



Is it God's Fault We Have Evil in This World?

Isaiah 45:7: (NASB) *The One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.*



Every Christian acknowledges the evil that permeates our world, though explaining its depth and purpose can be challenging. We always say the evil is a result of sin and Satan - and that is true. The harder question that most do not ask or want to ask is whether or not God is responsible for evil. If He is the Almighty and far above all He created, then surely He must bear a generous amount of accountability for what we see around us. We believe that God is powerful enough to stop the evil and chooses not to stop it, so by definition He must own some blame for all that evil produces. As a Christian

(and this may be a surprise to some), we do believe that God is accountable for evil. However, if we are going down THAT road, then there are other roads of accountability that justice requires we go down as well because it would be unfair to only tell half the story!

Why is there evil, *The Problem of Evil: Crash Course Philosophy #13*

- *But one of the most persistent challenges to God's existence is also the root of one of the most asked but least answerable questions that we as thinking beings face: Why is there evil? Evil comes in many forms, and likewise, for philosophers, poses many problems, especially vis-à-vis the existence of God. First, there's what's known as the logical problem of evil. Like all rational people, theists can't help but acknowledge that the world is full of evil. And here we're understanding "evil" to be all manner of bad stuff, like not just Hitler or Darth Vader or Moriarty. It's everything in the vast spectrum of badness, from stubbed toes to plagues and everything in between. Theists and atheists both agree that evil exists in this way, but they disagree about the next part. Many theists believe in an omniscient, omnipotent and omnibenevolent God. But atheists argue that this creates a contradiction - a set of beliefs that can't all be true at the same time. Because evil is bad, right - whether it's stubbed toes or genocide or paper cuts or epidemics. So, if there's really an all-knowing God out there, He knows about all the evil. He might even know about it before it happens. And if He's all-powerful, He could stop it. And if He's all-good, then He would want to stop it...and yet He doesn't. The evil continues.*

We begin with creation and the original consequences of sin. Why?

Because you cannot measure God's accountability without first measuring the grace and gifts which came first:

Genesis 2:15-17: (NASB) ¹⁵*Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. ¹⁶The LORD God commanded the man, saying, From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die. (King James Version: Dying thou shalt die.)*

God gave gifts to Adam, including life, space, food, responsibility, and once Eve was created, companionship.



There was also communion with God:

Genesis 3:8: (NASB) *They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.*

ARE WE WILLING to hold God fully **ACCOUNTABLE** for the miracle of His beloved human creation?

If we are going to hold God accountable for evil, we have to first hold Him accountable for all of these initial gifts.

We will tell a story throughout this program, written by Rick. It is a modern-day parable where the father pictures God and the children picture the human race. The neighbor in the story represents those who would judge God.



Part 1, *The Open Window, A Parable About God's Love*

- *Once not so very long ago a man became a father. He and his wife had twins - a boy and a girl - and this man was overjoyed at their arrival. The responsibilities of parenthood brought the man to his knees in humility, for those children would need him to guide them from infancy all the way to adulthood when they would be able to self-govern.*

To focus himself, the man drew up a contract to which his wife and closest neighbor (who was very much a recluse) were witnesses. It said that he would always do the right thing for the ultimate benefit of his precious children. Caring for infants was well-defined and exhausting. Much time was spent carrying, feeding, changing and entertaining. Reading to them and rocking them to sleep was an end-of-the-day experience of peace and joy. The man's reclusive neighbor could hear much of this through his open window and thought, "Surely this man is a wonderful father!"

Satan's "gifts" to Adam:

Genesis 3:4-5: (NASB) *⁴The serpent said to the woman, You surely will not die! ⁵For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.*



Observations:

- A lie: "You will not die!"
- A misrepresentation of God's process and context: Satan took God's actions and process out of context. God did know their eyes would be opened, but His shielding them was in their best interest and was not withholding something they "deserved" as Satan implied.
- A new allegiance: Now Satan stood higher than God in the minds of Adam and Eve. They began to follow Satan instead.



ARE WE WILLING to hold Satan fully **ACCOUNTABLE** for the lie and deception that led to man's sin and then death?



Premchand posted this graphic on our Facebook page ("cq biblepodcast"), showing how "poorly" God is doing:

Bible Kill Count not including the flood	
Satan	God
10	2,476,633

The question implied is, if God is so benevolent, why would He kill so many people? It is a matter of proper accountability. Yes, God ordered the destruction of places and people many times. But to hold God accountable for those things, we need to be fair and hold Him accountable for the goodness He put in place ahead of time.

Was Adam sinning a flaw in God's plan? Can we accuse God of careless planning?

