

GOD AND EVIL

There are many people who doubt that God exists. Many say that if there was a loving God who hates evil and suffering, which the Bible teaches, then there would be no evil or suffering in the world. Epicurus, a Greek philosopher who lived about 300 years before Christ, put it this way: "God either wishes to take away evil, and is unable; or He is able, and is unwilling; or He is neither willing nor able, or He is both willing and able. If God is both willing and able to do away with evil, then why is there still evil in the world? Why does God **not** remove evil from the world? The answer is that God removes evil by the willingness of man!

Hello I'm Larry Murdock. I preach for the Gandy church of Christ. Good morning and welcome to this program.

On every hand we are well acquainted with evil. Every day there is evil in the world. Every news cast tells us about it, every community must deal with it, every family is affected by it, every person must think about it happening to them. Not only is there wrongdoing in our world there is also much suffering. Some of the suffering is not necessarily connected with outright evil behavior. Even innocent children can be taken by cancer, or some other disease. And so there is suffering in the world.

Why must it be this way? Those who believe in God must answer this question. Atheists believe that they have the answer; in other words, "there is no God," Atheists will say. However, those who believe in God answer differently.

Friends, evil is in the world because there is freedom. That's right! God has given His creation the birthright of freedom. You may not be commended because of your choice; in fact, you may be imprisoned because of your choice, but you can never be condemned just because you possess the freedom to choose. Freedom to choose is a God-given right. However, when we act wickedly we abuse the freedom that God granted us. Paul, one of Jesus' apostles, wrote this, "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." (Gal 5:1) The freedom that Paul writes about is freedom from our sin. A few lines down Paul wrote this: "You were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; but through love serve one another." (Gal 5:13) In other words, do not use your freedom as a license to sin! Everyone has sinned; we sinned because we had the freedom to choose.

Everyone is born with a God-given freedom. God's first man and woman also had the freedom to choose. God gave them choice. God had also given his angelic creation the freedom to choose. Satan was one of God's angels who chose to rival God. Satan chose wickedness; he

was a rebel. And Satan wanted company. He recruited other angels whom we call demons. He also recruited the first man and woman.

It is true that there are differing amounts of freedom that individuals can exercise. Some societies have great freedom, and other societies have limited freedom. In some societies there is not much freedom to improve upon one's social standing. In other words, into whatever class of society you were born, that's where you will stay because of some social custom or religious law. But this is a man-made limitation; it is a false teaching. God did not make us to be stationary! God made one generation to improve upon the last one.

The Bible record says that "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so." (Gen 1:27-30) God gave mankind the commission to fill the earth and subdue the earth. And so that is what people are doing when they hitch up the plow and till the earth, getting it ready for planting. That is what people are doing when they freely take rocks out of the ground and turn it into brass, or copper, or steel, or some other mineral to be used in some productive work in the world. When a medical scientist discovers a new medicine that helps people overcome sickness that person has discovered something God created and he or she is carrying out this ancient commission that God gave mankind. When the farmer discovers a new disease-resistant seed he has uncovered something God put here in the earth and he is carrying out God's ancient command to His offspring.

With the powerful microscopes that scientists have built a whole new microscopic world has emerged that is enabling people to discover wonderful things about God's creation. Friends, one generation is not long enough to learn all there is to know about God's world, or about God's book, the Bible. But the next generation can build upon the knowledge uncovered in the past generation.

All of this is to say that our Creator has given to mankind freedom. Of course, it is regrettable that mankind has chosen poorly in so many ways. Satan has had His way with us. Satan twists what is true into a lie. He takes the truth about God and turns it into the worship of many gods. Satan has taken what is known about Jesus' mother, and turned it into Mariolatry, the worship of Mary. Satan has taken the truth of creation and turned it into the accidental big-

bang and subsequent evolution. Satan is God's enemy; he is a rebel. Mankind has joined with Satan in his rebellion against the Father who made us all.

The apostle Paul wrote that "sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—" ([Romans 5:12](#)) You see, God is just and He deals with the rebellion. God separated Adam and Eve from the sustenance that could have enabled them to live forever in the flesh. God had predicted the outcome. "The day you eat thereof, you shall surely die." Satan changed God's statement by saying, "You shall NOT surely die." The woman believed Satan and brought upon herself the responsibility to know the difference between good and evil. She freely shared the sin with Adam and he freely chose to carry the responsibility of discerning between good and evil. The Bible says in 1 Timothy 2:14 that the woman was deceived, but Adam was not deceived. Adam knew what he was doing. And so this couple brought into the world death and all that goes with it. And of course, death comes to us in many ways. We can die from drowning or another accident; we can die from disease. We can die from high winds, earthquakes, extreme cold, and tsunamis. We can die from old age; we can also die very young. Sin is the stinger that stings us with death and all the suffering that goes with it. Yes, the next life looms closely!

But Jesus Christ, God's Son, is God's remedy for death. Jesus is the key for the next life. "Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life." ([1 John 5:12](#))

The inspired man Paul wrote, "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." ([1 Corinthians 15:22](#))

Wickedness and suffering will remain in this world until Jesus comes again. We are the descendants of Adam, and so we suffer many things in this world. But God has a great experience awaiting those who choose to honor God and His Son. "Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" ([1 John 5:5](#))

Jesus Christ, God's son, also suffered in this world. In fact, Jesus "had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted." ([Hebrews 2:17-18](#)) Jesus' followers must also suffer because of a fallen world that tempts us. Even though Jesus was the son of God, he suffered. The Bible says that by His suffering Jesus learned obedience. ([Hebrews 5:8](#)) And so, even Christians must also learn obedience. Christians turn troubles into motivation for obedience.

Paul wrote about the suffering in the world when he said, "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." ([Romans 8:16-23](#)) Evil will rewarded eternal ruin, but you can be saved by the Son of God. Are you ready for the next life?