

# “How do we explain to non-believers why God allows bad things to happen?”

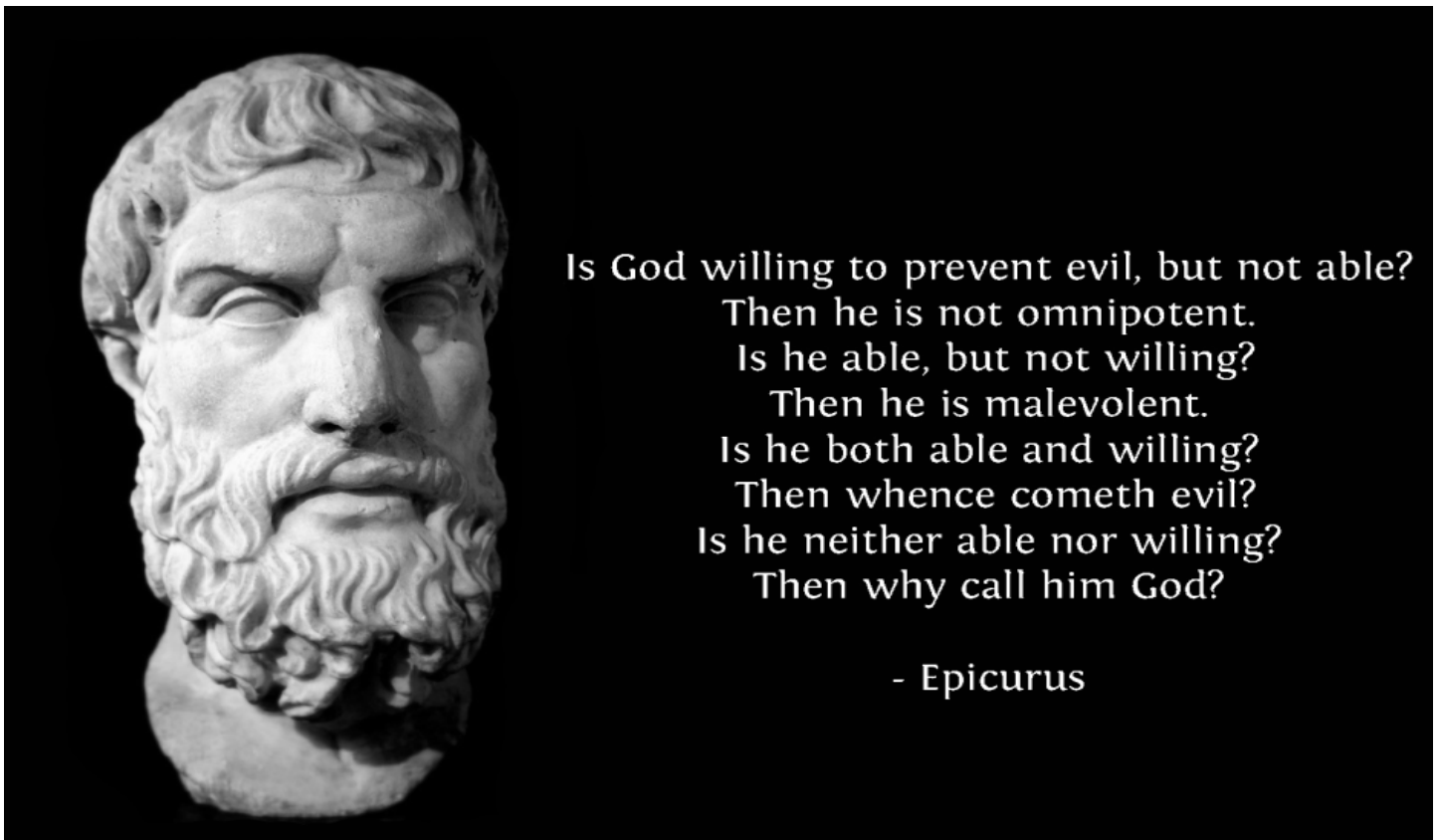
This has to deal with what is called **theodicy-**

"What is theodicy?"