No, and here is why:

Genesis 1:26-27: (NASB) ²⁶Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule...over all the earth... ²⁷God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Satan (as Lucifer) and Adam were created in the image of God. Each had the gift of thought, choice and responsibility. Both chose to deviate from God's direction. Adam never questioned Satan's influence that contradicted what God said.

**What does "dying thou shalt die" actually look like?
How did it practically play out in their lives?**

The interesting thing about God giving consequences to Adam and Eve is that our knowledge is limited, because there are very few words written. Think about the years (yes, years!) they would have lived in the Garden in harmony with God. Think about the communication and lessons they would have had!

The Bible reads as though Adam is created, figures out he is alone, Eve is created and ten minutes later the serpent appears with a piece of fruit. However, the first six chapters of Genesis covers 1,600 years!



Theodicy, *The Problem of Evil: Crash Course Philosophy #13*

- A theodicy is an attempt to show that the existence of evil doesn't rule out the possibility of God's existence. Yes, this is such a big deal that there's a word for it. And the most popular theodicy is called the Free Will Defense. This argument holds that God maximized the goodness in the world by creating free beings. And being free means that we have the choice to do evil things - a choice that some of us exercise. This theodicy says that God doesn't create evil, but evil can't be avoided without depriving us of our freedom. And a world without freedom would be a worse place overall. This explanation*



preserves God's goodness because He created the best possible world that also preserves His omnipotence and omniscience, because although He does know about evil and could stop it, He has a good reason not to - to ensure our freedom. The problem is the Free Will Defense only really addresses what's known as "moral evil," or the evil committed on purpose by humans. Now, we're certainly responsible for a lot of bad stuff, but you can't blame us for everything. We can't be held responsible for the fact the plates of the earth sometimes shift causing destructive earthquakes, or that a storm might knock a tree over that falls onto someone's house. This type of evil - the stuff that we're not responsible for - is called "natural evil."

We think the story of God being accountable for evil has a bigger and better ending. Leaving the story at this point means so many people live a life of suffering, brokenness and misery. But God's plan is bigger than that.

After a significant time (several years), sin enters and now the sentencing comes that defines *dying thou shalt die*.



Humanity had to be removed from access to the Tree of Life for the physical dying process to begin:

Genesis 3:22-23: (NASB) ²²Then the LORD God said, Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever - ²³therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken.

God put man out of the Garden so he could not eat of the Tree of Life. The tree perhaps contained whatever vitamins or enzymes were needed to maintain the human form in its perfect stage, without decomposition or aging. After being expelled, the dying process would now begin.

But whose fault was it they were expelled from the Garden? Who made the decision to sin? Adam decided to separate from the one thing that could perpetuate his human life.



The woman would directly suffer in the most basic areas of life:

Genesis 3:16: (NASB) To the woman He said, I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children...

Is this God saying, "I will show you - have some pain!" or is it Him saying that living outside of the Garden where all was balanced produces far greater physical pain?

Yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.



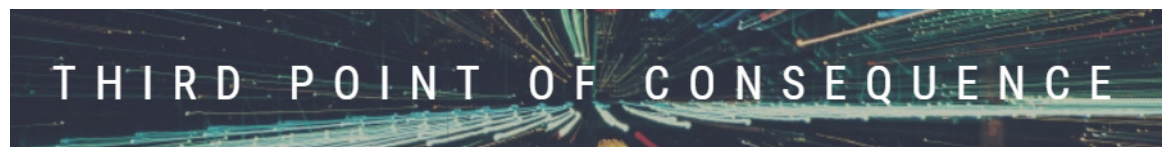
Another consequence of living outside the Garden was social and emotional. Instead of God being over them as equals, the physically stronger man will now rule the physically weaker woman. Whose "fault" was this? Adam's sin and Eve's participation.

God allowed natural consequences to take place. This was the natural consequence of being removed from the Garden.



Part 2, *The Open Window, A Parable About God's Love*

- The twins grew to be toddlers and began to taste independence. The man now needed to reason with them about proper behavior instead of just showing them. There were times - many times - that reasoning did not work, and the twins would cry and scream and even throw tantrums because they could not have their way. The man was patient, but sometimes he had to be firm. Now, his neighbor could not hear patience through his open window, but he could certainly hear firm. He could also hear the tantrums and the crying and thought, "Surely this man is not quite so wonderful, for he says and does things that make his sweet children so unhappy! This man is NOT a good father!"*



The man would directly suffer daily to provide what was once simply a matter of joyous responsibility:

Genesis 3:17-19: (NASB) ¹⁷Then to Adam He said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat from it; cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; and you will eat the plants of the field; ¹⁹by the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

The consequences included physical toil, emotional uncertainty and the inevitability of death. Whose fault is this? Not God's. Adam's choice led to hard consequences. God is letting fallen human nature take its course.



