



1. The “Problem” of Suffering & Evil

A.

1)

2)

3)

B.

C.

2. Why Evil is Assumed to be a Problem

A.

B.

3. Biblical Assertions

A.

1)

2)

3)

4)

B.

1)

2)

C.

1)

2)

4. Justifying Justice

A.

1)

2)

B.

1)

2)

5. Avoiding Common Mistakes

A.

B.

1)

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C.

1)

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a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

f)

D.



Apologetics

Compass Night 2019

1. The “Problem” of Suffering & Evil

A. Argument Against Christian Theism

1) Evil Exists

2) God Shouldn't Let Evil Exist

3) God Must Be Deficient

- Doesn't Know (not Omniscient)**
- Can't Stop It (not Omnipotent)**
- Doesn't Care (not Good/Loving)**



Apologetics

1. The “Problem” of Suffering & Evil

B. Modern Expression

(Sam Harris, “Letter to a Christian Nation” pp.50-51)

Somewhere in the world a man has abducted a little girl. Soon he will rape, torture, and kill her... this girl’s parents believe—as you believe—that an all-powerful and all-loving God is watching over them and their family. Are they right to believe this? Is it good that they believe this? No. The entirety of atheism is contained in this response.

Apologetics



1. The “Problem” of Suffering & Evil

C. The Christian Response is Called “Theodicy”

“Theos” = God

“Dikē” = Justice

- The vindication of God’s justice in allowing evil
- This will be a needed practice of 1 Peter 3:15

always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you



Apologetics

1. The “Problem” of Suffering & Evil

C. The Christian Response is Called “Theodicy”

(Sam Harris, “Letter to a Christian Nation” p.52)

“This is the age-old problem of theodicy, of course, and we should consider it solved. If God exists, either he can do nothing to stop the most egregious calamities, or he does not care to. Therefore, is either impotent or evil.”



Apologetics

2. Why Evil is Assumed to be a Problem

A. The Charge Assumes:

- **There is Something “Wrong” with being “Bad”**
 - **Accusers Don’t “Like” It**
 - > **e.g.: Rape of a Child / Genocide**



2. Why Evil is Assumed to be a Problem

B. “Ought to Be” Requires a Higher Standard

(Doug Wilson, “Letter from a Christian Citizen”, p.55)

“Atheism not only casts doubt upon the idea of a benevolent God, but it also destroys the very concept of benevolence itself... When you reject the triune God (in the name of benevolence!) I want to know what this all-authoritative benevolence actually is, by your accounting.”



3. Biblical Assertions

A. God

1) All-Knowing (Omniscient)

Daniel 2:20–22

Blessed be the name of God...to whom belong wisdom and might. ...he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him.



3. Biblical Assertions

A. God

2) All-Powerful (Omnipotent)

Job 42:2

*I know that you can do all things,
and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.*



Apologetics

3. Biblical Assertions

A. God

3) All-Good

Deuteronomy 32:4

*The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice.
A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and
upright is he.*



Apologetics

3. Biblical Assertions

A. God

4) Completely Sovereign

Ephesians 1:11

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will



Apologetics

3. Biblical Assertions

B. Evil

1) A Description

- **Not a “Thing”**
 - e.g.: Cold / Darkness
- **Not Something “God Created”**
- **Describes What Falls Short of God’s Standard**



3. Biblical Assertions

B. Evil

2) An Accurate Description

Genesis 2:9

The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 8:21

the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth.



3. Biblical Assertions

C. Creatures (Angelic & Human)

1) Moral Agents / Choice-Makers

Deuteronomy 30:19

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live



3. Biblical Assertions

C. Creatures (Angelic & Human)

2) Choices Bring Suffering

Genesis 4:7–8

If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it.” Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.



Apologetics

4. Justifying Justice

A. Natural Evil

1) Justly Imposed

Genesis 3:17

And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;



Apologetics

4. Justifying Justice

A. Natural Evil

2) Temporary

Romans 8:20–21

For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.