Theodicy is: a branch of philosophy dealing with the issue of evil in light of the existence of God.

If God is just and holy and good, then how do evil and misery exist? That's the question theodicy wrestles with.

History's most famous statement of the “**problem of evil**” comes from the ancient Greek philosopher **Epicurus**:



Matter of fact **Lex Luthor** in the movie **Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice**, said this, “If God is all powerful, he cannot be all good. And if he’s all good, then he cannot be all powerful.”



The problem with all this is that theodicy is confused when we don't define our terms. Or we use things that aren't part of the original equation.

What I mean is this:

**Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."**

But listen to how the KJV puts this verse.

**Isaiah 45:7, "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things."**

We know God creates, that is a fact but wait did God create evil?

Every translation has an issue and the King James Version is no different.

They wrongfully translate this word in the Hebrew as "**evil**."

The word translated "**evil**" is from a Hebrew word that means "adversity, affliction, calamity, distress, misery."

Notice how the other translations render the word: "disaster" (NIV, HCSB), "calamity" (NKJV, NAS, ESV), and "woe" (NRSV).

The Hebrew word can refer to moral evil, and often does have this meaning in the Hebrew. However, due to the diversity of possible definitions, it is unwise to assume that "**I create evil**" in **Isaiah 45:7** refers to God bringing moral evil into existence.

The context of **Isaiah 45:7** makes it clear that something other than "bringing moral evil into existence" is in mind. The context of **Isaiah 45:7** is, God rewarding Israel for obedience and punishing Israel for disobedience.

God brings judgment on those who continue to rebel against Him. "**Woe to him who quarrels with his Master**" **Isaiah 45:9**. That is the person to whom God brings "**evil**" and "disaster." So, rather than saying that God created "moral evil," **Isaiah 45:7** is presenting a common theme of Scripture – that God brings disaster on those who continue in hard-hearted rebellion against Him.

Listen to some of these verses,

**Habakkuk 1:2-4**, "O Lord, how long shall I cry,  
And You will not hear? Even cry out to You, "Violence!" And You will not save. Why do You show me iniquity, And cause *me* to see trouble? For plundering and

violence *are* before me; There is strife, and contention arises. Therefore the law is powerless, And justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore perverse judgment proceeds.”

**Ecclesiastes 4:1-3**, “Then I returned and considered all the oppression that is done under the sun: And look! The tears of the oppressed, But they have no comforter— On the side of their oppressors *there is* power, But they have no comforter. Therefore I praised the dead who were already dead, More than the living who are still alive. Yet, better than both *is he* who has never existed, Who has not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.”

**Psalm 10:1**, “Why do You stand afar off, O Lord?  
*Why* do You hide in times of trouble?”

**Revelation 6:9-10**, “When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

This could be said or even is said of God,

- Why did He allow Joseph Stalin to massacre thousands in U.S.S.R?
- If Israel is God’s chosen people Why did He allow millions and children too, to be killed by Hitler.
- Where was God during 911.

If we are going to try and tackle some of this stuff than we need to start by defining our terms.

Defining your terms is the biggest thing you can do to make sure your communication is perfect.

You ask someone “Are you saved?”

Well if you don’t define your terms salvation for someone might be different then it is for you?

In the south they ask you if you want a Coke? If you tell them yes, they ask you what kind. Coke is a general term for a soda in the south. So, what a Coca Cola is to you is just soda to them. We must define our terms.

So let's define what is evil?

**Webster** says:

**Evil is** : having qualities tending to injure, a nature which tends to badness, not good, having bad moral qualities, morally corrupt, bad conduct, bad thoughts, bad heart, moral badness from the principle of virtue imposed by conscience.

Evil is typically seen as a force opposed to good, kind of a yin and yang or two poles of a magnet.

Defining evil in this way leads to a logical problem for the theist: why would God create evil? God created gravity, light, magnetism, and so forth: why would He also create evil?

**The most logical answer is simply that God didn't create evil.** Because evil, in and of itself, does not actually exist, except as the absence of goodness.

Similarly, God created light, but did He also "create" darkness? **No**, because darkness in and of itself does not exist. Darkness is only a term we use to refer to a relative lack of light. It's entirely defined in terms of the absence of something else.

