

Does The Existence Of Evil Prove God Does Not Exist?

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INTRODUCTION

Ancient man denied God; modern man does the same. Three thousand years ago Israel's Sweet Singer lamented the infidelity of his day by saying, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalms 14:1; 53:1). Modern man hears this ancient echo and voices the same blatant denial of our Wonderful, Worthy God on holy high. Increasingly, the blight of atheism and agnosticism inundates our tottering society. Astute observers of our crucial age speak of this as the Post-Christian era. This means lessening of Biblical influence in our times. Theists, believers in God, line up with King David again and inquire, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3). We can PREACH and PRACTICE His religion; we can PERSUADE others to open hearts and lives to Him. We can meet head-on those who deny His existence; we can marshal the staggering evidence for His existence and articulate the arguments in His behalf in forceful fashion. With militancy the powerful Peter wrote, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear..." (1 Peter 3:15).

Hope rises into rich reality or sinks into total emptiness with accepting or rejecting God's existence. God equals hope; no God equals a hopeless future, a darkened pathway and gloom settling over our cheerless graves. To borrow a sentiment from Paul, we would express in like language, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable (1 Corinthians 15:19).

OBJECTIONS AGAINST GOD NUMBER BUT TWO

There have been many superficial objectors toward a belief in God. Some discount Him because their eye has not seen Him and their ear has not perceived any audible communication from Him. Not discerning Him with their five senses—touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing—they pompously deny His existence. Many wish He did not exist and the wish fathers the thought of His denial.

The serious detractors come up with only two grounds of denial, i.e., the presence of evil in our world and human suffering. The former of these is our focus for this study.

ATHEISTS AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

In 1929 Charles Smith, President of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism, met in debate a great gospel preacher named W. L. Oliphant. This debate was conducted at Shawnee, Oklahoma. In his first speech Smith quoted with approval, Epicurus, who said,

Either God wishes to destroy evil and cannot; or he can but will not; or neither wishes nor has the power; or he both desires and is able. If he wishes and cannot, he is impotent; if he can but will not, he is wicked; if he neither wishes nor can, he is impotent as well as wicked; if he can and will, why does evil exist? (Oliphant 28)

Eighteen years later, 1947, James D. Bales of Harding College (now University) met in debate with Woolsey Teller, one of the founders of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism. It was conducted at Harding College Auditorium in Searcy, Arkansas. Later it was published. I was just a teen-age preacher when I bought and read the book during 1950. Early in his first speech Teller referred to World War II that had just ended a couple years earlier (1945). He noted all the prayers prayed in that holocaust affecting the whole world. Arrogantly, he asked, "What was God doing all that time?" Pompously, he said God did nothing; the war went on; "He did not stop the war." (Bales 6) He slandered God and God's people throughout the debate. He thought the problem of evil ruled out God. He but parroted a threadbare, atheistic line of sophistry.

Flew, Matson and Barnhart, atheists met in debate by Thomas B. Warren between 1976-1980, were in the same corner with Smith and Teller. They were smarter than Smith and Teller as far as worldly knowledge was concerned but all five were ignorant of the truth that saves. All five were intoxicated with the concept of God. They frequently talked, wrote and debated about Him, but not as the Father whose children they desired to become and remain. Without exception they all five were God haters (cf. Romans 1:30).

EVIL IS REAL IN OUR WORLD

We are constant witnesses of the relentless evils inundating our sin-saturated society. Multiplied millions have perished in the wars fought in just the last century alone. Communism triumphed behind the Iron and Bamboo Curtains upon the corpses of slain millions. Bombs blow up buildings and down planes in the sky. Murder, rape, robbery, violence, spouse abuse, child abuse, abortion, drinking, other lethal drugs, character assassinations and fraud stalk the cities, towns and rural areas of our troubled land. Abortion takes more than a million lives in the USA every year and perhaps forty to fifty-five million world-wide. Since the infamous Roe Vs. Wade Decision in 1973 between thirty and forty million precious babies in the USA have had wombs turned into tombs for them. Wombs of women minus any natural affection have become homicide centers in our callused society.

