

## ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS OUTSIDERS MOST OFTEN ASK US

### **Part I: Answering The Five Questions Unbelievers Most Often Ask Us**

#### **B. Answering The Question Of Moral Evil In The Biblical "Good" And All-Powerful God's Universe**

##### **I. Introduction**

- A. Though many people have many questions about our Christian faith, we have noticed over the years ten questions that many people outside our Church *most often* ask us, questions 1 Peter 3:15 calls us to **answer**.
- B. Five of the questions come from unbelievers and five from believers, so we answer them in this lesson series, and I am indebted in part to Josh McDowell, *A Ready Defense*, 1991, p. 405-424 for the format of the lessons.

##### **II. Answering The Question Of Moral Evil In The Biblical "Good" And All-Powerful God's Universe.**

- A. This question is as follows: "How can Christianity be true if its 'Good,' All-Powerful God coexists in a world infected with moral evil? Is He then either not good enough or not powerful enough to eliminate this evil?"
- B. In answering this question, we first note that the Bible's God must be perfect, so He must do His best, meaning He must create a world where man is free to do good or evil, and that is what Scripture reveals has occurred:
  1. Norm Geisler, *Philosophy of Religion*, 1974, p. 377, held the Bible's theistic God must be "perfect" so that He must do His best, and Psalm 145:3 claims He is perfect while Deut. 32:4 claims His works are perfect.
  2. God's best in turn demands that He make a world of "free beings" even if it risks their choosing evil, for "it is better to allow failure, with the opportunity for a greater good, than not to give the opportunity at all," *Ibid.*, p. 375. Scripture similarly shows God aimed for the highest good even at great cost: in Hebrews 12:2, we learn Jesus faced the cross to gain a joyful end.
  3. For God to do His best demands that He create a world that lets its free beings heed Him freely, for forcing others to a specific choice yields an "unworthy" choice short of the best, *Ibid.*, p. 376. Similarly, Genesis 1:31 and 2:16-17 shows God made a world where man had free will, a world that God said was very good!
- C. Second, the current world where some evil and a holy God temporarily coexist is the only fitting result of this:
  1. God must provide for "an optimally perfect moral world" with (a) a "process" leading men to be free but not doing evil, (b) where moral freedom is allowed and "uncoerced," (c) where enough evil exists for its being to attain "higher moral values" and (d) "learn for themselves why evil is wrong," *Ibid.*
  2. The world in its current state is precisely such a world (as follows):
    - a. A world where sin never occurred could not fulfill the requirements for an optimally perfect moral world, and it is hard to conceive of a world that better suits these conditions than the present one, *Ibid.*
    - b. The Bible presents a world where (1) God made man with the full liberty to choose between good and evil, Genesis 2:7-9, 16-17. (2) Man sinned, and initially experienced its tragic results, Gen. 3:1-6, 8-19! (3) However, God gave a means for victory over sin shown in guarding the Tree of Life for man's later use if he triumphed over sin by Christ, Gen. 3:22-24; John 3:16; Rev. 22:1-5. (4) Some people conquer sin in Christ and gain the optimum moral victory, Genesis 3:1-24 with Revelation 21:1-8!
- D. Third, Scripture teaches God will one day judge all evil in history and create a new universe of righteousness, proof of His infinite goodness and power, cf. 2 Cor. 5:10; Matt. 25:31-46; Ezek. 20:34-38; Rev. 20:11-21:8.
- E. Fourth, we thus expose the charge that God is **not** good or all powerful to be a great evil that rises from **Satan**:
  1. Scripture reveals that Satan originated the idea in the world that the Bible's God is not a Good God:
    - a. In Genesis 3:1, Satan tempted Eve to doubt God's goodness in his forbidding her to eat of a certain tree.
    - b. Actually, God was Good, for had Eve first eaten of the Tree of Life (Gen. 2:9), God would have kept her from access to the forbidden tree lest she be locked in death, for when she ate of the forbidden tree, God kept her from the Tree of Life lest she be locked in death until God could save her, Gen. 3:24; Rev. 22:2!
    - c. Thus, the charge that the Bible's God is not Good is from Satan, John 8:44-45.
  2. Satan also originated the idea that the Bible's God is not powerful due to the presence of evil in the world:
    - a. Satan implied that God's motive in telling man not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was jealousy as He wanted to monopolize His insight on good and evil, Gen. 3:4-5; *B. K. C., O. T.*, p. 32.
    - b. Yet, such jealousy would arise from inferiority, a personal weakness, and a weak, jealous God would not make a tree to equip man to inflame His jealousy, so Satan's charge God is weak is a lie, John 8:44!

***Lesson:*** (1) *Both philosophical logic and Scripture itself reveal that a Good, All-Powerful, theistic God must allow for the world that now exists with its current, temporal evil!* (2) *The Bible's God is thus to be believed and obeyed!*

***Application:*** *May we trust in Scripture's good and powerful God and in His Son, Jesus, for eternal life, John 3:16.*