

# The Discernment of Good and Evil

## Part 4

By  
Boyd Yahn

Hello everyone, it is September 19<sup>th</sup> of 2022 and this is the fourth installment of the Good and Evil series. It's always interesting when going into an area of study you've just not looked at before that questions and insights just seem to come along.

0:00:20

Thoughts that weren't a thing become a thing because of a change of perspective. Christ said that we are to live by every word of God. He said in Matthew 23:8, and we will read that. Matthew 23:8, it says:

*<sup>8</sup>But you, (Speaking to the multitudes and His disciples) do not be called 'Rabbi'; (Which means master) for One is your Teacher, (So He is directing them away from humans to himself) for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren.*

We are to have one master and teacher and it is Him.

0:01:09

This is repeated in the writings of Paul in I Corinthians 11:3 where we are told directly that the head of every man is indeed Christ, and Christ's head is God. Christ said that the Father was greater than He, and Christ prayed that we should become one as He and the Father were one. And we are also told in I Timothy 2:5, we won't go there, but we know the text. There is one mediator between ourselves and God and it is also Christ.

0:01:43

Since we looked in Matthew, if we look at Matthew 23:1 we see that Christ is addressing both the multitudes and His disciples; so, it's there for everyone. And his following teaching was directed to them both. Christ is the head of every man. The Biblical record is both solid and consistent, given that, the question that needs to be asked then is, "Would God create a manmade hierarchal structure that would insist that the ecclesia would be at one with it, rather than with God and Jesus Christ"?

0:02:37

And that hierarchal structure would interject itself as the mediator between God and man. Would God actually construct one of those? And if God didn't make one and there is one, would it be an idol and a replacement for Christ being our head? And would that, of and by itself, be evil? We need to think on some of these things if we come to consider what God defines as evil and what He does not. What would your answer be?

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I would like to begin this study by looking at the bar by which we all shall be judged when that day arrives, as surely it must. We are told directly what that is actually, God doesn't leave us in the dark on that. He tells us directly what the bar will be, the parameters that will be in place when you and I are judged.

0:03:49

In verse 14 of Ecclesiastes chapter 12, it says:

*<sup>14</sup>For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.*

Christ added some color to this in Matthew, the book of Matthew; in Matthew 12. You know where we read in Ecclesiastes, God will be looking at us individually through the eyes of good and evil as defined by Him; certainly not by us.

0:04:27

So, in Matthew 12:35 – 37 we read:

*<sup>35</sup>A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. <sup>36</sup>But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the Day of Judgment. <sup>37</sup>For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”*

He knew what the end of the road looked like. And He also referenced this same thing in the book of John. John 5, if we go to John 5 and we'll look at verses 28 and 29, where it says:

*<sup>28</sup>Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice <sup>29</sup>and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.*

0:05:35

So, there is no mistaking what the bar is; good and evil will be the parameters that are used when we are judged. We are admonished, in light of this, to actively begin to discern good and evil, which only makes perfect sense if that's what we are going to be judged by. It might make some sense that we know what those things are so that we can make our choice.

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If this is the bar by which we will all be judged it might be a fair idea to come to know what that is and that of course is the largest part of why we are taking a look at this study. We, you and I, we are on a journey where we have grown up in a world that is evil, that rejects God's word generally, to be transformed into beings that are no longer evil in any way, and only good.

0:6:40

If we notice I Corinthians 15; I Corinthians 15:50 – 53, of the resurrection chapter where this is actually spoken of. It says:

*<sup>50</sup>Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood*

Which is what we are now.

*cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.*

*<sup>51</sup>Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— ... <sup>52</sup>in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible,*

So, we go from a life and existence of corruption, to a life of incorruption

*and we shall be changed.*

0:07:31

As God is immortal and incorruptible, only good, in the resurrection those whom God glorifies will join Him in existence but not in authority. There will be no evil in those empowered with eternal life, as we see in Revelation 14:5. Let's just take a quick look at that. Revelation 14:5, speaking of the 144,000 it says:

*<sup>5</sup>And in their mouth was found no deceit, for they are without fault before the throne of God.*

They are only good. Perfection, no evil, only good.

