

The Fall

We are going to look at some passages outside of Genesis today. We have been looking at the Fall of Mankind and related to that is a huge philosophical question that is debated and discussed—and it is the strongest or main argument against God, against the existence of God from the atheist camp.

It is all related to Genesis 3, answering the question, ‘Why did God permit evil?’ knowing that mankind would sin and plunge all of humanity into misery and suffering and eventually death, knowing ahead of time that this all would take place, knowing every detail of it.

It is probably a good question but the Bible does not give us a direct answer, but I think it gives us a lot of data that we can use to come to a reasonable answer or understanding of what God is doing with the whole issue of evil.

Most people call this the Problem of Evil in that it is a problem for believers, but Biblically if we have a good foundation, I think we can not only solve the problem but give a good answer.

Problem of Evil

1. Introduction

Similar to what we have already said we can quote George Buckner. He asks the question:
‘Why do I suffer? This is the rock of atheism’.

—George Buckner

He says that this is the ‘rock of atheism’, so it is an issue that needs answering—which we will endeavor to do in this session.

Another writer, Gordon Graham:

‘The existence of evil, both moral and natural, forms the basis for one of the oldest and most persistently troubling

Graham introduces two types of evil:

Types of Evil

- > Natural - does not involve choices of moral agents
- > Moral - traced to choices and actions of moral agents

Natural Evil does not involve choices of moral agents but it is related to the fall of mankind in that when man sinned it affected the whole universe—earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes that do destructive damage and kill people. It is a result of the Fall, so none of them will be in the eternal state, nor probably even in the Millennial Kingdom.

The one we think about most is Moral Evil traced to choices and actions of moral agents and it includes not just mankind, but obviously, as we have been seeing from Genesis 3, spiritual creatures or angelic creatures, particularly those that have fallen—demons and Satan himself. The importance of this whole area:

Importance

1. Proof - for Atheist
2. Universal - all affected
3. Reality - design or naturalism
4. Practical - suffering of all

According to the atheist it is proof of the non-existence of God, so he raises issues relating to it. If He is a good God, why would He permit such tragic outcomes and so much suffering and destruction. Where is God, if He does in fact exist? It is an important question because all of us are affected by suffering, to varying degrees; we are all in the midst of evil and are at least observers and are horrified by some things like the wars in countries that some of us have visited and where we know people.

So it is important to have a Biblical understanding, not only what Genesis tells us, in terms of the origin of it, but a good picture of what God is doing with evil. We have talked about evil being bounded, which is a crucial subject to understand and to share with others in that it had a beginning but God is dealing with it in time and it will be ended, or at least confined, in the Lake of Fire. It is good to understand that there is a design behind it and a purpose. And, if not, then Naturalism is the only explanation. Evil is real so we need to deal with it. And from a practical point of view because we all suffer from it to one degree or another.

Problem of Evil

1. If God is all-Good - wills good
2. If God is Omnipotent - does His will
3. Evil Exists
4. God does not exist *or* not all-good *or* not omnipotent or both

We must state the problem. 1. If God is all-Good, and those of us who believe in Him believe that He is, why does He not *will* that all things end up good, or, why does He *will and permit* things that disrupt goodness. That is, why does He permit evil if he is All-Good.

2. If God is all-powerful or Omnipotent, doesn't He have the power to stop it? Or didn't He have the power to prevent it? And does He not do His will: if God is all-Good, why does He permit it, and if He is Omnipotent why does He allow it to continue?

3. The reality of evil existing. Some actually deny it, there are a few views on it; one of them, like Christian Science (not Creation Science), the cult denies the existence of evil and view it as something more of an illusion. But I think that is far from reality, so evil does in fact exist even though God is All-Good and All-Powerful or Omnipotent.

4. The atheist would say that God does not exist *or* He is not All-Good—there must be some deficiency, something wrong with

God in that He allows evil to continue, or, a 3^o opción, He doesn't have the power to stop it or prevent it—or a combination of the two or the full concept of both.

That is the Problem of Evil.

Problem of Evil

1. Introduction
2. Problem
3. Solutions

There varies ways of trying to solve the problem of evil. The *unbelieving* way comes in a variety of forms.

