

Week 5 - Is God Good? The Problem of Evil and Suffering

- The Problem of Evil is not a modern philosophical problem.
- This problem has been debated and examined from the earliest days of the Christian movement and throughout Christian tradition.
 - **St. Augustine** taught that evil is not a “thing” created by God, but a privation of good—something that occurs when creation turns away from the fullness of God’s design.
 - **St. Irenaeus** emphasized that suffering plays a role in moral and spiritual formation, shaping human beings toward maturity.
 - **Thomas Aquinas** wrestled carefully with how God can permit evil while remaining wholly good, concluding that God may allow certain evils in order to bring about greater goods that could not otherwise occur.

IMPORTANT: Every worldview must explain the existence of evil in the world.

“Evil” is not evidence against God; It is evidence for God.

- Calling something “evil” already assumes the existence of a transcendent standard of good.
 - Acknowledging “evil” only makes sense within a moral framework that assumes the existence of God.
 - Without God, there is no such thing as *evil*—only amoral events in an indiscriminate universe.
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The Problem of Evil & Suffering

- Premise 1:** If God is all-powerful, He could prevent evil.
- Premise 2:** If God is all-good, He would want to prevent evil.
- Premise 3:** Evil exists.
- Conclusion:** Therefore, God does not exist.

A Different Approach to the Problem

Instead of asking: “How could a good and powerful God allow such a broken and painful world?”

Ask: “Given that the world is broken and painful, how should a good and powerful God respond?”

This different approach does not solve the problem of evil but perhaps it does invite us into the deeper mystery of God’s presence in the midst of our suffering.

Memory Verse for the Week

Romans 8:28 — *“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”*

Notes:

JUDITH // A Perfect Circle

You're such an inspiration for the ways that I will never, ever choose to be
Oh, so many ways for me to show you how your savior has abandoned you

(%@\$& your God) Your Lord, your Christ (*He did this*)

Took all you had, and (*left you this way*)

Still you pray, never stray, never (*never taste of the fruit*)

Never thought to question why

It's not like you killed someone, It's not like you drove a hateful spear into His side

Praise the one who left you broken down and paralyzed

He did it all for you, He did it all for you

Oh, so many, many ways for me to show you

How your dogma has abandoned you

(Pray) to your Christ, to your God (*never taste of the fruit*)

Never stray, never break, never (*choke on a lie*)

Even though he's the one who did this to you

Never thought to question why,

It's not like you killed someone, It's not like you drove a spiteful spear into His side

Talk to Jesus Christ as if He knows the reasons why

He did it all for you

He did it all for you

He did it all for you

IMPRECATORY PSALMS // Psalm 109:6-15

- 6 Appoint someone evil to oppose my enemy; let an accuser stand at his right hand.
- 7 When he is tried, let him be found guilty, and may his prayers condemn him.
- 8 May his days be few; may another take his place of leadership.
- 9 May his children be fatherless and his wife a widow.
- 10 May his children be wandering beggars; may they be driven from their ruined homes.
- 11 May a creditor seize all he has; may strangers plunder the fruits of his labor.
- 12 May no one extend kindness to him or take pity on his fatherless children.
- 13 May his descendants be cut off, their names blotted out from the next generation.
- 14 May the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the Lord; may the sin of his mother never be blotted out.
- 15 May their sins always remain before the Lord, that he may blot out their name from the earth.

PSALMS OF LAMENT // Psalm 22:1-2

- 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?
- 2 My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest.

PSALMS OF ANGER & ANGUISH // Psalm 44:9-12, 23-24

- 9 But now you have rejected and humbled us; you no longer go out with our armies.
- 10 You made us retreat before the enemy, and our adversaries have plundered us.
- 11 You gave us up to be devoured like sheep and have scattered us among the nations.
- 12 You sold your people for a pittance, gaining nothing from their sale.
- 23 Awake, Lord! Why do you sleep? Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever.
- 24 Why do you hide your face and forget our misery and oppression?