

THE HANDBOOK OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS ON PROBLEM OF EVIL

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

How can an all-good and perfect God allow evil to happen?

Reason Says

Some say that all evil disproves God. Some say that some forms of it disprove God.

Some say that we don't know either way. If so you have to make a choice. Do you risk praising an unworthy God? Or do you take the side of the people and rage against him? This would mean religion then should give people an equal choice and not be getting into schools or preaching to children that they must serve God. In a sense, neutrality is denying God for God by definition is that which should be the be all for he is perfect in love and goodness. So the argument itself is neutral. But it manages to oppose religions that say God taught them or set them up. So it is agnostic in theory but atheistic towards an revealed God.

Some say that evil proves that if there is a creator then he is not all good and not to be worshipped. Christians need to give us evidence that evil should be allowed to happen. It is not enough to simply say it. You don't want to risk heaping worship on a God who does not really deserve it and who could be laughing at you. Taking the risk is evil in itself. And it is not about you. What about other people?

We would add that there are atheists who say there is no God even though evil cannot refute him.

Handbook of Christian Apologetics says

There is no problem of evil if God is not all-good and has a bad side.

Reason says,

Is that correct? No. The problem is why anybody at all would do or tolerate extreme evil. God could be partly bad and still be doing a lot of evil for a good reason. A man who hits his daughter could still be fasting three days a week to save up money for her inheritance. He is an evil man and extremely evil not in spite of the good he does but because of it. Evil is more banal than anything else. God may not be a cartoon villain and still entitled to the same hatred and disgust if he was.

Handbook of Christian Apologetics says

The answer to the problem of evil starts with free will - God lets us do evil for he cannot force us to love him as love is voluntary.

Reason says,

But our evil hurts others not him. He is all-perfect and so he cannot suffer. It is not an answer but an insult.

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Praising robots, commanding them or blaming them is absurd so we are not robots, we have free will.

Reason replies:

True in theory. But false in practice. We praise and blame and command for it is necessary for running our lives. It doesn't mean we are not robots endowed with consciousness. Even people who believe that cats and dogs are conscious machines apportion praise and blame to them. This book is totally out of touch.

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Some say that there is too much evil for there to be a God. We reply that how could a holocaust of six million disprove God and not a holocaust of six thousand? There is nowhere to draw the line so we should forget that line of argument. Who is to say when too much evil is allowed? Maybe there isn't?

Reason replies:

If you want to see others happy you will struggle with your faith when see them suffer. The reply says that no matter how much suffering happens we must be no more disturbed by God letting the Nazi holocaust happen than we would be if there was a holocaust of six. It is saying, "I don't care how much evil God allows I will still believe." There is something vile in saying that. Already then we have proved that if God exists he is evil and that the belief encourages evil.

God being all-knowing means God can only know what is possible to know. So he does not know either!

Notice too that if you say that God is right to allow things like the Nazi Holocaust with its appalling evil because there is nowhere to draw the line then you are saying that God does not know if it is right to let us be that free and still he does it. This is not the behaviour of a good God.

If there were no God, Christians would make one that would do these awful things. They prove this by their faith in God. To deny that they would be evil for doing that shows insensitivity to human suffering and its horror.

Its easy for you to say that nobody has the right to say too much evil is being allowed by God when you cannot experience the suffering of all those people. Faith in God is evil.

And what happened to the doctrine that even God thinks no evil should be allowed and that it has to be tolerated? Too much tolerance would be a problem. And it is a human right to decide or guess that there is too much as it is. We suffer so it is up to us to decide where the line is to be drawn. The suggestion that it is not our place is itself arrogant and evil.

Page 139 says that God is always good but not always kind for sometimes kindness is harmful for us. But surely not helping at times is kindness? Goodness is kindness. A false distinction is made so that an excuse for saying God allows evil to happen for he is good and not because he is kind can be made.

We are not that bad that we need suffering to improve us. For Christians to disagree shows how little they value ordinary life and being an ordinary person. It's all snobbery. We all know that we are not that bad and most of us are happy with ourselves the way we are.

The principle that any religion that does not put people first tells us to reject any philosophy that does not honour human frailty and efforts to do better and that does not recognise that imperfection is not so bad.

The Church and the Bible and Jesus say that nobody deserves to be saved. God had the right to abandon us and let us all be barred from Heaven. So from this we see that nobody has the right to be loved by God or by anybody. This doctrine contradicts the fact that human rights are based on needs and we have a need or right to be loved. This says then that we have no rights of ourselves. Jesus might give us the right by taking our sins away. What this is saying that our belief in rights comes from religious belief. This is as vicious as holding that the woman that gave you birth is your mother because the doctor says so and not because you have a video of the birth. Morals should be based on knowledge and experience not mere belief. To disagree is to say that belief is more important than treating people right or thinking about their rights.

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Jesus suffered the pain of Hell on the cross and this pain was the pain of being forsaken by God

Reason replies:

You believe that Jesus was without sin. If so only an evil God would send him to Hell. God cannot reject a good man as a sinner even to save the world and remain a good God. And Jesus wouldn't be good either if he was devoted to a monster like that!

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Christ really separates the sin from the sinner so that we can love the sinner for Christ gets the punishment for our sin while we get the mercy.

Reason replies:

Nonsense. Nothing can genuinely separate the sinner from the sin. If you do wrong you did it and nothing changes that. Nothing could be more absurd than any of this and even many Catholic theologians would laugh their heads off at it. If the

sin is separated from the sinner then the sinner is not a sinner anymore. Are we to hate Christ then because our sins went to his account? The sins went somewhere if the sinners are to be loved as if they didn't do them so Christ must be to blame now.

This calls evil and sin a thing which contradicts the next bit.

