

IF GOD, WHY EVIL?

Part 3 of Reasons To Believe. Various Passages.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. May 12, 2024.

GOOD QUESTIONS, ANY ANSWERS?

People often ask, if God, why evil?

- If God is all-good and all-powerful, why does evil exist?
- Why hasn't God stopped it?

FOUR INSIGHTS INTO THE PROBLEM OF EVIL?

Insight One: The Devil and Demons Do Evil Things

- The devil is probably a high-ranking angel who rebelled against God and was thrown “down” to earth along with his fallen-angel allies.
- Demons are probably unclean spirits who create havoc.
- The devil and/or demons are responsible for:
 - The origin of evil
 - Spiritual confusion
 - Physical and mental attacks

Insight Two: The World Is Broken

- The effects of Adam and Eve's rebellion rippled out from Eden.
- This explains natural disasters and diseases.

Romans 8:20-21 (CSB) For the creation was subjected to futility — not willingly, but because of him who subjected it — in the hope that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of God's children.

Insight Three: Humans Have Moral Freedom

- Perhaps the only way God could create humans with the ability to make genuine moral choices was to create them with the ability to reject him and do evil things.
- Possibly, the best possible world is one in which we have genuine moral freedom, which results in some evil choices, rather than a world in which there is no evil because we do not have moral freedom.

Insight Four: We Are Ignorant

- We don't know enough to solve the problem of evil.
- When Job questioned God about his loss and suffering, God replied:

Job 40:2 (CSB) "Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who argues with God give answer."

- Listen how Job reacted to God's rebuke:

Job 40:4-5 (CSB) "I am so insignificant. How can I answer you? I place my hand over my mouth. 5 I have spoken once, and I will not reply; twice, but now I can add nothing."

THIS IS WHAT WE KNOW FOR SURE

There is a Plan and a Person

- God has a plan to eradicate evil and the Lord Jesus Christ is the person to do it.
- When we embrace, trust in, and count on the Plan and Person, we find the strength, courage, and hope we need to endure hardships.

Consider using Romans 8 as a way to embrace the Plan and Person.

- Read, meditate on, memorize.
- Turn it into a prayer and a declaration.

RESILIENCE BY RELYING ON THE REALITY OF ROMANS 8:28-39

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

- “God, I hate what I’m going through, but I know you have a plan to use it for my good.”

29 For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; and those he called, he also justified; and those he justified, he also glorified.

- “God, I praise you because you are using what I’m going through to transform me into the likeness of Jesus.”

31 What, then, are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He did not even spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him grant us everything?

- “God, I declare that you are for me, not against me.”

33 Who can bring an accusation against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies. 34 Who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is the one who died, but even more, has been raised; he also is at the right hand of God and intercedes for us.

- “Praise you, Lord. You accept me, now and forever.”

35 Who can separate us from the love of Christ? Can affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- “Lord Jesus Christ, I receive your love.

SMALL GROUPS GUIDE

DIVE IN

- Review Peter's study guide. What were his main ideas, insights, principles, etc?
- Which of Peter's four insights into the question of evil seems most satisfying to you? Explain your answer.
- When you hear about evil or suffering in the world, what keeps you from despair?
- When you go through a really hard time, what keeps you from falling apart or feeling bitter or angry with God?
- Share with the group any Bible passages, promises, or principles that hold your head up when you feel crushed by life?

PRAY TOGETHER

- Ask the Lord to end all evil and suffering in the world and send Jesus to usher in the new creation where there is no more sin or sorrow.
- Pray for the Cornerstone - people, leaders, health, and faithfulness.
- Pray for our families, communities, and nation.
- Pray for revival at the Cornerstone and a national spiritual awakening.