

GOD AND EVIL/SUFFERING

The Problem

- Why doesn't God do something about all the evil in the world?
- Either God is all-powerful, but not all-good, or God is all-good, but not all-powerful
- God is the creator of everything
Evil is something (i.e. real)
Therefore God is the author of evil

What is Evil?

- It is not a thing, but the absence of something that ought to be there and is not
- It is a corruption of that which is good (lack of wholeness)
- It has real effects

Did God create evil?

- God is love and the greatest good
- The greatest good for us is to experience His love
- The greatest evil for us is to be separated from/reject God's love
- Freedom is Indispensable/essential to love, therefore God had to create free creatures

Did God Create Evil? (cont'd)

- Free choice means the potential to reject God and His wholeness
- Evil entered the human race because of man's choice and thereby corrupted man's nature
- Evil today comes from man's sin nature and his choice to reject God
- God is not the author of evil

Why did God choose to create a world that allows evil?

- Since God is omniscient, He chose the best way
- Our world with its evil is not the best world, therefore it must be the best way to the best possible world
- God did not want robots or to force his love on anyone
- Therefore He created a world where men could freely respond to his love, however this also meant that they could reject his love (and thereby choose evil)

Why doesn't God stop evil?

- To stop evil is to stop free choice
- To stop free choice is to stop love
- To stop love would be to stop the greatest good
- To stop the greatest good would be the greatest evil
- If we want God to stop evil, we should ask Him to begin with us

What is the purpose of suffering?

- To develop character/teach us
- Pain is the most potent indicator of what evil does, and is meant to lead us to the Cross of Christ where love was confirmed and evil's price was paid for
- While we may not know all the purposes for suffering, this does not mean that God does not know and that there are no good purposes

What about innocent suffering?

- Suffering will occur in a world where there are morally free agents
- The real question is whether the suffering will ultimately be explained and justified

What about physical evil?

- It can come from decisions you and I make
- It can be the result of God's judgment
- It can come from Satan /demons
- It can come from the laws that govern a physical time/space universe

Can God be sovereign and allow free choice?

- Human freedom is a delegated sovereignty
- God is ultimately in control of history
- He is capable of using our choices (and evil) to bring about that which is for His glory and our greatest good
- Our response should be one of trust