

## Video Transcript: If There is a God, Why is There Evil?

1.

The existence of evil is one of the greatest obstacles to belief in God. The Bible tells us that God is gracious, merciful and loving, and that he is all-powerful. If this is true, then how can he stand by and allow his creation to be marred by so much violence, cruelty and distress?

In this video I will show that the Christian faith provides the most rational and realistic understanding of evil, and offers the only true remedy to the problem of evil.

2.

The philosopher Bertrand Russell issued this sobering challenge:

*I would invite any Christian to accompany me to the children's ward of a hospital, to watch the suffering that is there being endured, and then to persist in the assertion that those children are so morally abandoned as to deserve what they are suffering – Bertrand Russell.*

The philosopher David Hume states the argument clearly:

*Is [God] willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Whence then is evil? – David Hume.*

The existence of evil in the world is an issue which cannot be ignored.

3.

The reality of evil confronts every philosophy of life, and the burden of explaining its origin and existence lies equally upon all.

It is not a problem unique to the Christian faith.

Atheists try to use evil as an argument against the existence of God, but offer no explanation for the existence of either good or evil without God.

Eastern religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, try to deny the reality of evil by passing it off as an illusion.

In contrast to these inadequate responses, the Christian faith confronts evil head on, and deals with it.

4.

Atheists argue that the presence of evil in the world is incompatible with the nature of God described in the Bible.

However, this view is illogical for two reasons.

Firstly, the existence of evil is not a reasonable basis for concluding that God does not exist.

Good and evil can co-exist, and the evidence for God's existence is very strong as discussed in another video in this series.

Secondly, it is possible that God, in his wisdom, has allowed evil to exist for a time and for some purpose unknown to us.

5.

*It is a Christian conviction that evil can be used in a higher purpose, that suffering produces saintliness. If this is true, then it is possible that God's unwillingness to create a world in which evil is impossible reflects neither on his goodness nor on his power, but flows from his eternal and unchanging purposes – William Dyrness.*

Atheists often ask, "Why doesn't God stop evil?" to which one could reply, "How much evil should he stop?"

If he were to stop all evil, none of us would survive one day!

The degree to which God interferes in people's lives, to that degree he is denying their freedom to choose their own destiny.

6.

The atheistic view stumbles on another critical point. In order to judge one thing as good and another as evil requires an innate sense of morality which itself must come from God.

If our morality is the product of natural processes, then no one person's morality can be judged as being better than another's, and good and evil have no meaning.

*Why is it any easier to account for goodness without God than it is to account for evil with him? That the problem of evil generates more fury than the problem of goodness may be more a matter of psychology than philosophy – Ed. L. Miller.*

7.

Finally, atheism does not provide a practical solution to the problem of evil.

Instead, it intensifies the evil by removing the advantages of having God on our side to help us through.

*Suffering would be altogether intolerable if there were no God ... Atheism answers that the fact of suffering proves that there is no God. But this does not reduce the world's suffering by one hair-breadth, it only takes away hope – F. J. Sheed.*

8.

The central premise of the eastern religions is that of monism. This philosophy holds that all diversity is mere illusion, and that ultimate reality is a single entity which is neither good nor bad.

The eastern religions dismiss evil as a state of mind which can be cleared away by clearing our minds of all our troubles.

This response is unrealistic and impractical. Evil is real, and it cannot be run away from. It must be confronted and dealt with positively.

Denying the existence of evil is illogical. If evil, which is so obvious and evident to our minds, is an illusion, then how do we know that the theory itself is not an illusion?

*It would be nice if it were true that no evil existed, but the very fact that men wish it to be so makes this belief highly suspect – Sigmund Freud.*

9.

*Accepting the illusionist's position demands that one admit that all of life as he experiences it is deceiving him – Norman L. Geisler.*

It is one thing to believe that evil is an illusion, but quite a different matter to live consistently on this premise.

*Those who believe that evil and the world are illusions do not actually function as if this were so. They may maintain that all is an illusion, but if one were to push them in front of an oncoming bus, they would quickly "warm up" to the reality idea! – Norman L. Geisler.*

10.

Lastly, the belief that evil is only an illusion is self-refuting, because the illusion of evil is itself an evil.

It can, and does, lead to a fatalistic view of life. If evil is an illusion, it would be pointless trying to improve the conditions of life.

Hence, the destitute would be left to starve and the sick left to die, and there would be no need to have hospitals, schools and universities.

This defeatist view of evil is impossible to live with.

11.

The Christian view is that God did not create evil, but he did create the possibility for evil.

The Bible tells us that man was made in the image and likeness of God. As such, man has a freewill and the opportunity to choose between right and wrong.

The problem with having a freewill is that people can choose to do what is wrong (i.e., to sin) in preference to what is right.

The Bible also tells us that sin is the result of rebellion against God. Since God cannot rebel against himself, he cannot be the author of sin.

12.

Thus, evil resides in the things outside of God and is the product of rebellion against God. In essence, sin is the abuse of freewill, and evil is the result of sin.

*While we do not believe that personal freedom is the ultimate explanation of the origin of evil, we do believe that freedom was the means by which sin did come into the world – John Gerstner.*

Christians also believe that God can use evil to achieve good purposes.

For one thing, it can force people to examine their lives beyond the superficial and self-seeking pleasures of this world. This, in turn, may lead them to God.

13.

Sometimes God will use evil to rebuke his children in order to save them from a worse evil by allowing them to continue in sin (e.g., Job 5:17-18; Hebrews 12:5-11).

At other times he may allow his people to experience various kinds of trials to build up their spiritual character (e.g., James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7).

The Christian response to evil is one of perseverance and faith in Christ.

*I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us (Romans 8:18).*

14.

Unlike any other religion, the Christian faith offers a solution to the problem of evil – the cross of Christ.

It is here that God, in the form of a man, took upon himself the full force of sin and evil, and overcame it. Through the cross, God has demonstrated both his hatred of sin and his love for us (e.g., 1 John 4:9-10).

*The cross of Christ is God's final answer to the problem of evil because the problem of evil is in the cross itself – E. J. Carnell.*

*At the heart of the story stands the cross of Christ, where evil did its worst and met its match – John W. Wenham.*

15.

*For whatever reason God chose to make man as he is limited and suffering and subject to sorrows and death, he had the honesty and the courage to take his own medicine. Whatever game he is playing with his creation, he has kept his own rules and played fair. He can exact nothing from man that he has not exacted from himself. He has himself gone through the whole of human experience, from the trivial irritations of family life and the cramping restrictions of hard work and lack of money to the worst horrors of pain and humiliation, defeat, despair, and death. When he was a man, he played the man. He was born in poverty and died in disgrace, and thought it well worthwhile – Dorothy L. Sayers.*

16.

Of all the philosophies on evil, the Christian view is the most rational, realistic and practical.

Christians accept the reality of evil and understand how it operates in the world. They are affected by it just like everyone else, but they regard evil as having been already defeated by Christ on the cross.

*In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world (John 16:33).*

Only in Christ has God provided a solution to the problem of evil. On the cross Christ met evil head-on, and triumphed over it.

His victory over sin and evil is also our victory by which we may attain eternal life free from all evil (e.g., Revelation 21:3-4).