

Pastors Perspective – Loon Lake Times

What is the origin of evil?

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As we begin this interactive question and answer version of the Pastor's Perspective column, I asked some fellow pastors for questions, and one pastor suggested writing about "What is the origin of evil?" Some people have accused God of creating evil. Furthermore, many people have asked, "If God was a good God, then why does He allow evil?" Thus, let me see if I can address these questions. (I look forward to more of your questions. Please email me at AskthePastor@loonlaketimes.com)

At the outset, we all need to remember that we are human and not God. Do we honestly believe that, as flawed human beings, we are qualified to stand in judgment of an almighty, all-knowing, all-powerful God (if one engages in this conversation, they are acknowledging His existence)? Of course not. However, honest questions (as opposed to accusing God) are valid and sincere attempts to understand and clear up apparent contradictions.

When people ask why God allows evil, they typically refer to specific examples of injustice, or loss of life, or evil world leaders like Hitler. However, why stop with those specific expressions of evil? Why not include every single "evil," including all dictators, all deadly diseases, all violence against women and children, every corrupt politician who enriches themselves at the expense of the citizenry they are supposed to represent? The list of evils would be endless.

God created fully autonomous intelligent beings with a free-will who will be held accountable for their actions (Romans 14:12, Hebrews 9:27) – not a grand stage upon which we are mere puppets with God the master puppeteer. Instead of asking God why He does not stop evil, we should ask, "Why does mankind do so much evil?" This issue is no different from those who want to accuse gun manufacturers of being responsible for school shootings.

"Okay then," you say, "Why is there evil, at all? If God is good, where did the evil come from, if not from Him? He created Satan, after all!" Good questions. If we understand that God did not create puppets on earth, the same can be assumed for the heavenly beings (angels) whom He created. (Hold that thought).

Secondly, let me use an illustration of science. Scientists tell us that, in reality, cold does not exist. Cold is the result of heat leaving your body. The temperature rises and falls as the kinetic energy of atoms in an object or space rises or falls—the greater the average energy from these atoms, the "hotter" the temperature. As the atoms are removed,– less kinetic energy, and therefore, less heat is generated. In space, there are no atoms present to clash, and so you would freeze instantly.

When God finished creation, He said it “was very good” (Genesis 1:31). Just as God created a good world, He has also given good commands and principles. When people follow these, they do good and become good (Whew! – that is a lot of “good”). His commands and principles act like the kinetic energy of atoms that produce something desirable – “good.” When God’s commands and principles are removed from an individual or society, there is a lessening of the “good” and an increase of “evil.”

The Bible teaches that Satan wanted to usurp God’s throne. As he turned away from (removed) God’s commands and principles, he became evil (we could say “cold-hearted”). Good or evil exist within a person or society only to the degree that God’s principles and commands are present. Even non-Christians who practice God’s commands to love others and chose to live lives of honesty and integrity become good people. The same can be said of nations and cultures.

For some statistical evidence of what happens to a society when God’s truths are removed, check out David Barton’s website (wallbuilders.com). He includes data and graphs showing the downward shift in this nation, as prayer, Bible reading, and then the 10 Commandments were removed from our schools. Just as cold is the result of removing the heat-generating atoms, so is evil, the result of removing, disregarding, or flat out disobeying God’s commands and principles – whether you believe in God or not.