

IF GOD, WHY EVIL?

One of the most challenging questions in theology and philosophy

IF GOD, WHY EVIL?

One of the greatest intellectual barriers preventing people from believing in God is the problem of Evil. If God truly exists, why is there evil in the world? There are a few arguments that ask this question in different ways.

Problem of Evil

General Theories of Evil - How it relates to God

Source of Evil - What is the origin?

Nature of Evil - What is evil?

Persistence of Evil - Why does God allow evil?

The purpose of Evil - How does God use evil?

Avoidance of Evil - Why did God allow evil?

Theories of Evil - How does God fit in?

God exists, Evil does not

Evil exists, God does not

Evil and God both Exist

Theories of Evil

Dualism

Eternal struggle of good and evil

Finitism

God is limited in power, no control over evil

Determinism

God willed evil, he desired it to exist

Theories of Evil

Malevolent

God has no interest in stopping,
He is unloving

Illusionism

Evil does not exist, as there is
no extra mental reality

Realism

Evil is real, Christ defeated it
judicially, and in future will
defeat it practically

Source of Evil

Some believe if God created all things, and evil exists, then God must have created evil. At this point they either:

1 Reject God's existence, because by definition God cannot be the cause of evil

2 Reject God, as they think He is an unfair or unloving God and do not wish to serve Him.

Source of Evil - Question

Where did evil come from? An absolutely good God cannot create evil. Nor, would it seem, can a perfect creature give rise to imperfection. If a good God exists, what is the origin of evil? The problem can be summarized:

1. God is absolutely perfect.
2. God cannot create anything imperfect.
3. But perfect creatures cannot do evil.
4. Therefore, neither God nor his perfect creatures can produce evil

Source of Evil - Response

1. God is absolutely perfect.
2. God created only perfect creatures.
3. One of the perfections God gave some of his creatures was the power of free choice.
4. Some of these creatures freely chose to do evil.
5. Therefore, a perfect creature caused evil.

Source of Evil

Question - If God can only create good and perfect things, how can evil come from perfection?

Response - Evil is a result from the perfection of freedom. God is the **INDIRECT** cause, He created man with the **potential** for evil. Man is the **DIRECT** cause of evil, through his **actions**.

Source of Evil

Actions must be:

- Uncaused
- Caused by another
- Self Caused

Types of Cause

Determining: Actor, one who has fault. **YOU**

Contributing: Influences, culture, media, etc.

Contributor **ASSISTS**, determiner **ACTS**

Nature of Evil

It is important to define terms when having this kind of discussion. To understand what Christians believe about evil, we must define evil.

Evil exists

Though evil exists, evil is not a substance

Evil is a privation of a good thing which should exist.

Evil is also an improper relationship between good substances

Nature of Evil - Analogies

Evil is like rot to a tree

Rot is not a substance in itself, but a decay or corruption of the wood that should be healthy. It is the absence of the proper state of the tree.

Evil is like rust to a car

Rust is not an inherent part of the car's design but a corrosive process that eats away at its intended structure and function. It's a deterioration of something good.

Evil is like moth holes in clothes

A hole is the absence of fabric where fabric should be. The evil (the hole) is defined by what it lacks, not by what it positively is.

Evil is like an amputation in a body

An amputation is the cutting off of a part of the body that should be there. It's a privation, a removal of a good and essential component from an otherwise good whole.

Persistence of Evil - Question

Why does God allow evil to exist? Even if he did not produce it, he does permit it. Yet he is all-powerful and could destroy it. So why doesn't he do so?

The classical way to state the problem of the persistence of evil is this:

1. If God is all good, he would destroy evil.
2. If God is all powerful, he could destroy evil.
3. But evil is not destroyed.
4. Therefore, there is no such God.

Persistence of Evil - Response

The theist responds as follows:

1. God cannot do what is actually impossible.
2. It is actually impossible to destroy evil without destroying free choice.
3. But free choice is necessary to a moral universe.
4. Therefore, God cannot destroy evil without destroying this good moral universe.

Persistence of Evil - Response

Theism holds that even though God could not **destroy** all evil without destroying all good, nevertheless, he can and will **defeat** all evil **without** destroying free choice. The argument can be summarized as follows:

1. God is all good and desires to defeat evil.
2. God is all powerful and is able to defeat evil.
3. Evil is not *yet* defeated.
4. Therefore, it will one day be defeated.

Purpose of Evil - Question

It seems evident that there is useless suffering in the world. Some people get better through suffering, but others get bitter. Broken bones are stronger when they heal, but some never heal. Many die. What about all the purposeless evil in the world?

The problem can be summarized as follows:

1. An all-good God must have a good purpose for everything.
2. There is no good purpose for some suffering.
3. Therefore, there cannot be an all-good God.

Purpose of Evil - Response

1. God has a good purpose for everything
2. We do know a good purpose for much evil.
3. Some evil is a byproduct of good.
4. God is able to bring good out of evil.

Purpose of Evil - Ways God uses evil

Perseverance is developed by enduring

Servanthood is made possible

Compassion can be developed/exercised

Most valuable lessons come in times of adversity,
not pleasure

Pain (evil) is an indication of a greater evil, it can be
a warning sign.

What we call evil one day can lead to something
amazing another day.

God allows evil in order to ultimately destroy evil. The cross leads to everlasting freedom.

Avoidance of Evil - Question

Did God have other options other than creating a world with the possibility of possibility of evil?

Avoidance of Evil - Response

This is not the best possible world, but the best WAY to the best possible world, possible world, with freedom

Why not a world without possibility of sin?

Why not a world without free will?

Why not a world where sin does not result in separation or death?

Why create a world at all?

Why doesn't God stop all the evil in the world now, if Jesus destroyed evil?

Jesus' death and resurrection made the defeat of evil possible, When He returns the defeat will be actual.

In order to destroy evil now, God would have to destroy us all, or eliminate free-will. We all choose to sin.

God is allowing His Gospel to go out so more can come to salvation.

What about Hell? Why would a good loving God really send send people to Hell, a place of everlasting torment?

God doesn't send anyone to Hell, He confirms a choice they have made to reject Christ.

God has prepared a place for all to live with Him in everlasting joy. God has also created a place for people to live apart from Him forever. Some accept the invitation and some do not, and because God is fair, He lets people go were they choose.