

The Moral Argument for God The Problem of Evil

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Chapter Topics

- ◆ The origin of absolute morality
- ◆ Christianity's greatest challenge
- ◆ The problem of evil
- ◆ How to define evil
- ◆ Why does God allow evil to continue?
- ◆ How to respond to the believer
- ◆ How to respond to the unbeliever

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Christianity's Biggest Challenge



Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people?



How can a good God allow so much evil to happen?



Why does God allow children to get cancer?

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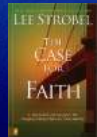
2009 Survey Question

"If you could ask God only one question and you knew He would give you an answer, what would you ask?"

The most common response:

"Why is there pain and suffering in the world?"

Lee Strobel (Masters in Law, Journalist, Christian Apologist), *The Case for Faith*, 2000, p. 29.



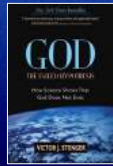
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The Problem of Evil

Victor J. Stenger (Atheist and author), *God, the Failed Hypothesis: How Science Shows that God Does Not Exist*, 2007, p. 216.

“The problem of evil remains the most powerful argument against God.”

Theodicy



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Theodicy

- ◆ A branch of theology
- ◆ Greek: theos (God); dikaios (justification)

Theodicy is a defense of God's righteousness in light of the reality that evil exists in the universe He created.

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Bertrand Russell (Nobel prize winner and atheist, 1872 - 1979)

“No one can sit at the bedside of a dying child and still believe in God.”



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A Common Answer

The secret things belong to the LORD our God.

Deuteronomy 29:29

For who has known the mind of the LORD?

Romans 11:34

Is this adequate?

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6 biblical facts for the Christian and the 4-Part solution



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Solution: Starting Points

- ◆ God exists and His Word is true
- ◆ God is sovereign (Col 1:16; Rev 1:8; 1 Chron 29:11-12; Psalm 115:3)
- ◆ God ordains all things that come to pass (Proverbs 16)
- ◆ Evil exists in the world
- ◆ Everything is ordained for the Glory of God, including evil (Job 1:8)

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Four Part Solution

If God exists, why is there
so much evil in the world?

1. The problem of evil
2. What is evil?
3. Did God create evil?
4. Is God to blame?

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1 The Problem of Evil

James Edwin Orr (Th.D., Ph.D., Ed.D.),
The Faith That Persuades, 1977, p. 80.

“The problem of evil is one of the most
crucial protests raised by unbelievers
against the fact of God.”

1912 – 1987
Chaplain U.S. Air Force, WWII



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2 How to define Good & Evil?

Good: Whatever conforms to the will of God

Luke 18:19 - "...Jesus answered, "No one is good-except God alone."

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Hot and Cold



The temperature of an object is the measure of the heat energy that it contains.

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Hot and Cold



How can this feel cold if cold does not exist?

Your body temperature (heat) is warmer than the temperature of the popsicle. A heat transfer occurs leaving you with less heat, therefore the sensation of "cold".

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What is Evil?

- ◆ You can't create evil because evil doesn't exist as a created entity.
- ◆ Evil is not the presence of something material.
- ◆ Evil is the absence of goodness and the righteousness of God.

Like hot and cold



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What is the definition of Evil?

Absence of God's goodness

Evil: That which is contrary
to the revealed will of God

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3 Did God Create evil?

God is the Creator of all things

Genesis 1:1

Psalm 33:6, 9

Exodus 20:11

John 1:1-3

Nehemiah 9:6

Revelation 4:11

Genesis 1:31 – God's creation was perfect

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God gave Adam the freedom to choose to disobey. He gave him one rule (Gen 2:15-17).

Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Through this one act, death and evil entered into creation.

(Death is an enemy- 1 Cor 15:26).

The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

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Evil and Man

Because of original sin, all people since Adam (except the God-Man Jesus) are born with a sin nature - the natural inclination to sin



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John MacArthur (Pastor, President Master's Seminary), Sermon "The Origin of Evil: Genesis 3:1-7", Feb 13, 2000.

"Evil became a reality only when creatures chose to disobey. Evil came into existence initially then in the fall of angels and then next, in the fall of Adam and Eve."

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4 Is God to blame for evil?

