

Foundations 3
Three Reasons Evil Exists in God's World?
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Introduction: A talk about the presence of evil in our world can quickly turn purely philosophical, but it is not-it's personal. The truth is every one of us in this room have been and are being deeply impacted by the suffering it grows out of evil. I may not know what you are suffering through right now. But I do know that we all go through hard times. When we talk about good and evil, understand we are talking about a very personal subject! I encourage you to not minimize the struggles that you're facing. We know that the issue of evil is much bigger than what is happening to any one of us. But if you do not take an honest look at this through the filter of your own life, your answers to the problem of evil will always end up sounding more like something from a philosophy textbook than a personal word from the father in Heaven who loves you.

We to have the sense, in light of our own struggles with evil, that we

are sitting at God's throne and asking him the hard questions that are in our heart. Questions are a great thing when they drive us to God. Eric Shannon was a religious man; raised Baptists, Turned religion nut of evangelical, Levitical law Jew who used his religion as an excuse to abuse his wife and children. When the abuse got to the point of torture. The State took his kids away and had them housed with his mother. His mother warned them her son was not exactly right and they needed to be careful. They just laughed it off.

Shortly, thereafter one afternoon Eric called screaming at his mother; give me my children back, or I will come and kill you!

Wednesday night after prayer meeting, Eric stormed his mothers rural Trailer house, with multiple weapons and the wife he had abused for years. He Shot Shirley's husband in the leg and then stomped on it, to compel him to give up where his son was at. He had his wife Robin tie up his own mother-Shirley hog tied-hearing hber husband screaming in the hall way. Eric's wife Robin straddled Shirley pressing a gun into her forehead-she noticed a picture of Jesus above the bed. Began to

taunt Shirley by shouting: Where's your Jesus now? He is right here-right now Shirley replied. You-really believe that? Yes-I do Shirley replied firmly.

This story causes me to ask where is our Confidence? Where is our hope? Where is the peace in the midst of the storm? What is our message that is spinning out of control? What is the billboard of our life, saying to a world broken by fear. Is it possible that in our hyper vigilance against our enemies, real or perceived, we've taken our eyes off of Jesus, our protector and redeemer?

Ask yourself where is your Jesus now? Where's our hope in this depression? It is days like today, I remember the witness of a gray haired nanny named Shirley Dunham. Even under the threat of gunpoint and her very life, Shirley displayed a faith greater than the evil she faced. Where is your Jesus? Does your Jesus walk with you through the valley the shadow of death? What does your savior say about why evil exists. There are three reasons why evil exists in our world today.

I. GOD'S WILL: BECAUSE GOD ALLOWS IT

The problem of evil and suffering can arguably be viewed as the single greatest intellectual challenge to Christianity. It's hard for people to understand how a great and good God could allow evil to exist.

A. He made a world in which evil COULD exist

Evil was introduced into the world. *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." Genesis 2:15-1

The tree of knowledge of good and evil: God planted the tree.

Satan as a snake: God had to let him into the garden.

The Old Testament implies that God is the creator of both good and evil . This is because he is the creator and is responsible for his creation. From the New Testament we see the fuller truth. God gave

a free will that allowed Satan to choose evil. Satan then tempted man, whom God also gave a choice, to choose evil.

"I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I the Lord, do all these things." Isaiah 45:7 (NIV)

B. God allows evil to CONTINUE to exist

God had to allow Job's suffering (Job 1:6-12 says; *One day the angels ^a came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan ^b also came with them. ⁷ The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it." Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."* *"Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. ¹⁰ "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. ¹¹ But stretch out your hand*

and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."

The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."

bThen Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

II. SATAN'S INFLUENCE: Because SATAN AFFLICTS IT.

The influence of Satan is a second reason why evil exists in our world today. Evil is not some new creation of Satan - Satan does not have the power to create anything. All he can do is to try to twist or to withhold what God has created.

Is weather evil?

Is ambition evil?

Is sex evil?

Is our ability to talk evil?

All of these are good creations of God. Evil is when Satan twists them into natural disasters... or war... or rape... or slander.

We as believers need to be able to understand and defeat the enemy **without glorifying the enemy!** Satan has power - but he is also stupid (why else would he have sinned against God). ¹³**For such men are false**

apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15

III. Mankind's CHOICE: BECAUSE WE ACCEPT IT.

Remember two truths:

A. Evil began with MANKIND. (Genesis 3)

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.' "

"You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was

with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

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?"

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

And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" Genesis 3:1-11

A key to understanding this passage is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Mankind cannot handle the knowledge of good and evil. God can. He can know that there is evil and yet choose not to do it. We cannot. When we know that it exists we choose to do it.

Have experienced the truth that If you eat of the tree then "Dying, you will die." The wages of sin is death. Adam and Eve passed along to their children, and to us, this knowledge. It became a part of our

story when they bit into that fruit. That's why we all inevitably sin: because we cannot refuse the temptation of evil.

We all start with the knowledge of good and of evil and with a flawed heart which causes us to sin..

"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned--" Rom. 5:12 (NIV)

B. Evil is present in ME.

It's not just "their fault." We need to be able to admit: "evil is present in me."

"What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written: There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." Rom. 3:9-12

Would you or I have eaten the "apple" if we'd been in the garden? The honest answer is YES.

THE QUESTIONS THAT REMAIN...

WHY DOES GOD ALLOW IT?

WHY DOESN'T GOD STOP IT?

- **He already has defeated evil!**

When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature,^[b] God made you^[c] alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. **Col 2;15**

Remember - evil cannot be destroyed without destroying freedom.

God decided to defeat and redeem evil rather than destroy evil.

(I'm glad. If He'd destroyed evil He would have had to destroy us!)

- **He is PATIENT!**

God has provided for the salvation of all. My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ²He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for^[a] the sins of the whole

world. (I John 2:1,2)

God desires for all to be saved. ³This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. (I Timothy 2:3-4)

And He waits patiently, desiring all to come to salvation.

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (II Peter 3:8, 9)

Conclusion: Now man and angels have used their free will to do evil,

God is concentrating on a solution.

I love the book *The Shack* by William P. Young. Mack accuses God about

justifying pain and evil: Papa replied; "Were not justifying, we are

redeeming it." Those seven words may be the best apologetic of a Holy

God's allowance of the world's plight. The same day I was blessed by

experiencing Cash's America. It was the Johnny Cash's life story.

Johnny Cash's life was a journey from justifying his evil, to finding God's redemption. Johnny is an example a man can be a drug addict and a saint, struggling to find his God. One of the best redemption stories in Cash's America, is the story of his older brother Jack tragic and painful death at the hands of a table saw. At first glance there is absolutely no redeeming qualities to his painful and unnecessary death. The Cash family tells that in His final minutes on earth: Jack pleads with his father that he wants to be with him in heaven one day. So he asks his dad please tell me I will see you in heaven one day? Ray Cashed promised he would, Jack died and Ray got on his knees and accepted Jesus as Lord. Truth be told you are God's story of redeeming evil. No one but you knows where you are in the story; lost, lusting or longing for God's light. But know that no matter the evil or good you have known you are God's Child. Papa wants you home in His arms.