Sometimes occasionally we have been shown how they fit perfectly into this eternal plan for the redemption of his people. Let's go through a few of them. I won't burden you with many of them, but let's go through a few of them.

Remember the sale of Joseph into slavery by his brothers? They threw him in the pit and they sold him to traveling slave merchants. That was a very evil thing to do, wasn't it? And his father was brokenhearted when the brothers showed him Joseph's coat and said, "He is dead. A wild animal ate him." How do you do that to your father? But they did it, a horrible thing, evil, evil, evil.

Yet what happened later? What did we see in Scripture? That evil was used by God for great good, not only for the good of Joseph, but of the good of his brothers, for the good of his father, for his whole household. And for the good of everyone in Egypt, because Joseph staved off the famine. So untold thousands of people avoided death because of Joseph. They didn't starve to death, because Joseph was thrown into a pit by his brother and abandoned and enslaved.

The Lord ordained that evil for good. It had its exact place in the divine plan. Joseph later said to his brothers in Genesis 45:

“Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.”<sup>21</sup>

Joseph saw the sovereignty of God in the evil.

“So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.”<sup>22</sup>

“But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.”<sup>23</sup>

And God hardened the heart of Pharaoh so that he would not let the Israelites leave Egypt. And therefore God brought these terrible plagues on the land. The Lord even revealed to Pharaoh why he created him. He said in Romans nine:

“For this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.”<sup>24</sup>

And to Moses God said:

“And I, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host, upon his chariots, and upon his horsemen.”<sup>25</sup>

The Lord ordained what appeared to be a great evil. Hundreds, possibly thousands of Egyptian soldiers died when the Red Sea came back on them and drowned them. So that appeared to be a great evil -- at least to the Egyptians!

Joshua 11:20 says that it was of Jehovah to harden the Caananites' hearts to come against Israel:

For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses.

I Samuel 2 is a wonderful chapter on God's sovereignty. Here is part of it, verses 6-8

The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them.

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<sup>21</sup> Genesis 45:5.

<sup>22</sup> Genesis 45:8.

<sup>23</sup> Genesis 50:20.

<sup>24</sup> Romans 9:17.

<sup>25</sup> Exodus 14:17.

The Bible teaches us that even Satan and the evil spirits, as we have seen in past sermons, are made to carry out the Lord's will. Remember the sermon I preached on ghosts and the occult and talked about some of the abundant biblical proof that Satan and his demons are completely under the Lord's control? They can do nothing He has not willed. And we talked about the first two chapters of Job where Satan appeared before the Lord and the Lord said, "Oh, you can do this to Job, but you can't do that."

1 Kings 22 the Lord ordered an evil spirit to deceive king Ahab. The Lord sent an evil spirit to deceive a king.

In 1 Samuel 16 it is written of Saul, quote:

"An evil spirit from the LORD troubled him."<sup>26</sup>

In Judges 9:23, the Lord sends an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem.

John Calvin said, *"God, who once commanded light to shine out of darkness, can marvelously bring, if he pleases, salvation out of hell itself and thus turn darkness itself into light. What does Satan work? In a certain sense he works the work of God. That is, God, by holding Satan fast bound in obedience to his providence, turns him in whatever way he will and, thus, applies the great enemy's devices and attempts, the accomplishments of his own eternal purposes."*

Remember **before** Absalom, David's son, had committed his sin of rebellion the Lord told David that he would bring evil upon him. In 2 Samuel 12 he says:

"Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun."<sup>27</sup>

What a great evil! But contrary to the will of God? Obviously not.

In 1 Chronicles 10:4 we read that Saul took a sword and fell upon it, and that is how he died. He killed himself. This was his own deliberate, sinful act. He committed suicide. Yet it executed divine justice. It fulfilled a divine purpose which had been revealed years before concerning David, so we read in 1 Chronicles 10:13.

So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; And enquired not

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<sup>26</sup> 1 Samuel 16:14.

<sup>27</sup> 2 Samuel 12:11.

of the LORD: therefore he [Jehovah] slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse.<sup>28</sup>

So Saul didn't have free will in committing suicide. He committed suicide even though it was sinful. **Scripture says *the Lord slew him***. God did it. God turned his heart to commit suicide.