Lesley is deeply angry with God and left the following comment at ChristianQuestions.com:

If you saw someone about to burn to death and you didn't do anything about it, you would be considered a monster, and rightfully so. In the same way, if you had medication to stop people from dying in agony and didn't give it, you would have to be some heartless monster. Hitler was considered a monster and rightfully so. He did, however, prove himself better than God for a while, as for the most part he did let people die. God carries out His monstrosity in the hereafter as well as on this earth...He created a hell.

This poor person has suffered horribly and we will go into the rest of the comments shortly. However, the concept of hell as a place of eternal torture is not scriptural, so we disagree on this point.



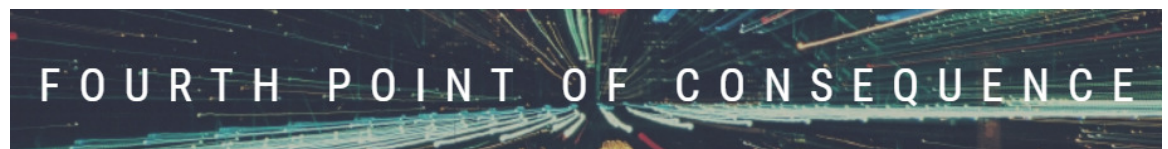
For an exhaustive study on this topic, please see our recent three-part series:
"Is the Hell of Christian Tradition Taught in the Bible?"
May 14, 2018, Episode #1021, (Part I)
May 29, 2018, Episode #1024, (Part II)
June 25, 2018, Episode #1027, (Part III)

ARE WE WILLING to hold God fully **ACCOUNTABLE** for the opportunity He gave to our first parents?

 **The most evil God possible, *Summarizing the Proof that God is Evil, Underlings***

- To start with, if you were trying to imagine the most evil God possible, you might come up with a psychopathic monster who would destine His creations to be pointlessly tortured for all eternity. But to be even more cruel, perhaps this evil God would first have most of those creations live a few relatively pleasant decades, just long enough to experience love, happiness, joy and all the other good things in life, only to then snatch it all away and leave them to be tormented by memories of that life during their eternal suffering. To further accentuate this betrayal, perhaps this evil God would have promised His creations a heavenly afterlife, contingent upon following the right religion, but then remained hidden from His creations so well that thousands of conflicting religions developed, ensuring that the vast majority of His creations would choose the wrong religion and thus inadvertently damn themselves.*

This describes a horrible god! But this is not the God of the Old Testament or New Testament. This is based entirely on misconceptions developed by traditions and wrong teachings.



God's answer for the initial cause that gave man opportunity to disobey was going to be eradicated:

Genesis 3:15: (NASB) *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.*

There was a glimmer of promise made right at the beginning that while Satan would *bruise him on the heel* - hurt mankind, but not a lethal blow, the woman's seed (Jesus) would *bruise you on the head* - Satan will be destroyed.



ARE WE WILLING to hold God fully **ACCOUNTABLE** for providing a pathway to root out spiritual evil?

At the very beginning He told us He had it under control but would let it run its course. We need to see and experience what evil is.

We now have plenty of foundation - what about the evil that has developed over the last 6,000 years?

In our human relationships, any fall from grace can happen in an instant. Ill-conceived words, an irrational action or misplaced trust can easily shatter a connection. Recovery requires far more than just picking up the pieces. It requires a careful and time-consuming reassembling of that which was broken. *Why would we expect the recovery of the human race back into God's grace to be any different?*

When we trace back the genealogies in Scripture from Adam until now, it is just over 6,000 years. In effect, this is a 6,000-year trial period for sin and death. God has allowed it to go on all this time. Is that a long time compared to eternity? Our suffering and pain is difficult but not forever.

 **Ivan unfriending God, *The Problem of Evil: Crash Course Philosophy #13***

- *Let's consider the case of Ivan, a good Russian who wants to break up with God. In the novel, "The Brothers Karamazov," nineteenth century Russian writer Fyodor Dostoevsky presents us with Ivan, a man who claims to believe in God. But Ivan finds the fact that God allows evil to exist to be so unforgivable that he decides that worshipping such a God would be just unconscionable. Ivan goes so far as to declare that he is returning his ticket to heaven. If the same God who allows evil, particularly the suffering and death of children, is also saving a cozy place in paradise for Ivan, well, Ivan wants nothing to do with it. So his way out of the problem of evil is to deny God's goodness and to conclude that a bad God is not only unworthy of his worship, He's also not someone Ivan wants to spend eternity with. It's like the ultimate "unfriending." Now, some readers have found Ivan's decision to be noble and full of integrity. After all, if you really think God is letting all this bad stuff happen, why would you want to be on His team? But other people think Ivan is being irrational. Why condemn yourself to an eternity in hell on principle? For theists, it's another question that doesn't have an easy answer.*

Again, a burning eternal torture of hell is not biblical.