The same is true of physical heat. Heat is a term used to describe the motion of atoms and molecules.

You can say that it is colder, but it's not really colder it's just the absence of heat.

A mathematical example is the "number" 0. The term zero literally refers to that which does not exist. People think of themselves as a nothing, zero, other people are something but I'm a nothing, that's where they get it from. It is a reference to nothing, to the absence of something. This is why adding or subtracting 0 results in no change, multiplying 0 is still "nothing," and dividing by 0 is a logical contradiction. Is zero "real"?

In the sense that it's a term we can understand and that has use, yes. But, of course, 0 does not exist in any tangible sense. It's literally defined as the absence of something (everything) else.

Like sunrise and sunset- the sun never moves, we say it does to describe what we see happening.

So just because evil exists, doesn't mean it is some created tangible thing.

The debate of how we define evil doesn't stop there, however. For many critics, the objection to God being "all good" literally for them means "never allowing any evil."

God does not create anything bad,

**Genesis 1:31a**, “Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was* **very good.**”

There has to be absolutes, there has to be a standard by which everything else is matched up to!!!!

And there is, that standard is God-  
He is perfect- the absence of that is imperfection  
He is righteous- the absence of that is unrighteousness  
He is good- the absence of that is evil

There has to be a standard and there is it's God's standards.

There has to be absolutes and there is absolutes. let me exemplify

**Do you know what an Agnostic is?**

An agnostic is: someone who says you can't know whether there is a God or not, you just can't know.

This is what is great about absolutes they are unchanging, they never change, when you have a standard it never changes its unchanging.

Now you can have that agnostic view but it goes against natural laws, that's my point.

**The Law of Non-Contradiction/Excluded Middle**

It simply states that a line is either straight or crooked, there is no middle ground!!!!!!!!

So based on that known law which is an actual law that everybody goes by, that law eliminates Agnosticism being true.

Since God created and everything He created was good at its original point, God also gave man a free will to choose.

**Genesis 2:16-17**, "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat...”

Because of sin now we are not Good no more—

**Romans 5:12**, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—“

here is one of the biggest questions that I have heard and I'm sure you have too!!

**Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people?**

Ok, question, who is good?

The bible makes it abundantly clear that because of sin NO-ONE is good?

**Ecclesiastes 7:20**, "For *there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin.*"

**Romans 3:10-17**, "As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." "Their throat *is* an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps *is* under their lips"; "Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness." "Their feet *are* swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery *are* in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known."

**Luke 18:19**, "So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? **No one is good** but One, *that is, God.*"

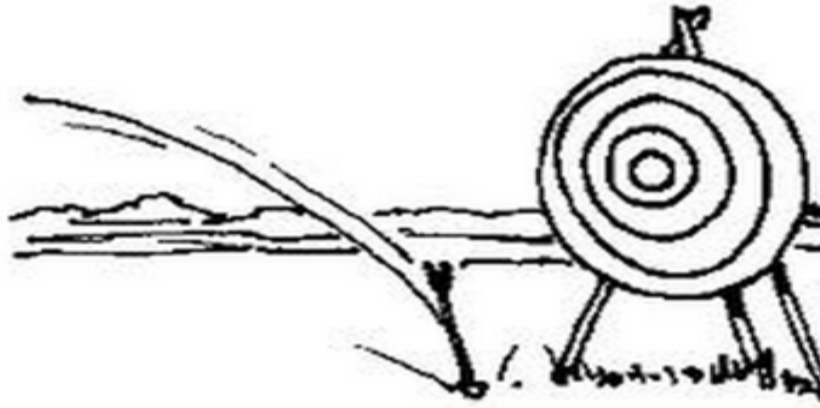
Did God create evil? **Isaiah 45:7** NO!!!!!!!!!!

Are there good people? NO!!!!!!!!!!

There has to be a standard an absolute and there is which is God which His number is 7 which is the number of perfection thats why man's number is 6 because we are not perfect we fall short,

**Roman's 3:23**, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" the word sin is from the Greek word *Harmataia*, which means to miss the mark its an archery term, which means you don't hit the bullseye **you don't even hit the target.**

All men fall short of being good, perfect, righteous, etc.



