

Objection: The Problem of Evil

What is evil? What is the problem we are talking about?

Epicurus (341 BC – 270 BC) – “Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil? Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?”

God is all-powerful and authoritative

- *Psalm 33:9* – For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.
- *Isaiah 44:24* – Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: I am the Lord, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself.
- *Romans 1:20a* – For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world.

God is all-good and loving

- *Psalm 100:5* – For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.
- *Psalm 145:17* – The Lord is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works.
- *John 3:16* – For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

God is all-wise

- *Job 12:13* – With God are wisdom and might; he has counsel and understanding.
- *Proverbs 2:6-7* – For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth came knowledge and understanding; he stores us wisdom for the upright.
- *James 1:5* – If anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given to him.

Unbiblical Answers To The Problem of Evil

1. Atheism
2. God is not all-powerful and authoritative
3. God is not all-good and loving
4. The nonexistence of evil
5. Karma & Reincarnation

What does the Bible say about evil?

- *Genesis 2:16-17* – And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”
- *Genesis 3:4-5* – But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”
- *Genesis 3:15*– I [God] will put enmity between you [Satan] and the woman [Eve], and between your offspring and her offspring; he [women’s offspring] shall bruise your head, and you [Satan] shall bruise his heel.
- *Psalms 51:5* – Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.
- *Isaiah 45:7* – I form light and create darkness, I make well being and create calamity, I am the Lord, who does these things.
- *Jeremiah 17:9* – The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?
- *Mark 1:27b* – He [Christ] commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.
- *John 8:44a* – You [Scribes & Pharisees] are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him.
- *Romans 3:23* – For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
- *2 Corinthians 4:6* – For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
- *James 1:13-14* – Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

Theological Conclusions From The Above Passages:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

November 9, 2022

Proposed Answers To *Why* Evil Exists

Answer Number One:

All of God's creatures were created "free moral agents." If God made them otherwise they would have been mere machines with no will of their own... To be a "free moral agent" implies that one has the power of "choice." ...As long as Satan chose the "Will of God" there was no "Evil" in the Universe, but the moment he chose to follow his own Will, then he fell, and by persuading others to follow him he introduced "Evil" into the Universe. (Clarence Larkin, *The Spirit World*, 12-14)

Does this answer the question of why evil exists? Why or why not?

Answer Number Two:

And we know it [the Fall of Satan] was a *gracious* purpose because God's *plan before the creation of the world* was to show *grace* to unworthy sinners. Sin came into being as part of a plan to show grace to sinners. "[God] saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own *purpose* and *grace*, which he gave us in Christ Jesus *before the ages began* (2 Timothy 1:9). The plan before the creation was that Christ would be the Lamb slain for sinners – sinners whose names were "written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain" (Revelation 13:8). Christ slain for sinners was the plan before any human sinned. (John Piper, "How Did Evil Begin?", 3)

Does this answer the question of the why evil exists? Why or why not?

Does the Bible tell us *how* evil exists?

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Reflection From The Week:

Reflect on the attributes of God's grace, mercy, and justice and answer the questions, "How does God show us his glorious grace, mercy, and justice?" and "What role does God's conquest over evil play in his purposes?" (These questions answer each other.)

Preparation For Next Week:

- Watch: "What Are The Most Common Objections Against Christianity?" - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSkrdv6gyE>

Further Resources:

Chatraw, Joshua D. and Mark D. Allen. *Apologetics At The Cross: An Introduction for Christian Witness*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2018.

Lewis, C. S. *Mere Christianity*. San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 1980.

Newman, Randy. *Questioning Evangelism: Engaging People's Heart the Way Jesus Did*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2004.

Van Til, Cornelius. *Christian Apologetics*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1976.