

Good verses Evil: The Relentless War

by Thomas W. Jacobson (18 November 2013)

The first purpose of civil government, and its duty to encourage good and punish evil, and its duty to protect human life, can best be understood if we comprehend the relentless war between good and evil, and the vital and unique roles of different spheres of authority in society to overcome evil (see “Restraining Evil Begins with You and ...”).

All that is good comes from the Creator God, and He alone is absolutely good. Jesus Himself said, “No one is good except God alone” (Luke 18:19). There is no evil, darkness, deceit, or corruption in Him. We have the capacity for good because we are made in His image, but because we are all corrupted, any goodness in us is from Him.

Evil, many say, comes from the world, the flesh (sin), and the devil; but whatever is in the world comes from the latter two. Evil, then, has two sources. Satan, the first source of evil, was created by God as a good and powerful archangel; but he became prideful, rebelled against God, and became chief adversary to God and man (Isaiah 14:12-16; Job 1:6; Matthew 4:10). He is “the evil one,” “the devil,” a “liar and the father of lies,” the “accuser,” the “tempter,” a “murderer,” the ruler over the darkness in this world, and the “serpent of old” who instigated the fall of man by tempting and deceiving Eve (Genesis 3:1, 4, 14; Matthew 4:1-11; 13:19, 38; John 8:44; Ephesians 6:12; II Corinthians 11:3; I John 5:19; Revelation 12:9-10). Satan’s goal is to turn every person against God, and to unleash his evil power to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10).

The second source of evil is sin within man. When Eve and Adam chose to listen and follow Satan, and thus rebelled against God, they committed the first sin and acquired a sinful nature. Every one of us has what my son calls an “inner sinner.” The truth about us is this: “The heart is more deceitful than all else, and is desperately sick” (Jeremiah 17:9); and “There is no one who does good, not even one” (Psalm 14:3).

Yet every person has knowledge of good and evil, for the Law of God is written on everyone’s heart; it can be suppressed, but never erased (Romans 2:11-16). It is the voice of conscience the Creator put within us.

There is a constant and unrelenting war in the unseen realm and within us. With Satan as our adversary, and a sinful nature from which we cannot free ourselves, is there any hope? Yes, but not from us! There is no human who can ever, on his own merits, justify himself before God, or overcome the power of Satan. So God Himself provided the remedy: His own perfect Son as a sacrifice for our sins – for the sins of all mankind for all time. That is what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross two thousand years ago, atoning for sin and defeating Satan. The divine exchange is this: If we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, repent and ask God to forgive our sins, then He counts the blood of Christ as atoning for our sin, and causes us to be “born from above” by His Spirit. But without belief in Him and repentance, there is no forgiveness of sins. (Luke 24:45-27; John 3:3-18; Acts 11:18; 20:21; Romans 2:4; 3:21-26; 10:9-13; II Corinthians 7:9-10; I John 1:9)

So how can we restrain evil? On a human level, that starts with us, our families, churches, synagogues, schools, businesses and organizations, and ends with civil government.