

# THE PRESENCE OF EVIL IN A WORLD DECLARED BY GOD TO BE “VERY GOOD”

*Paul N. Wanamaker, Pastor, The Evangelical Congregational Church of Easton, MA  
New England Reformed Fellowship, January 9, 2024*

What about evil? Is it enough to simply place evil in our mental file cabinet under the category of the “mystery of evil,” and then just leave it at that? There certainly is mystery regarding evil. We can never fully plumb the depths of what God has revealed to us in His word regarding it. There are indeed “secret things”<sup>1</sup> that God has not disclosed. We, in our present weak, partially sanctified and finite state would not be able to take it in.

We see the presence of evil in the recent horrific events of this past October 7<sup>th</sup>, 9/11, the holocaust, et al, and other effects of evil’s presence in this world such as disease, seemingly arbitrary disasters, and the terrible suffering resulting from those disasters. For many, these things provide a rationale for not trusting, or believing in “a God” who would allow such manifestations of evil. Many true Christians recognize the presence of evil, but see these kinds of evil manifestations in terms of God only allowing them, but not actually sovereignly ruling, and over-ruling them. For them, there exists only a gargantuan spiritual struggle between God Himself and the “principalities... powers... the rulers of the darkness of this age... spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places,” (namely, Satan and his demons), where God is just slightly stronger and will ultimately prevail.

Is it possible and permissible to dig further, and get Biblical answers to questions like: why does evil exist at all in God’s “very good” creation? Is creation no longer very good after the fall? Did God actually create evil? Does God use evil?

It is the purpose of this paper, by God’s illuminating grace, to get a Biblical perspective concerning those very questions.

## **God’s “Very Good” Creation**

We’re told that “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”<sup>2</sup> From nothing, absolutely nothing, God spoke into existence what some have referred to as the “stuff” of the universe. And then, using what was

---

<sup>1</sup> Dt. 29.29 “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” *All scriptural references are from the NKJV unless otherwise specified.*

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 1.1

disordered, chaotic and in complete darkness, God, by His word, brought forth order, design, purpose, harmony, beauty, light and goodness. Each Person of the eternal Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit participated in this stupendous and great work, where God has put on display His “invisible attributes... even His eternal power and Godhead,”<sup>3</sup> His divine nature. So glorious and majestic was creation that “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.”<sup>4</sup> The writer of the Proverbs wrote regarding wisdom, God’s Son, that “The Lord possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old... I was beside Him, rejoicing in His inhabited world.”<sup>5</sup>

That which was most prominent and exalted in creation were man and woman, created in God’s own image.<sup>6</sup> They were perfect reflections of God’s communicable pristine perfections. They possessed “true righteousness and holiness,” and true “knowledge according to the image of Him who created” them.<sup>7</sup> Thomas Boston wrote, “Man’s understanding was a lamp of light. He had perfect knowledge of the law... Adam had not the law written upon tables of stone, but it was written upon his mind, the knowledge thereof being created with him. God impressed it upon his soul... His will in all things was agreeable with the will of God (Eph. 4.24). There was no corruption in his will, no inclination to evil; for that is sin... His affections were orderly, pure, and holy... it is plain that man was naturally inclined both to spiritual and sensible good; yet to spiritual good, the chief good as his ultimate end... Man’s affections, then, in his primitive state, were pure from all defilement, free from all disorder and distemper, because in all their motions they were duly subjected to his clear reason, and his holy will.”<sup>8</sup> As they were both created in the image of God, they were “good and upright” as is God, their Creator.<sup>9</sup> “Adam’s pristine righteousness was inherent, intrinsic, and essential to the very nature of his created personhood as he stood in the image of his Creator.”<sup>10</sup>

So indeed, all of creation was “very good” with Adam (and Eve) being the very living embodiment of God’s “chief end of man,” which was to “glorify and enjoy Him”<sup>11</sup> All of Adam’s faculties were originally and fundamentally predisposed to know, serve and love God as expressed by his keeping of that law written in his heart, and Adam’s enjoyment of God sprung from this inherent holiness.

---

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 1.20

<sup>4</sup> Job 38.7

<sup>5</sup> Prov. 8.22,30

<sup>6</sup> Gen. 1.27

<sup>7</sup> Eph. 4.24; Col. 3.10

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Boston, *Human Nature In Its Fourfold State*, The Banner Of Truth Trust, 1997, pp. 40-43

<sup>9</sup> Ps. 25.8

<sup>10</sup> Douglas Vickers, *Divine Redemption and the Refuge of Faith*, Reformation Heritage Books, 2005, p. 44

<sup>11</sup> Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question #1

## There's Evil in God's "Very Good" Creation

In the Genesis creation account, the narrative very quickly moves to the introduction of the "serpent," "the great dragon... that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world," "the prince of the power of the air," "the devil... He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it," "Leviathan," "King over all the children of pride," the Satan. This Satan, or adversary, is the "evil one."<sup>12</sup> He hates God. He "is the arch-opponent of Jehovah's reign of grace in the world."<sup>13</sup> He's superhuman and supernatural, but He's a creature. Paul wrote regarding Jesus Christ, "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him."<sup>14</sup> The "all things" includes Satan. Christopher Ash wrote, "It is important to be clear that evil did not intrude on this good creation from somewhere else. There was no outside from which evil could come, for the universe is, and was, the universe."<sup>15</sup> But in God's creation of Satan, did He create evil? Why would God allow him to not only exist, but play such a significant role in the course of human events?

