

Apologetics III

- What are the main reasons you hear for people rejecting God or Christianity?

1. Attacks against theism

a. Problem of Evil and Suffering

- The most common objection to Christianity.
- Argument: How can you reconcile an all-powerful, all-knowing, perfectly good God with the existence of evil in the world? Either God *can't stop* the evil in the world, or he doesn't *know* about it, or He doesn't *care*.

1) Intellectual Problem of Evil

- Is it logically impossible for God and evil to co-exist? Is it possible that God could have morally sufficient reasons to allow the evil and suffering in this world? YES
- God's purpose is not to increase happiness and comfort in this life. His purpose is to bring the maximum amount of people into loving relationship with himself. Which will lead to true happiness and fulfillment for eternity.
- What if this is the world with the minimum amount of evil and suffering, while allowing for the maximum number of people to be saved? What if to decrease the evil in this world would include fewer people being saved?
- God very often brings good out of evil that could not have been accomplished otherwise.

2) Emotional Problem of Evil

- It is emotionally distressing to go through pain and evil. Sometimes people get so upset or offended with God that they reject Him. They cannot reconcile why God would allow them to experience the pain.
- Pain is real. We can't minimize the severity of it.
- Our God is not removed from our suffering. Rather, he experiences and knows our pain.
- He became human and experienced evil, pain, rejection, death, etc... He not only understands what we go through, but he has gone through it too.
- "There's a God who weeps, there a God who bleeds."

3) Why does evil exist?

- Christianity provides an explanation for the evil in the world.
- God created a good world – no evil. God did not create evil.
- God created humanity with the capacity to choose – His goal is love and love requires choice. We could choose to love Him, or choose to reject Him.
- The Fall was Adam and Eve choosing to reject God and rebel. Choosing rebellion against God is choosing evil. Evil resulted from the Fall.
- Since humanity was made in the image of God and given dominion over creation, all of creation was affected by their sin.
- We are affected by our choices, the choices of others, and the initial Fall.
- What about Satan? Either he rebelled prior to the Fall or at the same time.

4) It's Problem for everyone

- Not just for Christians – every religion must deal with it.
- For the atheist, why does evil bother us? It's the way things are and the way things are supposed to be. It's survival of the fittest; it's natural; why are we so uncomfortable with it? Why do we feel like it ought not be this way?

b. The problem of Divine Hiddenness.

- a. Why doesn't God make himself more evident?
- b. For those who are genuinely seeking God, he will make himself known.
- c. Would this lead to greater love and acceptance of God?
- d. Humanity hid from God in the garden, not the other way around.
- e. God has sufficiently revealed himself for anyone open to him.

c. Science vs Faith

1) Science arose through a Christian worldview – believed the world was designed and therefore could be understood. (John Lennox, Francis Collins, Stephen Meyer, Michael Behe.)

- Being a theist in no way hinders science. Christianity is committed to truth.
- "Scientist can't disprove God any more than a mechanic can disprove Henry Ford."
- Remember the scientific evidence for Christianity.
- DNA – information comes from a mind.

2) Age of the Earth

- This is an “in-house” issue.
- Old Earth – there was a gap between Genesis 1:2 and 1:3, or the days are periods of time “eras.” Takes a more figurative interpretation of Genesis 1.
- The general scientific consensus is that the Earth is old.
- Young Earth – God created the Earth mature, not in an infancy state. Takes a more literal interpretation on Genesis 1.
- Not a hill to die on IMO.

3) Evolution

- This is also an “in-house” issue.
- Theistic-evolution – God directed the process of evolution. There are many faithful believers who believe in evolution.
- Does not explain how the universe got here. Does not explain how life arose from non-life.
- IMO Darwinian evolution is not compelling. Adaptation is what he observed.
 - a. The fossil record does not show gradual changes, but sudden shifts.
 - b. Microbiology shows that there’s no “simple” lifeforms. The smaller we go, the more complexity we find.
 - c. The concept of irreducible complexity.
 - d. Issues with probability and mathematics.

d. The Burden of Proof – “Atheism is a lack of belief.”

Agnosticism – I’m unconvinced, how can anyone know for sure?

- 4) Is this agnosticism or “apathyism”?
- 5) How do you explain the evidence?
- 6) Don’t have to be at 100% certainty to believe something. If you are at 51%, that means it’s more reasonable to believe in God than not to.
- 7) Belief is a choice. It isn’t passive.