

## The Big Why?

### Presentation Handout

#### Big Life Questions

- Where did sin and evil come from?
- Why is there so much suffering?
- If God is such a good God, why does He allow sin, evil, and suffering? Why doesn't He stop it?
- Where is God in all the evil and suffering in our world and our lives?

#### God & Evil

- **God not responsible for sin, evil, and suffering** {Genesis 3:1a, 6; Ezekiel 28:15}
  - Satan is, not God as we learned in our first two presentations in our Mile-marker on Evil. And what's underhanded on his part: he loves to blame God for it all & get humans to believe this.
  - Of course, he would. Who would want to "own" the evil mess in our world, having humans mad at you? He has an image to "keep up!"
  - Obviously, Satan wants to indict God for all the evil in our world, so people will be mad at Him, blame Him, become scared of Him, and/or frustrated with Him.
  - Because of Satan's indictment-accusation, God's character and reputation are now "on-the-line" with the human race as Epicurus so profoundly stated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC...  
**QUOTE:** "Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent (all-powerful). Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent (evil/bad). Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil? Is he neither able nor willing? Why call him God."
    - So how do we answer Epicurus' questions, or Satan's indictment-accusations?
- **Freedom over Robots** {Genesis 2:16-17; 3:6}
  - When God created human beings He could have made them in one of two ways, either as:
    - Robots that could **not** sin, nor could they love or have relationships with others—God or fellow human beings, like programmed computers or cell phones.
    - Freewill individuals with individual personality that could choose love and deep relationships with others. This means human beings could choice to love God, others, etc. **or** not chose to love and obey God. They could chose to believe the best about God or the worse about Him, which is exactly what Adam & Eve did at Satan's prompting.
  - Why would God give freedom of choice to human beings if they could abuse it by rejecting Him and opening up their lives to sin, evil, and suffering?

- Because freedom is fundamental to God and His government! It's how He governs and designed His universe to work {*Luke 4:18-19, 31-36, 38-41; 13:10-13, 15-16; Mark 5:1-8, 15, 21-42; John 8:31-32, 34-36*}..
  - God's plan for humanity has always been freedom, to live and grow in His liberty in His perfect will, achieving His ultimate best for them.
  - But, a robotic programming **cannot** produce this type of freedom and joy!
  - Again, that means there is the "risk" human beings would not chose to embrace this God-given freedom-liberty in His will. Which Adam & Eve didn't, and we haven't either. This is why evil, sin, brokenness, tragedy, racism, etc. entered our world and why they still exist today.
- **Love over Fear {1 John 4:18-19}**
    - Is God able to deal with evil? Does God care about what is happening in our world and lives? Yes!!
    - However, not with an "iron-fist," "smash-a-bug" approach that we as human beings many times would like Him to do (but really we wouldn't).
    - Love-Freedom-Risk-Growth/Great Controversy Theme
      - Love requires freedom
      - Freedom involves risk
      - Risk entails responsibility
      - Responsibility enables growth
      - Growth leads to voluntary holiness
    - Voluntary holiness is the *right use* of our God-given freedom to make godly choices that honor and glorify God and help us live flourishing, free in obedience, joyful, committed lives to God {*Galatians 5:1, 7, 13*}.
      - When this happens, we as humans live "free" in real living—flourishing to our full potential in true happiness, wholeness, healing, etc.
      - But this growth into voluntary holiness can only happen in freedom motivated by love. This is also the only way one can have relationships and love with others and ultimately God. They'll never thrive at "gun-point" but only in freedom! This is why God doesn't use authoritarian, robotic, dictatorial, or predestination of events in our world or in our personal life events to manipulate human beings. We all have freedom of choice!
      - "If the thing is free to be good it is also free to be bad. Why, then, did God give...free will? Because free will, though it makes evil possible, is also the only thing that makes possible any love or joy or goodness possible" **Mere Christianity – C.S. Lewis**
- **Unknown/Eternal Prevention {Job 1:9-12; Isaiah 55:8-9}**
    - God is working on a bigger scale of eternity with the unfallen world looking on to see how He handles this sin-evil problem. And how do you explain to individuals who have never seen or even conceived of sin-evil? It was God's word against Lucifer/Satan's word.
    - In the first two presentations in our Mile-marker on Evil, we learned Satan instigated a smear campaign against God & His character. Unfortunately, his actions have worked all too well among the human race. Sadly, most humans at one time or another have believed his lies about God.

- Also among the angels there seemed to be confusion or some would not have joined his rebellion against God. So they too didn't understand the true nature of Lucifer/Satan's smear campaign about or against God.
- So how could God "secure" the universe for eternity against sin and evil from happening again?
- God had to let sin and evil play out for the universe to see sin and evil's true character; Satan true character as a liar-deceiver; and God's true character as One who is kind, caring, just, self-giving, and self-sacrificing.
- This "playing out" meant time. God could not destroy sin and prevent evil right at its inception and preserve the unfallen angels and worlds, and human beings or they would have served Him out of fear.
- Second, God wouldn't do this because He is God. This is where seeing God's overarching character of self-sacrificing love, care, respect, and freedom comes into "play" as He deals with sin and evil.

God's Sovereignty	Human's Freewill
God could change our minds to never know sin and evil.	Greatest miracle: human beings created with a freewill that could reject the will of an all-powerful God. <i>{C.S. Lewis}</i>
God cannot do whatever He wants because He chooses not to.	God is not interposing His will upon us, but He enters into our lives by our invitation.
God does not force our wills because He would know it. He's a God of integrity. No one else would know.	God waits for our invitation to come into our life, though He still convicts.
If God acted this way through force or manipulation, He would have committed suicide because He would have known what He did.	When God gave humans the gift of freewill choice He knew they could abuse it by making choices other than what He would want.

- It would be like trying to explain or teach trigonometry or calculus to a small child. They can't understand or grasp it. They're not familiar with it. This doesn't mean they couldn't understand it sometime in the future..., but it would take time for them to develop and understand. The same with the unfallen angels, beings, and sinful human beings as they try to grasp sin & evil in our universe. It would take time.
- This is why God didn't "crush" sin and evil at its inception, when Lucifer rebelled to become Satan though He knew Satan would smear His character & reputation with his lies.

### God's Ultimate Answer to Sin & Evil

- What is God's ultimate answer to the sin and evil problem? He suffers in understanding to ultimately destroy it, preventing it from ever raising its ugly head again sometime in eternity.
  - First, God suffers with us as we suffer through the sin-evil problem in our world and our lives personally *{Isaiah 63:9}*. He doesn't "blow" us off, never understanding or suffering with us. He does, amazingly!!

- Second, God ultimately suffered the 2<sup>nd</sup> death experience of sin by dying for the sin of the entire human race—revealing His self-sacrificing love for us all and His willingness to deal with the sin-evil problem for eternity at a great cost to Himself {*Hebrews 2:9-18*}! Death, sin, and evil are already defeated in principle and one day will be forever destroyed in reality.

**QUOTE:** “When the slaughtered lamb is seen “in the midst of” the divine throne in heaven {*Revelation 5:6*}, the meaning is that Christ’s sacrificial death belongs to the way God rules the world.” *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* – Richard Bauckham

**LIVING CHOICE:** Will you trust God as He ultimately and forever deals with sin and evil in our world, even as you suffer in and with it?