0:08:15

Understanding this, I Peter 2; I Peter 2, verses 1 and 2 takes on a significantly deeper meaning and importance to those of the ecclesia today. It becomes much more meaningful. Let's just read that:

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<sup>1</sup> *Therefore, (it says) laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,*

And we all have those things in us. Well, if we laid them all aside, and they are all evil, we would be replacing that evil with good, would we not? We go from a condition of being evil to various degrees, to a condition of perfectly good, like our Father. When the creation of beings living in the kingdom of God have a god level existence, God level beings, sons and daughters of God in its fullness. Think of that as a spectrum, with a hundred percent of evil to the left and a hundred percent good on the right, and we are transitioning from the left to the right, if we are part of the program.

0:09:54

The Bible actually speaks to this directly; something I had not considered in this way before. We've used this before but it's worth looking at again. In the tiny little book of III John, III John 11. I'd like to read that where it speaks to this. And the directive is really quite clear. We've got to move from a condition of some portion evil and some portion good, by God's definition, to all good, by God's definition. It says in John:

<sup>11</sup> *Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good.*

Imitating God.

*He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.*

0:10:50

Would it not make sense then that we would actively seek that out, to see what those parameters actually are? Would that not make perfect sense if that is what we would do?

0:11:07

Let's go to Romans 12:9; Romans 12:9 where we are given further instruction. It says:

<sup>9</sup> *Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.*

Wouldn't you want to know and know that you know? Notice verse 17. It says:

<sup>17</sup> *Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.*

Well, wouldn't you have to know what evil was to make sure that you didn't repay somebody with evil? How about verse 21? It says:

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*<sup>21</sup>Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

0:12:02

Romans 16, verse 19; Romans 16, verse 19:

*<sup>19</sup>For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore, I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil.*

The instruction really couldn't be more clear.

0:12:30

At this time, I think it's important to address how Satan and his ministers make a simple twist to present the wrong tree to us. They will actively use the terms good and evil; oh yes, they will talk about it as these situations and occasions to do that occur. But what they will not do, what they won't do, is define it.

0:13:00

It is then incumbent upon those who consider themselves part of God's ecclesia to do so. The reason that Satan's ministers speak of these terms, or on these terms, but never define them, is so they will not expose themselves for what they really are. And Satan does have ministers, and we need to keep that in mind.

0:13:30

In II Corinthians 11, verses 12 – 15, where Paul says:

*<sup>12</sup>But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast. <sup>13</sup>For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. <sup>14</sup>And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. <sup>15</sup>Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*

0:14:16

If such ministers defined righteousness, if you're going to transform yourself into a minister of righteousness, could you go to the scriptures and define righteousness from the scriptures and keep yourself hidden? Well, hardly. There would be no place to hide. That's one of the key tools that Satan's ministers use, is that they never define the terms. They do not do what the ecclesia needs to do, and that's go to God's definitions to remove any confusion or any doubt as to what good and evil actually is.

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If we read Psalm 119:172 it's not hard to figure out why Satan's ministers would never define righteousness. Psalm 119:172 says:

*<sup>172</sup>My tongue (David Speaking) will (speak) of your word, for all your commandments are (righteousness).*

You would never expect any of Satan's ministers to explain that in any detail.

0:15:37

They speak and they allow their audience to fill in the blanks as to what is good and evil. Thereby encouraging, aiding and abetting feeding from the wrong tree. And having no clue in many cases they are even doing so.

0:15:55

I'll give one example where we can see that if Satan's ministers actually took the time to define this, a lot of the traditional Christianity and Christian teaching would just simply collapse. We need to notice as we read this that Nehemiah was viewing things from God's viewpoint, from God's definition.

0:16:28

Let's look at this, Nehemiah 13, verses 14 – 18. Nehemiah was saying:

*<sup>14</sup>Remember me, O my God, concerning this,*

And he had been doing a little moving and shaking to get things back into the way God wanted it to be.

*... do not wipe out my good deeds*

Nehemiah understood that he was in harmony with God and God's definition of good. And he got that.

