

Has God put us in the best possible world?

Believers in God hold that the only totally perfect and infinitely perfect being is God. Anything else logically cannot be as good. This leads to the thought that God has made the best possible universe or best possible world.

This world could be one of several (even billions) best possible worlds. That does not really matter. Is this really a best possible world?

The argument that we live in the best possible world can be made by an atheist who thinks things just came together the way they are and it could not really be any better so it is best possible. Or it can be made by a believer in God. Some believers think God has committed himself to giving us the best. If he sets it up so that we can help ourselves that is just another way of giving us the best. If he is more involved in that he is still giving us the best. It depends.

Against all that, you can say that there is so much malice and suffering that no matter how much the world improves or could be improved you can always think of something better. Best possible world idea A is a problem for what if there were a possible world B in which at least one person did one good work that was not done?

What do we get then from this? Atheism. It is true that if there is nothing directing how things turn out then in a sense we can't expect much better. But it does not stop us from holding that it is a pity that the luck of the draw was not different, that it was better. So one way it's the best and the other way it is not. Either way assumes it's down to mere randomness. This bases our complaints on there being no designer of any kind. This shows empathy with what we have to put up with. If God has a problem with our atheistic empathy that shows the idea of God is morally defunct.

You can say that a best possible world in your head does not mean the real world should be like that so that in the world we have despite how it looks the good really has been maximised. This point has no relevance.

There is no way God can see a future or outcome that is not real, God cannot compare the universe to other options. The idea that God did a plan intending it to be the best possible world even if it is not, is okay.

Many believers argue that "the world isn't supposed to be perfect. Without pain/pleasure, sad/happy, cruel/kind, beautiful/ugly where would we be? We are supposed to become something better. If all was wonderful, how would that work? If all was dreadful, it wouldn't work either."

Do you see how terrible it is for a person whose life is okay to say a thing like that in a world where many endure horrendous agony?

The argument redefines perfect as being excellent but sometimes unpleasant. It is easy to miss that but that is what it does.

Also, it is strange to argue that bad and good work well together and then to say that we are here to become better people!

These things show that the God concept waters down evil and feigns hatred of evil.

Is it fair for a baby to suffer? We say no but if there is not enough fairness to go around - as we would expect in the best possible world or a world that is assumed by God to be - then in a sense it is fair. Fair only means you get your fair share even though it may not be what you truly deserve. It's fair under the circumstances. It is not fair that the loaf is split between the criminal and the saint but the criminal has to eat so under the circumstances it is fair. The notion that the world is fair under the circumstances lurks behind ideas such as an all good creator God and karma. Some systems blame the victim by saying that the victim was thinking negative thoughts that magically draw bad things into their lives. As bad as it is for some systems to make out all should be seen as adequately fair some go as far as to say it is nothing else but fair.

Karma and new age systems that say you attract what comes into your life are saying just that. They all plot to detach the gullible and themselves from the agony and pain they see around them. To say that people get no more suffering than they can bear insults those who have unbearable suffering. Victim blaming and the best possible world idea go together. That it should even raise the question, "Life is good but is your life bad because you are the problem?" is criminal and disgraceful.

If creatures are sinful, as religion says, just because they are not the almighty God then it follows we will sin forever. The doctrine of the best possible world suggests that sin is a necessary evil or a defect that cannot be avoided. As it is a sin to choose an explanation for somebody's bad behaviour that is anything other than the kindest and least judgemental one it

follows that you should tell Jack the Ripper, "If the evil you did was unnecessary it would not have happened. It is down to a defect in you and not really your fault. Any other evil would be worse."

We believe it is logically possible for there to be better worlds than this. That is to say this world could be better than what it is.

If this really is the best possible world then there is no such thing as doing anything to improve it. Whether you feed the poor or sit at the television all your life it makes no difference. It would put you off helping others. It even tells you there is no such thing!

Christians say God made a good creation meaning that it is indeed the best possible world so any defects are inevitable and cannot be avoided. Thus the doctrine of God when understood properly is just soul-destroying and irresponsible and evil. Any believer who is wonderful just does not understand what she or he is saying when she or he says there is a God.

Atheism says that all that is came by chance and mechanical forces so there is no reason to imagine it really is the best possible world.

Christians admit that we cannot know if we are in the best possible world and only God can know if this world is the best under the circumstances. Sorry but that is just too much trust to ask for. It is extremist to trust that much when it would be terrible to think that babies should suffer etc when they should not suffer at all.

Many believers say that as God is all-powerful, no evil can happen unless he lets it happen. And as he is all-good, he is doing all the good that can be done under the circumstances.

So he has put us in the best possible world. Or has he?

A best world is not the same as a best possible world. What is the difference? The world that is may be the best though you can think of better. The difference is that if there is no God then it may be that the best world is whatever we have. If the existence of a supernatural power is possible, then a better world should be possible. If this world is the best we have the atheist does not settle for that but condemns it.

