

Why *does* God

Allow Suffering?

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CHALLENGE TO OUR FAITH

- **The Godly Suffer – The Lord Said So**
 - Job (1:1, 13; 2:7).
 - Asaph (Psalm 73:1-12).
 - This fact served as a challenge to Asaph's faith in the goodness of God (73:1): *"But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked"* (73:2, 3).

THE UNBELIEVER'S ARGUMENT

J.L. Mackie

THE MIRACLE OF THEISM

Arguments for
and against the
Existence of
God

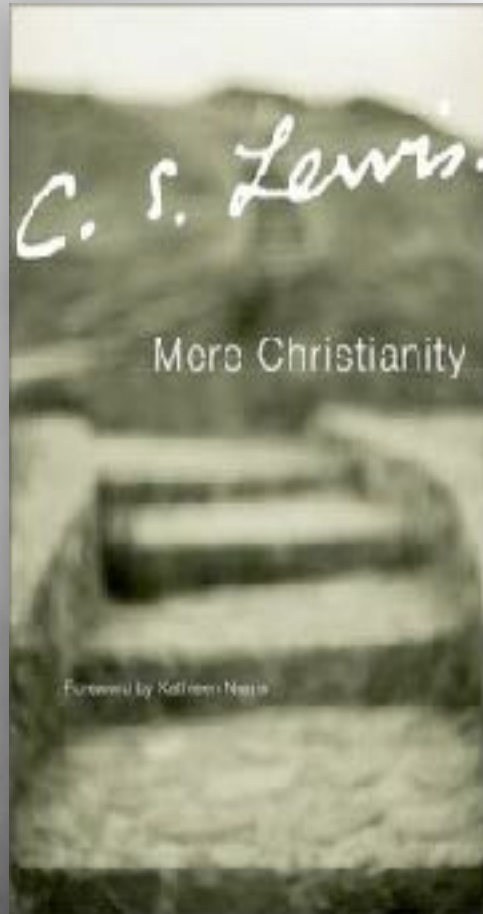
J.L. Mackie, an Australian philosopher, held that God's perfect goodness, omnipotence and the reality of evil are incompatible.

Interestingly, the argument assumes the very thing that proves the existence of God, i.e. that there is moral good and moral evil and there is such a notion as justice and injustice.

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“JUSTICE” AND GOD?

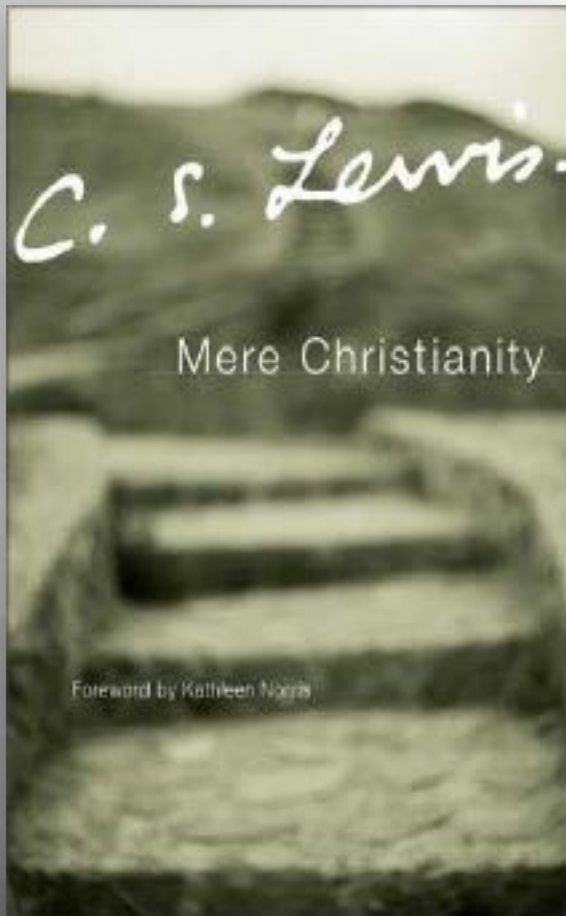


“And of course, that raises a very big question. If a good God made the world why has it gone wrong? And for many years I simply refused to listen to the Christian answers to this question, because I kept on feeling ‘whatever you say, and however clever your arguments are, isn’t it much simpler and easier to say that the world was not made by any intelligent power?’