**So why does God allow evil to happen?**

**Let's firstly** look at the nature aspect of this first,

**What I mean is why would God allow natural disasters like hurricanes, tsunami's, earthquakes, etc.**

**These types of tragedies allow many people to question God's goodness.**

**It's kind of funny how all secular people describe those natural disasters as "acts of God", but when good weather comes He is not thought of because He must not be good or something.**

**God created the entire universe and all the laws of nature. Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."**

**Some of these natural disasters are these known laws at work.**

**The Bible says that Jesus holds all this stuff together, making sure everything works accordingly.**

**Colossians 1:16-17, NLT "for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together."**

**Here is some peoples problem, if all this stuff is in Christs control then can He stop natural disasters? Yes, He can**

**Matter of fact God does influence the weather from time to time!!!!**



**Deuteronomy 11:17**, “If you do, the Lord’s anger will burn against you. He will shut up the sky and hold back the rain, and the ground will fail to produce its harvests. Then you will quickly die in that good land the Lord is giving you.”

**James 5:17-18**, “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.”

**Numbers 16:30-34**, the rebellion of **Korah**, it was an earthquake and the ground opened up and swallowed all the people up then closed back up around them.



God sent some natural disasters as a punishment for sin. One of the biggest punishments for sin with natural disasters is seen in **Revelation chapters 6, 8, and 16**.

Is every natural disaster a punishment from God?      absolutely not!!!!!!

In many ways, I would say in most ways the natural disasters are a result of the consequences that sin had on creation.

What do I mean by that?



**Genesis 3:17-18**, “Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: “Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field.”

**Paul** reiterates this in,

**Romans 8:18-21**, NLT “Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. Against its will, all creation was subjected to God’s curse. But with eager hope, the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God’s children in glorious freedom from death and decay. For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.”

So the earth has been affected by the fall of man, it waits with eager hope when it will join God’s children with a glorified body, so to speak.

My body is affected by sin and it is subject to death and decay. I can’t wait till I get my new body that will not be affected by sin.

The earth is no different. It is waiting when sin will no longer have effect on it as well, **Paul** said against its will all creation was subject to God’s will.

Now it says in groaning as in the pains of childbirth, that’s just the earth having natural disasters, and the closer we get to the end times the more disasters we’ll have.

In natural child birth the closer you get to having the baby the more contractions she has. Same with the earth.

This is another way to show the sinfulness of man because creation was affected by the fall.

God doesn’t allow evil disasters because He is not good, He permits it because it is just the effects of man’s sinfulness.

Sin is the ultimate cause of disasters, just like it is the cause of death, we weren’t built to die, disease, our bodies weren’t built to get sick, and suffering we weren’t made to suffer.

So the big question is why does God allow natural disasters to happen?

Natural disasters cause millions of people to reevaluate their priorities in life.

Billions of dollars is used to help people who are suffering. Christian ministries have the opportunity to help, minister, counsel, pray, and lead people to Christ! God can, and does, bring great good out of terrible tragedies

**Romans 8:28-29a**, NLT “And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son...”

**Second** thing I want to talk about is does God use evil to accomplish His plans?

**Habakkuk 1:5-11**, NLT “The Lord replied, “Look around at the nations; look and be amazed! For I am doing something in your own day, something you wouldn’t believe even if someone told you about it. I am raising up the Babylonians, a cruel and violent people. They will march across the world and conquer other lands. They are notorious for their cruelty and do whatever they like. Their horses are swifter than cheetahs and fiercer than wolves at dusk. Their charioteers charge from far away. Like eagles, they swoop down to devour their prey. “On they come, all bent on violence. Their hordes advance like a desert wind, sweeping captives ahead of them like sand. They scoff at kings and princes and scorn all their fortresses. They simply pile ramps of earth against their walls and capture them! They sweep past like the wind and are gone. But they are deeply guilty, for their own strength is their god.”

There is a distinction that needs to be made between God controlling situations, and Him creating evil.