Apologetics

4. Justifying Justice

B. Societal Evil

1) Choices Honored

Galatians 5:14–15

For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.



Apologetics

4. Justifying Justice

B. Societal Evil

2) Justice is Postponed

Acts 17:30–31

he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”



Apologetics

5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

A. Don't Compromise on God's Sovereignty

Amos 3:6

Is a trumpet blown in a city, and the people are not afraid? Does disaster come to a city, unless the LORD has done it?



Apologetics

5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

A. Don't Compromise on God's Sovereignty

Lamentations 3:37–38

Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?



Apologetics

5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

A. Don't Compromise on God's Sovereignty

2 Peter 3:5–6

the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished.



Apologetics

5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

A. Don't Compromise on God's Sovereignty

2 Kings 17:25

they did not fear the LORD. Therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed some of them.



Apologetics

5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

A. Don't Compromise on God's Sovereignty

Psalm 105:16

*he summoned a famine on the land and broke all
supply of bread*



Apologetics

5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

A. Don't Compromise on God's Sovereignty

John 9:1–3

As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.”



Apologetics

5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

A. Don't Compromise on God's Sovereignty

Exodus 4:11

Then the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?"



Apologetics

5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

B. Don't Forget Humanity's Position

1) Fallen

Romans 3:23

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God



Apologetics

5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

B. Don't Forget Humanity's Position

2) Represented by Adam

Romans 5:17–18

For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man... Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.



5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

B. Don't Forget Humanity's Position

3) Created / Creatures

Romans 9:21

Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?



Apologetics

5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

B. Don't Forget Humanity's Position

3) Created / Creatures

Job 40:1–5

the LORD said to Job: “Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? He who argues with God, let him answer it.” Then Job answered the LORD and said: “Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth. I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further.”

Apologetics



5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

B. Don't Forget Humanity's Position

3) Created / Creatures

Job 42:1–3

Then Job answered the LORD and said: “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

Apologetics



5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

C. Don't Forget God's Good Plans

1) To Express His Justice

Romans 9:22

What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,



Apologetics

5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

C. Don't Forget God's Good Plans

1) To Express His Justice

Romans 3:5–6a

But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.) By no means!



Apologetics

5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

C. Don't Forget God's Good Plans

2) To Express His Mercy

Romans 9:23

in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory—



Apologetics

5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

C. Don't Forget God's Good Plans

3) To Demonstrate His Love

Romans 5:7–8

*For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—
though perhaps for a good person one would dare
even to die— but God shows his love for us in that
while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*



Apologetics

5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

C. Don't Forget God's Good Plans

4) To Accomplish Good in Us

Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.



Apologetics

5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

C. Don't Forget God's Good Plans

4) To Accomplish Good in Us

a) To Drive Us to Him

2 Chronicles 6:29

whatever prayer, whatever plea is made by any man or by all your people Israel, each knowing his own affliction and his own sorrow and stretching out his hands toward this house



Apologetics

5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

C. Don't Forget God's Good Plans

4) To Accomplish Good in Us

b) To Strengthen Our Character

James 1:2–4

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Apologetics



5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

C. Don't Forget God's Good Plans

4) To Accomplish Good in Us

c) To Keep Us from Sin

2 Corinthians 12:7

So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited.



Apologetics

5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

C. Don't Forget God's Good Plans

4) To Accomplish Good in Us

d) To Assure Us of Our Faith

1 Peter 1:6–7

you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Apologetics



5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

C. Don't Forget God's Good Plans

4) To Accomplish Good in Us

e) To Prepare Us for Ministry

2 Corinthians 1:4

who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.



Apologetics

5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

C. Don't Forget God's Good Plans

4) To Accomplish Good in Us

f) To Direct History Through Us

Genesis 50:20

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.



Apologetics

5. Avoiding the Common Mistakes

D. Don't Forget Evil & Suffering Will End

2 Peter 3:12–13

waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.



Apologetics



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