*that I have done for the house of my God, and for its services! <sup>15</sup>In those days I saw people in Judah treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned them about the day on which they were selling provisions. <sup>16</sup>Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods, and sold them on the Sabbath to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. <sup>17</sup>Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, "What evil thing is this that you do, by which you*

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*profane the Sabbath day? <sup>18</sup>Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our Yehovah bring all this disaster*

And the word disaster is H7451, it's the same word as evil. Let's read that.

*<sup>18</sup>Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our God bring all this evil on us and on this city?*

So, does God bring evil upon evil? Yes, and the Bible is full of examples of Him doing so. (More on that in a future message)

*Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath."*

0:18:34

Nehemiah thought in terms of good and evil according to God, and so should God's ecclesia. Profaning the Sabbath day is evil by God's definition. God's word, the one we are to live by every word of, tells us of the evil in desecrating the Sabbath.

0:19:05

How do you think that definition would go over in a world consumed by evil? God's ecclesia must search out and hold in respect what God defines to be evil. In embracing those things, we are moving to be at one with Him as Christ prayed. And we move closer to being good; we are on the journey.

0:19:33

We know that we are to live by every word of God, He mentioned that in Luke 4:4, so let's read that. It won't take us long to do that. When He was having it out with Satan, Christ quoted that. He was a human being at the time. Ah, Luke 4:4 Christ answered Satan:

*<sup>4</sup>... saying "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'"*

0:20:10

This is fully supported and it is actually quoted in Deuteronomy 8:3 where the same message is given, only this time by God himself. And of course, Christ being at one with Him was perfectly in harmony with him.

0:20:26

Let's look at that, Deuteronomy 8:3

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*<sup>3</sup>So He (God) humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of Yehovah.*

So, Christ is in perfect harmony with His Father on this matter, and we need to be as well.

0:20:54

But God, as we just read, told man that he is to live by every word of God and sometimes there is a tendency to narrow that up some, to only the commandments or some vague view of the law.

0:21:18

Let's look at what God says directly in a few places. Let's go to Jeremiah 6. Jeremiah 6, where we will read verses 16 – 19. Jeremiah 6, verses 16 – 19. Verse 16:

*<sup>16</sup>Thus says Yehovah: "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'*

They chose evil.

*<sup>17</sup>Also, I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' 'But they said, 'We will not listen.' <sup>18</sup>Therefore hear, you nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them. <sup>19</sup>Hear, O earth! Behold, I will certainly bring calamity (evil) on this people—the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not heeded My words nor My law, but rejected it.*

0:22:31

It's far broader than one simple application, it's, "Heed MY words", we shall live by every word of God. And we, humanity, generally rejects that and as such is evil, by God's definition.

0:22:53

Jeremiah 7; Jeremiah 7, we'll read verses 22 – 24. God speaking:

*<sup>22</sup>For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices.*

That wasn't on the table yet.



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*<sup>23</sup>But this is what I commanded them, saying, ‘Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all (My) the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.’ <sup>24</sup>Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts and went backward and not forward.*

0:23:44

Evil is walking contrary to the voice of God, so says God. Do you and I have a fear of God? Do we respect His viewpoint? Do we respect His definition? Jeremiah 9:3.

*<sup>3</sup>“And like their bow they have bent their tongues for lies. They are not valiant for the truth on the earth. For they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know Me,” ...*

So, a rejection of God automatically leads to evil. When He says, “You shall have no other gods before me”, He means it. And it is the pathway to evil.

0:24:40

Jeremiah 11, let’s read verses 6 – 11 to see if we can get some more understanding of that.

*<sup>6</sup>Then Yehovah said to me, “Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying: ‘Hear the words of this covenant and do them. <sup>7</sup>For I earnestly exhorted your fathers in the day I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, until this day, rising early and exhorting, saying, “Obey My voice.”*

This is God the Father talking.

*<sup>8</sup> Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but everyone followed the dictates of his evil heart;*

Again, we see picking the opposite of what God says, is evil according to God.

*therefore, I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded them to do, but which they have not done.” <sup>9</sup>And Yehovah said to me, “A conspiracy has been found among the men of Judah and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem.*

Conspiracy is when two or three get together to bring about an evil purpose.

