

Did God Create Evil - Does the Bible Say So?

by [Rich Deem](#)

INTRODUCTION

One of the most common reasons skeptics reject the existence of God is due to the presence of evil in this universe. They reason that a perfect God would not create a universe in which evil exists. Skeptics claim that since God created everything that God must have also created evil. They even cite Bible verses, such as:

- I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things. ([Isaiah 45:7, KJV](#))
- Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it? ([Amos 3:6, KJV](#))
- Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good? ([Lamentations 3:38](#))

However, evil is not really a created thing. You can't see, touch, feel, smell or hear evil. It is not one of the fundamental forces of physics, nor does it consist of matter, energy, or the spatial dimensions of the universe. Still, skeptics like to claim that God created evil and cite the Bible to "prove" their point. The Bible is quite clear that God is not the author of evil and insists that He is incapable of doing so.¹

Love that King James translation!

Skeptics love the KJV so much, one would think that they were still back in medieval England. Use of this translation is problematic these days, since it uses an archaic version of modern English, which doesn't necessarily mean the same things today as when it was translated over 400 years ago. In addition, the KJV was produced using a limited number of medieval manuscripts that did not represent the earliest Alexandrian set of manuscripts.

What do the modern translations say?

- The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these. ([Isaiah 45:7, NASB](#))
- I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things. ([Isaiah 45:7, NIV](#))

[Isaiah 45:7](#) contrasts opposites. Darkness is the opposite of light. However, evil is not the opposite of peace. The Hebrew word translated "peace" is *shâlôm*,² which has many meanings, mostly related to the well being of individuals. *Râ'âh*,³ the Hebrew word translated "evil" in the KJV often refers to adversity or calamity. There are two forms of the word. Strong's H7451a most often refers to moral evil, whereas Strong's H7451b (the form used here) most often refers to calamity or distress. Obviously, "calamity" is a better antonym of "peace" than "evil."

Amos 3:6

- If a trumpet is blown in a city will not the people tremble? If a calamity occurs in a city has not the LORD done it? ([Amos 3:6, NASB](#))
- When a trumpet sounds in a city, do not the people tremble? When disaster comes to a city, has not the LORD caused it? ([Amos 3:6, NIV](#))

Likewise, [Amos 3:6](#) uses the same word, *râ'âh*, referring to calamity or disaster. the context (a disaster happening to a city) does not refer to moral evil.

Lamentations 3:38

- Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both calamities and good things come? ([Lamentations 3:38, NIV](#))
- Is it not from the mouth of the Most High That both good and ill go forth? ([Lamentations 3:38, NASB](#))

The King James Version of [Lamentations 3:38](#) seems to suggest that God speaks both good and evil. However, if one reads the verse in context, the preceding verses indicate that God does not do or approve of evil.⁴ The verse following indicates that people should not complain in view of their sins.⁵ What the verse really is saying that God decrees times of good things and times of judgment. Lamentations was written by Jeremiah during a time of judgment, when Judah had gone off into exile. Jeremiah was chosen by God to be the prophet to tell Judah to reform or be judged. The people did not believe Jeremiah, and, therefore, fell under God's judgment. In [Lamentations 3:38](#), the word translated "good" is *tôb* (Strong's H2896).⁶ The word usually refers to good things⁵ as opposed to bad things. Again, *râ'âh*³ does not refer to moral evil, but calamities, in this verse. Likewise, the Bible commentaries indicate that the verse refers to God's judgment based upon people's sin.⁷

CONCLUSION


God is not the author of evil.⁸ However, God does reward and punish on the basis of good and bad behavior. Therefore, God does bring judgment and calamity (either directly or through human authorities) on those who rebel.⁹ God will ultimately judge all people, since [rebels will not be allowed in the new, perfect creation](#).

