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WRESTLING WITH GOD



"IS THE BIBLE TRUSTWORTHY?"

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TEXT: Job 42:1-6

In a 2023 Barna research study, the presence of evil/suffering in the world was one of the top reasons people doubted or disbelieved in the God of the Bible. Using the book of Job as an outline, let's examine a few ways to approach this conversation.

1) What does the presence of evil/suffering say about God's goodness and power? (Job 1-2)

- a) The classic argument against God from evil
- b) The Claim: God cannot be omnibenevolent or omnipotent because evil exists.

Classic argument against God from evil:

- If God is all good, He would destroy evil.
- If God is all powerful, He could destroy evil.
- But evil is not destroyed,
- Therefore, there is no such God.

The Rebuttal: Just because evil is not destroyed right now does not mean it never will be.

Christian response:

- If God is all-good, He will defeat evil.
- If God is all-powerful, He can defeat evil.
- Evil is not yet defeated,
- Therefore, God can and will one day defeat evil.

2) How do other worldviews understand the problem of evil? (Job 3-37)

TRUTH: "The problem of evil is a heavy load for every worldview. But a strong back can carry a heavy load."
– Dr. Douglas Groothuis

TRUTH: Our ability to make moral judgments (evil vs good) is actually an evidence for God's existence.

- a) Atheism believes evil exists because it is a godless world.

CS Lewis quote: "My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line."

- b) Many new age and eastern religions deny that evil exists.
- c) Worldviews based on karma and reincarnation believe that through universal assessment over many lifetimes, evil is balanced.

3) How does Christianity understand the problem of evil? (Job 38-41)

TRUTH: It begins with the reminder that God is vast and humans are finite.

- a) Evil is a result of human choice to sin which brought a brokenness to all creation.
- b) God has a plan to redeem creation and overcome evil.
- c) In the meantime, God is big enough and powerful enough to cause good out of evil.

TRUTH: There is a difference between our seeing God's purpose for suffering and His ability to have a purpose for it.

Augustine quote: "For the Almighty God...being Himself supremely good, would never permit the existence of anything evil among His works, if He were not so omnipotent and good that He can bring good even out of evil."

4) What is the appropriate response to God in the midst of suffering? (Job 42)

TRUTH: God is worthy of our worship even when He doesn't give us reasons for our suffering.

Additional Resources:

- *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith* by Douglas Groothuis
- *When Skeptics Ask* by Norman Geisler
- *The Questions Christians Hope No One Will Ask* by Mark Mittleberg
- YouTube: Bible Project: Book of Job Summary A Complete Animated Overview

