

“I don’t want to go to Heaven” - The Problem of Evil

I am into Mixed Martial Arts and have been for more than three decades. Last Sunday, evening I found myself watching some MMA online. Several of the guys were chatting. I usually don’t pay much attention to what is going on in the chats. They tend to be subjects that are of little or no interest to me.

But, I looked up to see someone make a reference to God. So, naturally, I joined the fray. One guy said, “what God?”, then asserted, “there is no God!”

I began to try to reason with these men, no small feat if you understand that there are hundreds and even at times thousands of people watching these sports events.

After more than an hour had passed I suddenly realized that it was the three of us who were communicating. I was trying to testify to about God and His plan. Shocked I searched my mind for a way to say, or do, more to reach them.

Then it came to me. I shared my website and email address and encouraged them to continue the dialogue. What follows is an email that I received within an hour and I responded to immediately.

New to “FaithWriters.com” I am not sure this is the type of material I should share or not. It is a Christian site and we need to reach the world, where they are for Christ.

I did not correct any of the spelling or grammar. Even in my response, it was done on the fly so perhaps I’ll be given a little latitude. The address and name of whole name of the person have been removed, otherwise, it remains in an “as is” state.

On Jan 4, 2009, at 9:20 PM, ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ wrote:

First of all my name is Brian. I don’t want you to get the wrong idea about me so let me explain my position. I’m not some God-hating devil worshiper or something. As I said in the chat room I’m 23 years old, and I have been in the U.S my whole life.

I say that because I know being raised in a different country could completely change someones veiw on “God”. About 8 years ago I did not beleive in God at al. No God, no devil, no heven or hell. No after life. You live, you die, you spend the rest of eternity in your coffin. I thought this out unthought out imature feelings. You know “I’m 16 and my life sucks” About 1 year ago my veiw on God changed. My life took at turn for the worse. I lost my job of 4 years as a grocery manager at a grocery store. I am lucky enough that my stepfather owns his own (very) small buisness. So I went to work with him as a general contractor. He never had anyone working with him before so it was just me and him for 6 months or so and I was struggling to get the bills paid but I was surviving.

Keep in mind I am married with a 4 year old son so it’s not just me I’m providing for. Then all of a sudden everything came to a crashing stop. Work stopped coming in. For a month or so we were making about \$150 dollars a week which is not enough to support a family.

Then it stopped all together. We have not brought home a check in 2 months. On

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top of that my mother, his wife was diagnosed with lung, liver, and bone cancer in October. She needs total care because she is too weak to roll over on the bed by herself. Because of the money issues we can not even afford all of her prescriptions so she is in constant pain.

With all of this going on I have come to realize there has to be a higher power causing all this havoc in my life. I have now thought out my feelings and have decided that there probably is a God and but he is not a good “person” like everybody seems to think.

He is supposed to be almighty and has power over all yet when an innocent child gets snatched from their bed and raped and murdered, then the attacker goes free because some stupid cop didn’t read him his rights it really ~~xxxx~~ me off.

The almighty god just sat back and watched it like a pedophile with kiddie porn when he could have made a miracle lightning bolt or something and took care of all this when the rapist was on his way to the kid’s house. Then condemn the rapist soul to hell where it belongs.

He could have struck the Taliban training camps down before they ever learned how to fire an AK-47. He could have at the very least gotten someone to build an ark so all the good and innocent people in New Orleans survive when Katrina hit. That way at least he still gets the gangsters and drug dealers but spares the innocent.

Instead he sat back and watch all this and countless other bad things happen to good people. Because of this I have decided I don’t want to go to heaven because I’d rather be with the devil I know than the devil I don’t. At least with the devil everyone knows what he’s about, where as God seems to want to trick you into believing he’s something he’s not.

Truly I would love to feel like you and believe that when I die God will take care of my soul and everything will be alright but I have yet to find the reason to believe. Hope to hear from you soon.