God is the cause of all things

Acts 4:28	Psalm 115:3
Isaiah 46:10	Psalm 135:6
Ephesians 1:11	Isaiah 46:9-10

God is sovereign over everything

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Is God to blame for evil?

God does not ordain evil for evil purposes

Joseph sold into slavery

Genesis 50:20 – "As for you, you meant evil against me, but **God meant it** for good..."

God ordains evil for good and His glory

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Is God to blame for evil?

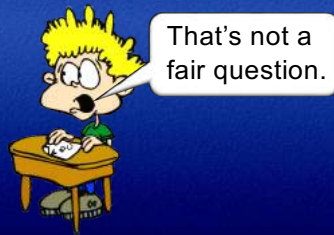
1. God is sovereign
2. God decrees all things
3. God decrees evil and "bad" things to happen

If God is the ultimate cause, is He also the chargeable cause?

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Class Challenge

Jesus' Death on the Cross was a terrible act of evil. Is God to blame for this?



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Is God to blame?

Case Study:
Jesus Death on the Cross

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Is God to blame for crucifixion?

Ultimate Cause – God predestined all the events related to Jesus dying on the Cross

Proximate Cause – Jews incited the Romans to crucify Jesus

Efficient Cause – Romans physically put Jesus on the Cross

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God is NOT the *chargeable party* for evil

People, in their sin nature, carry out evil in this world because of the evil in their hearts and are always the chargeable party for evil

The problem of evil

What is evil?

Did God create evil?

Is God to blame?

Answered

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Clifford McManis (Ph.D. Ecclesiology), *Biblical Apologetics*, 2013, p. 339.

“No discussion on apologetics is complete without addressing the problem of evil. Opponents have long held that the problem of evil is the most impregnable charge confronting Christianity. It is the critic’s ultimate trump card against the Bible’s credibility.”

29

James Anderson (Ph.D., Professor of Theology (specializes in philosophical theology, religious epistemology, and Christian apologetics)), *What’s Your Worldview?*, 2014, p. 59.

“The greatest challenge for the Christian worldview is undoubtedly the problem of evil.”

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Answering Theodicy

Going on the Offense

Can God and evil co-exist?



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Case Study



Forced labor camp
Soviet Union

Why does God allow bad things to happen?



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Response to the Believer

- ◆ Genesis 1:31 - "Very Good"
- ◆ Genesis 2:15 -16
 - 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."
- ◆ Gen 3:6,7 - Sin, death, evil, ... entered

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Response to the Believer

- ◆ Genesis 1-3
- ◆ You are asking the wrong question
- ◆ The correct question is, "why does a holy and righteous God Who knows what I have done and thought allow me, a sinner, to live?"



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Case Study: The Blind Man (John 9:1-7)

- ◆ Apostles: "...Who sinned, this man or his parents?"
- ◆ Jesus' response: "...but that the works of God might be displayed in Him."

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Case Study: The Tower of Siloam

- ◆ Apostles: Were these Galileans worse sinners than all the other Galileans?
- ◆ Jesus' response: "No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."



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Case Study: Joseph

But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

- Genesis 50:19-20

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The Atheists' 4-point challenge

The problem of evil and the existence of God



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1. If God is omnipotent, He would be able to prevent all of the evil and suffering in the world. (if not, then...)
2. If God is omniscient, He would know about all of the evil and suffering in the world and would know how to eliminate or prevent it. (if not, then...)
3. If God is perfectly good, He would want to prevent all of the evil and suffering in the world. (if not, then...)

Therefore →

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4. Evil and suffering exist, therefore, God is either not omnipotent, not omniscient, or not perfectly good.

Challenge

There appears to be a logical inconsistency in the Christian worldview.



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Response to the Non-believer

1. Understand the nature of the challenge.
2. Challenge the non-believer for why they believe their statement is true.
3. Provide a solution.

Going on the Offense

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Part 1 Understanding the Challenge

- ◆ It is an argument about morality (absolutes or moral relativism).
- ◆ The fact that evil exists is not about the existence of God, but about His character.

If God is good then why does He allow death and suffering?



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What is Moral Relativism?

- ◆ It is the claim that no ethical system is better than another.
- ◆ It is the denial of truth in ethical questions (Homosexuality, Rights, Religion)
- ◆ It is a widely held position in the modern world (politics, media, schools).
- ◆ Ultimately, people want to do what “is right in their own eyes”.