God is not the author of sin, but He can use sinful men to achieve His objective.

**Romans 8:28**, “all things work together for good...”

That means good things and bad things.

The Bible is clear that God does not sin and He performs no evil.

**James 1:13** teaches, “God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempts no one.”

**Deuteronomy 32:4** says, “The Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice”

The problem in Habakkuk is that God was using the Babylonians (**an evil people**) to accomplish His will.

Christ on the cross, that was an evil act, but God used that to save anyone who would believe in Him.

In Habakkuk’s day, God’s purpose was to bring judgment on Judah for their idolatry. Babylon was the instrument of His judgment.

Another situation is where God uses a lying spirit to cause death and destruction.

**1 Kings 22:19-23**, “Then Micaiah continued, “Listen to what the Lord says! I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the armies of heaven around him, on his right and on his left. And the Lord said, ‘Who can entice Ahab to go into battle against Ramoth-gilead so he can be killed?’”

“There were many suggestions, and finally a spirit approached the Lord and said, ‘I can do it!’ “‘How will you do this?’ the Lord asked. “And the spirit replied, ‘I will go out and inspire all of Ahab’s prophets to speak lies.’ “‘You will succeed,’ said the Lord. ‘Go ahead and do it.’ “So you see, the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all your prophets. For the Lord has pronounced your doom.”

Ahab was so mad because Micaiah would only prophesy bad towards Ahab, never good.

But it was because Ahab was so bad that he would never receive a good accommodation, so because of his wicked ways God pronounced his doom but still gave him a chance after chance after chance to get right with God and he never did.

**1 Kings 20:42**, “The prophet said to him, “This is what the Lord says: Because you have spared the man I said must be destroyed, now you must die in his place, and your people will die instead of his people.”

**1 Kings 21:18-20**, ““Go down to meet King Ahab of Israel, who rules in Samaria. He will be at Naboth’s vineyard in Jezreel, claiming it for himself. Give him this message: ‘This is what the Lord says: Wasn’t it enough that you killed Naboth? Must you rob him, too? Because you have done this, dogs will lick your blood at the very place where they licked the blood of Naboth!’” “So, my enemy, you have found me!” Ahab exclaimed to Elijah. “Yes,” Elijah answered, “I have come because you have sold yourself to what is evil in the Lord’s sight.”

The death of Ahab, was exactly as the Lord had said, Ahab was killed by an arrow and died and the dogs licked his blood.

God did not lie nor did He cause someone to lie, but used the evil that is in evil or demonic spirits to do what they do best.

I think we have answered enough that we can answer **Epicurus**:

The Christian can respond to **Epicurus** as follows:

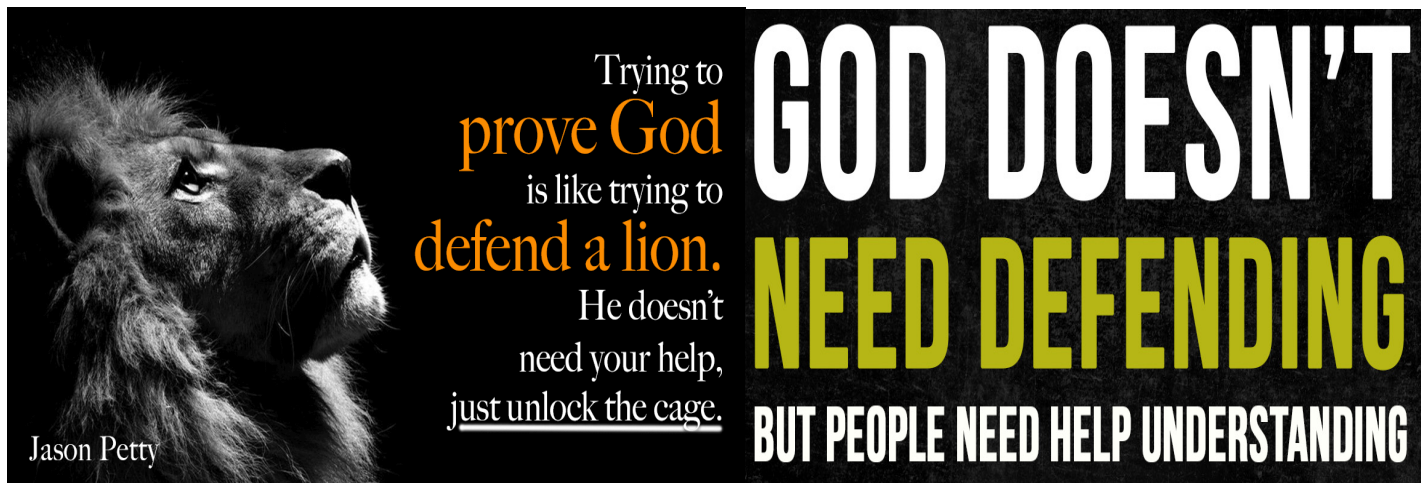
**Is God willing to prevent evil, but unable to? Then he is not omnipotent.** God is willing to limit evil and has acted to do just that. So, He is still omnipotent.

**Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent.** God is able, but not willing, to abolish our free will. So, He is still omnibenevolent.

**Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil?** God has acted to defeat evil. Evil comes simply when we fall short of His will.

**Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?** God is not willing to prevent our free will. Your disapproval does not make Him any less God.

God doesn't need help defending people need help understanding.



Why would God allow evil to happen to people specially children?

So we have come back to theodicy,

Here is the basic idea, **God is not willing to eliminate our freewill!!!!**

If He eliminated our freewill we would not have a choice, and that is not what God created us for.

**Ephesians 5:22, "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord."**

This is a good verse to combat the Calvinistic view, but what is that word submission, what kind of submission is it?

It is "**WILLFUL**" submission.

So, God does not want to take away our free will.

What does that mean,

See if a man molests a child we would say that's horrible, why doesn't God just stop people from doing that.

And that is a viable question, however, if God stopped a man from choosing to have sex then he eliminates sex all together.

In order for God to eliminate that problem he would have to eliminate our ability to choose to have sex or not.

In order to eliminate hate and malice and stuff, he would eliminate our free choice to love and do good as well.

See in order for me to hate something there has to be the absence of Love, so in order to eliminate hate God has to eliminate love because Hate is the absence of love, the only way to eliminate hate is to eliminate love.

Logic says that God does not have to create evil in order for there to be evil. Logic says that God does not have to conform to our moral preferences in order to be perfectly good.

The Bible makes it clear that evil is neither something God intended nor created. Rather, moral evil is a necessary possibility. If we are truly free, then we are free to choose something other than God's will—that is, we can choose moral evil.

Listen what these verses tell us,

Proverbs 14:34, “Godliness makes a nation great, but sin is a disgrace to any people.”

Proverbs 19:3, “People ruin their lives by their own foolishness and then are angry at the Lord.”

So what happens is this, once a person accepts the idea that evil has to be possible in order for us to have a free will, the next step is often to criticize God for allowing “too much” evil or the “wrong kinds” of evil.

God did and does try to eliminate moral evil. But man won't listen. Listen to **Frank Turek** in his apologetic site called “Crossexamined” he explains this well.

“God Behaving Badly?—Destruction of the Canaanites”

Destruction of the Canaanites

“In the Old Testament, God commanded the Israelites to completely wipe out the Canaanites living in a certain region (Deut. 7:1-5; 20:16-18): “you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy” (7:2), “do not leave alive anything that breathes” (20:16). And Israel obeyed. How could a good and loving God possibly command something like this?”

### King of the Universe

“We first must understand who God is. God is not just another ruler of some earthly kingdom. God is Creator of all things and King of the Universe. He gives life and he can take life whenever he wants, however he wants.”

“Furthermore, there are times that we think it is justified for humans to take another’s life, like in self-defense, to protect others, or in a just war. A general can order his troops to attack and kill enemy combatants. So was God morally justified in destroying the Canaanites?”

### Judgment, Not Genocide

“The Bible is clear that God did not arbitrarily order Israel to kill the Canaanites. They were evil. God told the Israelites “It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations” (Deut. 9:5, **emphasis mine**, or Frank’s emphasis). And while the Canaanites committed many wicked acts (such as bestiality), I think only one example would suffice: child sacrifice. They would burn their children alive in a fiery furnace as a sacrifice to the god Molech. Just that one act alone would be justification for their complete annihilation.”



