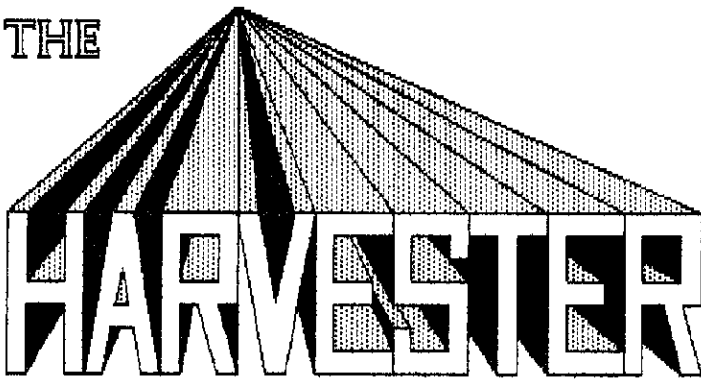


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*"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)*

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## DID GOD CREATE EVIL?

The only accurate record of creation informs us that, *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"* (Gen. 1:1). Of the events which occurred during five of the six creative days it was said, *"and it was so"* (v. 7, 9, 11, 15, 24, 30). Of five of those creative days it was also said, *"and God saw ... that it was good"* (v. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25). But at the conclusion of those six days it was said with an added emphasis, *"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold it was very good"* (v. 31). God made no mistake. He made every

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being and every thing as it should have been. He did not create sin and evil.

God did recognize, however, the presence of a force contrary to truth, good, and right. This is clearly evident in the ninth verse of the second chapter, "*And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow ... the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*" In this passage there is not the slightest hint that God created evil, but rather that He recognized a distinction between good and evil. Evil is contrary to the very essence of God. Although God is not limited or restricted in accomplishing that which is proper and right ("*with God all things are possible*" [Luke 19:26]), it would be contrary to His very nature to bring into being such a condition as evil ("*God ... cannot lie*" [Titus 1:2]), for example.

"*To know good and evil*" (Gen. 3:22) and to have made the wrong choice (Gen. 3:6, 11) resulted in man suffering the consequences of evil. This was unquestionably learned by Cain as recorded in Gen. 4:7, "*If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door.*" Cain suffered the consequences of his sin because he did that which was evil, not because God created evil.

### But What About Isaiah 45:7 and Amos 3:6?

As the Bible is a record of six thousand years of history encompassing numerous languages, social customs, and cultural changes during that long period, some Biblical expressions are understandably

in need of explanation. "*The sun stood still*" of Joshua 10:12, for instance, is not scientifically correct, but it is used as we today speak about the sun rising or setting. We know scientifically that the earth revolves around the sun, but even in view of our present day knowledge we continue to use expressions which describe what the sun appears to do.

This same type understanding permits us to comprehend the beautiful thoughts expressed in the two passages in question.

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

*"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?"* (Amos 3:6).

The thought conveyed by the word "create" is that of bringing into being that which did not previously exist. This can and readily does relate to the beginning of material things as we know them and as they are spoken of in Genesis 1 and 2. But this expression also conveys the thought of bringing about a condition which did not previously exist. One might spank a naughty child and be accused by the child of hurting him. While it is true that you did inflict hurt on the child and thus "create" an unpleasant condition, the child brought upon himself the need for discipline (Hebrews 12:5-11). This describes a

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God's harvest (Luke 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address and all correspondence to:

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condition which results from improper conduct and which warrants what seems to the child to be an evil consequence. This is the way in which the word "create" is used in Isaiah 45:7 and Amos 3:6.

