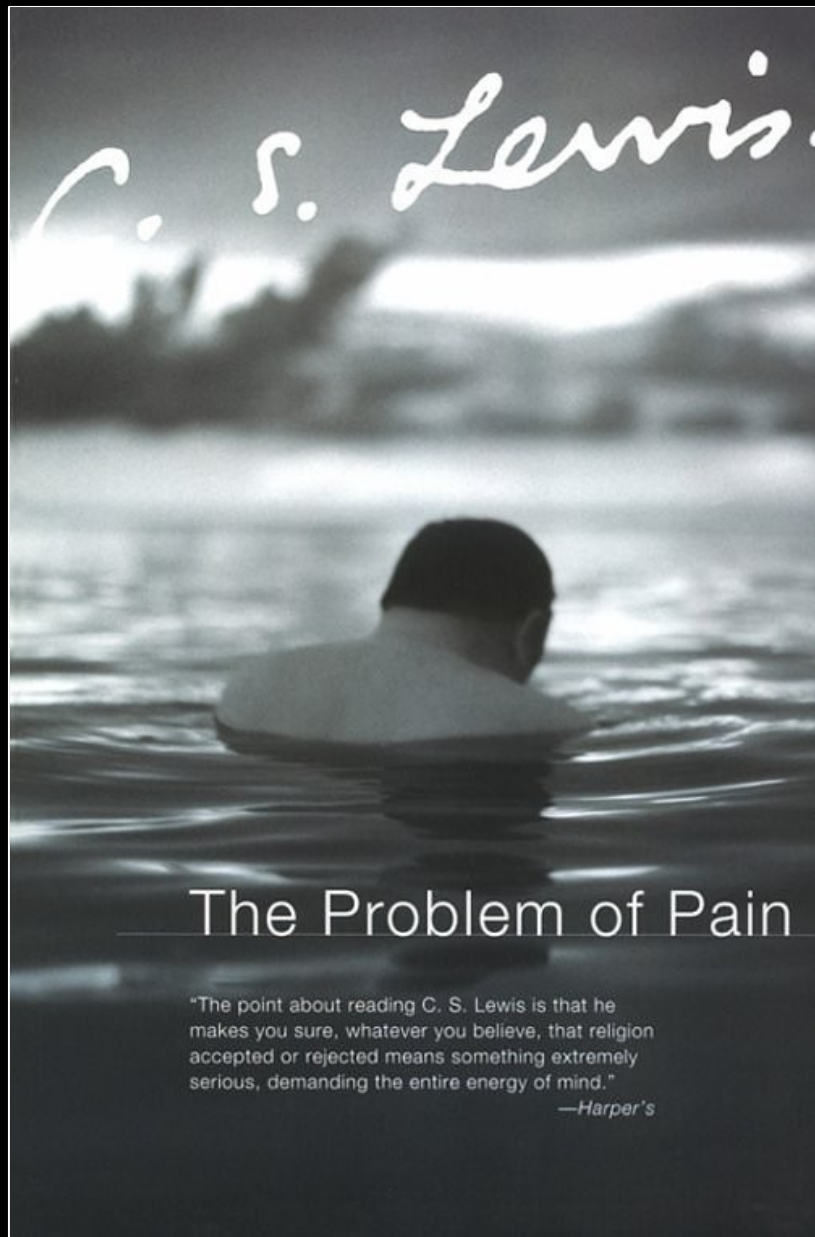


The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of parched, cracked earth. The cracks are irregular and form a complex, web-like pattern across the entire surface. The color is a warm, brownish-orange, suggesting a dry, arid environment. The lighting is somewhat uneven, with darker shadows in the crevices and lighter areas on the raised surfaces of the cracks.