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The challenge is a conclusion based on some value (or standard) of what is good and what is not good.

Going on the Offense



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Absolute Morality

How do you decide
“right” from “wrong”?

If God created us, He has the right
to set the rules. Otherwise, why not
make our own rules?

Whoever is in power makes the rules.

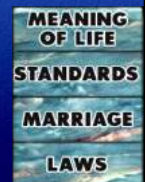
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Part 2

Challenge for the Non-believer

What is your absolute
standard for measuring what
is good and what is evil?

(Right from Wrong)



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Overview: 4 Responses

1. Personal opinion
2. What benefits society
3. The laws of society
4. Feelings



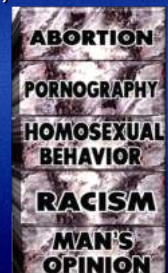
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Possible Response 1

If the standard (moral code) is
based upon personal opinion,

Then

How can we condemn
murderers, rapists, and
burglars?



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Possible Response 2

If the standard (moral code) is based upon what benefits society,

Then

Statements like “the society was evil” are meaningless because different cultures have different conventions.



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Possible Response 3

If the standard (moral code) is based on the laws of society,

Then

We can have many different moral codes because different societies have different laws. We are assuming all laws are good.

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Possible Response 4

If the standard (moral code) is based on what makes people feel good,

Then

We can have many different moral codes because people have different feelings. This response allows for murder, stealing, torture, and rape.

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The Nonbeliever and Standards

- ◆ Personal opinion
 - ◆ Benefit of society
 - ◆ Laws of society
 - ◆ Feelings
- } All fall short
} No universal standard

Whoever is in power makes the rules

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Bertrand Russell (Nobel prize winner and atheist, 1872 - 1979)

“No one can sit at the bedside of a dying child and still believe in God.”



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Critical Thinking

Why does Bertrand Russell think God did this since he does not believe in God?

Why doesn't God stop suicide?
 Why doesn't God stop rape?
 Why doesn't God stop ...

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Part 3 The Solution

God is all-good.
 God is all-powerful.
 Evil exists.

A Fourth Premise

God has a morally sufficient reason for the evil which exists.

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Why Did God Ordain Evil to Happen in His Creation?

- ◆ Everything that happens is to the Glory of God
- ◆ In a perfect creation, only some of God's attributes would be seen
- ◆ A fallen & redeemed creation would put all of God's attributes on full display
- ◆ All of His attributes = Glory of God fully seen

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Why Did God Ordain Evil to Happen in His Creation?

- ◆ Romans 9:22-23
- ◆ What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, ²³ in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory

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Why Does God Allow Evil to Continue?

- ◆ God is purposely delaying eliminating evil in order to allow more time for people to come to Him (Matt 13:24-30, 36-43: The parable of the wheat and tares).
- ◆ God is longsuffering (2 Peter 3:9).
- ◆ God will do away with evil (Rev 20:9 – 21:4).

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The Solution: The Gospel

- ◆ God is the Creator of all things.
- ◆ His creation was perfect.
- ◆ Man sinned – all have sinned ...
- ◆ God, in His great love for us, provided a solution by paying the penalty for our sins.



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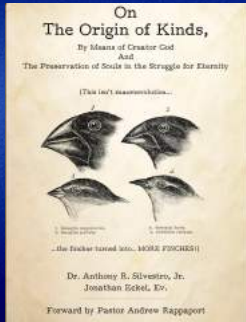
Good & Evil Conclusion

1. Adam is responsible for sin and death
2. Humans are evil by nature, not good
3. Unbelievers cannot account for a universal standard of morality when they don't acknowledge God

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On The Origin of Kinds

Author: Dr. Anthony R. Silvestro, Jr

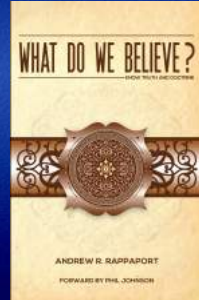


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Andrew R. Rappaport

Systematic
Theology

Witnessing to
the Cults



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5-Day Creation Apologetics Training College



When: August 1-6, 2022

Where: Ridgecrest Conference Center,
Ridgecrest, NC (Near Asheville)

Who: 50 students (college age and up)

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**END OF
CHAPTER**

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