Greed rules much of the work place with little sensitivity for workers or buyers of products and services. The Internet threatens to become an even greater cesspool of corruption among those who live sensual lives worshipping the bodies of the opposite sex and even those of the same sex (homosexuality).

Each of us would have to be blind in one eye and unable to see with the other eye to deny the reality of evil in our day.

DOES THE PRESENCE OF EVIL RULE OUT GOD?

The theist, a believer in God, says NO! The atheist, a denier of God, shouts YES! Crime in a city does not rule out the godly people who live there. A wayward son or daughter does not rule out godly parents who lived well before them and taught principles of integrity to those children now gone astray. A rebellious student does not rule out an administration, staff, dedicated teachers and serious-minded students in said educational environments.

An evil Ahab and Jezebel team did not negate the existence of Elijah or Micaiah in the Northern Kingdom. Evil Pharisees and Sadducees did not rule out the reality of John the Immerser. An evil, traitorous Judas Iscariot does not make Jesus any less real. Why then would evil in our world militate against God's existence and extended goodness?

The truth of the matter is THAT IT DOES NOT!

ATHEISTS HAVE TO MAKE A REAL CONCESSION HERE

Relative to what he calls evil the atheist creates a real problem for himself. In fact he makes a dangerous concession for the validity of his own infidelic cause. Unless God exists, there can be NO type of objective standard determining right and wrong, good and evil, what he ought to do and what he ought not to do. Eliminate God and everything becomes totally subjective. Each becomes his own moral regulator; he establishes his own norm or standard. What he may hate another may love; what he may love another may hate. What he thinks ought not to be done another may think it ought to be done or what he thinks ought to be done another thinks it ought not to be done! What gives him the right to set norms for other people?

In essence, one well-known philosopher stated the matter this way, "If God does not exist, anything is permissible; nothing is to be denied man." The ONLY possible evil the atheist might find is what is disagreeable or unpleasant to him personally. And what is disagreeable and unsatisfactory to him might be wholly agreeable and entirely satisfactory to a colleague, a neighbor or even a member of his immediate family. These may not share his dislikes at all; in fact they might like what he dislikes. Thus, what he styles evil they style good; what he disapproves they approve; what he finds distasteful they find delightful. Rule out God and all are here as a result of Time and Chance at work and Time and Chance are incapable of determining good and evil. The evolutionary children of Time and Chance likewise are incapable of determining good and evil for mankind. Inability to determine norms and standards runs the whole gamut from cockroach to child and from a mouse to a man. In fact, one evolutionist is on written record as saying the only difference between mouse and man is in the arrangement of molecules! Grant this as the true origin of all living organisms, what is the difference in crushing that cockroach with one's shoe and bashing out the brains of a screaming child who will not hush for a frustrated baby sitter? What is the difference in catching a mouse in a trap of death and making a man's head the target of a loaded and aimed gun? Morality cannot come from the workings of Time and Chance! If so, how, How, HOW?

Minus the Sovereign of the Universe of His August Throne and as He has revealed Himself to us within Sacred Scripture as moral ruler, absolute standard designer and executor of justice, there can be NO degrees of better or worse except in a subjective sort of way. There can be no objective right or wrong, good or evil in a world minus God. If so, how, How, HOW?

I attended every session of the Warren-Flew Debate in Denton, Texas in 1976, wrote a review of it later for the Gospel Advocate, November 18, 1976, and later read the printed volume of the debate when it was published. Atheistic Flew advanced NO affirmative argumentation when supposedly he was in the affirmative; he set forth NO negative argumentation when supposedly he was in the negative. He was weak as water in seeking to defend the tenets of atheism. He entered this debate saying he KNEW God did not exist. Had I been an atheist in Denton that week, I would have felt he let down the cause of infidelity with ineptness personified! Yet, none of his atheistic peers could have done one bit better. Carl Sagan could not have done any better. Later Sagan was challenged to meet Warren and he refused. He knew better than to become another casualty at the hands of the brilliant Warren.