Those who are angry because God is not stopping evil in this world are looking at one small lifetime. But there is suffering. There is sadness, suicide, rage, jealousy, broken hearts and darkness. We cannot underestimate it. But we also cannot underestimate the power of God with a plan. If we want to hold



God accountable for the evil in the moment, we must hold Him accountable for what comes before and after.

God wanted His creation back. He displays this by saving Noah, the only righteous man of his entire generation. Did He just let the others die?

No, He provided fair and consistent warning:

2 Peter 2:5: (NASB) *And did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly;*

Hebrews 11:7: (NASB) *By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark...and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.*

Noah did what God wanted him to do and was faithful. He preached for a long time, but no one listened.

ARE WE WILLING
to hold God fully **ACCOUNTABLE**
for providing a long, detailed and
reverent warning - to any who would
listen - of coming destruction?

God condemned that world to death but gave them fair warning of what was coming.



Trish: Good and evil exists in the spirit world. To know good and evil is just the way it is. If you are going to have intelligent beings, they will know good and evil.

Knowing good and evil is understanding its existence. Good and evil were known in the heavens a long time before mankind was created. Adam and Eve were exposed to it prematurely and it became a problem.



"The Tower of Babel"
by Pieter Bruegel
the Elder (1563)
Kunsthistorisches Museum,
Vienna, Austria

After the Flood, man walked away (again) from God and faith, most strikingly with the haughty building of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9. Whose fault was that? God let them abandon Him, but He NEVER abandoned the few who sought Him out.

Walking away from God creates consequences.

Lesley's comments on ChristianQuestions.com continued:



...He created my hell on earth. My grandma burned to death when I was three. My brother died of cancer when he was a baby, my mum, dad, stepbrother and stepfather all died with cancer, too. When we were told that my husband David was terminally ill, having Parkinson's disease, motor neuron, lung, bone and liver cancer of which they said lung cancer was the main killer, I became 100 percent convinced that if there is anything out there, it is an evil, callous, cruel monster...

We express our heartfelt sadness for the experience of this woman. It is very debilitating to see misery everywhere we look. It is hard to blame her for being angry. Sin brings misery, but God's plan will fix this. We cannot judge the unfinished plan.



Part 3, *The Open Window, A Parable About God's Love*

- Time went by and the twins grew into their pre-teen years. The man often played with his beautiful children creating laughter and smiles. There were other times, though, when the man demanded of them. He pressed them to do chores, to help their mom and to contribute to keeping their yard and things in order. Through his open window, the reclusive neighbor heard the laughter but also heard the whining and the resistance of the children towards their father. He heard them frequently cry out, "It's not fair!" and "I don't want to!" The neighbor grew concerned, for it now seemed that this man was becoming self-centered and even demeaning. Surely he was no longer wonderful - and had now become barely caring! This man was a bad father!*

We cannot paint an accurate picture of God by just looking at one snippet in time.

Abraham obeyed and received HOPE that man's broken connection with God would be mended:

Genesis 22:15-18: (NASB) ¹⁵Then the angel of the LORD...¹⁶said, By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.

All the nations of the earth shall be blessed - this has not yet happened; neither has the destruction of Satan. This tells us about the breadth of God's plan.

ARE WE WILLING
to hold God fully **ACCOUNTABLE**
for providing a detailed promise
of a coming blessing for ALL
because of the faith of one man?



God promised Adam that if he sinned he would die. He fulfilled that promise. He promised Abraham that if he was faithful, all the families of the earth would eventually be blessed because of him. God keeps His promises. If we are going to hold God accountable for evil, we also have to hold Him accountable for the good that is coming.

In spite of God's promises to the few who would follow Him, evil would continue to grow:

Genesis 15:16: (NASB) *Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.*

This is God speaking to Abram about his descendants and the Promised Land. The evil within the Amorites would be allowed until their fourth generation, after which the Promised Land would be obtainable. God allowed evil to run its course. The overall permission of evil gives man a comparison point to choose righteousness for eternity.

When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, God allowed them, His own people, to be treated harshly (Exodus 1). Moses finally rose up to deliver them, but in the meantime, why did God not stop the abuse? God, because of the environment of sin and death that man chose, would justly allow the consequences of evil to come to their full development.



God made it plain to Israel in the context of the Law that whomever would shun Him would earn the consequences of generational sin:

Deuteronomy 5:8-10: (NASB) *⁸You shall not make for yourself an idol... ⁹You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, and on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, ¹⁰but showing loving kindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.*

The natural result of godlessness is suffering, because all that is left is idolatry, which never brings true peace.

Visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children - sin breeds darkness. He does not take that away; rather, He says, "Go ahead, see what happens." It is a father letting the child mess it up for the purpose of learning.

God's desire to bring humanity back to Him is expressed in the Law and the consequences.

This seems really unfair! Is God purposefully SENDING iniquity down to innocent generations?

It is funny how we so easily jump to conclusions about God when it comes to perpetrating evil. Think logically about the generational effects we all experience from bad things in life. Substance abuse often begets dysfunction in children and their children. Those who are physically abused often become abusers. The message is simple - God is saying evil begets evil.



We must allow that message to permeate. Yes, God is accountable for evil because He lets it take its course for a specific and terminal reason. It has a beginning, middle and end. We know that because of the many promises we read in the Bible.

Good needs evil, *The Problem of Evil: Crash Course Philosophy #13*

- *Now, unlike Ivan, a lot of people aren't willing to give up their ticket to heaven. So, they need to work on a way to keep believing in and worshipping God, even though evil is still a thing. One way to do that is to argue that good can't exist without its opposite. The idea here is that you can't understand the concept of pleasure without pain. We don't know what it feels like to be warm if we haven't been cold. We can't understand the goodness of filling our bellies if we've never been hungry. But there's also another way, though it involves a little more work on your part. Twentieth century English philosopher of religion John Hick offered what's known as the "Soul Making" theodicy. Unlike the traditional view that God created a perfect world which we ruined through our own poor choices, Hick argued that God deliberately creates us unfinished, and our earthly lives are designed to toughen us up in a sense, kind of like boot camp. "The harshness of life," Hick said, "gives us a robust texture and character that wouldn't be possible without an imperfect world." Hick said that we're not just God's little pets, and He's not our benevolent owner whose sole job is to keep us in a safe, comfortable environment. Instead, He wants to build us, to train us into a particular kind of being. So, we need an environment that's suited to the sort of growth that He wants, the sort that this world makes possible.*

Some of these are principles of righteousness which will exist in the future. God's plan gives us the ability to learn from these principles.

The Jewish Law was a big step in the road back to God, though it was only a temporary fix:

Hebrews 10:1,4: (NASB) ¹For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things... ⁴For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

The Law was to lead us to our need for Christ by clearly defining what sin was. It pointed to redemption. Critics will complain, "They sacrificed animals. They could not wear mixed fabrics. They could not eat shellfish. They had to be different and separate." They do not understand the sacrifices were pictures to lead us to Jesus. The Law was a stepping stone for an imperfect world to take a giant step towards understanding Jesus when he came.

Part 4, *The Open Window, A Parable About God's Love*

- *The twins grew into their teen years. One seemed to adjust more easily than the other. Much of the laughter and smiles were now replaced with sibling rivalry and even some pointed rebellion against the father. Through his open window, the neighbor clearly heard the teens more loudly and more often than their father, as they boldly proclaimed his inabilities. They repeatedly cited his flaws and what they considered as his hypocrisy. He no longer treated the two of them the same, as he claimed that respect had its advantages and disrespect had its consequences. He was met with boisterous responses saying he was ignorant of what they were feeling. There were times*



that they even announced that they hated him. The neighbor's concern became a need to speak up, as he was sure that the father had not only violated his contract, he had become an actual threat to his children.

The reclusive neighbor did speak to the father and told him that he had unmistakably heard his fathering skills diminish over the years. He told the father that he was a poor example, and that he was obviously hurting his children. The father simply explained that growing up respectfully and responsibly did not happen of its own accord and to be patient, for he as a father knew that his beloved twins would, with a continuous righteous example, figure it out. The neighbor retreated back to his home and continued to listen through his open window.

Like the twins, the world is not yet at the point where God's next stage comes into play. We can easily make a judgment before we see the finished work.

Israel had a Law from God, and yet God commands them to wipe out an entire people:

1 Samuel 15:1-3: (NASB) ¹Then Samuel said to Saul...²Thus says the LORD of hosts, I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. ³Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.

This was horrible! Why would God tell them not to leave one living thing?

This is part of the difficult process of learning. The Law was put in place because sin entered, and it was based on justice.

In the context of several reminders to be completely just in how people are treated, we see this:

Deuteronomy 25:17-19: (NASB) ¹⁷Remember what Amalek did to you along the way when you came out from Egypt, ¹⁸how he met you along the way and attacked among you all the stragglers at your rear when you were faint and weary; and he did not fear God.

When Israel was wandering defenseless in the wilderness, Amalek mauled and killed the oldest and weakest who were straggling at the rear. Perhaps there was even an outward mocking of God as he slaughtered these innocent people.



