“God DISPATCHES Evil Instead of Sending It”

Why don’t you teach that Isaiah 45:7 is the simple mistranslation it is? Otherwise, without untangling this one verse, one is left with a god of darkness and evil rather than the God of light and peace.

Isaiah 45:7 I form the light, and DISPATCH darkness: I make peace, and DISPATCH ADVERSITY: I the LORD do all these things.

Thanks for your letter. I’m assuming you are referring to a previous email response of mine, “Is God the Creator of Evil?”. I did, of course, refer the person to what I consider to be a better translation of this verse.

However, the difficulty with the version you have cited is, quite simply, that it offers a rather unlikely translation. The Hebrew term in this verse primarily means “create.” It is the same term used in Genesis 1:1 to describe God’s creation of the heavens and the earth.

According to the Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon, there are 54 occurrences of this term in the Old Testament. The AV translates as “create” 42 times, “creator” three times, “choose” twice, “make” twice, “cut down” twice, “dispatch” once, “done” once, and “make fat” once. But its primary meaning, as any good lexicon will note is to create, shape, form.

Thus, I still think it’s better to point out that, in its original context, the passage is an affirmation of the sovereignty of God over whatever happens in the world. Nothing happens apart from His will or permission. That includes whatever calamities or natural disasters occur. And while I would agree with you that God is not the cause of any moral evil in the world, the Bible still affirms that He is

sovereign over whatever moral evil occurs. So you can prefer the version you cite if you want, but it takes a minority view on how this passage should be translated (as a simple comparison of different versions will quickly reveal).

Shalom in Him,

Michael Gleghorn

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"Where Do Historians Refer to the Earth's Darkness During the Crucifixion?"

I need some help finding where historians refer to the fact that the sky got totally dark and the stars came out when Jesus was crucified. I remember reading something from Julius Africanus, I think it was, who mentioned this fact, but now that I am looking for it I can't find it. Didn't Tacitus refer to Julius' comment also?

The historian Thallus, in A.D. 52, wrote a history of the eastern Mediterranean since the Trojan War. Although his work is lost, it was quoted by Julius Africanus in about A.D. 221. This is mentioned by Gary Habermas in his 1996 book, *The Historical Jesus* (pp. 196-97). Lee Strobel has a brief section on this in his book *The Case for Christ* (pp. 84-85). The historian Edwin Yamauchi quotes from a footnote by Paul Maier in his 1968 book, *Pontius Pilate*, as follows: "Phlegon, a

Greek author from Caria writing a chronology soon after 137 A.D., reported that in the fourth year of the 202nd Olympiad (i.e., 33 A.D.) there was ‘the greatest eclipse of the sun’ and that ‘it became night in the sixth hour of the day [i.e., noon] so that stars even appeared in the heavens. There was a great earthquake in Bithynia, and many things were overturned in Nicaea.'”

This, at any rate, should help you track down the source from Phlegon if you like.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn
Probe Ministries

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