Let's first ask, what is evil? Firstly, it's not a created thing like a rock, or a bird, or a star. It's a disposition, or a principle of ungodliness which Paul described as a law in his "members," his "body of death." He wrote, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"<sup>16</sup> And so we see evil, not as created matter, or substance, but as a condition whereby there exists the complete absence of righteousness. Evil is an attribute, a characteristic that denotes active opposition to good, in particular, God's "good and acceptable and perfect will,"<sup>17</sup> His goodness, His pristine moral perfections and purposes.

As Ash wrote further, "So what God proclaimed to be good and the angels sang about with joy included the germ of all that would transpire in its history, including what we call the fall and all its entailments of evil."<sup>18</sup> But what, in reference to evil, does the "germ" of it mean?

---

<sup>12</sup> Rev. 12:9; Eph 2:2; Jn 8:44; Job 41.1,34, all NKJV; 1 Jn. 5:18, ESV

<sup>13</sup> Hywel R. Jones, *A Study Commentary on Job*, Evangelical Press, 2007, p. 49

<sup>14</sup> Col. 1:16

<sup>15</sup> Christopher Ash, *Job, The Wisdom of the Cross*, Crossway, 2014, p. 379

<sup>16</sup> Rom. 7:18-24

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 12:2

<sup>18</sup> Ash, p. 379

Let's start answering the question by stating that, "God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He himself tempt anyone," and then state, that He clearly, unequivocally, and certainly (as Paul would say) did not create evil. But He did, in a sense, create the conditions, or possibility for evil. Using Ash's term, He planted the "germ" of it in the creation of His universe.

That "germ", or possibility was part and parcel of the creation of Adam. In contrasting Adam's corrupted fallen state with his previous unsullied perfections, Boston wrote, "A combat between flesh and spirit, reason and appetite, nay, the least inclination to sin, or lust of the flesh in the inferior part of the soul, was utterly inconsistent with this uprightness in which man was created... this righteousness was universal in respect of the subject, because it spread through the whole man; so also it was universal in respect of the object, the holy law. There was nothing in the law but was agreeable to his reason and will, as God made him."<sup>19</sup> And yet, Boston wrote that Adam's righteousness was "mutable; it was a righteousness that might be lost. His will was not absolutely indifferent to good and evil. God set it towards good only, yet He did not so fix its inclinations, that it should not alter."<sup>20</sup>

God did not rid His creation of Satan, nor did God create Adam to be immutably righteous, but "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."<sup>21</sup> We read further that, "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.'"<sup>22</sup>

The Puritan John Owen saw in this prohibition to Adam all the elements of a covenant (promises and threatening, rewards and punishments). He wrote, "The rule of obedience and reward that was between God and him was not expressly called a covenant, but it contained the express nature of a covenant; for it was the agreement of God and man concerning obedience and disobedience, rewards and punishments."<sup>23</sup> He went further in stating that this covenant may be understood in two ways, as law only and as a covenant. He wrote, "As it was law only; so it proceeded from, and was a consequent of the nature of God and man, with their mutual relation unto one another. God being considered as the Creator, governor, and benefactor of man; and man as an intellectual creature, capable of moral obedience; this law was necessary, and is eternally indispensable."<sup>24</sup> Owen went on to write that the promise and the prohibition given to Adam could be considered as a covenant because it "depended on the will and pleasure of God."<sup>25</sup> And this consisted in God establishing a promise of reward which was an expression of grace, and a threat of punishment which expressed righteous justice. God then

---

<sup>19</sup> Boston, p. 41

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 44

<sup>21</sup> Gen. 2:9

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, vv.16-17

<sup>23</sup> John Owen, *Hebrews*, Banner of Truth, 1991, 6:60

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

gave external and visible signs of the promise and the threat; “the first in a tree of life, the latter in that of the knowledge of good and evil... signs and pledges of this covenant.”<sup>26</sup> In this way, Owen’s covenantal understanding of God’s administration of Adam in the garden was derived not only from the law written on Adam’s heart, but the two trees which were tangible representations of the promise of life and the threat of death.

Boston described God’s use of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as a “visible sign... a memorial of his mutable state given to him from heaven, to be laid up by him for his greater caution. For man was created with a free will to good... but his will was also free to evil, and the forbidden tree was to him a memorial thereof.”<sup>27</sup> Dr. G. M. Richard provides some interesting insight by writing that evil is, “an attitude or a posture that chooses against God or opposite from God. The only thing that had to happen for evil to exist, was for God to exist—which the Bible tells us has been true from all of eternity—and for God to create beings that were able to choose Him or not choose him.”<sup>28</sup>

For Geerhardus Vos, the issue of Adam being “very good” needed to be confirmed. He wrote, “Man had been created perfectly good in a moral sense. And yet there was a sense in which he could be raised to a still higher level of perfection.” Vos anticipated the raised eyebrows and so continued with, “the advance was meant to be from unconfirmed to confirmed goodness and blessedness; to a confirmed state in which these possessions could no longer be lost... (therefore) man’s original state was a state of indefinite probation.”<sup>29</sup> Theologians have termed this as the potential for Adam to transition from *posse peccare* and *posse non peccare*, to *non posse peccare*, all of which hinged on his obedience or disobedience. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil provided the means of testing Adam in his state of innocence. Francis Turretin wrote, “that exploratory law was necessary in addition to the natural law impressed upon the conscience of men... in order that God, who had granted dominion of all things to man, might declare himself to be the Lord of man and man might understand himself to be a servant bound to obey and adhere to Him.”<sup>30</sup>