Solutions to the problem of evil

- > Atheism - denies God; that's the atheist's solution: it points to the non-existence of God, or a powerless God at least.
- > Naturalism - denies God because they deny the spiritual realm. It goes along with atheism. So naturalism doesn't have an answer. In fact it views evil from a second perspective: evil just exists, is part of reality, no beginning or end.
 - > No God
 - > No Purpose: everything is scientific
 - > Cause and Effect: is part of the naturalist's view
 - > Neutral Events: neither evil nor good
 - > Some Beneficial and others not. those that are not beneficial we would classify as evil
 - > Just the Way things are No need to debate it; you can't change it.
- > Polytheism - limits God: because it is limited in all of the gods—they have shared deity, limiting God's power by splitting it into many gods

- > Dualism - diminishes God They would see two eternal concepts, good and evil, and a universe that is never perfect or never good as we have seen in Genesis 1, but these diminish God's role.
- > Gnosticism - distorts creation Gnosticism was popular shortly after the 1st Century, actually distort the creation and would lay the groundwork for Christian Science that denies the existence of evil.
- > Pantheism - diminishes God Pantheism would do the same as polytheism, diminishes God, denies that He is Good and denies His power saying that God is part of the creation. Everything is God and God is everything—the New Age concept of God.
- > Idealism - denies evil This is what Christian Science believes; it denies evil, calls it an illusion
- > Biblical Theism - Good, Omnipotent, Holy and Sovereign God. Then we have what we call Biblical Theism, or a Biblical world view where we believe that God is in fact Good, Omnipotent and Holy. And we would believe also in a Sovereign God. All these perfections (attributes) lay a groundwork for our understanding of the problem.

Problem of Evil

1. Introduction
2. Problem
3. Solutions
4. Biblical

As a start to solve the issue, a list of Biblical insights:

Biblical Insights

1. God is Creator of All Things- Sovereign
2. Moral Agents Created - Volition
3. Moral Agents Choose Evil - Fall

1. In Genesis 1 we saw Him as a Sovereign God, that is, He is totally in control over the entire universe and all of the creation—which includes even the *concept* of evil. He is sovereign over it. And since He is sovereign, then He *permits* it. And if He permits it, because of His other perfections *then He must have a purpose for it and will ultimately use it for His glory*.

2. Therefore God is creator of all things which includes all the moral agents. He created them—human and angelic creatures included—with the capability of rebelling against Him. It was a *very good creation* originally.

That leads to the question of where evil comes from. We saw in Genesis that evil has two sources. It had a spiritual source, then came to earth in the form of a temptation of the woman and then by the man. *He chose to create moral agents with volition*, in the image of God, that is, we have choices that we can make. Volition is part of the image of God, part of our essence.

And with volition, that allows for the possibility of God being rejected and the possibility of evil. In fact this is one of the greatest gifts that God has given to man: the ability to make choices. So there are moral agents that He has created.

3. The moral agents, then, have fallen, that is, they chose to reject the God that created them. And the *origin* of evil:

Origin of Evil

1. Angels - in heaven, not on earth—the origin of evil, angelic creatures that became demonic and Satanic.
2. Mankind - sin on earth—evil came to mankind as a result of what we have studied in Genesis 3.

Biblical Insights

1. God is Creator of All - Sovereign
2. Moral Agents Created - Volition
3. Moral Agents Choose Evil - Fall
4. Natural Realm Affected - 2nd Law of Thermodynamics

5. God not author of Evil - Holy

4. Agents with the ability to choose chose evil and God knew ahead of time that this would be the choice. And we will see, when we return to Genesis, that the Natural Realm is Affected also as a result of the Fall of Man. I think you can see some of the affects in terms of the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics. So we can see it, that's *natural* evil.

5. This is very important in terms of answering the atheist, that *God is not the author of evil*. All of the teaching of the doctrine and *holiness of God* is necessary in the discussion of evil. Nowhere in Scripture is evil attributed to God; that would go against His holiness. That means that He is totally separate from evil in His person and His dealings with men. It includes His absolute righteousness measured against Himself—He is the absolute standard, He is the righteous One; all other righteousness is measure against Him. He is moral perfection and *separate* from all that is common or unclean, including evil.

Holy hundreds of passages mention the holiness of God

- > Description - Totally separate from evil in His person and dealings with men and includes His absolute righteousness measured against Himself as an absolute standard, moral perfection, separation from all that is common or unclean
- > Isaiah 6.3 ... 'Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory.

The only perfection that God has described as 'holy, holy, holy'. In fact the holiness of God is one of the aspects that displays His glory. Nowhere is there a verse that indicates that God is the author or originator of evil. Evil is not an entity, something that is created or exists: it is a concept of rebellion, and when you create a moral creature, that creature has the capability of responding in rebellion and *that* is evil.

Biblical Insights

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| 2. Moral Agents Created - | Volition |
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| 4. Natural Realm Affected - | 2nd Law of Thermodynamics |
| 5. God not author of Evil - | Holy |
| 6. God is All-Powerful - | Omnipotent |

6. Another perfection: He is All-Powerful or Omnipotent. He has infinite power to do anything which He wills. He can do anything consistent with His nature. The Bible speaks of some things that God *cannot* do because it goes against His nature, but it does not undermine His infinite power. For example God *cannot sin*, He cannot lie because that would be evil, which is inconsistent with His nature. He doesn't expend energy, so after 6 days of creation He did not rest because He was tired; He rested, as we mentioned, to set a pattern for mankind's workweek.

