

# The Problem of Evil

## Prepared for the Summer Group Classes of 2007

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Dr. Soulen states that there is a big difference between understanding evil and withstanding evil, and that distinction goes right to the very heart of the Christian faith.

The claim of Christian faith is that we are able to put our trust in a power that is able to withstand evil-and that is able to help us to withstand evil, even when we can't understand it.

Dr. Soulen does not get into the details of the problem of evil so a few verses and a short discussion might help. Again, this is my beliefs based on other scholars of the Bible and experience of my own studies.

God Made Everything...  
Evil is a Thing...  
Therefore, God Created Evil...

John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

While this seems to make sense, it is not truth just because it makes sense in a reasoning sort of way. God has stated that our reasoning is way below or short of God's reasoning. Yet we are to reason with Him. So His Word should give us some sort of answer to this issue.

When God created the Universe, he stated that it was good. Note that God does not address evil in the creation act. Note that God said that "all" he made was good. Therefore, the only conclusion is that God did not create evil.

Genesis 1:31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day.

It is important to realize that Evil is not a being, substance or entity. Also note that there is a difference between moral evil and physical evil, sin and suffering. Suffering can be good or bad. The suffering of a teenager results in a mature person. If we take away suffering from that equation, as many have experienced in recent generations, you get generations of immature adults that take well into their 30's to mature as opposed to previous generations.

Evil in the form of a hurricane is not of God except that God is not going to protect Christians from this kind of evil. It should be clear that God cannot do this as it removes free will. If Christians never experienced the evil of suffering it would be all too obvious to the lost world what was going on here. Thus, God must allow suffering of this kind to affect believers too.

Matthew 5:45 ...He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

13:1-5 Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them--do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."

So thus, we must ask where does evil come from or what or whom is the source of evil? Since there is a time of innocence we can conclude that evil was not always here like God has been.

We see in the Garden that evil seems to come from Satan but this is even untrue. What we see is that choice is the source of evil. God gave Adam and Eve a choice to make and Satan utilized his ability to make a choice to bring about doubt about God's "good" choice for them. Note that God holds Satan, Adam and Eve all accountable to their sin. Thus, if God created evil he would be a hypocrite for creating evil and then holding them accountable. This is a cruel, doomed for failure, formula which a loving God would not set up. Since God is the perfect father, he cannot look at sin without accountability.

Genesis 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Genesis 3:4 "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman. "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Genesis 3: 14 So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.

Habakkuk 1:13 Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.

Evil comes from free will or choice. Evil is the cost of free will. Evil is the risk God must take in order to have creatures that choose him of their own free will.

God made the angels first. Satan, the highest angel is not the antithesis of God. He is a created being with the ability to make a choice as we are. Therefore, Satan is not an equal or opposite of God or Good. Satan is not as powerful as many Christians "allow" him to be. Nor does Satan have any qualities of God such as Omnipresence as God does. Thus, he must come to Jesus in the desert as a single entity to tempt Jesus. Not as a spirit as God is.

So since evil is not a power in and of itself and evil had a beginning, then God did not create it. Through disobedience of angels and of men, making a choice, evil has entered the world. God will in His timing remove evil from the world in the end times. For now, the gift of love is the gift of freedom.

We are to resist evil and we can do so because of the Armor of God. God also works in our lives to help us with evil. God also works in our lives to make even evil to benefit our lives. We learn to put our trust in God to withstand evil.

Ephesians 6:13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Rom 8:38-39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2 Corinthians 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Evil is from human and angelic sources and therefore the root cause is the rebellion against God's purpose. The Lord's Prayer tells us a secret. "Deliver us from evil" is about the evil within our hearts that we have chosen since the garden to harbor. God does not tempt us to do evil. We tempt us to do evil rather than good to God and mankind. We ask God to help us with this human problem.

The battle of good and evil in man's heart is summarized by the 10 commandments of the Old Testament and the two commandments of the New Testament. There are 4 commandments in the O.T. and one in the N.T. that tell us of the relationship of man with God. There are 6 commandments in the O.T. and again, one in the N.T. that tell us of the relationship of man with man. It is these commandments that help us to see that evil is breaking the relationship with God and/or man.

Matthew 22:37-40 Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Once evil has run its course and the last human chooses God over self, God will remove evil from the world. Evil has a beginning unlike God and an end unlike us. Angels and mankind having lived with evil, allow God, in the end times to remove evil from the world since those that chose good will not choose evil again. We do not read of more angels choosing to rebel against God. There is only the first one third that followed Satan in the beginning that is mentioned. They learned their lesson about evil and so will we. With the mind of Christ being fully developed, we will not forget for eternity.

Isaiah 14:12-13 How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.

Rev 12:44 His tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman who was about to give birth, so that he might devour her child the moment it was born.

1 Corinthians 2:16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.