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*<sup>10</sup>They have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers who refused to hear My words, and they have gone after other Gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken My covenant which I made with their fathers.” <sup>11</sup>Therefore thus says Yehovah: “Behold, I (God) will surely bring calamity (evil) on them*

And we'll get to that in a future message where that needs to be looked at.

*which they will not be able to escape; and though they cry out to Me, I will not listen to them.*

0:26:29

Let's go ahead to Jeremiah 13 and verse 10. We will nail this definition of evil down. Again, it's continuous in scripture, Christ said it, the apostles said it, the writings, everybody said it.

*<sup>10</sup>This evil people, who refuse to hear My words, who follow the dictates of their hearts, and walk after other Gods to serve them and worship them, shall be just like this sash which is profitable for nothing.*

0:27:02

The book of Jeremiah is a treasure trove of God's insights and viewpoints. The one we are to be at one with. Use them to mine the nuggets that are there. Dig out your concordance if that is all you have; flip it open to evil and walk through and read every reference to evil in the Bible. And if first it's a bit bewildering to do so, at least it was for me, perhaps everybody's in a lot better shape than me, but if your eyebrows are a little saggy and eyes a little squinty, it will raise your eyebrows and open your eyes in ways you have possibly never considered before. Well, that is certainly the case in how it went down for me.

0:27:57

God's ecclesia are those who seek the will of God. I'm going to give just one example here of, where you take a definition like that; they're the one's that seek the will of God. God states His will constantly, it's part of His word. He tells us the things and now that we know and have established that doing something different than God's stated viewpoint is in fact evil.

0:28:36

Let's read Leviticus 19:28 just one of countless examples, because we live within an evil world. God says:

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<sup>28</sup>*You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am Yehovah.*

Does anyone see evil exploding around us? And would the people who have disallowed this dictate of God, would they even understand that it is evil? If you pointed this scripture out to them, how do you think that they would be with the definition that God provides?

0:29:19

Some might be cut to the heart; I know some that have. But for most, it's meaningless. There's another treasure trove regarding God's considerations of evil and His wisdom He passes along to us and that's found in the book of proverbs. Let's take a look at some of the proverbs where some of this would be mentioned. And just stop to consider it in the light of good and evil, where are we at with this, you and I?

0:29:56

Proverbs 3, verses 5 – 8. Let's read that.

<sup>5</sup>*Trust in Yehovah with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding;*  
<sup>6</sup>*in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.*

Totally in harmony with what we have looked at.

<sup>7</sup>*Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear Yehovah and depart from evil. <sup>8</sup>It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones.*

Pretty good advice. Have we considered that possibly in the way we should in the past? I don't think that is the case.

0:30:43

In Proverbs 8:13

<sup>13</sup>*The fear of Yehovah is to hate evil;*

Oh, maybe I should know what that is then.

*pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate.*

We can not only do evil; we can speak evil.

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And how often do we stop to consider that our mouth is engaged long before our brain is and we possibly speak evil and don't even know it? How often does that happen to us, even yet? Proverbs 13:19.

*<sup>19</sup>A desire accomplished is sweet to the soul, but it is an abomination to fools to depart from evil.*

0:31:48

So, if we come to understand what evil is by God's definition and the studying His word, and we just won't go there, what are we? A fool. So, if you and I begin to walk down this road and actually start to look at some of this stuff and give it some consideration, and make changes where changes need to be made; that's a very wise thing.

0:32:24

Proverbs 14:16 says:

*<sup>16</sup>A wise man fears and departs from evil, ...*

Well, you have to find out what it is and then depart from it. One of the most poisonous things that I have ever come across that I actually gave a sermonette on one time was called, "Rome's Other Poison". And it's the viewpoint that as long as you are in the right church and you do the right things; you go to church every Saturday, that somehow maybe that's all you need to do and you get a pass.

0:33:11

When we were tossed out of United (Church of God) back in 2016, our names were removed from the membership list and I always wondered why that was such a big thing. And now I think, with some hindsight, the clarity on that is correct, it's actually believed that as long as you are a member of this or that church, God's church supposedly, that somehow you don't have to grow, you don't have to change, you don't have to study to show yourself approved; as long as you're a member of the church, ah, you're in good shape.

