



COVENANTAL CRISES III:

The Origin of Evil

FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, mankind has pondered the reason(s) for the existence of disruptions, violence, exterminations and all other forms of evil in nature as well as moral evil throughout humanity. Numerous answers have been proposed and advocated. Following are a few mythical examples:

For thousands of years, mankind has pondered the reason(s) for the existence of evil.

1. Creation was “made” by a fallen god who then captured and imprisoned the true God (Gnosticism) in humanity.¹
2. Creation fell as the result of the fallen “serpent,” who tempted Eve and persuaded her to eat the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 3:1-6).
3. Creation fell after Adam’s “first wife,” Lilith, became angry, left Adam, disguised herself as a serpent, and deliberately tempted Eve.²

However, several critical passages in the Bible itself explicitly state who created evil and when and how the origin of evil occurred. Thus:

1. “I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things” (Isaiah 45:6, 7). Could any other statement be more explicit?
2. “And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as *one of us*, to know (Hebrew *yada* = covenantal knowing) good and evil . . .” (Genesis 3:22, emphases supplied).

3. “And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put . . . the tree of knowledge of good and evil” (Genesis 2:8, 9). How could God have done this if he himself did not “know” evil?

4. Finally, and even more revealing, on the “fifth day” “God created great whales” (Hebrew *tannînim* = dragons, sea monsters, serpents) that were explicitly evil (Genesis 1:21, 23):

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The word [*tannînim*; singular, *tannîn*] occurs 28 times in the OT where it always (except in this passage) indicates an evil sea beast often fighting with God in cosmic combat (Ps 74 and Isa 27). It is, in other words, a mythological beast. It is also poetically paralleled with “serpent” in some passages, probably because it is so evil, its bite is death, and ancient pictures seem to depict the beast in a serpentine form. We also know the word from Ugaritic literature where it is another word for the sea god, the primary enemy of Baal and people. Another Ugaritic word for this beast is *lôtan* (=Hebrew *leviathan*). It is the OT prototype of the “dragon” and one of the OT elements behind the NT concept of “Satan.”³

From these biblical accounts it is clear that the One-and-Only True and Good God was himself involved in the origin of evil. Why God did this is a matter for further contemplation and discussion.

Endnotes

1. See Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), pp. 36, 37.
2. See Lilith and Eve, at www.unicornsgarden.com/bkshe4.htm. See also Nigel Suckling, *SHE: The Book of the Goddess* (Cornwall, UK: Lakeside Gallery Publications, 1999).
3. Larry G. Herr and Doug Matacio, “Creating Unity Then, There, and Now,” West Coast Religion Teachers’ Conference, La Sierra University, 2011, p. 2.