Omnipotent also there are many passages about His power

- > Description - infinite power to do anything which He wills, can do anything consistent with His nature, potential and actual with no effort
- > Psalm 62.11 - *Once God has spoken; Twice I have heard this: That power belongs to God;*
- > Psalm 115.3 *But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.* —because He has all power to do anything that He so desires.

Psalm 62.11: All power in the universe comes from Him and belongs to Him; He is the author of all power. In creation science, in Romans 1.20, we can see a revelation of God just by observing the things that we can observe in the universe. One of the things mentioned in 1.20 is His Power. *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen...*

Biblical Insights

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| 6. God is All-Powerful - | Omnipotent |
| 7. God is All-Good - | Absolute |

7. We would say that He is Absolutely Good, and in that goodness He deals bountifully...

Good

- > Description - He deals bountifully, tenderly, and kindly with all His creatures, He is source of all in universe that is good
- > 1st Perfection of God attacked
- > Psalm 145.9 The Lord is good to all, And His mercies are over all His works.
John 10.11 "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

This was the 1st perfection of God that was attacked when the serpent and the personage behind it, Satan himself, questioned the goodness of God. Has God withheld something from you in the garden? Did He really say what He said about what you may eat and not?

Psalm 145.9 ...good to all...

John 10.11 Jesus claims to be the *good* shepherd and the good shepherd lays down His life for his sheep. He is claiming deity as well in making that claim.

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| 8. God is Designer - | Purposes |

8. These passages begin to answer, or lay a groundwork for us to be able to find an answer for why God permits evil. We know that God has a *purpose* and I think the main purpose is to display and reveal His glory to His creatures. He is displaying His glory throughout His creation and throughout time:

Exodus 33.18-20 Moses asks to see His glory... *'I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you, and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and compassion on whom I will show compassion. But, He said, you cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!'* Then,

Exodus 34: God *displays* His glory by revealing His compassion, His grace, His slowness to anger, His lovingkindness, His truth, His forgiveness. So, the perfections of God that we read about in Scripture, tell us something about the glory of God—reveal different aspects of the glory of God.

Proverbs 16.4 ***The LORD has made everything for its own purpose, Even the wicked for the day of evil.***

Glory is Displayed

1. Blind Man

John 9.1 *As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.*

2 *And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?"*

That is, they ask, should we attribute blindness to the sin of his parents? Or was it his sin?

3 *Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.*

4 “*We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.*”

5 “*While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.*”

Jesus proceeds to heal him. He is not saying that the man is not a sinner; He is just saying that *sin* is not the reason for the blindness, and the same about the parents. But God ultimately permits the evil and the blindness in order that God may display His power through the Lord Jesus Christ. He is revealing His glory. And the deity of Christ is displayed by this miracle along with other miracles.

So it seems that this *blindness* is permitted if not even ordained by God in order that His glory may be displayed in the man.

There are other statements like that in the story of Lazarus:

2. Lazarus John 11.4 *But when Jesus heard this, He said, “This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.”...*

He gives the purpose of the death of Lazarus. Mary wanted Jesus to come and heal Him so that he wouldn’t die, but Jesus delayed *in order that he would die.*

6 *So when He heard that he was sick, He then stayed two days longer in the place where He was....11 ... “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go, so that I may awaken him out of sleep.”...*

14 *So Jesus then said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, 15 and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him.”*

Jesus allowed Him to die for the purpose of His being glorified by it.

These are two passages in which God uses evil circumstances in order to bring glory to Himself and, in fact, He not only permits it, but is involved in orchestrating it to some extent.

Romans 3.3 *What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?*

4 *May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, “THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED.”*

5 *But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.)*

He is talking about people who do not believe; their *unbelief* will not nullify the faithfulness of God—He continues to be faithful; it doesn’t change God. So even if an unbeliever rejects God, God is still demonstrated to not only be faithful, but our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, as it is poured on those who believe.

6 *May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?*

7 *But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner?*

8 *And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), “Let us do evil that good may come”? Their condemnation is just.*

He is building a case, in Romans 3, in terms of God basically demonstrated through salvation, but that glory is seen even amongst the ones that reject it.

4. Pharaoh

We remember that, in Romans 9-12, God is vindicated even by Israel’s rejection but God does not reject them totally—He still has a plan to bring Israel to Himself. The case that He builds to come to that conclusion begins in chapter 9.

