

Background Info: I had decided to make the issue of evil a separate document as it seems to be a regularly asked question and even misconception. In this I'm responding to an article titled "The Five Best Reasons Not to Believe in God," to read the full article and me disproving it check my

notes sources in my carrd <3

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*Excerpt from Article: (The preponderance of suffering)*

*"In a recent interview, the British comedian Stephen Fry delivered a vicious, scathing attack on the Judeo-Christian God when asked what he would say if it turned out, after he died, that God did in fact exist. He called this God a "maniac", pointing to the large amount of unnecessary suffering in the world which he, by definition, created and allows.*

*The existence of suffering is an impossible problem for believers in an all-good, caring God to solve. Even if they use the wiggle room to argue that without some suffering there can be no charity; or that people who do wrong are punished, they cannot account for the suffering of innocent children and animals, or worse, the devout believers in their faith.*

*What kind of God, we may ask – and Fry does, more colorfully – has created a world in which children die in floods, starve to death, perish in agony from TB and malaria? What kind of God allows people who worship and adore him to be murdered, raped, tortured and come to countless other hideous ends?*

*This does not preclude the existence of any God, of course. God might be, as Fry has it, a maniac. He may be a vicious, sadistic God. Or, like the Greeks and Romans before us, he may be a pantheon of narcissistic Gods who have no interest in looking out for us. But a God who was benevolent and loving, as we are told the Christian God is, would never create the world we live in. Believing in him requires either shutting yourself off from the carnage all around you; or crafting frankly ridiculous excuses (God works in mysterious ways?)."*

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My response:

My main gripe with this subsection is not only the lack of understanding of the problem of evil but also the appeal to a comedian. Stephen Fry is hardly a credible source or someone to reference when making an argument like this, if anything it would have taken less time to google philosophers such as Epicurus and their statements on God and evil. I understand that this author was making a point, this being said, I'll go even further and share an Epicurus quote on the issue of evil and my comments on it so that we can establish a basis for why evil exists and so there is no confusion.

“Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then He is not omnipotent. Is He able, but not willing? Then He is malevolent. Is He both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil? Is He neither able nor willing? Then why call Him God?”

- Epicurus, Greek Philosopher (341 BC – 270 BC)

Evil is the antithesis of God while God is the source of all Goodness. We also know God's character is love as well as Goodness, He can't not have those characteristics or He wouldn't be God. I would also like to establish the basis that God didn't create ontological evil or any evil. As evil isn't a substance in and of itself as it only exists from the absence of goodness—this being God, as goodness is contingent on God, therefore as evil is the antithesis of goodness, it is the antithesis of God. We can compare this to like if you're in a lit room. If you turn the light off the room becomes dark but the darkness of that room isn't a substance in and of itself as the dark room only exists because you removed the source of light. Another analogy being that a hole in the ground only exists as the absence of dirt. Also we can say how cold doesn't exist as anything other than the absence of heat (this is scientific)

Now that that basis is covered we need to understand that evil exists because we have free-will to choose and do as we please. Yes, God is omnipotent, He can do anything. But this now becomes If you were God how would you eradicate evil in the world? See God has given us free-will and to take away our choice of free-will is unloving. God would ultimately be unloving by taking away our free-will choice to either choose between good or evil. If He didn't give us free-will we would be robots and only worship Him. The true way to get rid of evil in the world is to abide in God, but not everyone chooses that.

I think we also need to understand that our life on Earth is a blip on the screen, a vapor in the wind—James 4:14. No where in the Bible does it say that we will have peace on the Earth or God has come to where we will no longer suffer on Earth. I think human suffering is complex, we can't truly appreciate good things in our lives without also having an understanding of the bad times in our life. At what points in our life will we grow if we don't suffer at times. Suffering sucks, it's unfair and especially when it's random suffering pushed upon you or other people. But God is with us in our suffering today, comforting us, and we have the Blessed hope for all eternity when we do die. Jesus Himself suffered so much, and He knows our pain. Jesus is also known as a man of sorrows (Isaiah 53:3)

Let me also touch on the fact that God Himself suffered on the cross. In the Bible it says Jesus was a man of sorrows and well acquainted with grief. He lost friends and wept at his tomb, He was betrayed by Judas, He suffered persecution from Pharisees and Sadducees, the majority of His own people rejected Him, He suffered a painful and unjust death at the cross. If God

Himself suffered, what makes us think that we also aren't going to suffer. Everything we experienced and suffered in this world, God experienced it as well and has compassion on us.

*“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit” -Psalm 34:18*

*“You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book” -Psalm 56:8*

*“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” -Revelation 21:4*

We also know that God can use things that are bad for good. We see this in Genesis 50:20. "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives." The background of this is that Joseph's brothers had sold him into slavery. And when Joseph got to Egypt, God used Joseph to help the people with preparing for the 7 years of famine. We also see that Joseph became the second-pharaoh so to speak and because of this many lives were saved. Furthermore, we can see that because of this the descendants of Israel (Jacob) would become prosperous in Egypt.

The suffering we experience for these few years on Earth pales in comparison to the things we will see and experience in Heaven, alongside Jesus. We can't know for sure why God allows certain things but I think we need to realize that we don't know everything but He, being outside time itself, knows the end and the beginning.

In short, God can easily get rid of evil, it would require getting rid of free-will (the ability to choose good or evil) which would go against God's character, or God could get rid of everyone. Satan is not the bearer of evil or even the originator of evil. If you also want a bit of a second question to the Epicurus quote, what would classify as the evil that God would need to eradicate? For example, all evil—even things that we as humans bat our eyes at (think like lying to your parents) Or bigger evils such as genocide? We need also remember that our moral standards derive from God, and even further His are greater.

Also if we want to claim God is malevolent then we aren't talking about the Christian God. God is grieved when we do evil, He doesn't want us to sin. Would we rather have God strike us down immediately when we do evil? To take away our choice? If God did that then yes He would be malevolent. But to point the finger at God when we endure suffering from the evil that others have done against us is erroneous. God created that person, but it was ultimately their decision to do evil and add more suffering to the world.

That's why sin is so bad, look at the ripple effect it causes, yet we refuse to obey the parameters put in place by our Creator. We are so quick to blame God for the terrible things that happen but take credit for the good things that happen, it's a shame. We live in a fallen world and a dying creation, that's why we see Creation literally groaning and dying, that's why we have terrible instances of unfairness in the natural world. It's not a "frankly ridiculous excuse," to logically understand how our actions have consequences and we live in a universe in which we are free-will moral beings with the choice to do or not to do evil. You can easily turn the argument around from "If God real why bad thing happen," to "If God not real why good thing happen." The existence of evil in no way precludes God as nonexistent or lacking power to solve this issue or being malevolent by nature, but it's the very fact of the matter that since goodness exists there needs to be a source. That being goodness, perfection, morality is all contingent on God.