

A Evil from the human perspective:

❖ Divine answers to human questions.

- Many questions can come to mind when we are faced with the results of evil. Is it right to question God on this issue? The prophets did, and they received surprising and unexpected answers!
 - (1) JEREMIAH.
 - (a) QUESTION: “You are always righteous, Lord, when I bring a case before you. Yet I would speak with you about your justice: Why does the way of the wicked prosper?” (Jer. 12:1)
 - (b) ANSWER: “If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage in the thickets by the Jordan?” (Jer. 12:5)
 - (2) HABAKKUK.
 - (a) QUESTION: “How long, Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, “Violence!” but you do not save?” (Hab. 1:2)
 - (b) ANSWER: “For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.” (Hab. 2:3)
 - (3) DAVID.
 - (a) QUESTION: “Lord, how long will you watch this? Rescue my soul from their destruction, my life from the lions” (Ps. 35:17)
 - (b) ANSWER: “Let them shout for joy and be glad, all who favor my righteous cause; let them continually say, ‘Let the LORD be magnified, for he loves the peace of his servant!’ ” (Ps. 35:27)
 - (4) JOB.
 - (a) QUESTION: “Mortals, born of woman, are of few days and full of trouble” (Job 14:1 NIV)
“Why do the wicked live on, growing old and increasing in power?” (Job 21:7)
 - (b) ANSWER: “Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? [...] Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand” (Job 38:2, 4)
- Why do those who do evil do well? Why do those of us who want to follow God suffer? Where is God when I am suffering?
- Jesus himself felt helpless when sin fell upon him (Mt. 27:46.) Evil is not trivial: it hurts, and often we have no answers. But think of God as wanting to eradicate it from the universe even more than we do.
- Are we capable of knowing what God knows? Can we hold God accountable for things we do not know? Are we capable of handling evil and its consequences better than He?
- Until evil is eradicated we will not understand. We must trust in divine goodness.

❖ Is it worth continuing to be good?

- Seeing those who did evil prosper, while he himself suffered despite his attempts to do good, Asaph wondered, “Is it worth it to continue being good?” (Ps. 73:2-14.)
- When you're walking down the street, you only see what's around you. But from a helicopter, you can see what's happening on all the adjacent streets. What's the best perspective when deciding which direction to go in?
- Now imagine that you could see everything that is happening around the world simultaneously, even in the future. How would that change your perspective? That's how God is (Isaiah 55:8-9.) We can't understand His decisions because we can't see what He sees. So we must trust Him.
- When Asaph looked out from the perspective revealed in the sanctuary, he exclaimed: “I was so foolish that I did not understand; [...] You have guided me according to Your counsel, and afterward You will receive me into glory. [...] It is good to draw near to God” (Ps. 73:22-28.) It pays to continue being good!

B Evil from the divine perspective:

❖ Evil, love and freedom.

- Did God create evil? Certainly not. God is love, and evil is the opposite of love.
- The being in whom evil arose was perfect when he was created; there was no evil in him (Ezek. 28:15.) But Lucifer, like Adam and Eve, decided to do evil. They decided to distrust God, to doubt his love, and to disobey him (Gen. 3:4-6.)
- If God had not given us the ability to decide whether to obey him or not, evil would not exist. But then, love would not exist either, because love cannot be forced, but must be offered voluntarily.
- By offering them the opportunity to disobey Him by eating from a particular tree, God gave our parents the gift of voluntary love, the ability to love Him, or – on the contrary – to hide from Him (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:7-8.)

❖ The end of evil.

- When we are suffering the consequences of evil (an illness, an accident, etc.), we are distressed and perhaps think that we will never feel well again. But there comes a time when we think: it's finally over. Maybe we will be left with after-effects or maybe not.
- Ultimately, when evil attacks us, we think it is eternal... until it passes. But what if it doesn't pass?
- But God sees the end from the beginning, and He also sees the eternal bliss promised to all who trust in Jesus.
- Our focus in analyzing the problem of evil must be on the loving character of God. He has promised that one day evil will be no more (Rev. 21:4); that unimaginable glory awaits us (Rom. 8:18.) Trust His promise!