Flew had Herculean problems in dealing with the higher law violated by the Germans during World War II and especially their atrocities against six million Jews they liquidated so cruelly, so coldly, so callously. He and brother Warren both served in the Allied Cause during this war. He served in the British military; brother Warren served in the American military. The razor-sharp Warren logic showed conclusively that the German war lords did not violate British, French, American or even international law for toward such they claimed they were not amenable. In fact, they did not violate even German law feeling this Jewish holocaust was in their own best national interest as an imperialistic nation in quest of world domination. The German nationalistic spirit that Hitler whipped into high gear during the 1930's convinced the German people that they were supermen with a clear destiny of controlling the whole world. Warren knew which law they had violated—God's law. Judge Robert Jackson at the Nuremberg trial knew the German war lords had violated higher law and he knew which law that was—God's law. Flew, consistent with his atheistic philosophy that he was not about to renounce, did not know what that higher law was. At least he would not admit what it was! This was but one of a multitude of Warren arguments he could not or would not answer. But the higher law argument proved to be a thorn in his polemic side throughout the debate in Denton. Warren was a modern day David who met and demolished a Goliath of the world-wide atheistic community. Flew was the best, or among the best, they had. Yet Flew fluttered, failed and fled the Denton arena of debating action as a pathetic proponent of militant atheism. Seldom has there ever been a debate as one-sided as this one proved to be.

SATAN AND SIN ARE TO BLAME FOR EARTHLY EVIL

Atheists fail miserably to recognize that good and good only dominated the excellencies of Eden in Genesis 1,2 until Satan, the serpent and sin entered the hearts of humanity. Furthermore, many outstanding scholars, with expertise in both Scripture and science, are convinced that the flood, caused by an almost universal reign of sin on earth, changed our world drastically thus bringing about violent weather conditions that did not exist prior to the flood but have produced subsequent to it violent sun rays, killer tornadoes, typhoons, hurricanes, volcano eruptions, etc. If right in this, as I believe they are, sin is to blame for the climatic cruelties atheists attribute as evil thus making God blameworthy.

There was no pain, suffering or death while Adam and Even were in a state of innocence. All this came subsequent to the fall in Eden. Evolution denies man as a fallen creature. Some fifty years ago George Gaylord Simpson, an internationally known evolutionist, wrote a book entitled *The Meaning Of Evolution*, which the New York Times, called the best work on evolution produced in our time. In it, page 310, Simpson said man has not fallen; he has risen. This is a flat contradiction of Genesis 3. Either Moses or Simpson lied. If you have trouble deciding who the liar is, you are in real trouble spiritually speaking. Scripture, sanity and astute observations about us call evolution the big lie when it denies that man has fallen. On evolution 's part this is arrogant, ignorant and void of any and all substance.

Satan and fallen man are responsible for ALL the real evil in our world—100% of it! It is time, in fact way past time, that the accusing finger of infidelity is turned away from the Innocent, Immaculate Godhead toward the real culprits in evil's manufacture and continuation—Satan and sinful man. God is blamed for every wrong thing that happens on our earth. I, for one, deeply resent such! God is of too pure an eye to behold, with approval, any evil. Habakkuk 1:13 should be consulted at this point.

SOME POINTS TO PONDER

1. Man sinks to his lowest level when he denies his Creator and Sustainer.
2. Atheism is the ruin of every person who imbibes its lethal tenets.
3. There is NO glimmer of hope in atheism or agnosticism—not a particle!
4. Charles Smith and Woolsey Teller were exceedingly poor specimen of humanity when they railed against God in the first half of the 1900's; Simpson, Flew, Matson, Barnhart and Sagan were no better specimen during the last half of the 1900's.
5. We should all be up-in-arms at all our Glorious God is accused of perpetrating!

Works Cited

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