And so, God provided a means by which Adam’s love for God could be tested. Adam’s potential obedience would not be the result of coercion, or force, but would spring forth naturally out of his love for God. As such, Adam’s obedience would give glory to God since it would be an outward expression of what God created him to be, and declared to be very good. Or to state it differently, this prohibition in this covenant of works was put in place to display God’s glory as Creator. The Apostle Paul touched on this truth in his instruction to the Romans. We read, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”<sup>31</sup> Paul was addressing

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 6:60-61

<sup>27</sup> Boston, p. 50

<sup>28</sup> Dr. G. M. Richard (Ph.D., Univ. of Edinburgh) is President/ Assoc. Professor of Systematic Theology at RTS Atlanta

<sup>29</sup> Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 22

<sup>30</sup> Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, P&R Publishing, 1992, I:579

<sup>31</sup> Rom. 12.2

fallen sinners who were beginning their journey towards recovery of what was lost in the fall, but the principle is the same. To do God's will in being obedient is to experience the wisdom and goodness in His laws, which is to experience the wisdom and goodness of God. And this glorifies God. How else could David have written, "Oh, how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day,"<sup>32</sup> if he had not first experienced the delight and pleasure associated with obedience. And David knew that God's law was an expression of the excellencies of God Himself. For David, to obey was not only to glorify God, but as the Westminster Shorter Catechism puts it, it was to enjoy God.<sup>33</sup> David wrote, "In your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."<sup>34</sup> Thus, while Adam continued in his obedience, he glorified God in exercising His created perfections.

But what is meant by the tree being specifically named the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Was the knowledge of good and evil to be obtained only through disobeyingly eating the fruit from the tree, or was there a knowledge of good and evil obtainable by abstaining? To begin with, Adam already possessed a knowledge of good and evil in his state of perfection. Evil was already present in the garden, and Adam and Eve encountered it in their interaction with the serpent at the tree. Further, Adam knew evil in that he knew the consequences of evil, that he would surely die if he ate from the tree. Likewise, he knew good in what he saw and experienced of creation, which God declared to be very good. He knew good in that obedience would be rewarded with ongoing life. John Murray wrote, "In the event of successful probation the experience of the crisis of temptation, and the experience of assured and indefectible goodness, would have imparted a renewed and greatly increased knowledge of the contrast between good and evil, and a renewed appreciation of the good as the opposite of evil... Empirically, knowledge is knowledge of good and evil as co-related and contrasted realities."<sup>35</sup> If Adam had obeyed, he certainly would have obtained further knowledge and understanding of this co-relation and contrast between good and evil, which would have included further knowledge of the existence of evil and the reality of Satan as opposed to the goodness of God.

But Adam failed his probation. It's interesting to pause and briefly examine the details of this failure to heed the prohibition and warning.

By eating the fruit, Adam and Eve experienced a fullness of the knowledge of the contrast and the relationship between good and evil. They were overcome by a previously unknown sense of guilt, shame, and fear. They experientially came to know evil through the devastating consequences of submitting to it. And this new knowledge was significantly enhanced by the memory of the goodness of their experience before their act of disobedience. In his explanation for the existence of the prohibition associated with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Turretin wrote, "That sin might be more conspicuous by that external symbol and the evil of the concealed ulcer be dragged to the light (or the virtue of obedience be far more clearly exhibited). For the virtue of obedience would have been the more illustrious as the evil

---

<sup>32</sup> Psalm 119:97

<sup>33</sup> WSC, question 1

<sup>34</sup> Psalm 16:11

<sup>35</sup> John Murray, *Collected Writings*, Banner of Truth, 2001, 2:52

was because forbidden of God.”<sup>36</sup> In both cases, obedience or disobedience, there would be obtained by Adam an enhanced and experiential knowledge of both good and evil.

As Vos pointed out, this view that the knowledge of good and evil would be acquired in either case of obedience or disobedience removes the negative connotation which is often applied to the tree. Or to put it differently, the knowledge of good and evil in and of itself is not a bad thing. Knowledge was not something that God had forbidden. Thus, this knowledge is not descriptive of an “act”, but of a “state.” The tree and its name are morally neutral. It was the disobedient “act” of eating from the tree which was evil which placed Adam in a fallen “state” with its corresponding enhanced knowledge of good and evil.<sup>37</sup>

Vos concluded that the tree was to God His “appointed instrument to lead man through probation to that state of religious and moral maturity wherewith his highest blessedness is connected.”<sup>38</sup> And that “moral maturity” would result not only from the presence of the tree with its prohibition, but from the temptation to violate the prohibition presented by the serpent. Adam’s succumbing to the temptation took him into the experiential realm of seeing the good in plain conflict and contrast to the evil. This knowledge he would attain to, Vos wrote, “by taking either fork of the probation-choice.”<sup>39</sup>

As regards this concept of the knowledge of good and evil being the result of either a successful or unsuccessful probation, Greg Beale called the tree “a symbolic place where judgment was to be carried out (much as courthouses and courtrooms are adorned with the symbol of Lady Justice)...the tree seems to have functioned as a judgment tree, the place where Adam should have gone to ‘discern between good and evil’ and, thus, where he should have judged the serpent as evil and pronounced judgment on it, as it entered the garden... Adam should have discerned that the serpent was evil and should have judged the serpent in the name of God at the place of the judgment tree.”<sup>40</sup>

