



Evil and the God Who Knows

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The earthquake in Pakistan, the tsunami in Southeast Asia, the devastating hurricane in the gulf coast of United States, babies dying of malnutrition around the world, children killed by warring factions in Palestine, and child abuse in every corner of the world causes the human heart to cry out, "Why is this world so cruel?" If Jesus loves the little children, then why does He allow them to suffer such intolerable suffering? The point is, in light of God's providence, His plan, His love, and His power, why all of this intense, unequally distributed suffering, and the suffering of children (the innocents)? The atheist says that such things are sure evidence that the God of the Bible does not exist. The theist is sure that such things do not count against God but not sure how to answer the questions that rise even within the heart of the Christian. This lecture affirms that God is the all-knowing, all-powerful, omnibenevolent God of the Bible, but attempts to put all of these questions in a context different from how they have normally been understood.

1. What Are The Issues For Our Subject?

1.1. If God is the creator, did God create evil?

2. The Questions We Ask

2.1. Why does God allow so much suffering?

3. Answers We Give

3.1. God will bring some good from this.

3.4. God is judging people for their disobedience to him.

4. What Should We Do?

4.1. Consider that we claim a Christian Worldview.
4.7. Although there is sin in the angelic realm, I will only deal with mankind.

5. God and Suffering

5.1. The question before us is: if God exists, why does He allow such acts of terrible, intense and often unequally distributed suffering and evil that often includes the innocent?

6. What is God like?

6.1. God is:

6.4. Here I say nothing new, but only speak to remind.

7. How does God work in this world?

7.1. Who God is does not usually present a point of controversy in a group such as this.

8. Moral Choice

8.1. God was morally free to make man in His Image.

8.6. Without the power of moral choice one cannot love and without love humanity would not be humanity.

9. Mankind's choice to sin

9.1. At a point, God decides to create which includes all of nature which includes mankind.

9.7. Except that evil caused by satanic forces.

10. The physical Creation Order

10.1. Prior to God creating anything, God established an order for his creation.

10.6. When he builds a plane, ship or walks across the road, he must acknowledge this order.

11. The moral Creation Order

11.1. God has also established a moral Creation Order.

11.4. At the heart of this order is the existence of two minds.

12. Two Minds

12.1. Two minds.

12.5. This freedom (power of moral choice) permits man a range of choices within which he has genuine (libertarian) freedom.

13. Freedom and Love

13.1. It is this freedom that makes it possible for

man to love God (Luke 10: 27 — the highest function of man) and for man to love man.

13.3.2. We see this in the Garden.

14. God's Providence

14.1. God creates a material world and creates man who has a mind which in turn shapes much of how history unfolds.

14.4. Under the conditions of contingent beings having the power of moral choice, this world is best in terms of moral and physical ordering and historical outcomes.

15. The Effects of Sin

15.1. The question might be asked: Was it not possible for God to create a better world than this one?

15.4. Man's power of choice when exercised, really influences the flow of history. This was true in the Garden and all that has followed.

16. The Best Possible World

16.1. God knows all possible choices his moral agent could make and the consequences of each act.

16.6. So, we are responsible for some of the pain and suffering in this world and God is not obligated to step in and eliminate or mitigate the consequences.

17. God and Gratuitous Evil

17.1. God is morally justified in allowing even gratuitous evil because He honors His Word (Gen. 2:17). The curse is real! And he is faithful to His Creation (1 Peter 4:19).

17.5. The Christian maintains that God is providentially involved in giving mercy and comfort to those who look to Him in their suffering.

18. God's Involvement with the World

18.1. Those who would have God act in justice and eliminate all evil, must then face the fact that that would also mean that God would intervene and judge us every time we acted unjustly, unlovingly, and so forth.

18.5. We see God working within it in the Virgin Birth and in the Incarnation itself.

19. Suffering and the Kingdom of God

19.1. Furthermore, one must understand that according to Christian teaching, God is more than just a powerful being — among other things He is just. Theologians refer to God as a simple being

meaning that He always acts in a way that is consistent with all His attributes.

19.4. In the flow of human history, evil must be seen for what it is and we must realize that often evil in this world serves no larger purpose. Although God may at times work to reverse the intents of evil people, the evil itself may often be gratuitous.

Suggested Reading

I do not necessarily endorse all the theological or philosophical positions represented below.

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