Another difference is that it might not be possible even for God to have a best possible world. It cannot be known not even by God. God cannot know what would have happened had Henry VIII never married.

God meant well but not even God knows if the universe is the best possible universe.

We then would have the right to disagree with how he has done things.

He would have no right to tell you you are allowed only one marriage partner so you can object and marry two wives.

If God does not know for sure what the best universe would be that is not an excuse for a universe like this one.

What about the thought that this world is the best possible world for getting us into the best possible world in Heaven? The believer could say that if life on earth was a trillion times worse than it is. It is speculative and of no logical use. If Heaven is a logically possible world then why do we have this one? Heaven and earth cannot both be the best.

The universe is getting worse. We are destroying the planet.

Many believe the environment will fix itself. Most people today believe it is unlikely that it will and that we need to make big changes to stop damaging it any more than we have.

Is denying it will probably fix itself insulting to God? Yes. It assumes he is keeping out of it or has set it up so that it will not fix itself unless we do something. To say, "Okay we will tackle the problems in case God will do nothing" is blasphemous.

If this really is the best possible world, why does God do little or nothing about all the bad influences around us? What about the notion that we are not to blame for the love of evil and self-centredness in us but to blame for how we respond to that love? It is said that all will sin eventually but that does not mean all sin necessarily. God has done little or nothing about our "sins" for he has made us too fond of sin.

It is arrogant of religious people to think that the universe was made just for them. Even when they suffer, they think they are so important the universe was made to cause it. That kind of arrogant comfort is to be deplored.

Everything has potentiality built into it. The potential may not be gained but it is there. Aristotle said that good means fulfilling your potential or helping something to achieve its potential. The best possible world doctrine suggests that the potential is to have an overall good result. So if you have an amazing brain your potential is not to use it but to fit in the plan which could entail you becoming a monk to stare at a wall until the day you die.

The best possible world argument is only appealing to people who don't care enough about suffering to detest how people suffer. If they care they do not care enough.

The doctrine of a God intending to set up the best possible world goes with the doctrine of God. Choosing God while rejecting it shows you do not understand what you mean by God. Even if this world is not the best possible world God intended it to be. God cannot see what would happen if Abraham Lincoln was not born for nobody can know what happened in a history that never happened. That is why when setting up the best possible universe he is making an educated guess and that fits the notion that God is all-knowing.

The person with a good or okay life who says life for all of us is perfect will rightly be dismissed as a callous individual for there is so much horrendous suffering in the world.

Perfect does not necessarily mean anything will be all good. It means it will be perfect under the circumstances. In a sense what is called imperfect is in fact all good for perfection asks only that things be as good as they can be. To expect more than what is possible is not just an imperfection but an evil. You cannot condemn something for being unable to be any better. It is perfect in a different way from how something 100% good would be perfect. In one sense it is not 100% good but in the important and real sense it is 100% good. It is perfect in the only real way and therefore the only way that matters. Thus the argument, "Suffering and evil do not prove life is imperfect. It could be perfect for the only perfection that matters is that something is as good as it can be" stands.

Does it stand for atheists? Kind of. Though atheists feel blind forces and chance are top players behind we are here and still alive they see nothing wrong with hating viruses that kill. For atheism, the perfection of the universe (in the sense described) is accepted extremely GRUDGINGLY. If a potion is made to make us happy forever on earth and save us from suffering and death we will take it. The opposition to the perfection of the universe implies blasphemy. If there were a God responsible for all things we would still curse the perfection.

Does it stand for theists or believers in God? They have to see the perfection as a sign of God's glory. So its perfect if a baby dies horribly and perfect if it does not for it all up to God.

The best possible world idea comes from Leibniz who also said that evil is not real. For him as for Catholicism, evil is just a distortion of good and is not real in that sense. Only good is real. Goodness is originaive not derivative. Badness is derivative - it is derived from good. It is not originaive. If you disagree with that account of evil then that ruins his theory for a world with real evil in it or evil as a power and originaive force then it cannot be the best possible world.

Those who say there is a God are saying life is perfect even if they do not realise it. Belief in God does not make any believer compassionate towards those who suffer. A mistake makes them compassionate for they have not thought about the meaning of God.

Against the notion that God will, whether obligated or not, will make sure we have the best quality of life, spiritually and or materially, he can give, it is said that:

He owes us nothing so it is up to him what he wants to give us.

He does not owe us anything to help us make our lives on balance meaningful and precious.

He may refuse to help us for it makes us too dependent when we should do things for ourselves.

All that presupposes that sin is a serious matter. The rational view is that there is no sin only missing the mark.

Yet even this still claims there is a best possible world. It links sin to us being on a learning curve.

The final conclusion is that we can imagine a better world than this and have the right to curse God if there is one for nothing giving it to us. We have to live in this universe not him.





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