

WORLDVIEW

Does It Matter? *Why Is There Evil And Suffering?* Question #2

To quickly review, “Worldview” is the way the world works, how we fit in it, and how we understand and explain it.

“Our worldview is the sum total of our beliefs about the world, the ‘big picture’ that directs our daily decisions and actions” (Chuck Colson and Nancy Pearcey in *How Now Shall We Live*).

There are Four Ultimate Questions for humanity:

1. **Origin** Where do we come from ... who are we?
2. **Problem** What’s gone wrong in world...why is there evil and suffering?
3. **Solution**—Is there an answer to our dilemma...what can fix it?
4. **Purpose**—What is our purpose in living...can we make things better?

Origin: Two Basic Views

First, the theistic view, held by people of Jewish, Christian and Islamic faiths, asserts that God created the cosmos, the world and us. This thinking has been out of fashion, but is now making a return under theory scientists call “Intelligent Design.”

The Bible declares God’s Son, Jesus Christ, as the Creator who holds all reality together (John 1:1-3 and Colossians 1:15-17).

The second is the secular, materialist or naturalistic view. It espouses the cosmos is a closed system, explained solely by physical, material or natural causes. Thus, science alone has the explanation; there is no other influence or God; creation came by chance.

This implies that each of us is an accident, living by pragmatism (i.e., existentialism or “whatever works”) or random chance (i.e., nihilism or “life is pointless; human values are worthless”).

“The Christian and materialist hold different beliefs about the universe. They cannot both be right. The one who is wrong will act in a way which ... doesn’t fit the real universe.”
C.S. Lewis

Question #2: What’s gone wrong? Why is there evil and suffering?

Despite our delusions with short-term aspirations and pleasure, and utopian philosophical and social experiments throughout history, this world and we who live in it are fatally flawed. We fail. We damage. We hurt. We die.

If God created all, and if He is wholly good, how could this be? What happened? **Let's read history's first lie (Genesis 3:1-5).**

DISCUSSION: What do you think about “the Serpent” (Satan, the Devil, Lucifer, the Great Dragon, The Deceiver)? Is he real? Where did he come from? How'd he turn to the dark side, or go evil?

The Castaway was banished to deceive (Revelation 12:7-9). Why?

Preceding the lie, pride came before The Fall (Isaiah 14:12-14).

Satan's rebellion is documented in the Bible as Lucifer's “I wills,” as he set his will against God's. Overcome by his overweening pride, he was wanting to be like God, in fact, to *be* God. His was a perfect life corrupted by pride (1John 2:16).

DISCUSSION: What about your own pride? Is its mission any different than Lucifer's? How does pride help or hurt in our personal quest to be close to God, and to people?

Adam and Eve's high stakes game of Truth or Dare suffered huge consequences (Genesis 3:6-19).

Now a new drama unfolds -- the long-term struggle between good and evil. Even after their sin had punctured the perfection of His freshly-minted Paradise, God searched for lost man, not vice versa.

Whose fault was The Fall (Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23)?

Sin is always a bad exchange, i.e., truth for a lie (Romans 1:20-25).

Ever since the Garden, the world has been waiting for its release from the human and natural debris of The Fall (Romans 8:19-23).

Whatever Happened To SIN?

“Our core problem,” says St. Augustine, “is the human heart which, ignoring God, turns on itself, tries to lift itself, wants to please itself, and ends up debasing itself...wanting God's gifts without God.”

Jean Jacques Rousseau ushered in Enlightenment thinking that lured modern man away from a belief that he was fatally flawed and that sin was the cause. This French philosopher declared that human nature is naturally good, society corrupts us, and

civilization is artificial. In “The Social Contract” he states this and says man must be free, liberated from society’s institutions, i.e., family, church, class, community. He excluded liberating man from the state for he viewed the state as the liberator, setting the table for revolutions.

He introduced the Utopian thrust ... the French Revolution, Marxism, Communism, Hitler, Pol Pot. Rousseau was blind to the state’s flaws. Karl Marx used the state to deny God. Friedrich Nietzsche announced that God was dead and that Christianity had a falsely constructed morality for religion’s slaves. His utopian view led to a bald ethic of power, practiced by the Nazis and other totalitarian regimes. Sigmund Freud reduced humans to complex animals, replacing the concept of sin with instincts and desire.

Blaise Pascal, the 17th century inventor of the first digital calculator, claimed, “Certainly nothing offends us more rudely than this doctrine of original sin, and yet without this mystery, the most incomprehensible of all, we are incomprehensible to ourselves.”

Controversial behaviorist B. F. Skinner insisted, via his Environmental Determinism, that we are the product of how we have been punished and rewarded, i.e., social forces. This veered education away from pursuing truth and training in moral character, and into social conditioning.

Since, per this thinking, there is no sin and man is perfectible, the blame for his faults shifted from self to environment, and we ended up with no-fault insurance, no-fault morality, no-fault divorce, no-fault crime, and no-fault parenthood. Frivolous lawsuits transferred responsibility from self to others.

The great paradox of all attempts to deny the Fall, to ignore man’s sin nature, is that in denying sin and evil, we actually unleash its worst powers. When we cannot bring ourselves to call evil evil, we lose the capacity to deal with it. Thus, it spreads, say Chuck Colson and Nancy Pearcey in *How Now Shall We Live*.

Alfred Einstein saw the universe’s design and order as having a distinct starting point in time. This, said he, reveals an Intelligence of such superiority that it boggles all human thinking.

Yet, he was stymied by the problem of evil and suffering. Since there was obviously wickedness in the world, how could the Designer be wholly powerful and good, yet allow evil and pain?

Einstein’s surmised that man was determined in a closed system whose physical laws turn humans into robots, ignoring Christ as Creator. The Bible says the source of sin is outside of God. Having free will, Adam and Eve chose other than God’s best. They disobeyed. This is The Fall. It is history, not symbol.

Genuine love cannot be coerced or predetermined. God gave us free will, and we’ve all abused it by sinning. God’s character is unimpeachably good, and requires justice. The

punishment for humankind's original sin was seen in the fall of man and creation and in the introduction of death. Yet, Jesus took the sentence of justice for all mankind who will admit being a sinner, and will acknowledge Him as their Redeemer.

Sin is the breaking of shalom (peace) with God. Plattinga says sin is any act, thought, desire, emotion, word or deed—or the absence thereof – that displeases God and deserves blame.

In its wake sin:

1. Disrupts one's relationship with God, creating shame, guilt and separation.
2. Alienates believers from each other by causing blame and embarrassment.
3. Introduced disorder and decay into creation. Thus, the physical order fell as did the moral order.
4. Introduced death to our planet.

DISCUSSION: If, in fact, you do acknowledge the existence of sin in your life, how do you personally explain its root cause? And how do you deal with it?

Next time ... What's the remedy for our sin, and why does it matter?

His Deal
www.HisDeal.org
george@HisDeal.org
Copyright © 2022. Jeff Kemp. All Rights Reserved.