It was the serpent who successfully undermined the neutrality and purpose of the tree in the minds of Adam and Eve. He introduced the false understanding that the knowledge of good and evil could only be obtained by eating from the tree, as if the power of this transfer of knowledge resided with the fruit of the tree (Gen 3.5b “You will be like God, knowing good and evil”), and that God was withholding this knowledge by the use of His threat of sure death. Further, he deceitfully substituted in their minds the knowledge which could be gained by not eating from the tree with the false promise that they would become like God in that they would exist and operate independent of God, becoming gods themselves. The irony of course is that having been created in the image of God, they were already like God in their moral perfection, but by disobediently eating the fruit, this moral integrity became radically corrupted. And the

---

<sup>36</sup> Turretin, 579-80

<sup>37</sup> Vos, p.31

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, 32

<sup>40</sup> G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, Baker Academic, 2011, p.35

loss of their inherent righteousness would dramatically add to the misery of their fallen condition.

The serpent had successfully stirred up in Adam and Eve an envy of God, and essentially brought God's goodness into question by suggesting that God was holding out on them. In reality, in contrast to the tempter's claim, it was an expression of God's overall goodness to place the tree in the garden. Obedience would have resulted in bringing Adam and Eve into further blessedness as they experienced "that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."<sup>41</sup> Boston explained, "Confirmation in a righteous state is a reward of grace, given upon continuing righteous through the state of trial, and would have been given to Adam if he had stood out the time appointed for probation by the Creator."<sup>42</sup>

This principle of blessed obedience as a result of testing is beautifully illustrated with God's testing of Abraham with his son Isaac. The account of this testing is well known. We read of it and the result; "Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham... Then He said, 'Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you'... And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!... do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me... because you have done this thing... blessing I will bless you... because you have obeyed My voice.'"<sup>43</sup>

We read no more of this tree in Scripture, but we certainly read of, and experience the impact of Adam's violation of the prohibition associated with it. Not only did Adam forfeit the promise associated with the tree of life for himself, but he acted as the federal head and representative of all mankind, and thereby plunged us all into spiritual and physical ruin. Adam's federal headship and the consequences of his actions affecting all are made clear by what the Apostle Paul wrote; "Just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned... Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam... by the one man's offense many died... the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation... by the one man's offense death reigned through the one... through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation... by one man's disobedience many were made sinners."<sup>44</sup> Adam's legacy to his descendants is not only a shared guilt for his disobedience, but a corrupted nature such that amongst fallen men, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," and now, "there is none righteous, no, not one... there is none who does good, no, not one."<sup>45</sup> And so, no one is able to keep the demands of the covenant of works as a means of obtaining life. The probation ended in Adam's failure, and the tree, which

---

<sup>41</sup> Rom. 12:2

<sup>42</sup> Boston, p. 45

<sup>43</sup> Gen. 22:1-2, 10-12, 16-18

<sup>44</sup> Rom. 5:12,14-19

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 3:10,12,23



along with the tree of life sacramentally represented the covenant of works, has served its purpose, and is now gone.

Calvin wrote regarding this tree “that it was prohibited to man, not because God would have him to stray like a sheep, without judgment and without choice; but that he might not seek to be wiser than became him, nor by trusting to his own understanding, cast off the yoke of God, and constitute himself an arbiter and judge of good and evil... a judgment had been given him, by which he might discriminate between virtues and vices... We now understand what is meant by abstaining from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; namely, that Adam might not, in attempting one thing or another, rely upon his own prudence; but that, cleaving to God alone, he might become wise only by his obedience.”<sup>46</sup>

## **The Stage Set for A Much Fuller Display of God’s Glory**

The impact of the entry of death after the fall is dramatically and forcefully emphasized in the record of Adam’s genealogy. We read, “Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. After he begot Seth, the days of Adam were eight hundred years; and he had sons and daughters. So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died.”<sup>47</sup> Yes, Adam and Eve would begin the “filling” of the earth, but their offspring would not possess the perfect image of God, but would be after the image of Adam, guilty and corrupt in body and soul. And so, for Adam’s descendants, it would be, “and he died... and he died... and he died...” and so on.

The book of Job contains a remarkable and frightening picture of death that the Lord presented to Job. Job had spoken very negatively of God’s administration of the world, having accused Him of being unjust and not good in the way he, Job, was being treated in his awful sufferings. In chapter 40 of Job, the Lord “challenges Job to have a go himself at being the judge of all the earth...”<sup>48</sup> He said to Job, “Have you an arm like God? Or can you thunder with a voice like His? Then adorn yourself with majesty and splendor, and array yourself with glory and beauty. Disperse the rage of your wrath; look on everyone who is proud, and humble him. Look on everyone who is proud, and bring him low; tread down the wicked in their place. Hide them in the dust together, bind their faces in hidden darkness. Then I will also confess to you that your own right hand can save you.”<sup>49</sup> As if to say, if you can do all of that, “then I will gladly abdicate and hand over the government of the universe to you...”<sup>50</sup> And by the way Job, “Look now at the Behemoth, which I made along with you,”<sup>51</sup> what are you going to do with this beast in your righteous governing of the world?

