

How Does God Use Evil?

This article is from the “Edifying the Body” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website (churchofgodbigandy.com). It was posted for the weekend of June 18, 2022.

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our recent Bible studies on Wednesday night, I just concluded a six-part series about “Evil and Wickedness.” After each study, I wrote a short article in the “Among Friends” section of our website.

At this time, I want to write this short article (for the “Edifying the Body” section of our website) to remind my friends how a righteous God uses evil.

God claimed to create evil

James mentioned God and evil.

James 1:13—“Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.”

The prophet Isaiah quoted God as saying that He created evil (translated “evil” in the King James Version and translated “calamity” in the New King James Version).

Isaiah 45:7—“I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil; I, the LORD, do all these things.”

Job’s two trials

The book of Job shows how God initiated two major trials for Job but allowed Satan to provide the evil details.

- God initiated the first trial (Job 1:8).
- Satan suggested some details.

Job 1:11—“But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!”

- God approved the details but put limitations on Satan.

Job 1:12—“And the LORD said to Satan, ‘Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person.’ So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.”

- God initiated the second trial (Job 2:3).
- Satan suggested some details.

Job 2:4-5—“So Satan answered the LORD and said, ‘Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!’ ”

- God approved the details but put limitations on Satan.

Job 2:6—“And the LORD said to Satan, ‘Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life.’ ”

Fall of Ahab

The book of 1 Kings shows how God initiated the fall of Ahab but allowed a spirit to provide the evil details.

- God determined that Ahab would fall at Ramoth Gilead—but he listened to suggestions about the details of how it would occur.

1 Kings 22:20—“And the LORD said, ‘Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?’ So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner.”

- A spirit suggested that he would make it happen.

1 Kings 22:21—“Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, ‘I will persuade him.’ ”

- God asked for details, heard the details, approved the details and gave him permission to proceed with his plan.

1 Kings 22:22—“The LORD said to him, ‘In what way?’ So he said, ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’ And the LORD said, ‘You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go out and do so.’ ”

- God used a lying spirit to accomplish His goal.

1 Kings 22:23—“Therefore look! The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the LORD has declared disaster against you.”

Explaining today’s evil

I hope that these Old Testament scriptures can help you to deal with the evil encompassing our globe today. Please remember that faith, hope and love can help us in these evil times.