

# GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Can You Discern Evil?

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**W**e live in times, I fear, as upside down as Isaiah described in his day: “Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil...” (Isaiah 5:20). Some in our country are aghast when they hear the President describe nations that want to kill innocent people as the “axis of evil”, yet will either join in or keep silence when the man who says such things is described as being evil. Just what is evil? Do you know?

The child of God must have a grasp of this subject in order to please God and grow to maturity. “But solid food is for fullgrown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil” (Hebrews 5:14). We are not to just know the difference between good and evil, but know what is good and what is evil.

Satan is described as the “evil one” for he is opposed to all that is good or commended by God. Jesus prayed that his apostles not be taken out of the world, but be kept from “the evil one” (John 17:15). While in this world, we must understand there is a real source for evil present. We can withstand Satan by being

armed with the word of God and prayer—the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:11ff.).

Any thing, thought or action that is contrary to the standard of God’s word is not only sin, but is evil. When Paul speaks of “the evil” that he would not do, but yet practices, he says it is “sin that dwelleth” in him (Romans 7:19-20). No wonder it is difficult for some in our society to call things evil. They recognize no objective standard of right and wrong, therefore no rule of good and evil. We know that sin is lawlessness (1 Jn. 3:4). Therefore, thoughts that are contrary to God’s teaching are “evil thoughts” (Mk. 7:21). When men commit fornication or adultery, they are committing acts that are “evil” or “wicked” (1 Corinthians 5:13). Even doing something that we judge in our conscience as being unlawful is “evil” (Romans 14:20).

God is not hesitant to describe men who do not bring the doctrine of Christ to us as doing an “evil work”. Therefore we are not to give such teachers greeting or God’s speed or else we will be participating “in his evil works” (2 John 10-11). A ser-

vant who is beating, hurting and abusing others while becoming drunk himself is called an “evil servant” (Matthew 24:48-49). Even religious people who are teaching and trying to influence others away from the teaching of Christ are called “evil workers” (Philippians 3:2). People are recognized as evil, not because of intolerance or prejudice, but because their actions contradict the revealed word of God.

God allows us to call those “troubles” in life that bring us “harm” as being that which is “evil”. Jesus encouraging us not to worry about tomorrow, says that “sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matthew 6:34). We can look at the harm that tornados and hurricanes cause and call them evil. Not because there is something inherently evil in nature, but that they cause much trouble and harm to our lives. Paul said Alexander the coppersmith did him “much evil” or harm (2 Timothy 4:11).

When people are nations encourage the killing of innocent persons, they are practicing evil. They are doing evil on two counts: acting contrary to God’s word, and harming others.