---

<sup>46</sup> John Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis*, The Ages Digital Library Commentary, Ver. 1.0, 1998, p.62

<sup>47</sup> Gen. 5.3-5

<sup>48</sup> Ash, 408

<sup>49</sup> Job 40:9-14

<sup>50</sup> Ash, p. 409

<sup>51</sup> Job 40.15

The Lord then proceeded to describe this beast to be “powerful, hungry, superbeast, untamable by human beings, who is yet made by God and can be tamed by God...”<sup>52</sup> Ash wrote that in attempting to identify Behemoth, “we cannot be sure and must make a more tentative suggestion based more on hints and nuances in the text... This ever-hungry superbeast is always devouring like the grim reaper in modern cartoons, the hooded figure of death with his sickle picking off one and then another to keep feeding his insatiable appetite... it seems that Behemoth may be the storybook embodiment of the figure of death.”<sup>53</sup>

The Lord continued with Job by introducing “Leviathan... the king over all the children of pride.”<sup>54</sup> And as Ash concluded, “the archenemy of God, the prince of the power of evil, Satan, the god of this world (as Jesus calls him), the one who holds the power of death. And in the Leviathan we see the embodiment of beastliness, of terror, of undiluted evil.”<sup>55</sup>

Two beasts, one, “the king of terrors,” and the other the king of the proud.<sup>56</sup> Both of them unassailable and uncontrollable by man. Both “these beasts in their size, ferocity and untamable nature are evidence of that dark power rooted in the universe itself which shadows all life.”<sup>57</sup> And yet, God can and does tame them both for, “only the Lord can keep evil on a leash.”<sup>58</sup> The implication is that God has purpose in their continued existence and influence in this world. The description of Behemoth directs us to this understanding when we read of him that, “he is the first of the ways of God.”<sup>59</sup> A preeminent purpose in God’s ways? How so?

We’re helped in our understanding of the “ways of God” by looking at a time when Moses asked of the Lord, “Please, show me Your glory,” to which the Lord replied, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”<sup>60</sup> Christopher Morgan defines God’s glory as, “the magnificence, worth, loveliness, and grandeur of his many perfections, which he displays in his creative and redemptive acts in order to make his glory known to those in his presence.”<sup>61</sup> It’s very interesting and instructive that God would single-out and highlight mercy among the innumerable manifestations of His glory.

The apostle Paul, in countering an accusation against God of being unrighteous in His sovereign election of some for salvation, quoted a portion of the above passage by writing, “What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have

---

<sup>52</sup> Ash, p. 411

<sup>53</sup> Ibid

<sup>54</sup> Job 41.1,34

<sup>55</sup> Ash, 421

<sup>56</sup> Job 41.34

<sup>57</sup> Robert Fyall, *Now My Eyes Have Seen You: Images of Creation and Evil in the Book of Job*, IVP, p.127

<sup>58</sup> Ash, 421

<sup>59</sup> Job 40.19

<sup>60</sup> Ex. 33.18-19

<sup>61</sup> Christopher Morgan, *The Glory of God*, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/the-glory-of-god/>

compassion.' So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy."<sup>62</sup>

The significance of God's response to Moses and Paul's use of it is delightfully demonstrated in an account of the emperor Napoleon who had a rule that any soldiers who were absent without leave would be shot if captured. This rule was enforced without exception until a soldier who happened to be the seventeen-year-old son of Napoleon's cook ran away. When he was captured, his mother asked Napoleon for mercy. He said, "Woman, your son doesn't deserve mercy." She replied, "Yes, of course, you're right. He doesn't deserve mercy. If he deserved it, it would no longer be mercy." Napoleon responded, "Well, then, I will have mercy." And he spared the woman's son. Just tradition, or only a story? Perhaps, but it helps illustrate that the "magnificence, worth, loveliness, and grandeur of (God's) many perfections" is particularly placed on glorious display in His bestowal of mercy on undeserving sinners.

And so, with the "evil one" entering God's "very good" creation, and the ensuing consequence of death, because of Adam's terrible and lawless disobedience, the stage was set for a fuller and grander manifestation and display of God's glory, a more glorious presentation than Adam could ever have known or experienced in his pre-fall state of perfection. It would emerge in the Lord being glorified in showing "mercy to thousands, to those who love (Him) and keep My commandments."<sup>63</sup>

But what would that mercy consist of? Adam had been driven from the garden, and as such, was blocked from access to it, and the tree of life. Worse yet, the intimate communion and fellowship with God was lost because of his lawlessness. And the righteous sentence was duly carried out. He died, spiritually immediately and physically progressively, which was the beginning of the penalty for his rebellion. If God did not intervene, it would culminate finally in eternal death. Therefore, wouldn't mercy consist in the restoration of what was lost? Wouldn't it be forgiveness and life itself, eternal life?

Napoleon pardoned the deserter, sparing him from death. He was willing to overlook the offense with its consequences. But the emperor, as a fellow fallen human being himself, was powerless to execute pure justice for the death-deserving crime of desertion, while at the same time showing mercy to the cook's son. Certainly, the woman was filled with tremendous gratitude and Napoleon would be admired by his soldiers, and others for his magnanimity as the story spread.

But God is not Napoleon, or any other human beneficent ruler. The bestowal of God's mercy must be consistent with His pure righteousness. His forgiveness must be a just forgiveness. Although the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is physically gone, the covenant God established with mankind at the tree is still in effect. Obedience to God's laws is rewarded with life and disobedience results in punishment, which is ultimately death. This is because the

---

<sup>62</sup> Rom. 9.14-16

<sup>63</sup> Dt. 5.10

standard of what it is to be in God's image has not changed. The "bar" has not been lowered, and the basis on which all mankind will finally be judged will be the keeping or breaking of this covenant.

