

APOLOGETICS



The
Mind's
Journey
to
Heaven

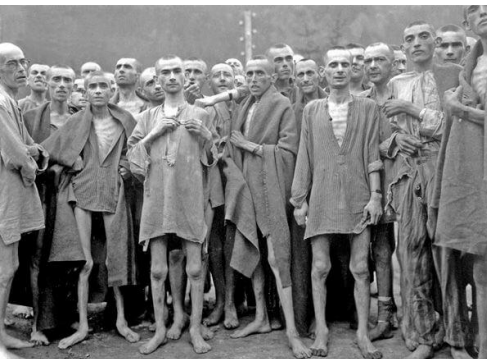


How can a good God exist if ... He allows suffering and evil?

- Does suffering and evil exist?
- Is God to blame?
- What is the real depth and weight of this argument?



Nazis Kill Last Jew of Vinnitsa (1941).



If God does exist, how could he be considered good with killing all human and created life other than one family in the flood? and torturing Job?



And killing His own son?



What is the root premise of this question?

- With so much chaos in the world, an all powerful, all present and all knowing God cannot exist.
- All perceived bad things which happen to man and creation are inherently evil.
- If God does exist, then He cannot be good if He allows this kind of suffering and pain to happen.

Leaning into these questions...requires a pause.

When the spirit of the person asking is ...Truly hurting...

Then we need to ...

- Weep with those who weep Romans 12:15
- Clothe yourself with compassion Colossians 3:12
- Wait till the person is in the right state of mind to receive the truth Ecclesiastes 3
- Use words which build up and edify Ephesians 4:29



Leaning into these questions...requires a pause.

When the spirit of the person asking is ...Seriously pondering ...

Then we need to ...

- Give the Biblical answers
- Remind them some answers must be experienced to understand
- Address the question at the level of the asker
- Remind them that the Bible's answers are sufficient but not all encompassing

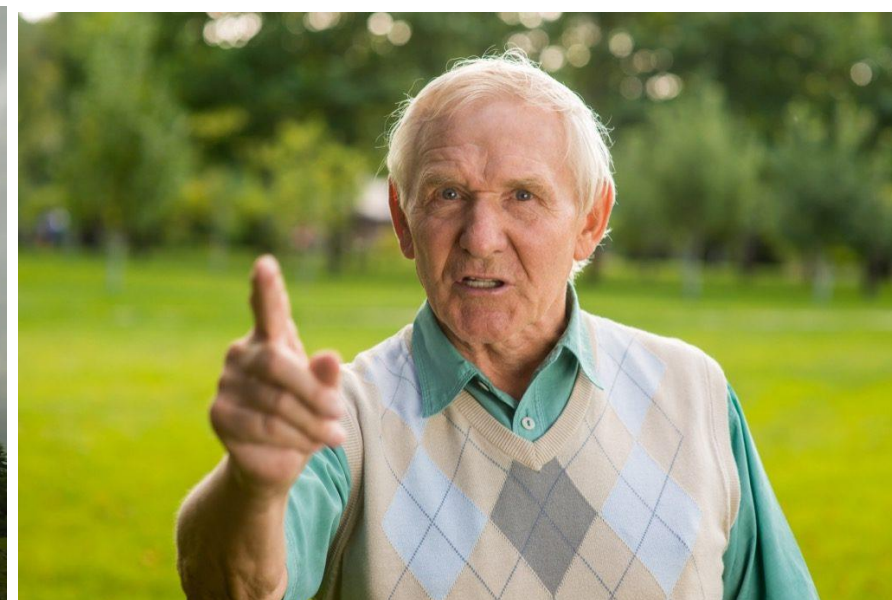
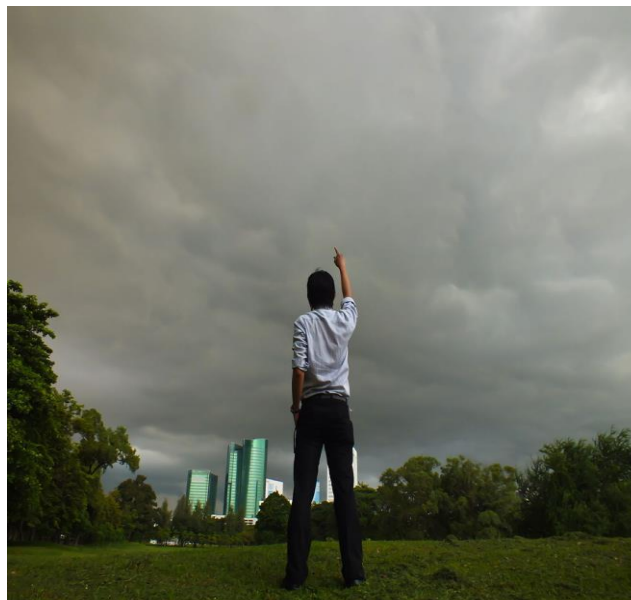


Leaning into these questions...requires a pause.

When the spirit of the person asking is ...Judging God ...

