

How Could a Good God Allow Suffering?

The God Questions – Part 4

The Problem of Evil

- If God is omniscient, he would know about all of the evil and suffering in the world.
- If God is omnipotent, he would be able to prevent all of the evil and suffering in the world.
- If God is perfectly good, he would want to prevent all of the evil and suffering (or at least the unnecessary suffering) in the world.
- Evil and suffering exist (or unnecessary suffering exists); therefore, God is either not omniscient, not omnipotent, or not perfectly good.

Can There Be Evil and Suffering Without God?

How does one determine whether a law is just or unjust? A just law is a man made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law.

-Martin Luther King, Jr.

- To say that there is evil in the world implies the existence of morality.
- For there to be morality, there must be a standard, or a moral law, by which things can be measured.
- If there is a moral law, there must be a moral lawgiver. If there is no moral lawgiver, there is no moral law, and there is no way to say that evil exists.
- Some argue that morality has been developed over time through the process of evolution.

Who Determines What is Unnecessary or Pointless Suffering?

- Just because we can't see or imagine a good reason why God might allow something to happen doesn't mean there can't be one.
- Most people limit their view of God's goodness to the pleasure and pain that people experience in this world.
- Without God, most suffering would be pointless. With God, your suffering doesn't have to be pointless.

Why Does Evil Exist in Our World?

- Evil was not a "thing" that God created; it is the absence or opposite of good.
- God allowed evil into the world when he allowed beings to have free will.

- When sin entered the world, it brought moral evil (Romans 5:12, 19).
- When sin entered the world, it brought natural evil (Romans 8:20-22).

We Believe in a God Who Suffered for Us

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

1 Peter 3:18

- Jesus was made like us in every respect so that he could sympathize with our weaknesses and pains (Hebrews 2:17, 4:15-16).
- Jesus suffered greater pains than we will ever suffer (Matthew 27:46).
- Jesus suffered so that we don't have to experience eternal suffering (Isaiah 53:5, Romans 5:10).

We Believe in a God Who Works Through Our Suffering

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

-Romans 8:28

- People have been created to glorify God by being conformed to the image of Christ. This is how we must determine what is "good" (Colossians 1:16, Romans 8:29).
- God uses suffering to bring us through the process of sanctification (Romans 5:3-5, James 1:2-4, 1 Peter 1:6-7).
- The sufferings in this world are preparing for us an eternal glory (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).
- Our experiences will be used to help those who are suffering (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

We Believe in a God Who Will One Day Make All Things New

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.

Revelation 21:1

- The sufferings of this world do not even compare to the eternal glory that we will experience (Romans 8:18).
- God will bring justice, no evil will go unpunished (Romans 12:19, 1 Peter 2:23).
- God will personally comfort his people and remove all suffering (Revelation 21:4).

They say of some temporal suffering, "No future bliss can make up for it," not knowing that Heaven, once attained, will work backwards and turn even that agony into a glory.

-C. S. Lewis