Why Does God Allow Suffering & Evil? Pt. 2



C. S. Lewis

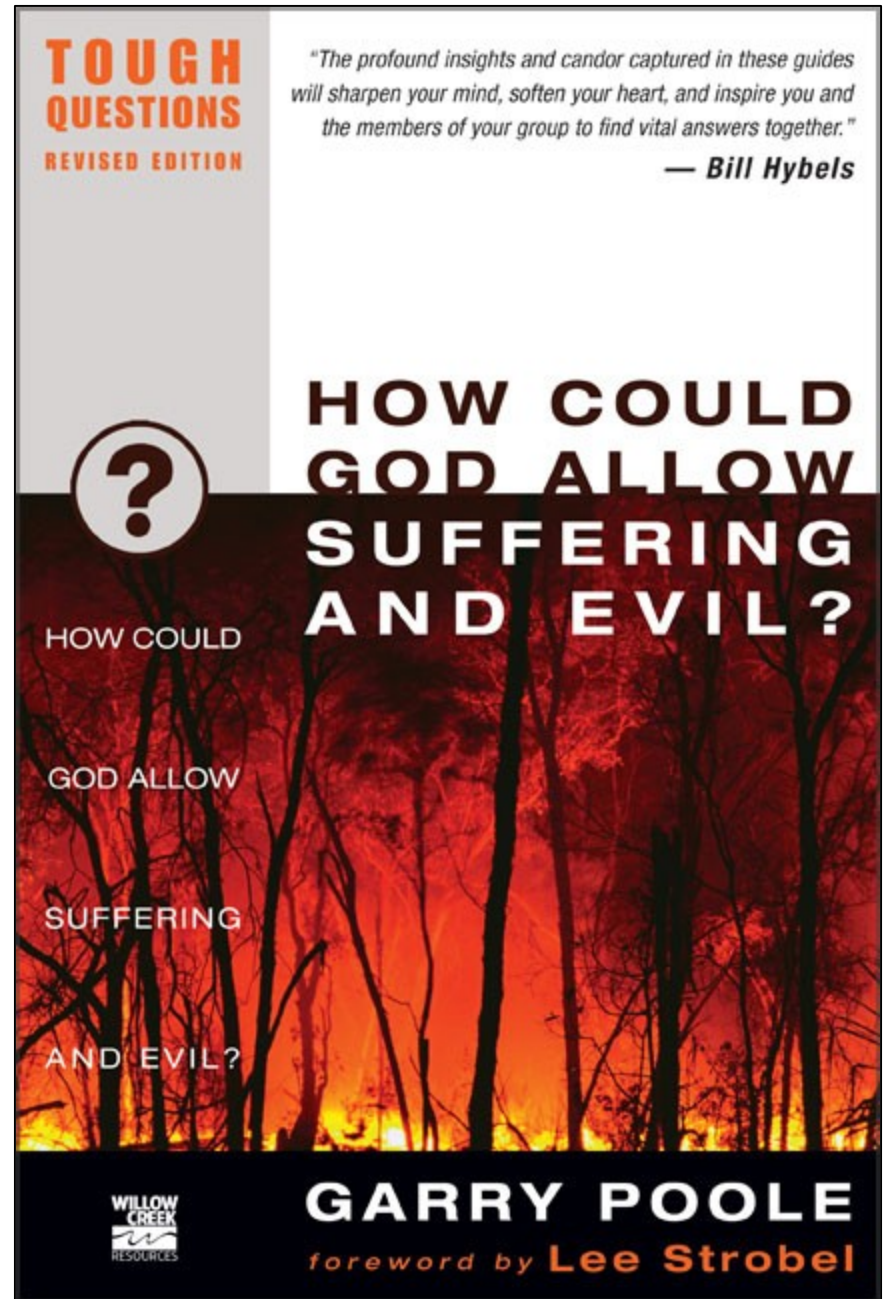
The Problem of Pain

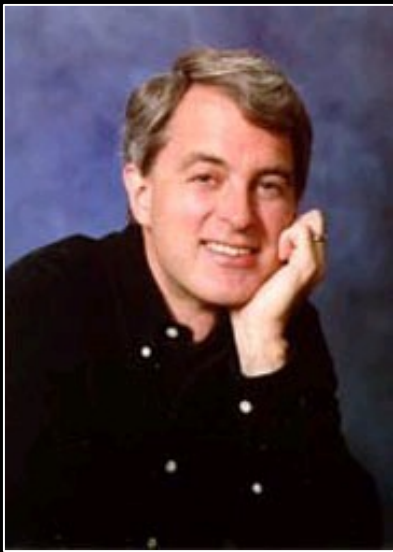
"The point about reading C. S. Lewis is that he makes you sure, whatever you believe, that religion accepted or rejected means something extremely serious, demanding the entire energy of mind."