Remember, the Law was about justice:

¹⁹Therefore it shall come about when the LORD your God has given you rest from all your surrounding enemies, in the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance to possess, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven; you must not forget.

Israel was commanded under Saul to wipe out Amalek. Whose fault was that? This was just retribution against the murderous Amalek. We are not advocating *eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth* now, but then it was the Law.

Saul did not fully complete this task, and over a thousand years later, a direct descendant Amalekite named Haman tried to destroy Israel. If it was not for Queen Esther, he would have succeeded. (It is interesting to note that both Mordecai and Esther were descendants of Saul.)

The justice in the Old Testament is harsh.



God follows through on the principal that generations after an evil against God is done, the evil still exists and comes to its judgment. Is this fair? *Within the confines of the consequences of sin and death, this is the way life works.*

EXAMPLE

Sexual promiscuity over generations brings disease. People engaging in promiscuous behavior contribute to the spread of disease. Is such a person evil? Some would say yes, others would say no. What if that person is not aware they have a disease and they continue to spread it? What if they think they might be infected but do not want to check - is that person evil? Are they evil if they knowingly spread disease? Where do we draw the line with human-to-human evil? In many cases, we pass evil, sin and death amongst ourselves.

EXAMPLE

What about the opioid epidemic? How did this happen? One reason is that the medical standards for prescribing medication was changed from the doctor's observations to the patient's description. They gave that responsibility to the patient, thinking it was a better way. The phrase is now, "Pain is what they (the patient) say it is." If the patient says their pain is a 10 on a scale of one to 10, the doctor has to believe them. Who is evil in this?



Be fair. If we want to hold God accountable, what are we doing to hold each other accountable?

For us here and now, we are told that within humankind there is a compass that can find God:

Romans 2:12-16: (NASB) ¹²*For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; ¹³for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.*

It is a matter of *doing* the right thing that makes you right before God; not just *knowing* the right thing.

¹⁴*For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, ¹⁵in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, ¹⁶on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.*

Even for those individuals who were not given the Law, they instinctively have an understanding of good and evil and can lean towards good. They can lift themselves up with an internal compass. How much do we choose to ignore our compass and do what we know we should not?

ARE WE WILLING
to hold God fully  **ACCOUNTABLE**
For allowing a just consequence
to run its course and for giving humanity
the ability to have righteous instincts?



Bottom line - does God really create calamity as our theme Scripture says? Is God at fault for evil?

So far we have seen God point humanity towards righteousness and punish grave acts of darkness. He allows the context of sin to do what it will, and within that context it continually points us to the road back to Him. Let us never forget God's big picture, for it has a glorious and inclusive conclusion.

God allows evil for a time but brings grace, goodness and resurrection to every man, woman and child who has ever lived.

Evidential problem of evil, *The Problem of Evil: Crash Course Philosophy #13*

- A lot of people find these and other theodicies to be pretty compelling. However, the problem of evil actually goes a step deeper. What we've been talking about so far is the logical problem of evil. This problem can be resolved if we can explain why there's evil. But there's also the evidential problem of evil. This problem points out that we might be able to explain why evil exists, but we still can't explain why there's so much evil in the world. For instance, let's say that it's true that we really do need evil in order to understand goodness. In that case, why can't we understand the contrast through some sort of low-level evil like paper cuts, and head colds and having to work straight through our lunch hour every now and then. I mean slow, painful deaths from cancer and city-destroying hurricanes, they don't really add anything valuable to our understanding of goodness. Do they? If God were truly good, and if a negative contrast were really needed in order for us to understand the goodness of the world, then why wouldn't He just give us the very minimum dosage of necessary evil to achieve that goal?*

God does give us the minimum amount, but because humanity has the ability to think, reason and experiment, how many of us have said, "If it was done *this* way, it would be better." Over time, mankind has tried many different ways, taking God out of the picture. Today it has become politically incorrect and offensive to include God. God is allowing society to go down this road, as the prophetic end is a world that brings complete anarchy. That is what happens when we live without God.

Lesley's concluding statement posted at ChristianQuestions.com:



I want to end my life desperately but the "God of Love" has prepared a place worse than any death camp for people who don't love and trust Him. I hate Him but the (edited) has my husband and others that I love.



She feels trapped by God and her hatred is overwhelming. It breaks our hearts that anyone goes through these things. We can assure her that for the relatives who died, the next thing they know will be being raised to life and be given an opportunity to live without the tragedy. They will have that chance because God promised this ending and He delivers.



Back to the principles of the first commandment. God reminds us of OUR human responsibility:

Romans 1:18-23: (NASB) ¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Christianity teaching the false doctrine of hellfire is contrary to God's love and goodness. It was done for selfish controlling reasons and greed, perpetuated over generations. Sometimes we accept evil as truth without questioning it.

