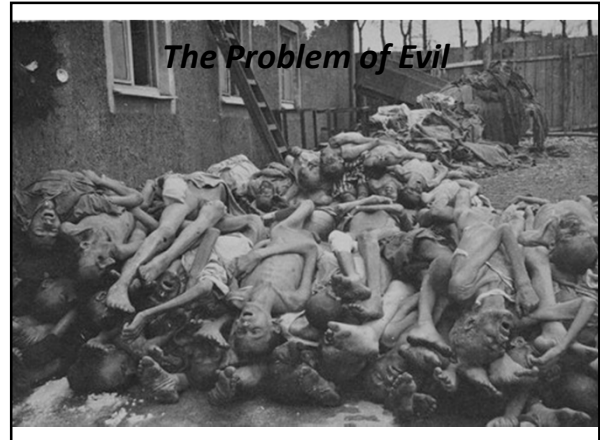


Evidence for Faith Class

Eight-week course outline

- Faith and Reason
- Truth and Knowledge
- God's existence and the problem of evil
- The Reliability of the New Testament and Jesus of Nazareth
- The Bible as God's Word
- Bible Interpretation



The Problem of Evil

The word “evil” includes natural evil (e.g., earthquakes, floods, animal suffering), human intentional evil (e.g., murder, rape, theft), accidents (e.g., medical, car, friendly fire), and ill health (mental, physical, episodic, fatal, chronic).

The Problem of Evil

Personal evil (man’s inhumanity to man) and natural evil (disease, disasters)

Two ways to approach the problem:
Intellectual versus emotional

Intellectual: logical and probabilistic

The Problem of Evil

Logical:

- All-Powerful and all-knowing—OK: he knows how and could eliminate suffering, but he doesn’t want to because he is not loving (The uncaring God)
- All loving and all powerful—OK: he wants to and could, but doesn’t know how to eliminate suffering (the ignorant God)
- All loving and all knowing—OK: he wants to and knows how, but doesn’t have the power to eliminate suffering (The weak God)

The Problem of Evil

The atheist argument

P1) If God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent, evil wouldn’t exist

P2) Evil exists

C) Therefore, an omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God does not exist

The Problem of Evil

The atheist argument

P1) If God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent, evil wouldn't exist

P2) Evil exists

C) Therefore, an omnipotent, omniscient, omnibenevolent God does not exist

Hidden assumptions:

- If God is all powerful, he can create any world he wants
- If he is all loving, he prefers a world without evil/suffering

The Problem of Evil

God cannot...

- not exist
- act against his own nature (e.g., he cannot lie [Titus 1:2])
- actualize a contradiction
- swear by a being greater than himself [Heb 6:13]
- create a square circle
- *make a moral agent freely choose something*

The Problem of Evil

It is possible that God cannot feasibly create a world of free creatures in which there is no moral evil.

It is also possible that God cannot feasibly create a world with less evil and more good than our actual world.

The Problem of Evil

Atheists hidden assumptions:

- ~~If God is all powerful, he can create any world he wants~~
- ~~If he is all loving, he prefers a world without evil/suffering~~

Double fail

The Problem of Evil

Premise 6. God could not have created a world that has as much good as the actual world but had less evil, and God has good reasons for permitting the evils that exist.

This then leads to the conclusion: An all-powerful, all-knowing and all-loving God can coexist with evil.

If premise 6 is even possible, God and evil are logically compatible. The atheist has thus assumed a burden of proof that he cannot meet.

The Problem of Evil

Probabilistic version. This version of the problem of evil says it is *improbable* that God exists in light of all the evils in the world.

Craig points out that even if this is granted, it would not outweigh all the other reasons for God's existence (cosmological, teleological, moral, etc.). So God's existence is not improbable relative to the full range of relevant data.

The Problem of Evil

Answering the Probabilistic version

The evils in the world do not outweigh the good. Most people believe there is more good than evil in the world, and thus life is worth living.

Furthermore as finite creatures, we are in no position to make these sort of probability judgments regarding the possible good reasons for God permitting evil. Only God could make such an assessment of all contingencies and outcomes.

The Problem of Evil

The theist, without having to know why God allows evil, using logic only, can give a solid defense of God and evil's compatibility. The atheist fails to meet the burden of proof that God and evil cannot coexist.