The god Molech, which was a man with the head of a bull, is pictured here holding a child. That is how the Canaanites sacrificed to their god. the Canaanites practiced bestiality —this is why it is mentioned in **Leviticus 18**; God did not want the Israelites practicing this disgusting act as the Gentile nations around them had done. In the Canaanite epic poem The Baal Cycle, we learn:  
“Mightiest Baal hears; He makes love with a heifer in the outback, A cow in the field of Death’s Realm . . . He lies with her seventy times seven, Mounts eighty times eight; [She conceives and bears a boy].”



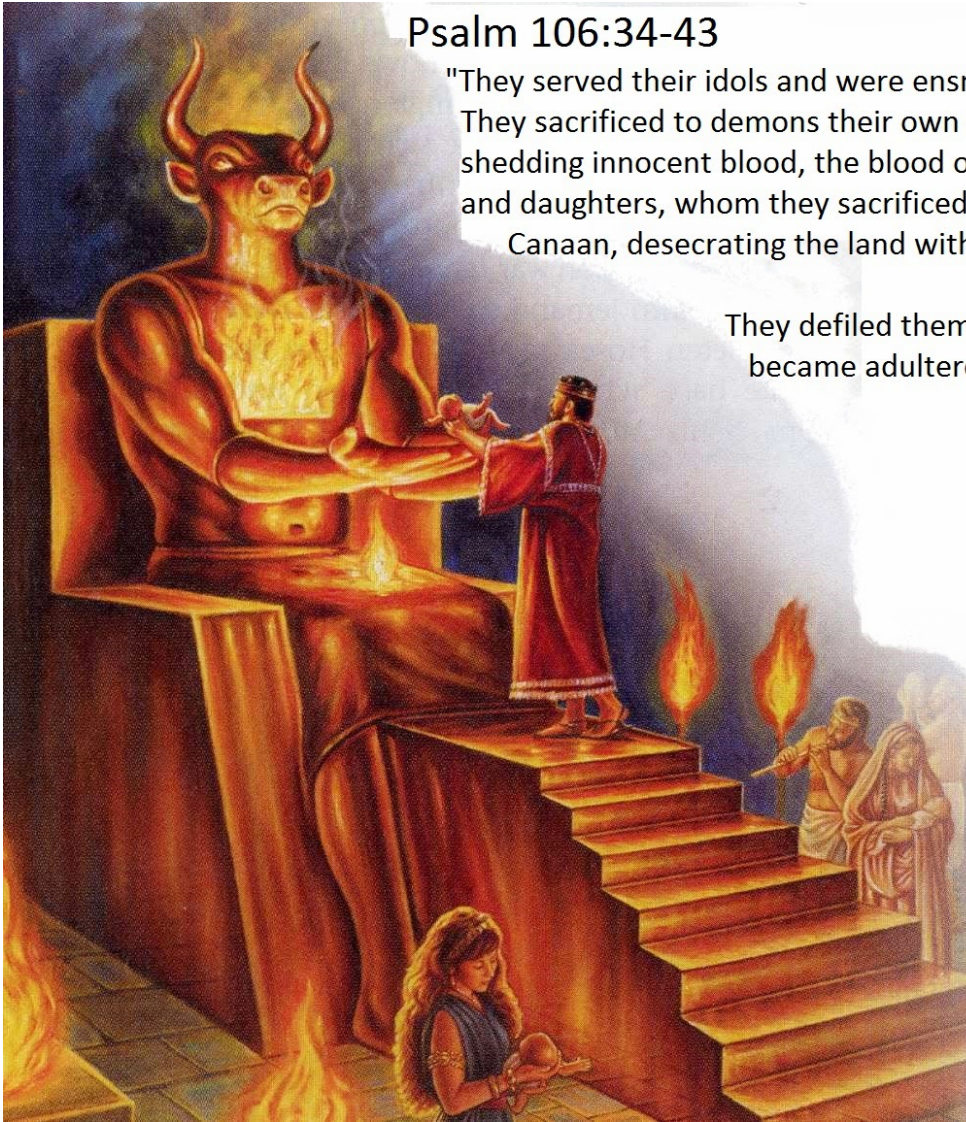
**“The irony is that many skeptics question why God doesn’t prevent great evils in the world. But here we have an example of God eradicating a wicked culture, and yet skeptics complain about it!”**

