

Can you provide 3 “answers” to the question “How do you know that God exists?” and the question “If God is good why is there so much suffering in the world?”

Following answers by TVR....

V2

IS THERE A GOD?

I regard the afterlife to be a fairy story for people that are afraid of the dark (S. Hawkin)

I regard atheism to be a fairy story for people who are afraid of the light of a righteous omnipotent God. (T & A Reeves with tongue in cheek)

The evidence of the four books:

- Book of Nature: Nature provides evidence of being highly organised & contrived. This organisation allows the form & pattern of nature to be *described* using succinct laws. But the purely *descriptive role* of science means that attempts to push it beyond its role of description simply leads to a *description of descriptions*. (“[Descriptions all the way down](#)”) There is therefore an explanatory barrier beyond which science cannot pass and which begs the question of the existence of some fundamentally different and transcendent explanatory agency.
- The Book of Society: The human predicament has no internal solution: History suggests that flawed human nature is unable to fix flawed human nature. It therefore has a bootstrap problem prompting one to go looking for a transcendent solution.
- Book of The Word: The Bible makes sense of the human predicament particularly around the causes of that predicament and how it can be fixed. The Bible is exceptional in many ways; it is a wealth of wisdom about the dynamic of human nature and its social systems. Above all, it unlocks the meaning and purpose of life.
- The Book of Personal Experience: Without meaning and purpose humanity is in a state of permanent [existential crisis](#). (cf. Ecclesiastes) The yearning for meaning, purpose & successful community can only be satisfied by filling the “*God shaped hole*”. “*In the beginning God*” is the only [epistemic method](#) of achieving that. See Hebrews 11:6

CHRISTIANITY’S PROBLEM OF SUFFERING: Why does a Christian God allow suffering and evil?

[Quote from PZ Myers’ atheist theology....](#) (“atheology”!) “*No one uses the problem of evil to disprove a god, but only the idea of a benevolent god, or more specifically, the perfectly*

good being most Christians promote. When I see it deployed in an argument, it's usually to make the narrower point that I don't believe in your god.....But OK, sure, if the problem of evil says you should be anything but a traditional Christian, I'll take it."

Possible Responses

- **The following is the wrong answer:** Human and Satanic choices are solely responsible for suffering and evil, therefore they are not God's responsibility. **No!** Why create creatures flawed enough to make choices which create havoc? Therefore the world which creation brought into existence was not "perfect". However, imperfection doesn't imply the world wasn't good.....but, apparently, it was not good enough!
- **Personal dilemma problem:** An implication of Myers' atheology is that, by definition, morally and epistemically flawed persons such as ourselves would not exist in a world free of suffering & evil. So how do you respond to this dilemma? Do you wish for a perfect world where you wouldn't exist or would you rather opt for our imperfect world where you do exist? (and later there is a chance of metamorphosis Rom 8:18ff)
- **The Rose of Sharon solution:** "***For a single rose a field of thorns spared***". Our flawed world is a condition for the work of the *Rose of Sharon* (Song 2:1). In a perfect world that work would not be evident to the great cloud of witnesses of Hebrews 12:1.
- **God loves the world in spite of its imperfection:** Just as an Author loves the flawed world and characters in his book (e.g. Tolkien) God loves the imperfect us. If anything a suffering world is evidence of extreme divine love.....it's far easier to love a perfect world! So, in spite of all its pain and evil, God so loved the world that he decided to reify it and save it. (John 3:6)

NOTES:

1. **Psalm 139** tells us of the platonic pre-existence of the self. The author brings us forth from the world of possibility: Verse 16: *God's eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.*
2. **Google AI on the Rose of Sharon:** *The idea of Jesus as the "Rose of Sharon" comes from the Song of Solomon (2:1) in the Bible, where the term is used to describe something beautiful and fragrant. Christians often interpret this as a symbol for Jesus, who is seen as the most beautiful and loving flower, with the thorns on a rosebush symbolizing his crown of thorns. While the phrase appears in the Bible, the identification with Jesus is a later interpretation, and some scholars debate its accuracy.....creative interpretations are allowed. The Bible unlocks our creative processes: cf Isaiah 11 and Lucifer*