

H. A. Ironside's Teaching on Isaiah 45:7

By Troy J. Edwards

I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things. (Isaiah 45:7)

I have examined this passage multiple times as it remains a source of contention with those of us who know that God is good, does nothing evil, but recognize that the Bible is the divinely inspired and authoritative written Word of God.

In all of my writings on this we have shown through comparing Scripture with Scripture and by citing students of Scripture (past and present) that the passage must be read in a permissive rather than in a causative sense. I was delighted to run across an affirmation by yet another well-respected figure in the church who affirms this understanding.

H. A. Ironside, the well-respected pastor of Moody Church in Chicago from 1929 to 1948 and prolific writer of many books and Bible commentaries, had this to say on the passage:

“I create peace and I create evil.” What does that mean? Extreme high Calvinists insist that GOD has foreordained everything that takes place on the earth; therefore that man should sin, in order that He might have opportunity to display His redemptive grace. But that is not what is involved here when He says, “I create peace and I create evil.” It is evil in the sense of calamity. In other words, **if there is a thunderstorm and great damage is done, GOD says, “I take full responsibility for it”**; if everything is fair and beautiful GOD says, “This is from Me”; if there is a great earthquake, GOD is behind that. Whatever it is, “I the Lord create peace, I create evil.” And so we read, “Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?” (Amo_3:6).

GOD takes the responsibility for everything that occurs, but it is not always that He is working directly Himself, but that He permits others to work. For instance, He permitted Satan to try Job. But the point here is that there are not two great powers in the universe in conflict with each other, both of whom are god, a good god and an evil god; **but there is one GOD, though there is an evil power working against Him.** (Ironside Notes on Selected Books, E-Sword Edition; Emphasis are mine)

I believe that this is a beautiful explanation of Isaiah 45:7. It helps us to understand the Old Testament language and removes the need for us to apply the marcionist idea of rejecting any portion of Scripture that does not appear to fit with our understanding of God as He is represented by Jesus the Messiah. Isaiah 45:7 is Scripture, but must be understood in the wide context of full Biblical revelation concerning God's loving and holy character.

For more understanding of this important topic, we have a number of books that will assist in your study and growth. Visit www.vindicatinggod.org/books.html for more details.

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