Romans 9.17 *For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH.”*

18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

The very purpose that Pharaoh even existed was in order to demonstrate God's *power*, one of the perfections of God—reminding us of the plagues which showed that He was the one true God and all the false gods of the Egyptians were impotent, they had no power to deal with the plagues. So God was displaying to the Hebrews and to the Egyptians that He was the one true God and ultimately the nation of Israel would be led out of Egypt. He is laying the groundwork for the Exodus and the plagues. He announces it before the plagues and how Pharaoh will respond.

So God is involved even in Pharaoh in using the evil intentions and purposes of Pharaoh to demonstrate His power.

Romans 9.19 *You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?"*

20 On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?

21 Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?

God is sovereign and He can use unbelievers, or, as a potter He can use anything for His own purposes.

22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?

23 And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory,

So God's glory is in view in that Romans passage and it demonstrates not only His glory but another aspect, even His wrath is an aspect of His glory. ...*vessels of wrath prepared for destruction*. So God uses evil, evil creatures to display His very purpose.

You are familiar with the story of Job. You can read chapters 1 and 2. If you remember, Satan challenges God and wants to afflict Job and tells God that the only reason Job believes in God is because God has been so good to him. So God permits him to afflict Job. God allows affliction to come in order that things can be demonstrated and the life of Job demonstrates to be one of faithfulness and trust in God through all the adversity of the experience.

So, Job is never given a reason for the evil, but as we read it, and we see a little of the background—in fact Job doesn't seem to even be aware of what is going on in the spiritual realm, but in the end is trusting in God. Job is faithful but it is by God's grace and God is glorified through the whole process.

Satan cannot do any evil without God's permission.

6. Death of Christ

Even the death of Christ glorified God in many, many ways; many things were revealed at the death of Christ. And Paul even says this in

Romans 5.8 *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* So the crucifixion is one of the greatest displays of God's love and here Paul brings attention to it. His love, grace, mercy, wrath...were displayed on the cross. Also the justice of God in the necessity for God to deal with sin. All of these perfections and attributes, and primarily that of love, are displayed in the death of Christ. Perhaps nearly all the attributes that we know about could be displayed in the death of Christ.

7. Display to Angels

There are also several passages of God doing things amongst humans in order to demonstrate certain things to angelic creatures. So He is displaying His *glory* to them in His dealing with man and dealing with evil on earth.

1Corinthians 4.9 *For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.*

In the midst of evil (death), they had become a 'spectacle' to angels and to men. So God was displaying something among the apostles to the angels.

Ephesians 3.10 *so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.*

11 This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord,

We live in the midst of evil and God is using believers and the body of Christ, the church to demonstrate to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places; those are angelic creatures.

1Corinthians 11.10 in the context of husband-wife relationship, *Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.* God is displaying something to *them*. We may not understand all that God is doing in terms of the angels.

Luke 15.10 *"In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*

There are passages in Revelation that are similar.

1Tim 3.16 *By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.*

So angels are observing and God is displaying His glory in the midst of what is going on amongst us and we live in that fallen world.

Hebrews 12.1 *Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us,* More than likely they are angelic witnesses that surround us, *let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,*

2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, I think the implication there is that there are creatures observing, angelic creatures.

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| 9. God Deals with Evil | |

We might also say that God Deals with Evil. We mentioned that evil is bounded and that He deals with evil historically, so he is dealing with it and will ultimately complete His dealing with it after the Great White Throne judgment when He casts all the evil doers and sinners and death and Hades itself into the Lake of Fire and they will be confined into eternity.

1Corinthians 15.24 *then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father; when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power.*

25 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.

26 The last enemy that will be abolished is death.

27 For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him.

28 When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.

They say ‘God always wins.’ All things end up how God has designed and what He desires, in the process He deals with evil and through it all He is glorified in various ways even as we experience evil. If you think about it: if there were no evil, and I think this is part of the reason He has permitted it, there would be no need for salvation, so we would not know all the aspects of God’s salvación or who He is. There would be no need for salvation. We would not see His grace. Could we truly understand the grace of God unless we see the withholding of it to vessels of wrath, as Paul describes it? Would we even truly understand His love or mercy or patience, His compassion—would we understand those aspects without the evil surrounding. How would we know *wrath* unless God had creatures of wrath or the recipients of wrath. Would we really understand His judgment unless there were objects of His judgment? And would we understand the holiness of God and the purity of God without the contrast?

God had a *desire*...bringing about the creation and all these things. It is hard for us to understand because we don’t *think* the same as He does.

Isaiah 55.8 “*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,*” declares the LORD.

9 “*For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.*”

Conclusion

- > Our Lord is Glorious beyond what we can Imagine
- > Yet He Permitted Evil for His Glorious Purposes

Applications

- > Problem of Guilt
- > Praise Him Anyway