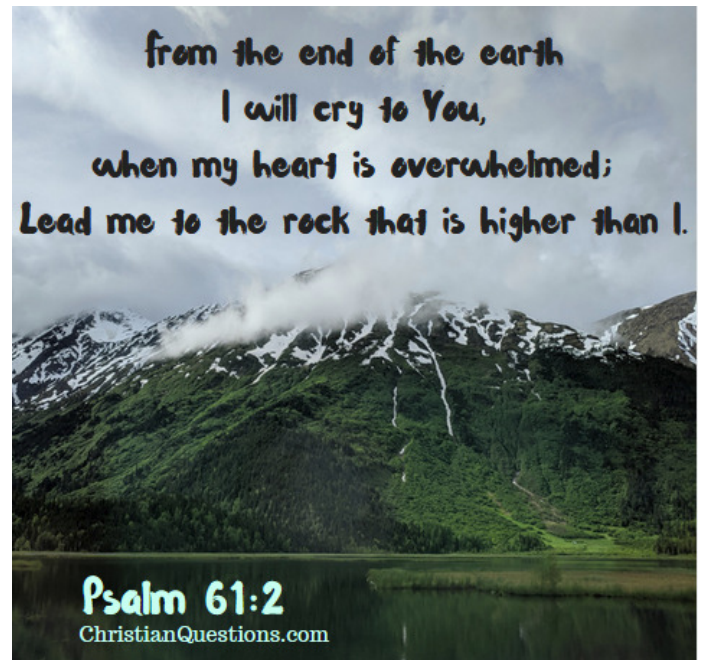
God wants us to see the full, disgusting, heinous effects of evil so we will never want to go back to it.

²¹For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, (futility is a result of denying God) and their foolish heart was darkened. (Darkness is a result of futility.) ²²Professing to be wise, they became fools, (foolishness is a result of darkness - there is a domino effect) ²³and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. (Anything that puts the created above the Creator - idolatry - is the result of foolishness.)





ARE WE WILLING
to hold God fully ACCOUNTABLE
for giving us minds capable of observing
the astounding grandeur of creation?



Part 5, The Open Window, A Parable About God's Love

- Years went by, and the neighbor had grown tired of listening to the unrest next door and completely lost interest. His final conclusion was that the father, who had since moved away, had always been a menace. A few more years went by and the neighbor became feeble. He lost track of the twins. When his own wife had passed away, and he was silently suffering with the grief of his loss, there came a knock on his door. It was the twins. They were now adults, and each had their own children. They had come to comfort him and help him. They cleaned his house and his yard and helped him get his things in order so he could better cope with his trauma. They seemed to him to be almost like angels. The neighbor asked them how it was that they grew into such powerful caring and conscientious adults, especially having been raised by that wretched father of theirs.*

The twins smiled. They explained the amazing experience of growing up with the most caring dad they could ever have imagined. They explained how he taught them respect and responsibility, hard work and integrity, patience and perseverance. They explained how the consequences he put in place as a result of their misbehavior taught them what goodness and righteousness really were. They explained how they now knew that everything he did was for their ultimate benefit and that they hoped to parent their children with the same focus, wisdom and love that he had parented them with. The reclusive neighbor now, for the first time in a very long time, smiled. He had opened the window of his heart and had heard for the first time of the father's true character. And the neighbor thought, "Their dad was my neighbor. Surely this man was the best father he could have ever been."

It is amazing what happens when you can look at an entire story after it ends. Through the eyes and experiences of the twins, they can confidently say their father did everything for their benefit. This is how we see God when we look at the final picture.



The focus of the context of our theme verse is King Cyrus, the pagan king who freed Israel:

Isaiah 45:1: (NASB) *Thus says the LORD to Cyrus His anointed, whom I have taken by the right hand, to subdue nations before him...to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut...*

God is saying this king will be a tool for righteousness in His hand.

God now describes Himself:

Isaiah 45:5-7: (NASB) *⁵I am the LORD, and there is no other; besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me; ⁶that men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no one besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other, ⁷the One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.*

Creating calamity - speaking of the providence involved in the deliverance of His people. He is not proclaiming Himself the "Father of Calamity." He overrules for the benefit of His people.

The conclusion God Himself reveals when He speaks of calamity:


Isaiah 45:8-9: (NASB) *⁸Drip down, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds pour down righteousness; let the earth open up and salvation bear fruit, and righteousness spring up with it. I, the LORD, have created it. ⁹Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker...Will the clay say to the potter, What are you doing? Or the thing you are making say, He has no hands?*

This is a great picture! But do we quarrel with our Maker?

Isaiah 45:18: (NASB) *For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited), I am the LORD, and there is none else.*

God is saying yes, He brings (and allows) calamity, but for the purpose of bringing eventual and lasting righteousness.

