

## Evil Exists Because God is Love

Epicurus, an ancient Greek philosopher who lived about 300 B.C., said, "Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent. Is he able and 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?" Others have asked these same questions for the 2300 years since. However, in their seeming wisdom, they merely demonstrate how philosophers, enamored with their own wisdom cannot see the flaws in their own reasoning.

Epicurus and his philosophical offspring over the millennia have created a false dilemma. That is, they have developed a set of choices and acted like the choices they have listed are the only ones available when they are not.

Epicurus believed a God who is able to eradicate evil but doesn't do so must be malevolent. So, there are but two choices. Either God is not able to do anything about evil or God is evil Himself. It didn't occur to Epicurus that there is a third option. It never occurred to him that God might actually be wiser than him and have a better alternative.

Is it possible God sees a good end that can come from the evil and suffering that goes on in the world even today? Is it possible God allows evil because in His infinite wisdom He can actually use it in a way that benefits men if we will let it? Are we simply like little children who can't understand why our father keeps letting us struggle to stand up and then fall over instead of picking us up and taking us everywhere we want to go? Maybe we presume too much when we demand that an all-wise, all-loving God will only run the universe our way or else He must not really exist.

I suggest God who is able to eradicate all evil is unwilling to do so not because He is malevolent but because He loves us too much to do so. First, His love is demonstrated by granting us the free will to choose between good and evil. He loves us too much to force us to be good like Him. He lets us pursue our own course.

Second, He loves us enough to allow evil so that we may grow and learn to rely on Him, which leads to salvation (cf. II Corinthians 12:7-10; Romans 5:3-5). Without evil in the world, we would have no notion of our need to turn to and rely on God. We would be lost and never know it.

Third, He loves us enough to allow evil so we can learn to be merciful like Him (cf. Matthew 5:7). If there were no evil, we could not learn how to relieve the suffering of those who have endured evil. We could not learn to be like God.

Finally, God loved us enough to send His Son as an answer to all evil. By surrendering to Jesus (cf. Galatians 2:20), we can eradicate evil in our lives and help do so in others and prepare for the day God eradicates the world because it is evil.

Yes, evil exists, but not because God is malevolent. No, evil exists because God is love.