Brian

Hi Brian,

I am sorry to hear of your pain and that of those you love. I have been in full time ministry for more than thirty years and have seen my share of senseless horror.

It is also good to see that you have been doing some thinking. I know that any thinking person will come to the conclusion that there is a God. In my mind this is the easiest of

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all things to prove. To believe the opposite is to believe that everything is an accident, pure chance with no reason.

The opposite end of that process is to admit that life is accidental. Death is accidental and nothing from the beginning to the end and into eternity means anything at all.

Therefore, all of the “rights and wrongs” that you referred to shouldn’t concern us at all.

It is easy to talk that way in a “chat room” or university class, but to make it personal and to say that my mother, wife, child or baby is just an accident and has no real meaning. Nothing would be right, nothing would be wrong?

There are only two options as to why we are here. The first is accident. You and I both find this unacceptable. The second is that we are a part of creation and there is purpose and design.

Interestingly, the Bible is the only source of an answer to who that Creator is, what He is like and why He does things the way He does. This book, the Bible, is unlike any other book in many ways.

I won’t take your time now to examine them, but I would like say that it contains the only real reasonable answer to our situation. Please, I encourage you to read it yourself. Then if you wish you can disagree with it intelligently. But I have confidence that someone searching for the truth will find all the truth he can handle when he reads it.

So the question is not is there a Creator. It is what kind of Creator is He? Is He kind or cruel?

Have you stopped to ask yourself where you got this sense of justice, this idea of right and wrong? If, in fact, there is such a thing it must have come from somewhere. If there is a God, and we agree there is, then God must be the creator of this whole idea. Or else, by some completely unknown process “good” just happened in an evil world. Logically that is very hard to swallow.

Is it possible to be “right and wrong” at the same time? Up and down, black and white, do opposites actually agree? Can we be just and unjust, at the very same moment?

Your sense of morality rejects the idea. “Salt water and fresh water can’t come out of the same spring at the same time. One will be changed by the existence of the other.

Perhaps, the first place to look then is in creation itself. What is the world like? Is it good or bad?

Be sure to understand that I am not talking about “mankind” with the senseless acts of free will, but creation itself. Can you think of even one thing God has created that is evil? Indeed, does it even exist?

Without a doubt there is evil in the world. You mentioned “Satan”, the Devil. He is truly evil. There are evil men.

But, there is nothing in nature that is sinful by itself; it must be perverted in order to be sinful. To pervert is to change the original intent of a thing.

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You might, as I have written in a book, consider evil as a “parasite”. It does not exist on its own anywhere in the world. It was not created to be evil, it is something good that is being misused by a “freewill”.

Money is not evil, sex is not evil even the taking of a life may be the moral thing to do in a given situation. I trust that you would agree with me on this as well. For those who might think otherwise, I wonder if their feeling comes from a sense of right and wrong or cowardness? Who would not protect his own child with his life? Certainly, you would, according to your own statements.

The answer is a much deeper one. If nothing in nature is sinful in its self then the Creator must have a nature consistent with His creation. If creation is good, then the Maker is also good.

A bad builder might build something that is good but to consistently create good you must be good. We are thinking in such limited terms. The sun in our universe is just a medium sized star, yet it could hold over a million earths in its vastness.

In our galaxy there are 80-100 billion stars and we know (because of the Hubble Space Telescope) that there are at least 80-100 billion more galaxies.

If in looking from the smallest to the largest parts of existence we see the evidence of a good Creator it is hard to consider reasonable that an argument from a specks of dust (you and me) against such a Being would carry much weight. Or, that beings like us, or such temporary nature could rightly judge an eternal being. Is that reasonable to you?

But the message of the Bible is not that God is there, that is assumed. The Bible is not needed to convince any rational person of the existence of a maker. The message of the Bible is that He cares. That what we observe in the world around us should be and is constantly speaking to us about our God.