In the first three chapters of Romans, Paul, like a prosecuting attorney, addressed every category of mankind: civilized, barbarian, Gentile, Jew, and those who do not have the law, and then declared, "There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one."<sup>64</sup>

Therefore, if God is to be merciful to sinners, justice must first be satisfied. If that's not the case, then God Himself is not just. "But now," that's how Paul begins his wonderful proclamation of good news for sinners. But now there is relief, a full pardon, a just pardon. He put it this way, "But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."<sup>65</sup>

There is a desperately needed righteousness that the sinner absolutely must have credited to his moral account, a righteousness outside of himself because he cannot attain it. But there's more. A legal debt has been accrued and is due because of the sinner's violation of the law, and that debt is eternal death. And that death must be eternal since there exists an infinite gulf between finite fallen man and God. To fall is to fall infinitely. God's moral law requires perfect obedience on the one hand and payment for lawbreaking on the other. In short, God's justice must be fully satisfied in order for God to "justify" a sinner, to not just overlook, or indulge the sinner, but justly forgive a sinner. Only then can God look favorably upon him. The stipulations of the legal covenant publicly established at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil define these terms.

To the reader's great relief, Paul is telling his readers that the marvelous news that these stipulations have been fully met by the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ. The benefits of this redemptive work of Jesus Christ are available *through faith*, that is to say, the means of gaining it, and *to faith*, that is to say, to those who appropriate it through the actual exercise of faith. This is what Paul meant when he wrote concerning this gospel that, "in it the righteousness of God is revealed *from faith to faith*; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'"<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Rom. 3.10-12

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, vv. 21-26

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 1.17, *the NIV translators apparently attempted to clarify Paul's statement by providing this rendering, "by faith from first to last."* John Murray provided the alternate understanding above in his commentary on Romans.

But it's the phrases, "...the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith... to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus," which should particularly draw our attention. If it is the chief end of man is to glorify God, then might we say carefully and reverently that God's chief end in the whole of creation and history, redemptive history, is to glorify Himself?

In referring to this "demonstration of His righteousness" in the redemptive work of Christ, Paul was highlighting God's pure justice. Only One who is perfectly righteous can exercise perfect justice. Given mankind's guilt, corruption and inability, God in His wisdom and might would exercise that justice by graciously providing a Substitute for the guilty and corrupted sinner. And this is the wonder and awe-inspiring genius of the gospel. Paul explained; God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."<sup>67</sup> It's almost as if Paul was at a loss of words to describe the fullness of Christ's identifying with sinners. "Made sin," think of it. What wonderful and marvelous grace! In that substitutionary work, He, the blameless One, the sinless One would pay the full debt due for the sin of those who are trusting in Him. The lawless deeds of the believing sinner are attributed to the account of Christ. Further, Christ's righteousness is attributed to the sinner's account. Martin Luther called this a "marvelous exchange." Both His perfect keeping of the law, and His paying in full the debt for the sins He took on Himself, are of infinite worth, and timeless because of His divine nature.

This being "made sin" was first shown publicly when Jesus willingly submitted Himself to John's baptism of repentance. There He was in line, waiting with, and identifying with real sinners who were truly in need of repentance. It would be there, as we read, "when He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'"<sup>68</sup>

In the Savoy Declaration, we read that "Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament... to be unto the party baptized a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his engrafting into Christ."<sup>69</sup> Regarding this understanding, Hugh Martin wrote, "What can the sacrament of baptism be in in Christ's own case but a sign and seal of the engrafting of the church unto Himself, and communicating to her the benefits of the new covenant, and His engagement to be hers—her Lord and covenant-head?... For Christ now, after His baptism, must be regarded as including more than Christ at the incarnation... He must be understood and acknowledged now in immediate connection with, and obvious reference to, His baptism—as not merely the individual Jesus in His own single person as the head, but as the whole body mystical... the whole body, therefore, is recognized by the Spirit, and sealed by baptism, as one in Christ."<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> 2 Cor. 5:21

<sup>68</sup> Mat. 3:16-17

<sup>69</sup> Savoy Declaration, XXIX, I

<sup>70</sup> Hugh Martin, *The Abiding Presence*, Christian Focus Publications, 2009, pp. 66-67, 73

The Father's declaration of "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," therefore, takes on a much fuller and richer meaning. The eternal Father, not subject to time, sees the whole scope and significance of Christ's redemptive work. That work was described in the naming of Jesus; "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."<sup>71</sup> Jesus Himself made it clear that "the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost."<sup>72</sup> And the pinnacle of that work would be the cross. Christ was not surprised, confused, or in any way ignorant of that culminating work. He plainly stated, "the hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified... Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour."<sup>73</sup> In His human nature, He was indeed troubled because He knew He was about to experience the full weight and fury of the wrath of God poured out upon Him because He was "made sin." But His death, His being forsaken, would be, and is, the only way the debt due for sin could be paid, not for His sin, but for the sins of all who are trusting Him.

But note that He linked this quickly approaching and horrific ordeal to His being glorified. Later, He also linked His glorification to the glorification of His Father. He prayed, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You."<sup>74</sup> At the cross, God would place His glory, the sum of His perfections, on full public display. Any doubts concerning God's holiness, righteousness, and justice, in dealings with lawlessness were definitively shown and settled to the glory of God. We read, "If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree... for he who is hanged is accursed of God."<sup>75</sup> Indeed, Christ was accursed of God there on that tree. Prior to Paul's conversion, this was a stumbling block for him in his consideration of this Jesus. How could this Man, so clearly receiving his just punishment as a criminal, possibly be the messiah, and be worshipped?

