

KNOW WHY YOU BELIEVE
LESSON # 18
WHAT ABOUT EVIL

When you start to talk to people about God, one of the first objections they have is if God is a good God why is there evil and suffering in the world?

It's a good question. Let's talk about that today...

(I) THE MAIN PROBLEM IS SIN

Before people rebelled against God there was no sin, suffering, death or sickness. These things are a result of people's rebellion against God in the garden

A) People were originally create in innocence and upright.

Ecc. 7:29

Ecclesiastes

7:29

²⁹ This only have I found: God made mankind upright, but men have gone in search of many schemes."

Gen 3:8-13

Genesis 3:8-13

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

¹⁰ He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

¹¹ And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

¹² The man said, "The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

B) People had un-separated **fellowship with God.**

1. Gen 2:15-17

Genesis 2:15-17

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;

¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

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2. The separation we see testifies to our sinfulness.

C. People were given the earth to rule.

1. Gen. 2:19-20 (denotes ownership)

Genesis 2:19-20

¹⁹ Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.

²⁰ So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field. But for Adam no suitable helper was found.

2. Gen. 1:26, 28-30

Genesis 1:26-30

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

²⁹ Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground--everything that has the breath of life in it--I give every green plant for food." And it was so.

3. Gen 9:1-2 (even in this age)

Genesis 9:1-2

¹ Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth.

² The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air,

upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands.

D. People were created in the image of God.

1. Gen. 1:26, 6:9

Genesis 1:26

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

Genesis 6:9

⁹ This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.

2. I Cor. 11:7; Ja. 3:9

1 Corinthians 11:7

⁷ A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.

James 3:9

⁹ With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness.

E. What is the image of God?

1. Moral resemblance and sharing of the unique divine attributes.

- a. Capacity for justice and compassion, for love and hate.
- b. Ability to relate to the past, present and future.
- c. Ability to need to establish long meaningful relationship
- d. Ability to communicate and "philosophize."
- e. Ability to choose, ability to create.

(II) WHEN PEOPLE SINNED AND REBELLED AGAINST GOD ALL OF THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF SIN ENTERED INTO THE WORLD

A) Eve listened to Satan rather than God.

1. She set her will against God.

- a. The will is a "free" thing affected by the mind, the soul, and the spirit.

2. "Aspiration" is a key word to understanding the fall.

B) Sin effected every aspect of life

- 1. Everything in us fell; mind, body, emotions, spiritual capacity.**

2. The appetites of the flesh became lust.
3. The will is now in bondage to Satan. (Rom. 6:6)

Romans

6:6

⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—

4. Man ceases to become upright and became a sinner.

5. Gen. 6:5

Genesis 6:5 ⁵ The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

Job 14:4, 15:14-15

Job 14:4

⁴ Who can bring what is pure from the impure? No one!

Job 15:14-15

¹⁴ "What is man, that he could be pure, or one born of woman, that he could be righteous?"

¹⁵ If God places no trust in his holy ones, if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes,

Isa. 1:5-6

Isaiah 1:5-6

⁵ Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted.

⁶ From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness-- only wounds and welts and open sores, not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with oil.

Rom. 3:10-18;

Romans 3:10-18

¹⁰ As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;

¹¹ there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.

¹² All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

¹³ "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips."

¹⁴ "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."

¹⁵ "Their feet are swift to shed blood;

¹⁶ ruin and misery mark their ways,

¹⁷ and the way of peace they do not know."

¹⁸ "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

6. Death did not exist before the fall.
7. A drastic change occurred in man's relationship with animals.
8. Sickness enters into the scene.
9. Hate, suspicion, murder, extended through ALL creation.

C) SUFFERING ENTERED INTO THE WORLD AS A RESULT OF PEOPLE SINNING AGAINST GOD

1. It wasn't God who brought it on, but people who sinned against Him

(III) IN ORDER TO HAVE CREATURES WITH MORAL FREEDOM, GOD ALLOWED EVIL CHOICES

A) Yet it is true that God does sometimes intervene with evil choices and does as He pleases

Psalm 115:3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

Psalm 135:6 The Lord does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.

Daniel 4:34-35 *At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. [35] All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?"*

B) GOD DOES SOMETIMES PERFORM ACTS OF DELIVERENCE

C) SOMETIMES HOWEVER HE CHOOSES NOT TO. WHY?

1) All things have a purpose, even seemingly senseless acts of evil

2) Jesus going to the cross looked pointless and evil, until we understand it on the other side of the resurrection.

3) This doesn't make us feel any better, but does help us understand.

4) **Romans 8:28** *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

D) If God brought instant, perfect justice right now then everybody would instantaneously be sent to hell.

1) God is patient and long-suffering

2) Ultimate justice will come when Jesus returns.

E) Jesus said the rain falls on the just and on the unjust.

Matthew 5:45 *“He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”*

(IV) WE SHOULD NOT BE CONTENT WITH SIMPLE EXPLANATIONS OF EVIL EITHER

A) We should never grow comfortable with evil

B) Evil can never be seen as an expression of God’s goodness, although God can even use evil.

C) We should never assign our own evil to something outside of ourselves. We are responsible.

D) Sin is never good.

E) Evil is always an intruder.

FINALLY IN SUMMARY

A) “God does in fact weep over every sparrow and grieve over every evil and every suffering. So the suffering that Christ endured on the cross is literally unimaginable.”

“We are not supposed to live at peace with evil and sin, but we are supposed to live at peace with God. We continue to trust in His goodness, His sovereignty, His mercy, and we continue to confess our own responsibility for sin.” Robert Pyne in Humanity and Sin

