

QUESTION & ANSWER SERMON - PT. 2

Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. August 16, 2026.

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QUESTION ONE: Why did God permit evil and suffering to enter the world, and why doesn't he stop them?

Answer: This is theology's toughest question. Very briefly:

1. The Sources of Evil and Suffering

Genesis chapter three: Evil and suffering entered the world when the devil tempted Adam and Eve, they rebelled against God, and God responded.

Romans 5:12 (CSB) Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned.

Romans 8:20-22 (CSB) For the creation was subjected to futility — not willingly, but because of him who subjected it ... 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together with labor pains until now.

Hebrews 12:7 (CSB) Endure suffering as discipline: God is dealing with you as sons. For what son is there that a father does not discipline?

2. The Limits To Our Understanding Of God, Evil, And Suffering

Why does God allow this? Job was a righteous man who lost everything and suffered terribly. He demanded God give him answers. God answered:

Job 38:1-4 (CSB) Then the LORD answered Job from the whirlwind. He said: 2 Who is this who obscures my counsel with ignorant words? 3 Get ready to answer me like a man; when I question you, you will inform me. 4 Where were you when I established the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding.

We don't have the information or the intellectual capacity to understand the problem of evil and suffering.

Deuteronomy 29:29 (CSB) The hidden things belong to the LORD our God,

3. God Will Eradicate Evil and Suffering in the End

Revelation 21:3-4 (CSB) Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.

4. A Possible Explanation

Any world in which humans have moral freedom - that is, the freedom to choose to do right or wrong - will inevitably result in people making evil decisions leading to suffering in the world.

So ... Maybe in God's mind, it's better to create humanity with moral freedom than to make us like robots.

QUESTION TWO: Who decided what books are in the Bible? Why do different denominations have more books included?

Answer: Very briefly:

1. The Inspiration of the Bible

2 Timothy 3:16 (CSB) All Scripture is inspired by God...

Inspired means breathed out in the sense that it is God's speaking. Paul was referring to the Old Testament, but the apostle Peter describes Paul's writings as inspired. So, we believe the Bible is inspired, or God-breathed.

2. The Process of Identifying Inspired Writings

Scholars believe Jewish religious leaders recognized most of the Old Testament as Scripture around 400 BC, when Ezra returned from the Babylonian exile. The rest of the books were recognized sometime in the first century AD.

The New Testament's books were all written before the end of the first century. They circulated among Christian communities and were gradually recognized as

God-breathed. A collection of 27 books is mentioned in a list in 150 AD. Athanasius of Alexandria mentions the same books in 367 AD.

3. The Criteria Used For Including Writings In The New Testament

- Apostolicity: Written by an apostle or their delegate.
- Orthodoxy: Conform to the "rule of faith" recognized by the churches.
- Catholicity (universal reception): Broadly recognized and used.
- Traditional/liturgical use: Books consistently read aloud in worship.

4. Why Do Some Christian Traditions Have More Books?

The Hebrew Masoretic text contains the 39 books we Protestants recognize. The Greek Septuagint contains additional books - Apocrypha or Deuterocanonical books - recognized by Roman Catholics and Orthodox. We believe that the Apocryphal books are useful but not authoritative.

LIGHTNING ROUND

Question: What did Jesus mean when he said: “Do not judge, so that you won’t be judged” (Matthew 7:1-3)?

Answer: Don’t be judgy. Don’t be self-righteous and critical. Don’t tear people down. None of us is without sin or failure.

Question: What is the sovereignty of God, and what are its implications?

Answer: God has a plan and purpose, and he will get it done:

Ephesians 1:11 (CSB) “... according to the plan of the one who works out everything in agreement with the purpose of his will ...” God has a plan and a purpose, and he is working everything in the universe to get it done. See Romans 8:28-30

Question: What does the bible say about burial or cremation?

Answer: The Bible says nothing directly about burial or cremation. We're free to choose, but pray about it and bear in mind the following:

- Even in death, the human body should be treated with respect and dignity.
- All bodies eventually return to dirt and dust.
- When Christ returns, he will raise us (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

Question: What happens when a Christian dies in the Lord?

Answer: Our biological bodies die and return to the ground. Our spirit or soul continues to live and is immediately in the presence of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:1 (NLT) For we know that when this earthly tent we live in is taken down (that is, when we die and leave this earthly body), we will have a house in heaven, an eternal body made for us by God himself and not by human hands.

Question: Who are the rulers and authorities in Ephesians 3:10?

Ephesians 3:10 (CSB) This is so that God's multi-faceted wisdom may now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavens.

Answer: They are most likely angelic beings - both holy and fallen - who rule over myriads of other angels in the unseen realm (Ephesians 1:21; 6:12).

Question: Can Satan tempt more than one person at a time?

Answer: No. Satan is a limited creature, an angel, so he can only be in one place at a time. However, he can lay traps, spread lies and deception, carry out schemes, and send multitudes of fallen angels and demons to tempt us.

Ephesians 6:12 (CSB) For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this darkness, against evil, spiritual forces in the heavens.