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Evil is not a real force but is simply abused good. If evil were a real power then an all-good God would be conclusively disproved. Even physical evil such as blindness is simply the absence of sight – blindness is not a power

Reason replies:

So good is a force and evil is not! Is not evil the turning of good into something else? If fresh milk becomes sour is not the sourness a thing in itself just like the freshness was a thing? To say the sourness doesn't exist but is just the absence of freshness is madness. Of course blindness is a power that prevents sight from being possible. Do not insult the blind by saying they are just suffering from the absence of sight.

To argue that if a bomb hits a thousand people and one person survives minus arms and legs that God exists for God saved that person is an atrocious and sick and offensive argument. When you think about it, the doctrine that evil depends on good to exist, is saying the argument is true! The survival is evidence of the existence of good and the others have endured the loss of good.

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says

Every human being naturally wants perfect happiness

Reason replies:

No. Imperfect happiness is a part of true happiness.

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Happiness today is thought to be feeling happy. True happiness is a state not a feeling and it depends on virtue. Just like you can feel healthy and not be healthy so you can feel happy and not be really happy. True happiness is a permanent state.

Reason replies:

Happiness has to do with your perception and your mind. Being healthy does not for you can't see all that is going on in your body. You can see what is in your mind if you let yourself. The analogy fails. If happiness is caused by virtue then explain the anguish of a holy mother to be who refuses to abort her child to please the policy makers of the Catholic Church though doctors are certain that if she doesn't abort it will kill her and her baby?

The Handbook may mean that happiness is not a feeling but a condition. When you realise that everything will be okay in the end, that God will help you through your suffering on earth and take you to Heaven when you die that's happiness even if you are in the middle of a deep depression. They say real happiness is a permanent state so it must subsist no matter what you feel. The feeling of happiness is spoiled a bit by the fear that you mightn't feel that way tomorrow. So true happiness then is an unshakeable attachment to virtue and looking forward to God and Heaven. That is how it is permanent the only way it can be.

So anybody then who challenges the faith must be pure evil! They take away happiness. The more faith in God and in the Church you have the more chance you have of being happy. The doctrine seems to imply that happiness depends on faith and that nobody should criticise or refute anybody's faith. With such a doctrine Christianity would cease to exist as Christianity for it teaches that the whole world must be converted from their religion to Christianity.

The Bible speaks of the happiness of being a believer in Christ here and now on earth. If faith in what God says is virtue and obeying it and looking forward to Heaven is happiness and assuming God wants us to be happy then the following theological belief is true. We can't obey God or do anything to please him so Jesus has to do it for us and he died in our place for our sins on the cross. All we have to do is ask him and he will save us by this faith alone. From that point our salvation is fixed and even murdering or disbelieving means we cannot go to Hell for Jesus bought Heaven for us. This is the theology of Protestantism, evangelical Christianity. Why is it true then? Because if happiness has to be permanent to be real then theologies that say we can lose salvation by serious sin or loss of belief such as Roman Catholicism are evil faiths.

The state supposedly came from God so its job is to make its citizens happy. If this is the Christian God then clearly the state should support the Christian religion and discriminate against any that undermines it.

Religion is based only on faith and faith is made of belief and trust and faith can be wrong and there could be a faith that is

more believable than yours. It then is faith that makes the believer happy not truth for the two are not necessarily the same thing. Just believing in something doesn't necessarily make it true. Does truth come first in reality? Yes. We need it. The happiness and faith thing clearly sets religion in opposition to science for science puts truth before anybody's needs. If religion uses science then it is being inconsistent.

This "happiness" that the handbook offers us is too abstract and cold. Everybody wants to feel good. We try to look good and succeed at our careers for we want to be happy as in feeling good. If we were so keen on the handbook's version of happiness why is it that even the Christians among us change their jobs out of boredom and so on?

Handbook of Christian Apologetics Says
God brings good out of evil

Reason replies:

Religious optimism is dangerous. A paedophile struggling with an attraction towards a child may be able to resist it because he sees that it could damage the child psychologically for life. If he becomes a religious optimist he will feel God can bring good out of it and allows the evil for the sake of transforming it and making even better good than the good that was lost. If he is not a religious optimist, then his lack of it does good for he is deterred from hurting the child for he feels that not everybody will eventually experience the best out of life in the midst and because of evil. So if he believes in a supernatural God who makes the unexpected happen easily concern for the child will not deter him for he believes that it is up to God to do something about the damage. If the damage happens it is God's fault or responsibility. Or it is the child's for not letting God heal. The believers cannot accuse the abuser of the sin of bringing bad consequences on the child but they can only accuse him of leaving a mess for God to fix. You see how inhuman belief in God is.

The idea that God is in control and only lets us rebel and do harm because he has a plan to make it worthwhile tells us to trust God. This trust is evil because though we have to trust people for convenience in life, trust is not good in itself unless it is earned first. We trust only those who prove they are trustworthy and we only trust those who can't because we can't go through life checking everybody out. The genuine person likes to be checked up on. God has the power to reveal to us that we should trust him when he lets bad things happen to us. We have right to know exactly why. He is silent so he is evil. The good then that comes out of the evil he allows is trust in him but this trust is not good.

So no spiritual good comes out of evil.

Finally

If you argue that moral principles must be taken very seriously then you have to consider these questions. You don't want to be applauding the justice of an unjust God. Attempts to glorify God water down evil and that becomes clear when you do the thinking. If good comes about in spite of evil then evil has no purpose. If good comes about through evil then evil is not really that bad. Both of these actually prohibit faith in a good God! How could you really intend evil if you believe God has a plan for all you do and suffer? You might murder but you will be believe that God only let it happen for a good purpose so it wasn't really evil but necessary for some good.