

Theology 1
The Problem of Evil & Angels
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*Probably **the most difficult intellectual challenge** to the Christian faith is the problem of evil in the world. Although the problem of evil will never be fully resolved within this earthly life, there are **biblical teachings** that help alleviate it.*

The Nature of the Problem

- The evil that precipitates this dilemma is of two general types:
 - Natural evil – evil that does not involve human willing or acting, but is merely an aspect of nature which seems to work against human welfare (effects of the Fall)
 - Moral evil – evil that can be traced to the choice and action of free moral agents
- Various solutions have been offered:
 - Some have abandoned the idea of God’s omnipotence – God is not all-powerful
 - Others have modified the idea of God’s goodness (see p. 149 example)
 - Some have rejected the reality of evil and suffering (Christian science)

Building a Better Solution to the Problem of Evil

- Evil as a necessary accompaniment of the creation of human kind – in order to be truly free, humans had to be placed in an environment where evil was **possible**.
- We would do well to reevaluate what makes something good or evil
 - Good is that which glorifies God, fulfills His will, and conforms to His nature (Rom. 8:28-29).
 - What we may consider evil in our current time frame may actually accomplish a greater good in the long-term (Rom. 5:3-5, 8:18).
 - We should also consider the extent of what we call evil. What we consider evil may actually produce a great good for someone else (flood vs. rain on crops).
- The overarching point – evil is the result of human sin and not God’s impotence or any moral failure on His part. (**James 1:14**)
- *God doesn’t do good because of evil; He does good **in spite of it**.*
- Lest we think we serve a God who can’t sympathize with our living in a world filled with evil, we should remember He was actually the greatest victim of human evil!

Angels

- Angels are **spiritual beings** that God created higher than humankind (superhuman, but not deities). Some of them remained obedient to God and carry out His will, while others disobeyed, lost their holy condition (Isa. 14, Eze. 28, 2 Pet. 2:4, Jude 6, Rev. 12:4), and now oppose and seek to hinder His work.
- The word angel comes from the Greek **angelos**, meaning “messenger.”
- The activity of angels – pp. 156-157
- The origin and activity of demons – pp. 158-159 (see esp. 2 Pet. 2:4, Jude 6)