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***“God has allowed so much terrible suffering. A good God simply wouldn’t do that. Either God is all-powerful, or he is good. If he were all-powerful, he would stop suffering. He cannot logically be both.”***

# Introduction

In a couple of minutes, write down the experience in your life where you doubted if God would ever bring good from terrible suffering.

# Analyzing the Objection

The objection of the origin of evil is the oldest in the book. **Analyze** the atheistic logic found in the following quote from the Greek philosopher Epicurus, called the Epicurean Paradox. Then **explain** why the problem of evil is even more problematic for atheism.

*“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 where does evil come from? Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?” -Epicurus, 341-270 BC*

From the story of suffering in ***Job 1:6-22;*** **demonstrate** why these explanations break down:

* “The existence of evil proves God does not exist.”

*“Again we see lurking within supposedly hardnosed skepticism an enormous faith in one’s own cognitive faculties. If our minds can’t plumb the depths of the universe for good answers to suffering, well, then, there can’t be any! This is blind faith of a high order.”*

*-Tim Keller, Reason for God*

* “Evil proves that God is getting back at you.”
* “God is a deist-type-being who is just distant and doesn’t care.”
* God is not in control

**Pursuing the Resolution**

**Write down at least three Bible stories** that show how God used suffering to accomplish a greater good.

Philosophical explanations can still seem cold to innocent persons who have gone through tragedies or abuse. **Use the following passages to respond** to a hurting person who says, “Where’s God even when my suffering has no silver lining to it and no conceivable good could come out of it?”

**Isaiah 53:3-4**

*He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem. Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.*

**Matthew 19:28**

*Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”*

**Conclusion**

Practice how you would answer this objection to Christianity: “God has allowed so much terrible suffering. Either he is all-powerful but not good, or he is good but not all-powerful. The all-good, all-powerful God of the Bible can’t exist. You Christians can’t have it both ways.”

[***Job 1:6-22***](https://www.biblestudytools.com/passage/?q=job+1:6-22) *- One day the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them.****7****The LORD said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered the LORD, “From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it.”****8****Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.”****9****“Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied.****10****“Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land.****11****But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.”****12****The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.” Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.****13****One day when Job’s sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house,****14****a messenger came to Job and said, “The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby,****15****and the Sabeans attacked and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”****16****While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”****17****While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”****18****While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, “Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother’s house,****19****when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!”****20****At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship****21****and said: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.”****22****In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.*

[***Job 42:1-6, 10-16***](https://www.biblestudytools.com/passage/?q=job+42:1-16) *- Then Job replied to the LORD:****2****“I know that you can do all things; no purpose of yours can be thwarted.****3****You asked, ‘Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?’ Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.****4****“You said, ‘Listen now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.’****5****My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.****6****Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.”*

***10****After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before.****11****All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the LORD had brought on him, and each one gave him a piece of silver and a gold ring.****12****The LORD blessed the latter part of Job’s life more than the former part. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys.****13****And he also had seven sons and three daughters.****14****The first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah and the third Keren-Happuch.****15****Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job’s daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers.****16****After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation.*