—Harper's



Small Group Curriculum

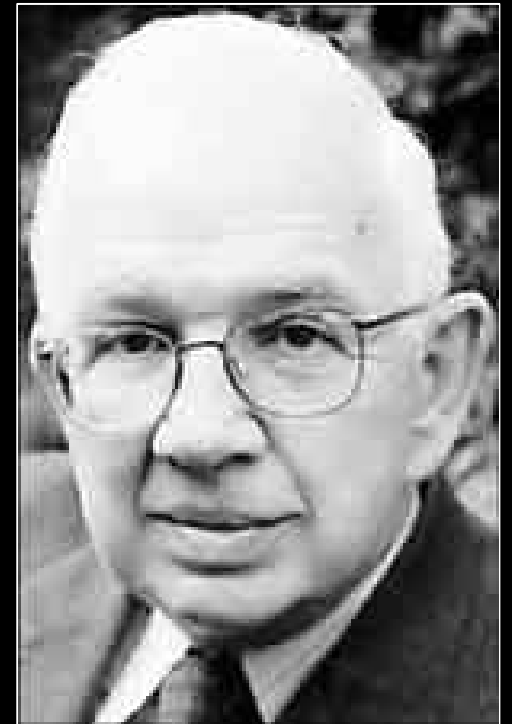


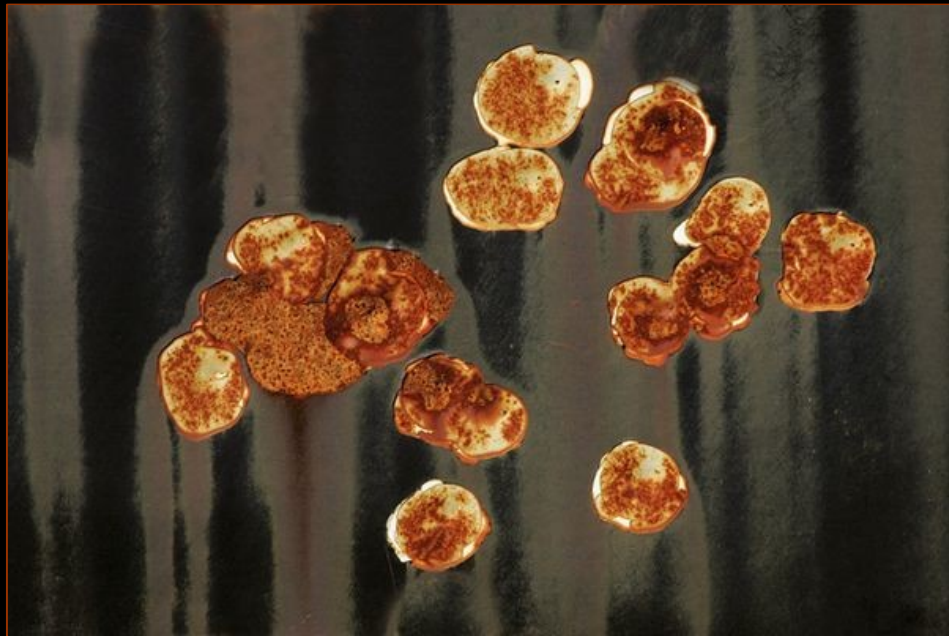


In 1999, George Barna, the public-opinion pollster, conducted a national survey in which he asked a scientifically selected cross-section of adults: “If you could ask God only one question and you knew he would give you an answer, what would you ask?” The Top response, offered by 17 percent of those who responded, was: “Why is there pain and suffering in the world?”

“There is only one question which really matters: why do bad things happen to good people? All other theological conversation is intellectually diverting; somewhat like doing the crossword puzzle in the Sunday paper and feeling very satisfied when you have made the words fit; but ultimately without the capacity to reach people where they really are.”

— Rabbi Harold Kushner





“[A Theodicy] aims to provide an account of why God actually permits the evils in the world. By contrast a defense offers no such account but seeks merely to show that atheists have failed to carry their case that evil is incompatible with God’s existence.”



— Alvin Plantinga

I. The Objection: The Christian God and a world in which there is evil cannot coexist (a logical problem).

Another Form of the Argument:

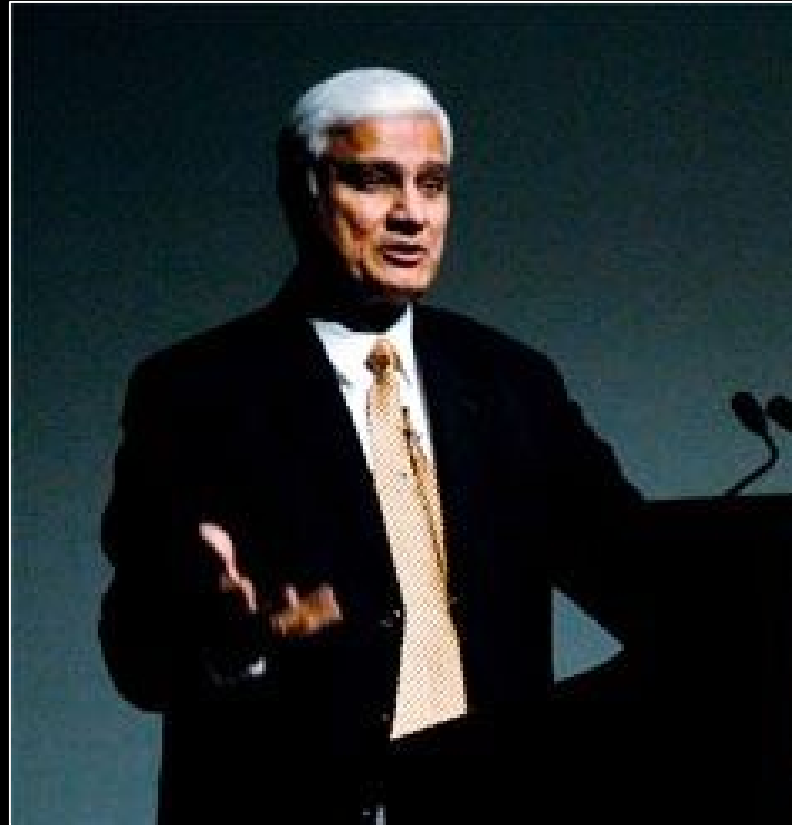
- A.** If God were good, he would *wish* to make his creatures perfectly happy.
- B.** If God were all-mighty, he would be *able* to do whatever he wished.
- C.** We, his creatures, are not perfectly happy.
- D.** Therefore, God lacks either goodness or power or both.

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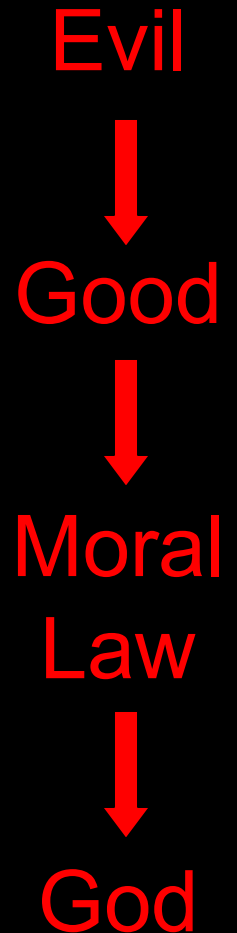
III. A Problem With The Objection



Ravi Zacharias

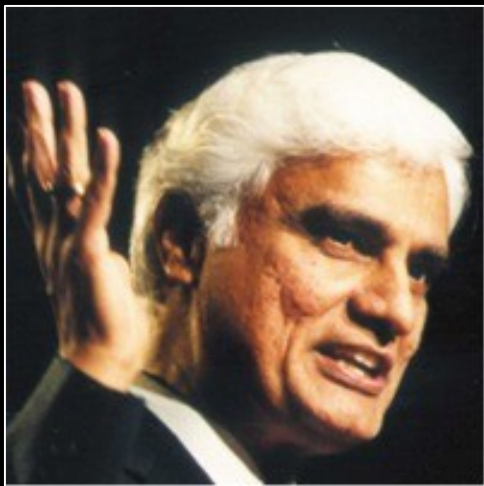
III. A Problem With The Objection

- A. To say there is such a thing as evil, presupposes there is such a thing as good.
- B. To say there is such a thing as good, presupposes there is a moral law, on the basis of which to differentiate between good and evil.
- C. To say there is such a thing as a moral law, presupposes there is a moral law Giver.



Conclusion:

The objection to God presupposes the existence of God. The framing of the question is as much a problem for the one asking the question as it is for the one attempting to answer it.



Ravi Zacharias

IV. Theodicies:

Historical Christian Explanations for the Existence of Evil

A. Evil is a necessary possibility for the existence of human freedom.
(free-will model)

OBJECTION: Couldn't God Have Created A Different Kind of World?
(The best of all possible worlds).

All Possible Worlds

- 1. Nothing – no world at all.**
- 2. An amoral world.
Neither good nor evil.**
- 3. A world in which everyone chooses good (a kind of robotic world).**
- 4. The world like ours. The possibility of good and evil.**

Q: Wouldn't it have been better for God to act upon #1-3, rather than #4?