Was that evil of Saul to do? Yes. Was it a sin? Yes. Was it sinful of God? No. Impossible. It was not sinful of God. As we now know, it is impossible for God to sin, by definition.

There are many more examples in Scripture showing that the Lord creates evil. I put many more on the handout, so please prayerfully study them. A couple more, tho. II Kings 22:20:

“Thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place...”<sup>29</sup>

That is, upon Jerusalem because of her apostasy. And we see that in the Bible many times. God punishes people with plagues and with invasions and other horrible things.

1 Chronicles 5:22:

“For there fell down many slain, because the war was of God.”<sup>30</sup>

And on and on and on.

So all these things are summed up in our passage in Isaiah 45.

“I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.”<sup>31</sup>

Which is echoed in Amos 3:6:

“Shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?”<sup>32</sup>

Now there is a lot of New Testament support for this as well, of course. Again, it is on your handout. No Bible believer can deny that God has willed and thus foreordained sin and evil. As the Scripture asserts, He even willed and foreordained the crucifixion of Christ. So sinful acts of men do have their place in the divine plan. It is a mystery, but they do have their place in the divine plan.

To a certain extent we can say that the reason for this is to magnify God's grace.

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<sup>28</sup> 1 Chronicles 10:13-14.

<sup>29</sup> 2 Kings 22:20.

<sup>30</sup> 1 Chronicles 5:22.

<sup>31</sup> Isaiah 45:7.

<sup>32</sup> Amos 3:6.

Romans 5:20:

“But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”<sup>33</sup>

So every sinful act, every trial and tribulation that you experience in this life, every evil thing that people do to you, every illness, so-called accident, every death of a loved one, every tragedy in the world has a place in God’s plan: every war, every earthquake that takes thousands of lives, hurricanes, diseases... it is only because we are finite, imperfect creatures that we can’t see all the relationships and connections, how the Lord is working and we just say, “Oh, these awful events can’t be ordained by the Lord, they can’t be part of his plan of blessing His people.” That is ignorant, rank unbelief.

Dr. Charles Hodge said, “The acts of the wicked in persecuting the early Church were ordained of God as the means for the wider and more speedy proclamation of the gospel.”

The old saying has been proven true time and again: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." That means Church grows when they see men and women who are willing to die for their belief in Christ, when they see what supernatural strength they have been given to die martyr's deaths, to actually sing praises to him while their bodies are burning, and that inspires God’s people by the thousands, by the millions, and the church grows ever stronger.

Dr. Hodge continues, “The apostasy of the man of sin being predicted was predetermined. The destruction of the Huguenots in France, the persecution of the Puritans in England, laid the foundation for the planting of North America with a race of godly energetic men who were to make this land the land of refuge for the nations, the home of liberty, civil and religious. It would destroy the confidence of God’s people could they be persuaded that God does not foreordain whatever comes to pass. It is because the Lord reigns and does his pleasure in heaven on earth that his people repose in perfect security under his guidance and protection.”

So unless we do believe that God has willed and thus foreordained the whole course of events and that the course he has outlined for our life is for our good and the good of His church, we are going to be discouraged in times of adversity.

Remember Joseph's father Jacob wanted to die and complained bitterly about his life - just before he was reunited with his lost son Joseph, the one he thought was killed years ago.

Job’s faith was tested to its foundations when he lost all of his wealth, he lost all of his children, he lost his health -- and even he lost the love of his wife who told him to drop dead. His wife told him: “Curse God and die.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Romans 5:20.

<sup>34</sup> Job 2:9.

Drop dead, Job.

Yet he never lost his faith. What did Job say throughout all this?

Job 13:15:

“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.”<sup>35</sup>

And the Lord blessed him, as we know, with much more than he had before in every blessing.

It is the times of the greatest darkness in our lives that the Lord is preparing great things for us. The pressures of life are just the hands of the Potter. We may see some of these blessings in our lifetime. We may not see most of them. But we must always keep in the forefront of our mind this wonderful promise directly from him, 1 Corinthians 2:9.

“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”<sup>36</sup>

Let us pray.

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<sup>35</sup> Job 13:15.

<sup>36</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:9.