Then we need to ...

- Focus on the cross
- Use questions to show them that their perspective is misplaced
- Pray for them...usually those with the most angst are the closest to being saved.
- Earn the right to help minister to them in the area of their biggest hurt



Addressing the conclusion first...

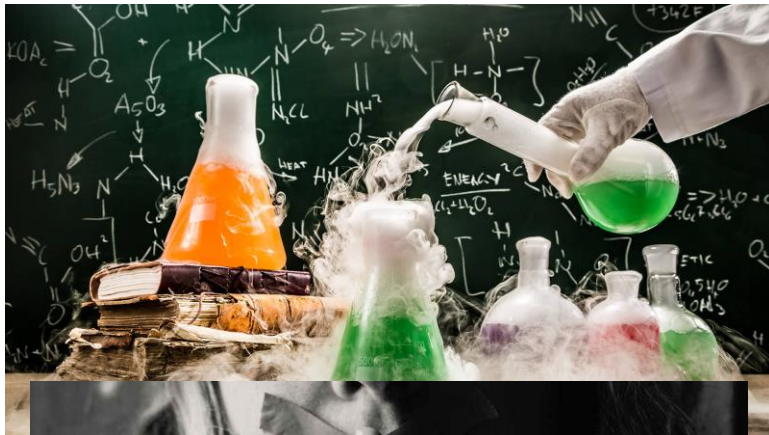
- To conclude from looking at Suffering and Evil that God doesn't exist is a fallacy.
 - For to acknowledge there is evil or bad things is to acknowledge there is righteous and good things.

...hence God must exist.

- This answer alone doesn't go far enough as you are the ambassador of the one whose character is being maligned...you must go a step further.
 - You must address God allowing evil to exist
 - You must address God allowing suffering to happen
 - You must address God causing suffering and pain...yes causing.
 - You must lean into God judging all sin with Death and Hell
- You must close this by pointing to the Cross.

An aside as a reminder from our last lessons...

- Atheism or Science has no means in which to engage the question of why suffering and evil exist...it is silent.



Nazis Kill Last Jew of Vinnitsa (1941).



An aside as a reminder from our last lessons...

- The Bible has great answers so we should let the Bible speak.

A photograph of a person wearing a plaid shirt, sitting at a dark wooden table and reading an open Bible. Their left hand is on the left page, and their right hand holds a silver pen over the right page. The text "Bible Answers" is overlaid in a large, black, serif font across the center of the image.

Bible Answers

The Bible's Answers...for the one who is hurting.



Current Foundation Upon Which To Fall



Promised Future To Hope In

The Bible's Answers...for the one who is hurting.

Jesus Wept. John 11:35:

Jesus knew ...

- *Temptation* (Mark 1:13)
- *Poverty* (Matthew 8:20)
- *Frustration* (John 2:15-16)
- *Weariness* (John 4:6)
- *Disappointment* (Luke 13:34)
- *Rejection* (John 6:66)
- *Sorrow* (Luke 14:15; Matthew 26:38)
- *Ridicule* (Mark 15:19)
- *Loneliness* (Matthew 27:46)
- *Troubled and Sleepless Torment* (Matthew 26:36-56)

Jesus knows ...

- *Our frame* (Psalm 103:14)
- *Our weakness* (Heb 4:15)
- *All your ways* (Psalm 139:3)
- *His plans for you* (Jeremiah 29:11)

Jesus is near . (Matthew 28:20; Psalm 34:18)

Jesus will not leave (Hebrews 13:5)

Suffering has a purpose....

- Heb 12:11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.
- Rom 8:28 All things work together for the good of those who love Him and are called by His name.

We need to take the long look...

- Rom 8:18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.
- Heb 12:2 who for the joy set before Him endured the cross...
- 2 Corin 4:17-5:1 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

God meant it for good...

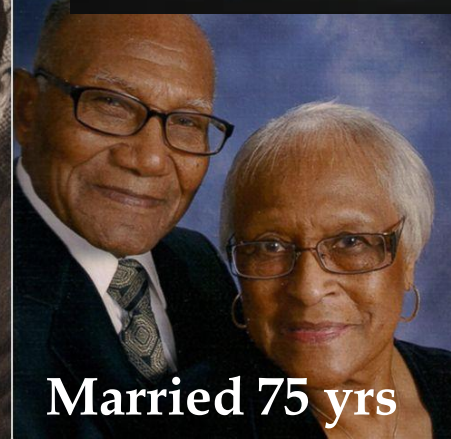
- Gen 50:20 ...you meant it for evil but God meant it for good...

Current Foundation Upon Which To Fall

Promised Future To Hope In

The Bible's response to...one seriously pondering

- The assumption that suffering is always bad is wrong.
 - The greatest relationships blossom in the soil of deep suffering.
 - The greatest character traits are crystalized in the crucible of suffering.



