

Evil Mentioned in the Pentateuch

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Religious people who consider themselves children of God are extremely appreciative of the grace that our Heavenly Father bestows upon them. They realize that they are saved by grace and that the Eternal Father has expectations of them.

Therefore, the children of God seek to understand the concept of evil. I will begin a series of short articles to discuss the concept of evil from the Bible.

This article is about evil mentioned in the Pentateuch.

Knowledge of good and evil

The first mention of evil is found in Genesis 2. The first references are involving 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 2:15-17—"Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. 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 3:1-5—"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, "You shall not eat of every tree of the garden"?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, "You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die." ' 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.' "

How early?

Religious people often ask when evil arrives into the life of a person. Are babies created with evil? If not, how quickly does evil arrive?

Genesis 1:31—"Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day."

Genesis 6:5—"Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

Genesis 8:21—"And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, 'I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.' "

Evil against people

The Bible has many examples of people practicing evil against other people. One of the famous examples in the Bible is the account of Joseph and his brothers.

- *Genesis 37:19-20*—Joseph's brothers discussed killing him.
- *Genesis 37:26-27*—The brothers sold him to the Ishmaelites.

Later, the brothers were worried that Joseph would get revenge upon them. Joseph's response is one of the most important messages in the Bible.

Genesis 50:19-20—"Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.' "

Making a choice

The Bible shows God's desire for people to choose good and to avoid evil.

Deuteronomy 20:15, 19—"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil . . . I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live."