



**Why**

## **Does God Allow Suffering?**

### Outline

The Philosophical Objection:

*"Either God wants to abolish evil, and cannot; or he can, but does not want to; or he cannot and does not want to. If he wants to, but cannot, he is impotent. If he can, and does not want to, he is wicked. But, if God can and wants to, then why does evil still exist in the world? ~ Epicurus, philosopher, 4<sup>th</sup> Century*

The Visceral Objection:

*"But, as it is, a sweet-tempered child lies dying of a brain tumor, a happy young wife sees her husband and child killed before her eyes by a drunken driver; and...we soundlessly scream at the stars, 'Why? Why?' A mention of God – of God's will – doesn't help a bit. How could a good God, a loving God, do that? How could he even let it happen? And no answer comes from the indifferent stars." ~ Sheldon Vanauken*

*"For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."<sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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.*

*To the woman he said,*

*"I will make your pains in childbearing very severe;  
with painful labor you will give birth to children.  
Your desire will be for your husband,  
and he will rule over you."*

*<sup>17</sup> To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,'*

*"Cursed is the ground because of you;  
through painful toil you will eat food from it  
all the days of your life.*

*<sup>18</sup> It will produce thorns and thistles for you,  
and you will eat the plants of the field.*

*<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your brow*

*you will eat your food  
until you return to the ground,  
since from it you were taken;  
for dust you are  
and to dust you will return.”* Genesis 3: 5-7, 16-19

## I. UNDERSTANDING EVIL

### Framework

- God exists and He is good. .
- God is all-powerful.
- God is smart. There is an Intellect behind the order.
- The world is flawed.
- Evil began as a choice made by people who distrusted God.
- The result is the world you see.

## II. TACKLING THE PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTION

*“The God of the Bible and evil/pain/suffering cannot both be true. Pain and suffering disprove God.”*

*“If there is no God, then why is there so much good in the world?”*

*“God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.”* Genesis 1:31

*“Then why did God give us free-will if he knew it would result in suffering?”* Good question! Is free-will the actual culprit?

## III. The Problem of Free-will.

*“It is logically impossible to create people with free-will without the possibility of moral evil.”*

*~Peter Kreeft, “Making Sense Out of Suffering.”*

## IV. God's Solution to Pain & Suffering.

### Redemption

*"For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. <sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.... What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Romans 7:18-19, 24-25*

*"buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." Romans 6:4*

*"Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted."*

Hebrews 2:18

### The New Heaven & New Earth

*"Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup> 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." Revelation 21:1-4*

*"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup> For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. <sup>18</sup> So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18*