

# Glad Tidings

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

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## “I am not wicked...or am I?”

(Jerry Fite)

I have never personally met the person who said he or she was “sinless.” The same person, however, might be offended if called “evil” or “wicked.” Furthermore, the person who would refer to such in these terms would be characterized as unloving, cruel, and extreme in our present culture. I might “do wrong,” but I am not “bad!” How dare you disrespect me in this way!

Being considered “evil,” “wicked,” or “bad” will always be weighed and criticized by public opinion. While we should never overlook how our words will be interpreted by our neighbors, we should first understand how God uses these terms to characterize sin. Societal mores change with the coming and going of each generation. But God “*changes not*” (*Malachi 3:6*). It is the eternal God before whom we must stand in the Judgment. How He characterizes my actions and life has eternal consequences.

The Greek word “poneria” (noun), with its adjective complement are translated “iniquities,” “evil,” “bad” and “wicked” in the New Testament. Paul declares “everyone” of us has “iniquities” to turn from (*Acts 3:26*). When the Lord invites all to His supper, he invites the “bad” along with

the “good” (*Matthew 22:10*). Therefore, if you are not good, you are bad. In this passage, there is no category between the two. Jesus condemns men who love the darkness rather than the light. According to our Lord, the reason for this misplaced love is that man’s deeds are “evil” (*John 3:19*). We may call our deeds sin, missing the mark, or falling short of God’s glory, but God calls all iniquity “evil.”

Whether one persists in fornication (*I Cor. 5:8*) or, in resisting the truth, camouflages secret motives to entangle another in inconsistency (*Matthew 22:18*), the sinner will face the Lord at His return and experience the separation of “the wicked” from “the just.” It is not just sex, it is wickedness! It is not merely a capricious question, it is wickedness!

Because we continually make comparisons in life, we can easily fall into the trap of classifying people in their sins. One may sin, but surely, that does not mean he or she is evil...does it? Is this how God views me? Paul instructs and exhorts the Corinthian church to “*put away from yourselves the evil person*” (*I Corinthians 5: 13*). There are some today, even among Christians, who would criticize the choice of

words the Holy Spirit inspires Paul to write. Is Hitler “evil” because of his multiple atrocities, but the brother who commits the one sin of fornication is not evil? If God views the one who does righteousness as “righteous,” why do we think that if one chooses to do evil (sin against God), he or she is not “evil?” If practicing righteousness, we are righteous, “*just as He is righteous*” (*I John 3:7*), are we not evil, as Satan is evil, when we succumb to his will (*John 8:44*)?

Do you ever find fault with God’s grace because He rewards a worker, who has devoted less time than you, the same as He rewards you? Jesus asks, “*is your eye evil, because I am good*” (*Matthew 20:15*)? Have you ever left God out of your plans for tomorrow, boasting of what you are going to be able to do? James says, “*all such boasting is evil*” (*James 4:16*). How many people today would consider fault finding with God and boasting of plans apart from God as “evil.” God does!

The servant, who out of fear, hid the money his Lord had entrusted to him to be used, was considered a “slothful,” therefore “wicked” servant (*Matthew 25: 26*). Was he really “wicked?”