Darkness, cold and evil are not really creations. They are the absence of something created, like light, heat and goodness. Evil is the absence of God's goodness, a natural consequence indeed!

ARE WE WILLING
to hold God fully  **ACCOUNTABLE**
for having an actual thought-out plan
allowing for evil to come to its
full maturity so that
it will never be heard from again?

Let's hold God accountable for His plan that says evil must run its course. Though it has taken thousands of years, God will bring evil to an end, creating the peaceable kingdom of righteousness Jesus taught us to pray for, *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.*



Join us next week for our podcast on December 23, 2018:
Ep. #1053: "How Do You Show Your Joy to the World?"

Bonus Material!

The battle line between good and evil runs through the heart of every man. — Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

Examples of Scriptures used by those who seek to condemn God to try to show Him to be a monster:

Source: September 15, 2013, CQ Episode 779: "Does the Same God Rule in the Old and New Testament?"

The God of the Old Testament sanctions rape:

Deuteronomy 21:10-12: (NASB) ¹⁰When you go out to battle against your enemies, and the LORD your God delivers them into your hands and you take them away captive, ¹¹and see among the captives a beautiful woman, and have a desire for her and would take her as a wife for yourself, ¹²then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall shave her head and trim her nails.



Deuteronomy 21:13-14: (NASB) ¹³She shall also remove the clothes of her captivity and shall remain in your house, and mourn her father and mother a full month; and after that you may go in to her and be her husband and she shall be your wife. ¹⁴It shall be, if you are not pleased with her, then you shall let her go wherever she wishes; but you shall certainly not sell her for money, you shall not mistreat her, because you have humbled her.

(Source: Biblical commentary by Matthew Poole) ...2) To express her sorrow for the loss of her father and mother, as it follows, Deuteronomy 21:13, it being the ancient custom of mourners in most nations to shave themselves, and in some to pare their nails, in others to suffer them to grow. Or rather, 3) In token of her renouncing her heathenish idolatry and superstition, and of her becoming a new woman, and embracing the true religion; which her captive condition and subjection to his will would make her inclinable to do in profession.

Women of that time had few rights in most cultures, a result of the curse upon Eve. Here it speaks of taking someone as a wife - therefore with all the rights and respect of a wife - not a slave. This shows respect for the woman's life and experience.



The God of the Old Testament slaughters innocent children for merely being immature:

2 Kings 2:19-25: (NASB) ¹⁹*Then the men of the city said to Elisha, Behold now, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water is bad and the land is unfruitful...* ²¹*He went out to the spring of water and threw salt in it and said, Thus says the LORD, I have purified these waters; there shall not be from there death or unfruitfulness any longer.* ²²*So the waters have been purified to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.* ²³*Then he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up by the way, young lads came out from the city and mocked him and said to him, Go up, you baldhead; go up, you baldhead!* ²⁴*When he looked behind him and saw them, he cursed them in the name of the LORD. Then two female bears came out of the woods and tore up forty-two lads of their number.* ²⁵*He went from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.*

(Source: Biblical commentary by John Gill) There came forth little children out of the city; the word for "children" is used of persons of thirty or forty years of age; and though these are said to be "little," they were so well grown as to be able to go forth out of the city of themselves, without any to guide them, or to take care of them; and were of an age capable not only of taking notice of Elijah's baldness, but knew him to be a prophet, and were able to distinguish between good and evil; and, from a malignant spirit in them, mocked at him as such, and at the assumption of Elijah.

The word for *young* here means "young, small, insignificant, unimportant."

Did God do this? No. Did He allow it? Yes. Why? He allowed the forces of nature to depict the wrath of the Creator of nature, upon the mockery of those who would represent Him, especially after the prophet had just cured the waters of the city of bitterness.

A matter of comparison - who is the monster?

(Source: Deaths in Wars and Conflicts in the 20th Century - Milton Leitenberg - CORNELL UNIVERSITY; PEACE STUDIES PROGRAM, OCCASIONAL PAPER #29; 3rd ed. ©August 2003, 2005, 2006 "A Beastly Century") It was a phrase used by Margaret Drabble, a British novelist, in an address to the Royal Society of Literature in London, on December 14, 2000. But of course it was no more than a human century. In 1994, the historian Eric Hobsbawm wrote that 187 million people were "killed or allowed to die by human decision" in what he called the "short century"-a period of about 75 years from 1914 to 1991.... Given that Hobsbawm is a Marxist historian, his choice of the category "by human decision" was particularly significant. However, the sum that he provided was low by just about 44 million people for the full twentieth century, during which approximately 231 million people died in wars and conflict and, in very large numbers, "by human decision."