The Bible's response to...one seriously pondering

- Blaming God for wrongs done by man presumes too much...or too little.
 - It presumes God is evil and man is good.
 - The Bible says Man is utterly evil and fallen.
 - If True then an all powerful God could...
 - Leave man to himself...and man would destroy himself...and spend eternity in hell.
 - Execute quick justice ...and all mankind would spend eternity in hell.
 - Since Man is not destroyed completely, there must be more to God than meets the eye.

The Bible's response to...one seriously pondering

- What about the fact that God put the tree in the Garden of Eden knowing it would cause man to fall ...why?
 - Having the tree in the Garden created a need for faith and corresponding obedience.
 - This obedience increased God's glory regardless of man's response.
 - If Adam obeyed (and he did for a time)...then God was glorified in His obedience.
 - If Adam disobeyed (and he did), then God's glory in his mercy and grace on the cross would be displayed in an even greater way.





The Bible's response to...one seriously pondering

- What about the fact that God allowed Satan to have access to the Garden of Eden...why would he do such a thing...and still be a good God?
 - First, I am glad Satan has to ask permission.
 - Second, God sees the eternal and infinite picture. In this picture, God has chosen to bring about greater good from the evil Satan wants to create. In some way, it serves God's purposes.
 - Third, Allowing evil, controlling evil, restraining evil, bringing about a greater good from evil and eventually destroying evil brings God more glory than simply never allowing it to exist.
 - Last, it displays his power to the objects of His love and mercy.



The Bible's response to...one seriously pondering *God's ways are higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9)*



Exodus 7:3 But I will harden Pharaoh's heart that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt.

Exodus 11:9-10 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh will not listen to you, so that My wonders will be multiplied in the land of Egypt." Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh; yet the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the sons of Israel go out of his land.

The Bible's response to...one seriously pondering *God's ways are higher than our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9)*

- Story of Joseph and the Exodus...why was Joseph and the people of Israel allowed to suffer?
 - Gen 50:20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.
 - Yes, but more than this...so that the name of God would be made great among the nations (Ex 9:16)...and many people would be spiritually saved...how?
 - By...
 - Enslaving nations under Egypt through Joseph's knowledge via a dream which provided the wealth along with the manpower of the Israelites to make the Pharaohs great...collecting amazing wealth...and military might.
 - This provided for Israel's protection and training while they grew in numbers.
 - Then overthrowing Pharaoh through the plagues and work of Moses made His name to be feared among the nations.
 - Then sending his people Israel out with wealth, knowledge and numbers.
 - In the end, it was through Israel that His word would be created and the Savior would be born.

The Bible's response to...one seriously pondering

Jesus, God's only begotten son, was tortured and murdered ...why?

- To display God's true nature to all...full of sacrificial love...justice...mercy...and grace.
- To purchase eternal life for those who trust in Him. John 3:16
- To secure eternal glory which He will share with those who trust in Him. John 17
- For the Joy set before Him. Hebrews 12:2



The Bible's response to...one judging God.



Where were you when I made the earth?



Romans 9:21



Tower of Siloam Luke 13:3-5



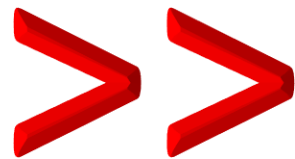
Noah's Ark



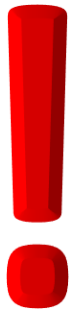
Jonah in the "great sea creature"

How can one man suffering be sufficient to save the whole world of sinful deeds?

- This is a question that usually comes up as a follow up. It actually is not a tangent but is very pertinent to the topic.
- Torn relationship pain is found to be the most significant pain a person can experience...more than physical.
- Rejection from a marriage of 50 years is devastating and the closest thing to death without dying.
- If Jesus was in a perfect relationship from eternity past...then took the weight of our punishment in the wrath from the one He loved most...then His suffering would have been infinitely more significant than we can understand...yet...
 - If we learn what the love of a good relationship looks like, then we get a glimpse into what the loss of it also might look like.



Billions of People
X
Billions of Sin



Where are we going to go?

- Major Secular Questions Asked of Christians
 - How do we know God exists?
 - Doesn't science prove Christianity is false? Can any rational person believe in the Christian Faith?
 - Science is the only discipline which is objective and can therefore be trusted.
 - Evolution has proven that we were not created.
 - Can you trust the Bible as accurate or truth?
 - How can a good God exist if He allows suffering and evil?
 - Is it fair for God to condemn someone to hell? What about those who have never heard the Gospel?
 - Isn't Christianity arrogant to say it is the only way to heaven? Aren't all religions just different ways to the same God?
 - Aren't all people basically good?
 - Isn't Christianity just a "white man's" religion used to oppress women and people of color?
 - Isn't Christianity just a bunch of Do's and Don'ts?
 - Isn't the institutional Christian Church just about getting your money? Do you really have to go to church to be a Christian?
 - Optional – Crowd generated questions...open Q&A
- Major World Religion's Arguments against true Christian Faith
 - Islamic Arguments
 - Roman Catholic Arguments
 - Hinduism Arguments
 - Mormonism Arguments
 - Buddhism Arguments