



““Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”
(John 9:2)

Questions Concerning Sin and Evil

1. What is Sin?

- Not a crime that requires punishment
 - Jam. 2:10 — “For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.”
- Rebellion
- Illness that requires a physician
 - Mk. 2:17 — “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

2. What was the origin of sin?

- Did God create evil?
- “Sin entered into the world through the envy of the devil.”
(Liturgy of St. Basil)
 - Why envy us?

3. Is sin inherited?

- Exo. 20:5 — “For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me.”
- Ezk. 18:20 — “The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.”
- Is there a way that both of these verses can be true? Or are they contradictory?

3. Is sin inherited?

- We must distinguish between:
 - Bearing the guilt of someone's sin
 - Suffering negative physical and emotional consequences due to that person's poor decisions.
- Children of wicked people suffer terribly
 - Physical or emotional abuse
 - Irresponsible behavior
- Even though the children of sinful people suffer physically, they do not inherit the sins of their parents

Jeremiah 16

- “For thus says the Lord **concerning the sons and daughters who are born in this place....** ‘They shall die gruesome deaths; they shall not be lamented, nor shall they be buried, but they shall be as refuse on the face of the earth.’ ” (v.3-4)
- ‘Why has the Lord pronounced all this great disaster against us? Or what is our iniquity? Or what is our sin that we have committed against the Lord our God? ’ then you shall say to them, ‘**Because your fathers have forsaken Me,**’ says the Lord; ‘they have walked after other gods and have served them and worshiped them, and have forsaken Me and not kept My law.’ ” (v.10-11)

Jeremiah 16

- “And **you have done worse than your fathers**, for behold, each one follows the dictates of his own evil heart, so that no one listens to Me.” (v.12)
- These Israelites were suffering due to the sins of their fathers—and due to their own sins.

4. How can a good God allow evil?

- Argument: If God exists, evil cannot. If evil exists, God cannot. Evil exists, thus God cannot.
- Atheists presuppose God would not have a good reason for permitting evil.
- There is no reason to think they are incompatible

4. How can a good God allow evil?

- C.S. Lewis — God in His omniscience “saw that from a world of free creatures, even though they fell, **He could work out...**a deeper happiness and a fuller splendor than any world of automata would admit.”
- N. Geisler — “The theist does not have to claim that our present world is the best of all possible worlds, but it is the best way TO the best possible world: If God is to both preserve freedom and defeat evil, then this is the best way to do it. “
- N. Geisler — “Evil is overcome in that, once those who reject God are separated from others, the decisions of all are made permanent. “

4. How can a good God allow evil?

- Consider these 3 points:

1. God is not finished yet

- Just because evil is not destroyed right now does not mean it never will be.

2. The chief purpose of life is not happiness, but union with God.

3. The knowledge of God encompasses eternal life

- 2 Cor. 4:17 — “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

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- What is sin?
- What was the origin of sin?
- Is sin inherited?
- How can a good God allow evil?