

Where was God?

When pain or tragedy affect us personally,
many ask, “*Why, God?*” “*Why me?*”

No one knows all the answers

Proper course: work from known to unknown

God did not make monsters who hurt others

- Gn.1³¹ Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.
- Ps.14¹ The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.”

God created us with free will

I. Atheism is not the answer

What is evil to an atheist?

- A value judgment. If not measured against a morally perfect standard, it means nothing

“My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call something crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line” – C. S. Lewis

- Inconsistent to admit ignorance, and yet blame God

Evil is a departure from good

- It presumes the existence of absolute good.
- If no God, there is no perfect standard, no absolute right or wrong, and therefore no departure from that standard.
- National Institute of Standards & Technology, Gaithersburg, MD
 - How long is a foot? ... yard?
 - If no standard ... guesses!
 - If no God ... all is relative.



Without God, morality is reduced to
likes and dislikes; all is relative

Lk.12⁵⁷ Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do
you not judge what is right?

2 Co.13⁷ Now I pray to God that you do no evil,
not that we should appear approved, but that
you should do what is honorable, though we
may seem disqualified.

Ja.4¹⁷ Therefore, to him who knows to do good
and does not do it, to him it is sin.

Most people are drowning in moral relativism

- Gn.3: Adam and Eve chose . . . food
- Gn.4: Cain chose murder
- Gn.6: sank to lowest level; ignored God
 - At what point did they go too far?
 - Mt.24:37-39

Our world has reverted to pre-flood mentality. Morality has become a personal preference

Morality has become a matter of opinion – personal preference...

- Adultery? What's wrong with it?
- Abortion? An individual choice!
- Murder? Depends on circumstances.
- Stealing? Could be right or wrong...
 - The cost of rejecting God: **anything goes.**

David Hume's dilemma

- Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? ...then he is impotent.
- Is he able, but not willing? ...then he is malevolent.
- Is he both able and willing? ...whence then is evil?
 - Missed the real question: **why is anything good or evil??**

I. Atheism is not the answer

II. God is the only answer

- “Why does God put up with evil in world?”
 - For same reason He suffers long with our sins. 2 Pt.3:9, 15. Lk.15.
 - Why am I a Christian?
 - Because God patiently put up with my evil!
 - If God destroyed all evil tonight at midnight, where would most be at 12:01?

- Amazing: most who blame God for evil believe in the goodness of man.
- Some avoid offending Muslims at all cost (even criminals), but constantly blaspheme God.
- Shimei, 2 Sm.16:5-8 (1 Sm.22)

- Most people live in rebellion against God, repeatedly disobeying His word and despising Him, and yet the very second that something goes wrong, they wonder where He is.
- People despise Lord's church: slander it, ridicule it . . . until they get into a bind . . .

- If we are suffering with pain and/or evil as we deny God, the only conclusion left: pain and suffering are meaningless.
- If God is real, we can derive comfort. We know:
 1. He is good and just. Gn.18:25. Ro.3:23; 6:17
 2. One day He will balance accounts. Ac.17
 3. He loves and cares for us. 1 Pt.5:7
 4. It is possible that pain can make sense – God can use it for good. Rv.1:9; 2:10

Proper view of God is most important

- Gn.3: Eve's distorted view of God brought disaster.
- Gn.4: Cain...
- Gn.6: most thought only of themselves

- Good examples –
 - Job, 42:5
 - Abraham, Gn.18-19 (18:25)
 - Habakkuk . . .
 - Lk.13:1-5, tragedies teach us . . .
 - 1) Easier to see sin in others, not ourselves
 - 2) We should serve our Creator
 - 3) Life can be taken from us without warning
 - 4) If we die in sin, we get no second chance
 - 5) Proper view of God: tragedy → repent!

- Good examples –
 - Job, 42:5
 - Abraham, Gn.18-19 (18:25)
 - Habakkuk . . .
 - Lk.13:1-5, tragedies teach us
 - Jn.9:1-3, opportunity to glorify God
 - Ro.8:31-39, no calamity could convince Paul that God did not love him.
 - Where was God?

- Job 38-42, God is all-wise, all powerful.
- “[God] is not the author of evil, but he is the author of creation and of the risk inherent in it.... The significance of the cross of Jesus is that the one who suffers most because of sin is not mankind but God himself and it is by his own action in the cross that the power of evil is actually overcome” – Nigel Wright