Then came Paul's conversion with eyes opened, and with a radical heart transplant. Then he could see that yes, Jesus hung on that tree as cursed of God, but not for His sins. They were for Paul's sins. He never got over that undeserved grace, mercy and love for him in his being forgiven and becoming a new creation in Jesus Christ. Jesus, the One he hated became the One to whom he would immediately say, "Lord, what do you want me to do?"<sup>76</sup> He would later write, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."<sup>77</sup>

And so, at the cross where our Lord and Savior died, the glory of God's mercy was magnificently manifested in His grace and love extended to those who don't deserve mercy. Jesus Christ experienced eternal hell so that the humble and repentant believer could have eternal life.

---

<sup>71</sup> Mat. 1.21

<sup>72</sup> Lk. 19.10

<sup>73</sup> Jn. 12.23, 27

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 17.1

<sup>75</sup> Dt. 21.22, 23

<sup>76</sup> Acts 9.6

<sup>77</sup> Gal. 2:20

Jesus Christ, “who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.”<sup>78</sup>

The hymnwriter wrote,

*O love, how deep, how broad, how high,  
how passing thought and fantasy,  
that God, the Son of God, should take  
our mortal form for mortals' sake!*

*He sent no angel to our race,  
of higher or of lower place,  
but wore the robe of human frame,  
and He Himself to this world came.*

*For us baptized, for us He bore  
His holy fast, and hungered sore;  
for us temptations sharp He knew,  
for us the tempter overthrew.*

*For us to wicked men betrayed,  
scourged, mocked, in crown of thorns arrayed,  
He bore the shameful cross and death  
for us at length gave up His breath.*

*For us He rose from death again,  
for us He went on high to reign,  
for us He sent His Spirit here  
to guide, to strengthen, and to cheer.*

*All glory to our Lord and God  
for love so deep, so high, so broad—  
the Trinity whom we adore  
forever and forevermore.<sup>79</sup>*

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil served its purpose as a means of testing Adam during his time of probation, and there is no do-over, or make-up test. And if we stay true to our understanding of God’s sovereignty in that He “works all things according to the counsel of His will,”<sup>80</sup> then we need to affirm that God ordained Adam’s disobedience, and yet Adam was

---

<sup>78</sup> 1 Pet. 2.24

<sup>79</sup> Attributed to Thomas á Kempis, *O Love, How deep, How Broad, How High!*

<sup>80</sup> Eph. 1.11

entirely responsible for his actions<sup>81</sup> in spite of his efforts to shift blame to Eve and ultimately God for his disobedience, stating, “The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I ate.”<sup>82</sup> Adam was essentially saying, “What, who me? It was the woman’s fault, you know, the woman You gave me!” Adam’s failed probation through the use of the tree essentially provided the means whereby God would then begin to reveal what all along was His ultimate eternal redemptive purpose. The entrance of evil into God’s “very good” creation provided the setting whereby God could glorify Himself in a way which would have been impossible otherwise. In particular, it was the evil one, “Leviathan,” Satan, and death, the “Behemoth,” that God would utilize for His redemptive purposes.

After the fall, God began to make known that purpose when He declared to the serpent in the garden, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”<sup>83</sup> In the light of what we know from God’s additional revelations in His word, that “Seed” is Jesus Christ, the Son of God in the flesh.<sup>84</sup> The metaphor of bruising the head of the serpent and bruising the heel of the Seed would find its fulfillment in Christ, who as the greater Adam, gained access for the elect to the eternal life that the tree of life sacramentally represented. This access He fully accomplished firstly, in His perfect obedience to the law as required in the Covenant of Works, but secondly, access was gained because Christ’s heel would be bruised in His death on the cross where He would exhaust the curse of death for the elect brought on through Adam’s disobedience in eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. We read, “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”<sup>85</sup> One writer has noted, “It is no accident that human sin which began at the foot of a tree... (Gen.2.9ff), found its resolution on another tree, the cross of Calvary.”<sup>86</sup>

In this way, through the probationary use of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, along with the tree of life, the stage was set for God’s ultimate intention to have a redeemed people for Himself, so that “in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ... that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory,” and “by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of the cross.”<sup>87</sup>

And so, the access to the tree of life that was denied Adam in his fallen state, has now been made glorifyingly available to all who humbly repent and exercise faith in Jesus Christ, thereby manifesting their spiritual union with Christ in His death, resurrection and glorification. The

---

<sup>81</sup> James 1.13-15, many verses such as John 6.37, and Acts 2.23; 4.27-28 affirm the dual truths of God’s sovereignty and man’s accountability.

<sup>82</sup> Gen. 3.12

<sup>83</sup> Gen. 3.15

<sup>84</sup> Galatians 3.16

<sup>85</sup> 1 John 3.8

<sup>86</sup> R. Laird Harris, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Moody Press, 1980, 2:689, (Robert Starke quotes this writer in his paper, “*The Tree of Life: Protological to Eschatological*”, <http://www.kerux.com/documents/keruxv11n2a3.asp>)

<sup>87</sup> Eph. 1.10,12; Col. 1.20



Apostle Paul wrote, “for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive,” and, “For as one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one man’s obedience many will be made righteous.”<sup>88</sup> In the Revelation, John heard Jesus say, “To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”<sup>89</sup> John received a further vision when “he (an angel) showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him.”<sup>90</sup>

## Some Concluding Thoughts

This paper was not intended to be exhaustive in its treatment of the presence of evil in this world, which God declared to be “very good.” It can’t be. The intention was to focus primarily on the first manifestation and exercise of its presence in creation, and then, chiefly, to point to God’s remarkable use of what happened for the majestic and gracious display of His glory in the exercise of mercy to undeserving sinners through the redemptive work of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Stated simply, evil and the consequences of its presence are integral to creation, and our Creator’s purposes, His redemptive purposes. As such, God’s created world with all that is in it, was, is, and will continue to be “very good.” We read, “I am the Lord, and there is no other; there is no God besides Me... there is none besides Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other; I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the Lord, do all these things.”<sup>91</sup> That’s because God is sovereign over it all, and that includes evil which He uses for His good purposes. He did not create it, but prepared the possibility for its existence, and it is entirely subject to God, meaning there is no possibility of it overcoming God, or His good world.