Please pay close attention to the idea of where we got the moral law, this sense of right and wrong I have been talking about. The only way you can have grounds to call the things you did evil, and the things that you call “good” must come from the One Who originated the ideas to begin with.

In other words, where did the idea of good come from to begin with? If God is good that which He has done must be good, or else, God is not at all good.

Good must have come from somewhere. It did not come from man. Experientially, man is where we find the problem. The Bible answers this dilemma by explaining what Scripture calls “sin”. Sin could be defined as a deviation from right, or truth.

Now, what about man? If your response had been that men are evil I would have had to ask if “all men are evil”? And the answer is yes!

Strangely, the Bible tells us that this is the absolute source of our problem. It tells us where evil came from, what it is and what we can do about it.

Your suggestion that God should send a “miracle” lightning bolt to kill those who are perpetrating evil creates a large number of issues, certainly more than I can answer in what has become a not so brief email.

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First, the God you envision is like the gods of the religions of man. That is, religions that are thought up in the minds of men. Because they make their own gods, they make them in their own image.

Whether, gold, silver, wood or just figments of the imagination they are no Gods at all. If you will stay with me for a few more minutes I will expose some other problems with your solutions and present what the God of the Bible gives as the answers.

Another problem arises, if God were going to deal with sinners by just wiping them out, He would have had to killed our ancestors, Adam and Eve. In which case we would not be discussing the issue. An unjust man with an indictment against a Holy God is like a thief complaining about the I.R.S.

I wouldn’t be here, you wouldn’t be here, your son, parents, Taliban, etc. You get the idea. The solution is that God must be both just and good. Goodness requires both. He must hold every person accountable for his or her “sins”. Indeed, Romans 3:23 says, “We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God”. We have “all” failed to meet the standard that God has set for us which by the way is to be equally as good as He is. It also says rightly in Romans 6:23, “the wages of sin is death”.

So, we sin, starting with Adam and Eve. Everything gets out of balance. How would a good, just God correct sinful men who are incapable of fixing the problems created by this sin without destroying all men in the process? Remember, He must do this in a manner that will allow Him to remain both “righteous” or just and “good” or holy.

Perhaps an illustration would help. Suppose a good judge was seated at the courts bench when his son is brought in for not paying parking tickets. A fine must be levied or the boy must spend time in jail.

Is it possible for the Judge, in this case God, to show mercy and at the same time remain fair, that is be good and just. There is no law that says who has to pay the tickets, only that they must indeed be paid. Cannot the Judge, God in our case, pay the ticket at His own cost and meet the before mentioned requirements of being right and caring?

That is exactly what God has done by sending His Son Jesus Christ into the world to pay the awful payment of death for the sin we have committed. He included “all” men in the transaction so that all men could be “saved”.

“Saved” from what? The answer is Hell! Or I could use a less popular term, justice. You see, God absolutely agrees with you. Someone is going to have to pay for every atrocity, every murder, every ruined life and every single departure from “right” and “good”.

The fact is, we are all - all - heading for hell for the injustice we have committed. Our sin is sending us there. God is trying to play on our team. It is like someone in a football game getting the ball on a turnover and running in the wrong direction. He is going to score - for the other team, unless someone stops him. What if it were a ledge, a crevice that would mean certain death. God is actually trying to stop us before we score or drop helplessly off the ledge to our death.

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But, instead of seeing Him as helping us we think He is trying to mess us up. So we dodge Him just as we do the opposing team, to our own ruin. It is life and death. Consider the confusion you are having now and multiply it for your son.

Brian, I hope that at least some of this makes sense to you. The Bible teaches that if we will take responsibility for our sin and repent (be sorry enough to change) rather than living in it or blaming it on someone else and will trust the sacrifice God has made of His Son we can be saved.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16 (KJV)

Write me back if you would like. I would be more than happy to try to do what I can to help make sense of a senseless world running headlong away from God. I’ll be praying for you, your finances and your family.

In His Service,

Dr. C. David White