

Evil and Wickedness in the Pentateuch

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I gave a presentation titled "Evil and Wickedness—Part 1." The focus of this study was about evil and wickedness in the Pentateuch.

Knowledge of good and evil

The first mention of evil is found in Genesis 2. The first references involve the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:9—"And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

Genesis 2:16-17—"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.' "

Genesis 3:4-5—"Then the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' "

Serpent was deceptive

Think about the serpent's comments for a minute. We know that the serpent was deceptive—John 8:44 and 2 Corinthians 11:3.

Consider this question: Doesn't God want His children to know the difference between good and evil?

Notice some instructive verses—1 Kings 3:9, Isaiah 7:15 and Hebrews 5:12-14.

So what was the problem?

Timing was the problem

In Genesis 3, God explained the problem.

Genesis 3:22-23—"Then the LORD God said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever'—therefore the LORD God sent

him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken." God certainly wanted Adam and Eve to live forever—but not at that time and not in that specific scenario.

- Matthew 4:10

- Hebrews 5:7-8

How early does evil arrive?

Are babies created with evil? If not, how quickly does evil arrive?

- Genesis 1:31—Everything that God made was very good.

- Genesis 6:5—God saw the wickedness of people—that the intent of the heart was evil.

- Genesis 8:31—The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.

A few other scriptures

- Genesis 18:23-25—Abraham asked God if He would destroy the righteous with the wicked.

- Genesis 50:15-18—Joseph's brothers worried that Joseph would repay them for the evil they did to him.

- Genesis 50:19-20—Joseph said: "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good."

- Leviticus 18:17—Uncovering the nakedness of people is wickedness.

- Numbers 14:26-27—God asked: "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me?"

- Deuteronomy 19:15-19—Concerning the punishment against a false witness, God said: "So you shall put away the evil from among you."

- Deuteronomy 22:22—Concerning the punishment for adultery, God said: "So you shall put away the evil from Israel."

- Deuteronomy 30:15, 20—God set life, death, good and evil before them—and He wanted them to choose life.