A most appropriate example of this type expression is found in 1 Kings 18:17-18. Ahab, the wicked king of Israel, had suffered with Israel a terrible drought which continued for three years and six months. This drought was justly brought about by God because of the sin of Ahab and the people of Israel. When God finally saw fit to bring the calamity to an end, He sent Elijah to appear before Ahab. Upon seeing Elijah, King Ahab, continuing to display his old rebellious attitude, said to Elijah, "*Art thou he that troubleth Israel?*" Elijah had not troubled Israel, but Ahab had through his sin and rebellion. Ahab blamed the trouble on Elijah, for Elijah had been the spokesman for God. Elijah correctly responded, "*I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim.*"

To suffer the just consequence of sin or poor judgment might well result in a condition which we consider evil, for it brings upon us an undesirable and hurtful circumstance. Only in the sense that God might well have allowed it or even brought it about as a punishment, can it be said that God was involved in evil. Even then, God can not correctly be said to have created evil as a force or nature; it is merely that the consequence, even though just, is unpleasant to the one receiving it. I never did meet a boy who enjoyed a spanking. A spanking always appears to be evil to the one receiving it!

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## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Who would lead Abraham's servant to find Isaac a wife?
2. In Psalm 23, where did the psalmist say he would dwell?
3. What was the first command given to Gideon by God?
4. When Daniel gave the unpleasant interpretations to Belshazzar, what did Belshazzar give to Daniel?
5. Which book of the Bible records the description of a virtuous woman?

## ANSWERS NEXT MONTH ...

and remember last month's questions?

1. Who became the king of Israel after Saul's death? ISHBOSHETH (Saul's son) (2 Sam. 2:10)

2. How much did Goliath's armor weigh? 5000 SHEKELS or ABOUT 125 LBS. (1 Sam. 17:5)

3. Why did Pilate's wife want him to have nothing to do with Jesus? SHE HAD A DREAM (Matt. 27:19)

4. Of whom is it said, "They watch for your souls"? THEM THAT HAVE THE RULE OVER YOU (Heb. 13:17)

5. What did Aaron's staff, when it turned into a serpent, do to the Egyptian magician's staffs when theirs turned into serpents? AARON'S SERPENT SWALLOWED THE MAGICIAN'S SERPENTS (Exo. 7:12)

## ATTEND THE MEETINGS

Friends, it is getting to be that time of the year when revivals are being conducted everywhere. Unfortunately, when one hears of a gospel meeting his interest is not sparked and he has an indifferent feeling about such matters. There are some good and valid reasons why we should attend the meetings this year. Here they are:

### BECAUSE THE GOSPEL WILL BE PREACHED

Nothing is "just as good as" the gospel. Since it is the "power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16), no one has ever been saved without it, nor can one afford to be without it. What is more important than hearing God's Word proclaimed?

### BECAUSE OF THE VALUE OF YOUR SOUL

Your soul is a unique thing (Matt. 10:28), more valuable than the whole world (Mark 8:36). Jesus then asked, "What would a man give in exchange for his soul?" (v. 37). Would he give an evening of watching television? Would he give a gallon or two of gasoline?

### BECAUSE YOU ARE GOING TO DIE AND FACE THE JUDGMENT

*"It is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment"* (Heb. 9:27). Death and judgment are both certain and uncertain. They are certain to happen but they are uncertain when that moment will occur. The gospel meeting will help you prepare for when that moment happens.

### THIS MAY BE YOUR LAST OPPORTUNITY

This is not a mere scare tactic but an attempt to get you to take time from your busy schedule and make you think about something you have been avoiding. With every beat of your heart and with every tick of the clock your chance to hear and obey the gospel grows that much shorter. Wasted opportunities can never be recalled and there is no unending supply. Have you given this matter serious consideration?

--ADAPTED--

# GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE &amp; TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
April 5 - 9	Liberty Church Liberty, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
April 19 - 23	New Bethel Church Cullman, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
April 30 - May 2	Pleasant Ridge Church Woodbury, TN	Bill, Chad, & Brad Prince (Oxford, AL)
May 2 - 7	West Broad St. Church Wedowee, AL	Jim Pritchard (Shawnee, OK)

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## WHAT WOULD HAPPEN?

**What would happen** if I heard the same exact message that was preached in Acts chapter 2 by the apostles some 2000 years ago? And **what would happen** if I honestly believed that the One called Jesus Christ was also the True Son of God? And finally, **what would happen** if I did exactly as Peter instructed those who asked about salvation: *“repent and be baptized ... in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins ...”* (Acts 2:38)

Wouldn't the same thing happen to me as did the thousands of Jews on the day of Pentecost? *“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”* (Acts 2:47)

RAY