



Essential Philosophy with Dr. David Schenk

Lesson 11: Introduction to the Problem of Evil

Outline:

Introduction to the Problem of Evil Argument

- The Problem of Evil: If God is so awesome, loving, and wonderful, why is so much of the world and life miserable? How can it be miserable if God is so great?
 - Other questions the Problem of Evil asks: Why did anything in God's creation go wrong? Why is there a devil in the first place?
- Apart from objections to the Cosmological and Ontological arguments, the Problem of Evil is one of the most famous arguments used by atheists to support their views.
- Christians and theists often ignore or downplay The Problem of Evil, despite it being a powerful argument that demands serious attention.

Two Types of the Problem of Evil Argument (2:26)

- Logical Version
 - God is incompatible with real evil.
 - Even if there is a tiny bit of evil, it is impossible that God exists.
- Evidential Version
 - God is unlikely to coexist with a certain kind or quantity of evil.
 - The more genuine evil in the universe, the more unlikely it is that God exists.
 - Dr. Schenk uses William Rowe's evidential argument in this lecture series.



The Logical Version of the Problem of Evil

Problem of Evil: Logical Version (4:58)

- (1) If there is real evil in the world, then God was either unable or unwilling to prevent it.
- (2) If God was unable to prevent evil, then He is not omnipotent.
- (3) If God was unwilling to prevent evil, then He is not omnibenevolent.
- (4) If God exists, then He is both omnipotent and omnibenevolent.
- (5) There is real evil in the world.

- (6) \therefore , if there is real evil in the world, then God does not exist.
- > (7) \therefore , God does not exist.

- Notes on the Logical Version:
 - Premise (4) is clear Christian orthodoxy.
 - Premise (5)'s "real evil" means genuinely bad evil.



Attempted Solutions to the Problem of Evil (See Blackboard at 11:33)

[1] Evil is punishment for sins.

- The evils suffered seem far out of keeping with the sins committed. And anyway, isn't sin itself already an evil? So where did it come from?

[2] Evil comes from Satan.

- Uh-huh. And exactly where does Satan come from, again? Isn't he one of God's creations?

[3] Good cannot exist without evil.

- That ends in heresy. After all, it would mean either that God cannot exist without the Devil or that without the Devil God at least would not be good. Bad idea.

[4] There is no real evil.

- Wow. That's logically consistent, but it completely flies in the face of all our moral experience.
- Notes: Deny (5). This pushes the limit, as it would mean that the supposed devils of hell are not really devils, and all they do is for the best.

[5] *Free Will Defense* (FWD); Deny (3)

- Now this one has some steam behind it. An explanation will be needed as to why free will is worth the price of all this suffering, but assuming such an explanation it'll have traction.
- It still doesn't explain natural evil, though. *Natural evil does not occur through malice; it is pain, misery, deprivation, etc. that comes into the world on account of the universe, i.e. natural disasters*. Why, though, did God create a universe where this happens?