0:33:56

And I remember reading years ago in a magazine where a prominent personality died and it was so important that he died a Catholic. He was a member of "the church." Well, that thinking just isn't going to cut it. We must grow and we must change and we must discern good and evil.

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Reading Proverbs 14:16 again, it says:

*<sup>16</sup>A wise man fears and departs from evil, but a fool rages and is self-confident.*

Verse 22

*<sup>22</sup>Do they not go astray who devise evil? But mercy and truth (Aren't those the things we are supposed to seek?) belong to those who devise good.*

0:34:57

Probably wouldn't be a bad idea to know what good is so that we can devise good and reject evil. Proverbs 15:28; Proverbs 15:28.

*<sup>28</sup>The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.*

The mouth is engaged long before their brain is engaged. But the righteous study how to answer.

0:35:34

Now that's interesting, we've actually got to get our nose in the book and it's not enough to just be a member of a particular organization, or not. Proverbs 16, verses 4 and 6. This is an eyeopener for me. It says:

*<sup>4</sup>Yehovah has made all for Himself, yes, even the wicked for the day of doom.*

Going down in verse 6.

*<sup>6</sup>In mercy and truth atonement is provided for iniquity; and by the fear of Yehovah one departs from evil.*

0:36:20

So, God says something, we respect His word, we have a fear of what He says and we move. I thought, huh. That's one of the keys, that's the way we can get the ball rolling in the right direction. Verse 17 of Proverbs 16.

*<sup>17</sup>The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; ...*

We are moving from a condition of being evil and we don't even know it; to a condition of being good. All these are in perfect harmony with that.

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0:37:10

If we look at verse 17 of Proverbs 16. Sorry, I just read that:

*<sup>17</sup>The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; and he who keeps his way preserves his soul.*

Proverbs 17, and verse 13, it says:

*<sup>13</sup>Whoever rewards evil for good,*

So, if someone does good to you and you reward it with evil; there's consequences.

*evil will not depart from his house.*

0:37:45

So, there's ripples that go out on the pond based on our ignorance of this area that I don't think I have considered at all to the degree that it warrants it. Are these directives that the ecclesia should consider deeply? What do you think?

0:38:14

I'd like to leave you with something to consider as we attempt to expand the scope of what evil actually is. Remember, this is from God's point of view, the one we are to become one with. And this kind of popped off the page while I was trying to study this. If you go to Jeremiah 23; Let's, go to Jeremiah 23. Jeremiah 23, and let's read verses 1 – 4. It says:

*<sup>1</sup>“Woe to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!” says Yehovah. <sup>2</sup>Therefore thus says Yehovah God of Israel against the shepherds who feed My people: “You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings,” says Yehovah. <sup>3</sup>“But I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. <sup>4</sup>I will set up shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking,”*

0:39:45

So, the failure to feed God's people, to feed the sheep; God refers to as evil. Have you taken the time to consider that? Have you thought about those hollow empty messages that you hear; there's nothing there, it's all fluff? Have you considered that is evil in God's eyes?

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It just simply says that it is. And there will be shepherds set up over them, when the time comes, who will feed them. Who do you think that might be? It kind of gives us a whole new perspective and a feel to Christ's admonition to Peter in John 21. In John 21 where we will read verses 11 – 17. John 21 and verses 11 – 17.

*<sup>11</sup>Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, (They had been fishing) full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. <sup>2</sup>Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?" —knowing that it was the Lord.*

*<sup>13</sup>Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.<sup>14</sup>This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.*

0:41:36

Well, that would have been a bit of a sobering thing, ah, you are doing your thing, you're catching fish and then He shows up. And of course, He would show up because there was a purpose. And:

*<sup>15</sup>So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." <sup>16</sup>He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." <sup>17</sup>He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." (and) Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep.*

0:42:37

To not feed the sheep, as we read in Jeremiah 23, is evil by God's definition. Christ did so because there was no evil in Him. Doesn't a new perspective freshen one's viewpoint? More to come on this fascinating subject.