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REFERENCES

1. "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? ([Numbers 23:19](#))
 "For the LORD your God is a compassionate God; He will not fail you nor destroy you nor forget the covenant with your fathers which He swore to them. ([Deuteronomy 4:31](#))
 "For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God who does not show partiality nor take a bribe. ([Deuteronomy 10:17](#))
 "The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He. ([Deuteronomy 32:4](#))
 "Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind." ([1 Samuel 15:29](#))
 "Now then let the fear of the LORD be upon you; be very careful what you do, for the LORD our God will have no part in unrighteousness or partiality or the taking of a bribe." ([2 Chronicles 19:7](#))
 "Therefore, listen to me, you men of understanding. Far be it from God to do wickedness, And from the Almighty to do wrong. ([Job 34:10](#))
 "Behold, God is mighty but does not despise any; He is mighty in strength of understanding. ([Job 36:5](#))
 For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You. ([Psalm 5:4](#))
 To declare that the LORD is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. ([Psalm 92:15](#))
 Thus says the LORD, "What injustice did your fathers find in Me, That they went far from Me And walked after emptiness and became empty? ([Jeremiah 2:5](#))
 in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago ([Titus 1:2](#))
2. Brown-Driver-Briggs' Hebrew Definitions:
 shâlôm  (Strong's H7965)
 1. completeness, soundness, welfare, peace
 - a. completeness (in number)
 - b. safety, soundness (in body)
 - c. welfare, health, prosperity
 - d. peace, quiet, tranquillity, contentment
 - e. peace, friendship
 1. of human relationships
 2. with God especially in covenant relationship
 - f. peace (from war)
 - g. peace (as adjective)

Part of Speech: noun masculine

A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number: from H7999

Same Word by TWOT Number: 2401a

3. Brown-Driver-Briggs' Hebrew Definitions:
 rá'âh רָאָה (Strong's H7451)
1. bad, evil (adjective)
 - a. bad, disagreeable, malignant
 - b. bad, unpleasant, evil (giving pain, unhappiness, misery)
 - c. evil, displeasing
 - d. bad (of its kind - land, water, etc)
 - e. bad (of value)
 - f. worse than, worst (comparison)
 - g. sad, unhappy
 - h. evil (hurtful)
 - i. bad, unkind (vicious in disposition)
 - j. bad, evil, wicked (ethically)
 1. in general, of persons, of thoughts
 2. deeds, actions
 2. evil, distress, misery, injury, calamity (noun masculine)
 - a. evil, distress, adversity
 - b. evil, injury, wrong
 - c. evil (ethical)
 3. evil, misery, distress, injury (noun feminine)
 - a. evil, misery, distress
 - b. evil, injury, wrong
 - c. evil (ethical)

Part of Speech: see above in Definition

A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number: from H7489

Same Word by TWOT Number: 2191a, 2191c

4. For He does not afflict willingly Or grieve the sons of men. To crush under His feet All the prisoners of the land, To deprive a man of justice In the presence of the Most High, To defraud a man in his lawsuit-- Of these things the Lord does not approve.
 ([Lamentations 3:33-36](#))
5. Why should any living mortal, or any man, Offer complaint in view of his sins?
 ([Lamentations 3:39](#))
6. Brown-Driver-Briggs' Hebrew Definitions:
 tób טוב (Strong's H2896)
1. good, pleasant, agreeable (adjective)
 - a. pleasant, agreeable (to the senses)
 - b. pleasant (to the higher nature)
 - c. good, excellent (of its kind)
 - d. good, rich, valuable in estimation
 - e. good, appropriate, becoming
 - f. better (comparative)
 - g. glad, happy, prosperous (of man's sensuous nature)
 - h. good understanding (of man's intellectual nature)
 - i. good, kind, benign
 - j. good, right (ethical)
 2. a good thing, benefit, welfare (noun masculine)
 - a. welfare, prosperity, happiness
 - b. good things (collective)
 - c. good, benefit
 - d. moral good
 3. welfare, benefit, good things (noun feminine)
 - a. welfare, prosperity, happiness
 - b. good things (collective)

c. bounty

Part of Speech: see above in Definition

A Related Word by BDB/Strong's Number: from H2895

Same Word by TWOT Number: 793a

7. *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible:*

"Lam 3:38 - Out of the mouth of the most High proceed not evil and good?"

Certainly they do; they come to pass, both one and the other, as God has pronounced, and his will determined; even "evils", as it is in the plural number; not the evil of sin, or of fault; this comes not out of the mouth of God, but is forbidden and condemned by him;"

Geneva Bible Translation Notes:

Lam 3:38 - Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not ^(s) evil and good?

^(s) That is, adversity and prosperity, (Amo 3:6).

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary:

Lam 3:38 - evil . . . good--Calamity and prosperity alike proceed from God ([Job 2:10](#); [Isa 45:7](#); Amo 3:6).

8. For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You. ([Psalm 5:4](#))

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ([James 1:13](#))

9. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil. ([Ecclesiastes 12:14](#))

"Thus says the Lord GOD, 'Clap your hand, stamp your foot and say, "Alas, because of all the evil abominations of the house of Israel, which will fall by sword, famine and plague! ([Ezekiel 6:11](#))

for it [rulers and authority] is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. ([Romans 13:4](#))