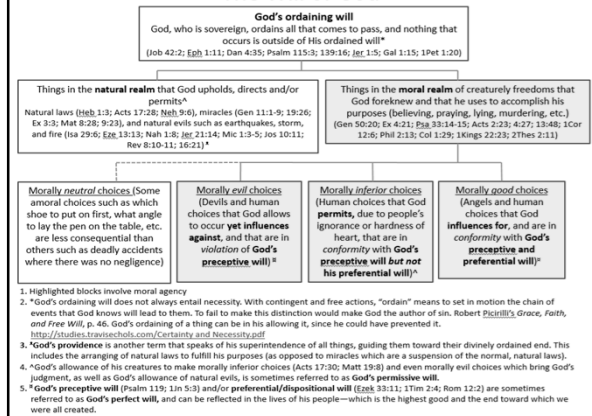
Only the theist can give an ultimate and objective grounding for evil's existence. If atheism is true, there is no evil; just molecules in motion; nature doing what nature does

The Problem of Evil

Sources:

1. Richard G. Howe, presentation, personal conversation, and email
2. Norman Geisler and Frank Turek, book, I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist, Appendix 1
3. Phil Fernandes, paper, The Problem of Evil
4. Matthew Coombe, paper, A Theodicy (answering some questions about God and evil)
5. William Lane Craig, Aalborg University lecture YouTube video, The Problem of Evil
6. Alvin Plantinga, book, God, Freedom, and Evil

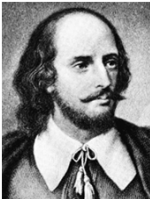
The Will of God



The Problem of Evil

The emotional approach

It is one thing to think about the problem of evil from a distance, but altogether another to personally be in the throes of it.



"For there was never yet philosopher that could endure the toothache patiently."

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)
English playwright and poet

The Problem of Evil

The emotional approach

The philosopher tries to think clearly about evil, but a friend or counselor or pastor is needed when a person is suffering. A good friend (while also needing to think clearly about evil) knows how to listen, care for, counsel, pray for, and weep with a friend who is in pain. More importantly God himself cares about our suffering. Jesus Christ, God incarnate, came to earth and suffered the pain of rejection, humiliation, scourging and a cruel death—all for us. He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

The Problem of Evil

Conclusion:

The theist, without having to know why God allows evil, using logic only, can give a solid defense of God and evil's compatibility. The atheist fails to meet the burden of proof that God and evil cannot coexist.

Atheism, pantheism, and religious dualism fail to give a credible explanation for the existence of evil, and offer no hope in overcoming it. However, the *Christian* has the resources to give a general theodicy all the while rightly acknowledging the limited knowledge of humans and the inscrutable ways of an all-knowing, all-powerful, all-good God.

The Problem of Evil

Conclusion (cont'd):

Only the Christian understands that God became a man and suffered for us, and that he is touched with the feelings of our infirmities.

Only the Christian understands that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in believers, and that all things work together for good to *them who love God*.

Only the Christian understands that Jesus will return to destroy evil, and for his children, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." (Rev 21:4)

Resources

www.travisechols.com

The Theological Argument for God's Existence
The intricate fine-tuning of physics for life is best explained by design, versus chance or necessity.

Can Darwinism Explain New Life Forms?
Short edited excerpt from Dr. Stephen Meyer's book, *Darwin's Doubt*. Charles Darwin had concerns about his own theory being capable of explaining new life forms. The latest scientific discoveries have justified his concerns.

The Problem of Evil
If an all-knowing, all-powerful, all-good God exists, why does evil exist?

Answering Objections to the Moral Argument for God's Existence
Objective moral values and duties exist and demand a moral Law-giver. All objections

grace, works, free will, faith, repentance, regeneration, baptism, and the essence content of the gospel.

Two Views of Salvation
A detailed comparison of a Calvinistic cause-effect model and an Arminian influence-response model, with more categories than the typical TULIP.

Faith
A detailed study of faith's relationship to election, God's giving, grace, evidence, reason, choice, belief, trust, sight, regeneration, confession and baptism.

Spirit Baptism
A detailed study of Holy Spirit baptism as occurring simultaneously to faith in Jesus Christ for all believers in this age and as distinct from water baptism.

Conflict Resolution
Conflicts in relationships will arise. God's way of resolving conflicts and making peace is always right.

The Circles of Forgiveness
A graph depicting a way to understand God's forgiveness of sinners and our forgiveness of one another.

You and Your Conscience
Is it an sin to drive aconomy? watch mostly questionable movies? eat pork in front of my Jewish brother who thinks it is wrong? Ad infirmum. It depends.

Practical Living Resources
[Work Thru the Bible](#)

Resources

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Preparing to Succeed in Severe Suffering

Posted on August 8, 2017 by Clay Jones

One thing is clear: unless we die young and suddenly, all of us are going to endure severe suffering. This is true because, as I've said many times, only one thing is going to prevent you from watching absolutely every person you know die from murder, accident, or disease, and that will be your own death from murder, accident, or disease! We live in a fallen world, but thankfully, if we trust in Jesus, then we will live forever and ever.



ClayJones.net is the personal blog of Clay Jones, D.Min., Associate Professor of Christian Apologetics at Biola University. Learn more about Clay.

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