

## **The Problem of Evil Class Notes**

By H.C. Felder

- I. What is Evil?
  - A. Evil is not a substance, but the lack of something that should be there
- II. Where Did Evil Come From?
  - A. Free will is the cause of evil
  - B. Satan used his free will to rebel against God causing the first sin
  - C. Evil comes from our desire to put our own interest above God's
- III. Why Can't Evil Be Stopped?
  - A. God cannot destroy evil without destroying freedom
  - B. Some physical suffering is a result of our own free choice (e.g., some sickness)
  - C. Some evil results indirectly from own free choice (e.g., poverty from laziness)
  - D. Some evil results from free choice of others directly (e.g., child abuse)
  - E. Some evil results indirectly from the free choice of others (e.g., poverty of a family from a father's drunkenness)
  - F. Evil will eventually be defeated
- IV. What is the Purpose of Evil?
  - A. God sometimes uses evil to warn us of greater evils
  - B. Pain keeps us from self destruction
  - C. God will use evil to bring about his purpose
  - D. Permitting some evil, prevents other evil
- V. What about Natural Disasters?

Giving An Answer ♦ P.O. Box 20083 ♦ Charlotte, NC 28202

[www.GivingAnAnswer.org](http://www.GivingAnAnswer.org)

- A. When man fell, all of creation fell (Rom. 8;20-21)
  - B. Some suffering is caused by people's free choice to live in harm's way
  - C. It is not wrong for God to take life since He gave life
- VI. Couldn't God Make a World Without Evil?
- A. God could have created nothing
    - 1. The things God created were good and it is good to merely exist
  - B. God could have created a world without free creatures
    - 1. A non-moral world is not a good world
  - C. God could have created free creatures that would not sin
    - 1. Not possible
  - D. God could have created creatures that would sin but all would be saved in the end
    - 1. God cannot force anyone to love him. Forced love is rape.
  - E. This is the best way to the best possible world
    - 1. Freedom is preserved in that each person makes his own free choice to determine his destiny
    - 2. Those who choose God will be confirmed in it and sin will cease
    - 3. Those who reject God are in eternal quarantine and cannot upset the perfect world that has come about
- VII. Evil is Evidence for the Existence of God
- A. God is the moral standard by which we can judge evil
  - B. The Moral Argument Proves the existence of God
    - 1. Every law has a lawgiver
    - 2. There is an absolute Moral law

Giving An Answer ♦ P.O. Box 20083 ♦ Charlotte, NC 28202

[www.GivingAnAnswer.org](http://www.GivingAnAnswer.org)

3. Therefore, there is an absolute Moral Lawgiver

## VIII. Christianity Alone Defeats Evil

### A. Pantheism

1. The belief that evil is unreal does not correspond to reality
  - a) It does not explain the existence of evil
  - b) It is contrary to our experience

### B. Atheism

1. Believe that evil is real but has no way to deal with it. Evil must be defeated by man

### C. Polytheist

1. Believe evil is necessary. There no mechanism to get rid of evil

### D. Finite Godism

1. God is limited in love and/or power so he either can't or won't defeat evil

### E. Islam

1. There is no triumph of good over evil. People in heaven are unregenerate

### F. Christianity

1. There is coming in the future world where evil is defeated and a greater good achieved
2. For once men have freely chosen good or evil, it is not a violation of their free choice for God to permanentize what they really willed to do
3. People are regenerated
4. Evil will be completely segregated from good (Heaven and Hell)
5. Evil will be defeated permanently

Giving An Answer ♦ P.O. Box 20083 ♦ Charlotte, NC 28202

[www.GivingAnAnswer.org](http://www.GivingAnAnswer.org)