**“God did not act impulsively or arbitrarily when he commanded the destruction of the Canaanites. He was judging the wicked. And He even imposed harsh judgment upon his own people, Israel, when they partook of the same wicked actions of the nations surrounding them. After all, one of the reasons God gave for destroying the Canaanites was so Israel would not adopt their evil practices (Deut. 7:3-4; 20:18).”**

## Psalm 106:34-43

"They served their idols and were ensnared by them.  
They sacrificed to demons their own sons and daughters,  
shedding innocent blood, the blood of their own sons  
and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of  
Canaan, desecrating the land with bloodshed.

They defiled themselves by their actions,  
became adulterers by their conduct."



**"But surely they weren't all bad, right? Recall the account of Abraham bargaining with God to spare Sodom and Gomorrah ([Genesis 18](#)). God played along, knowing that Abraham could not find ten righteous in the cities, and God also knew that the Canaanites were completely and utterly evil. So he commanded them to be destroyed."**

God never promises to make everyone's life easier or better, nor does He promise to alter cause and effect simply at our whims. There is an eternal context and a spiritual condition to what God tells us about suffering and evil in this world.

Though we would love to eliminate evil, here are some benefits!!

**First**, He uses pain and suffering to draw us to Himself so that we will cling to Him. Jesus said, [John 16:33](#), **"In the world you shall have tribulation."**

An added benefit is that as we experience God's comfort through trials, we are then able to comfort others in the same way,



**2 Corinthians 1:4**, “He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.”

**Second**, He proves to us that our faith is real through the suffering and pain that are inevitable in this life.

**Hebrews 12:2**, “the author and finisher of our faith.” will not be crushed by suffering, but will come through the trial with their faith intact, having been “proven through fire” so that it “might be found to praise and honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (**1 Peter 1:7**). Those are the ones who do not shake their fists at God or question His goodness, but instead “count it all joy” (**James 1:2**), knowing that trials prove that they are truly the children of God. “Blessed is the man who endures temptation, because having been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him” (**James 1:12**).

**Thirdly**, God uses pain and suffering to tell us that something is wrong. Have you ever heard of CIPA?

Congenital Insensitivity to Pain with Anhidrosis (**CIPA**) has two characteristic features: the inability to feel pain and temperature, and decreased or absent sweating (anhidrosis). Basically, you don’t feel pain nor do you sweat.

An inability to feel pain and temperature often leads to repeated severe injuries. Unintentional self-injury is common in people with CIPA, typically by biting the tongue, lips, or fingers, which may lead to spontaneous amputation of the affected area. In addition, people with CIPA heal slowly from skin and bone injuries. Repeated trauma can lead to chronic bone infections (osteomyelitis) or a condition called Charcot joints, in which the bones and tissue surrounding joints are destroyed.

Normally, sweating helps cool the body temperature. However, in people with CIPA, anhidrosis often causes recurrent, extremely high fevers (hyperpyrexia) and seizures brought on by high temperature (febrile seizures). God uses pain and suffering to tell us something is wrong, we need something or rather someone to fix it, which points us to Christ.

**Finally**, God uses suffering to take our eyes off this world and put them on the next. The Bible continually commands us to not get caught up in the things of this world, but to look forward to the world to come.

This world and all that is in it will pass away, and those who would follow Him must not see the things of this life,

**Who would want to live with God in eternity if this world was awesome?**

**Listen to what Job said,**

**Job 1:21, “I came naked from my mother’s womb, and I will be naked when I leave. The Lord gave me what I had, and the Lord has taken it away. Praise the name of the Lord!”**

**God is still God,  
God is still Good,  
To God be the Glory  
Amen.**