A: C. S. Lewis points out that the minute you use the word “better,” you’re invoking a moral law, by which to measure what would have been morally good or superior.

IV. Theodicies:

Historical Christian Explanations for the Existence of Evil

B. Evil serves the purpose of turning our hearts toward God and soul building.

- I Peter 1:6-7
- Romans 5:3,4
- Hebrews 5:8,9

“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proven genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

— 1 Peter 1:6,7

“Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”

— Romans 5:3-5

“Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him . . .”

— Hebrews 5:8,9

IV. Theodicies:

Historical Christian Explanations for the Existence of Evil

B. Evil serves the purpose of turning our hearts toward God and soul building.

- I Peter 1:6-7
- Romans 5:3,4
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OBJECTION: Is this fair?

Couldn't God just make us all like Jesus?

IV. Theodicies:

Historical Christian Explanations for the Existence of Evil

C. The full purpose of all evils is presently a mystery that will not be made clear until eternity.

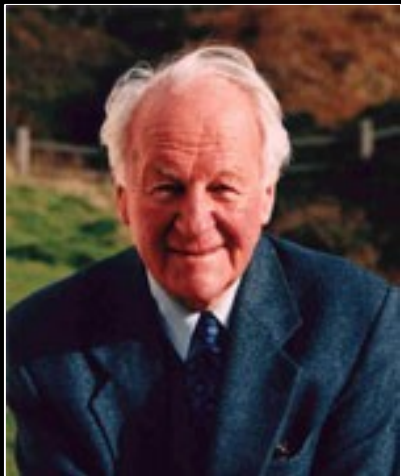
OBJECTION: This is a post-dated check, for which there is no reason to believe.

IV. Theodicies:

Historical Christian Explanations for the Existence of Evil

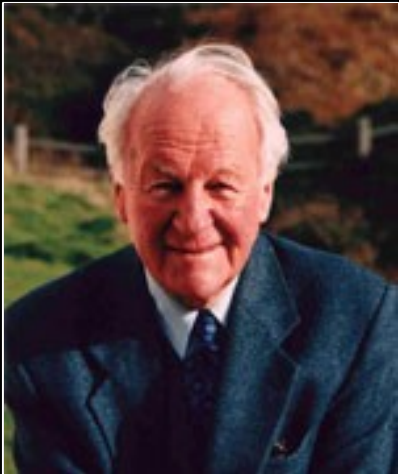
- D. The problem of evil is lessened in light that God has suffered because of sin and still suffers with us. We must see suffering in light of the cross.

“I could never myself believe in God, if it were not for the cross. The only God I believe in is the One Nietzsche ridiculed as ‘God on the cross’. In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it? I have entered many Buddhist temples in different Asian countries and stood respectfully before the statue of the Buddha, his legs crossed, arms folded, eyes closed, the ghost of a smile playing round his mouth”



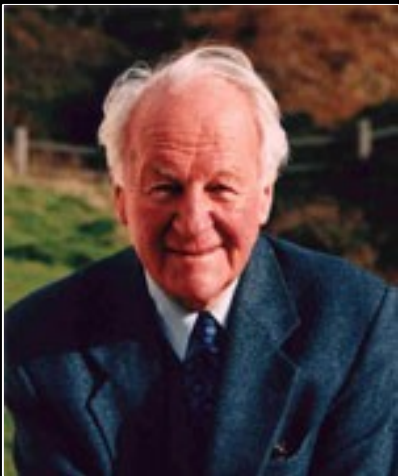
— John Stott

“ . . . a remote look on his face, detached from the agonies of the world. But each time after a while I have had to turn away. And in imagination I have turned instead to that lonely, twisted, tortured figure on the cross . . . nails through hands and feet, back lacerated, limbs wrenched, brow bleeding from thorn-pricks, mouth dry and intolerably thirsty, plunged in God-forsaken darkness. That is the God for me! He laid aside his immunity to pain.”



— John Stott

“He entered our world of flesh and blood, tears and death. He suffered for us. Our sufferings become more manageable in the light of his. There is still a question mark against human suffering, but over it we boldly stamp another mark, the cross which symbolizes divine suffering. ‘The cross of Christ . . . is God’s only self-justification in such a world’ as ours.”



— John Stott

The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of parched, cracked earth. The cracks form a complex, irregular network of dark brown lines against a lighter, golden-brown soil, creating a textured, grid-like pattern that symbolizes suffering and hardship.

Why Does God Allow Suffering & Evil? Pt. 2