This sovereignty of God over all is such that, as Ash wrote, “Satan is restrained... Satan, the Leviathan is a horrible monster. But he cannot go one millimeter beyond the leash on which the Lord keeps him... He is the only God without rival. Even the mystery of evil is His mystery. Even Satan, the Leviathan, is God’s Satan, God’s pet, if we dare put it this way... we may with absolute confidence bow down to this sovereign God, knowing that while evil may be terrible, it cannot and will not ever go one tiny fraction beyond the leash on which God has put it. And it will not go on forever, for One to whom we belong is God.”<sup>92</sup>

Beyond this paper, there are further paths of inquiry in our understanding of the presence and workings evil in the world, and God’s use of it. Do we not receive further understanding of God’s use of evil in Joseph’s experience with his brothers. At the time of their repentance, and

---

<sup>88</sup> 1 Cor. 15:22; Rom. 5:19

<sup>89</sup> Rev. 2:7

<sup>90</sup> Rev. 22:1-3

<sup>91</sup> Is. 45:5, 6-7

<sup>92</sup> Ash, p. 422

his forgiveness, he said to them, “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.”<sup>93</sup> Paul echoed this by writing, “we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”<sup>94</sup> There it is, “good,” and “purpose.”

Consider the God’s use of evil in the chastening of His people for their sanctification, and His glory.<sup>95</sup> The prophet Habakkuk was baffled and genuinely concerned for God’s righteous character in His using the wicked Chaldeans to chasten His people for their lawlessness. He protested, “You are purer than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness.”<sup>96</sup> God acknowledged their wickedness, but ultimately would assure Habakkuk that after He was finished using them to chasten, He would judge them for touching His people. In that way, God would also glorify Himself in His just judgment of His enemies. Habakkuk had his own idea of how God should administer His world, ultimately, he would humbly submit to God’s ways and means by confessing that, “the just shall live by faith.”<sup>97</sup>

The presence of evil and God’s use of it in suffering is another avenue of inquiry. In the case of the man “who was blind from birth... His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.’”<sup>98</sup> A prominent case of God’s use of evil was in Job’s horrific suffering. And yet it was out of God’s sanctifying love for him as Job finally came to understand. As such, suffering can be understood as not just unexplained, undeserved and meaningless, but as “redemptive suffering”<sup>99</sup> because of the sufferings of Christ in His death. The true believer, “in Christ,” spiritually joined to Christ, now dies with Him, emerging as a new creation as He is being sanctified in suffering. Green wrote, “Adversity is good when it comes from Him.”<sup>100</sup> And it did come from God’s hand. We read that after Job’s suffering and recovery, “Then came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and ate bread with him in his house. And they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him.”<sup>101</sup>

Job bitterly questioned God’s dealings with him in his sufferings. W. H. Green wrote, “He judged God by his own partial and defective notion of His dealings, instead of judging those dealings by His knowledge of God.”<sup>102</sup> Contrast Job’s words before his direct encounter with God with those very same words afterwards. Matthew Henry explains Job’s words in Ch. 42:2 with, “‘Whatever the Lord pleased, that did he.’ Job had said this passionately, complaining of it (ch. 23:13), ‘What his soul desireth even that he doeth;’ now he says, with pleasure and satisfaction, that God’s

---

<sup>93</sup> Gen. 50:19

<sup>94</sup> Rom. 8:28

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, v. 29

<sup>96</sup> Hab. 1:13

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 2:4

<sup>98</sup> Jn. 9:2, 3

<sup>99</sup> Ash, *used this term in multiple places in his commentary, ‘Job’*

<sup>100</sup> William Henry Green, *Conflict and Triumph*, Banner of Truth Trust, 1999, p. 153

<sup>101</sup> Job 42:11, ESV

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, p. 154

counsels shall stand. If God's thoughts concerning us be thoughts of good, to give us an unexpected end, he cannot be withheld from accomplishing his gracious purposes, whatever difficulties may seem to lie in the way."<sup>103</sup> Job came to "rest secure, and live with his questions being unanswered. In God, power, justice and wisdom are all aspects of one and the same divine character, so Job can let the matter rest in faith within the mystery of God."<sup>104</sup> With all that's been written in this paper about the presence of evil, there's still much mystery. The surface has been only slightly scratched. But knowing what we do know about God and His ways, we too can, and must rest in faith "within the mystery of God."

Job was graciously brought along in his pain from frustrated confusion and fear, to confession, repentance, peace and most importantly, worship. Let us fall down in reverent awe and humble worship.

"Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth!"<sup>105</sup>

SDG

---

<sup>103</sup> Mathew Henry, *The Bethany Parallel Commentary on the Old Testament*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1985, p. 960

<sup>104</sup> David Atkinson, *The Message of Job*, Inter-Varsity Press, 1991, p. 156

<sup>105</sup> Ps. 46.10