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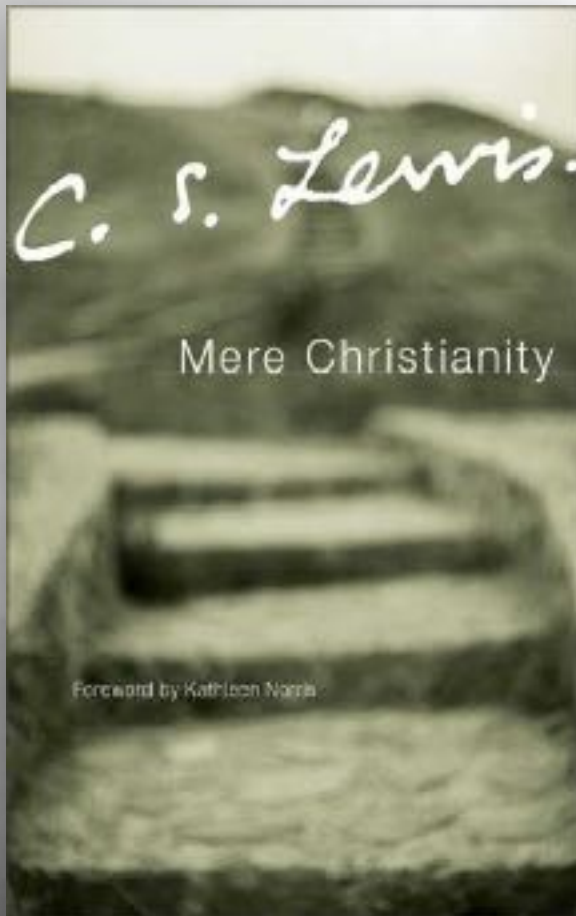


Aren't all your arguments simply a complicated attempt to avoid the obvious?' But then that threw me back into another difficulty..."

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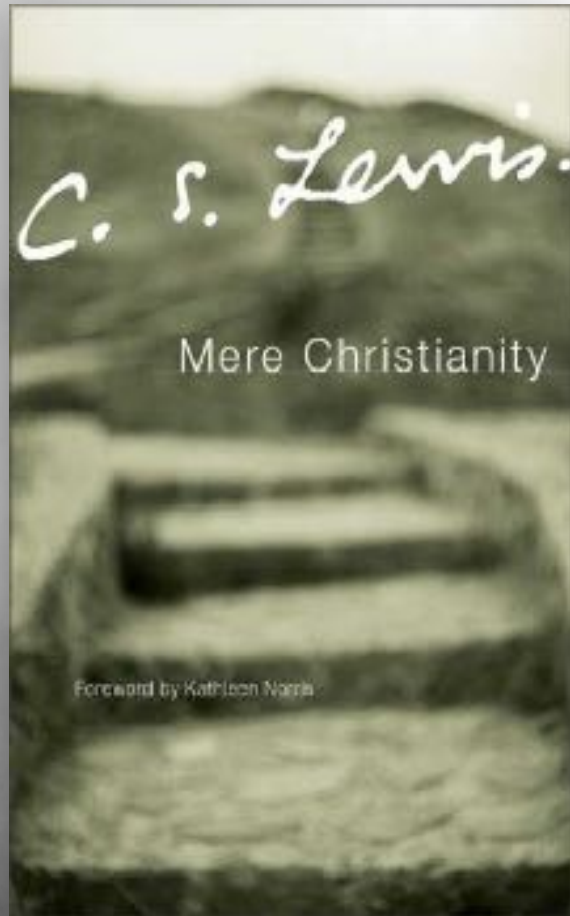


...My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust...

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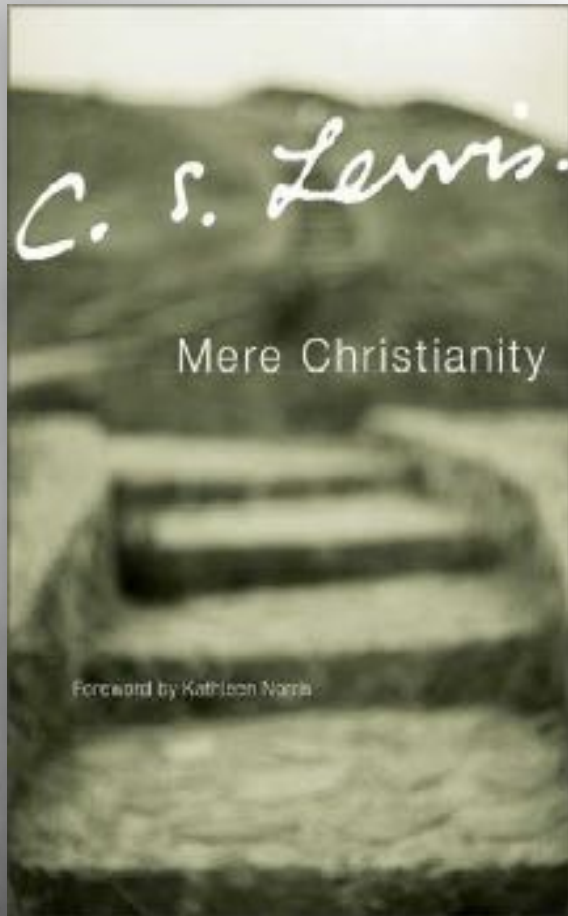


“If the whole show was bad and senseless from A to Z, so to speak, why did I , who was supposed to be part of the show, find myself in such violent reaction against it ...”

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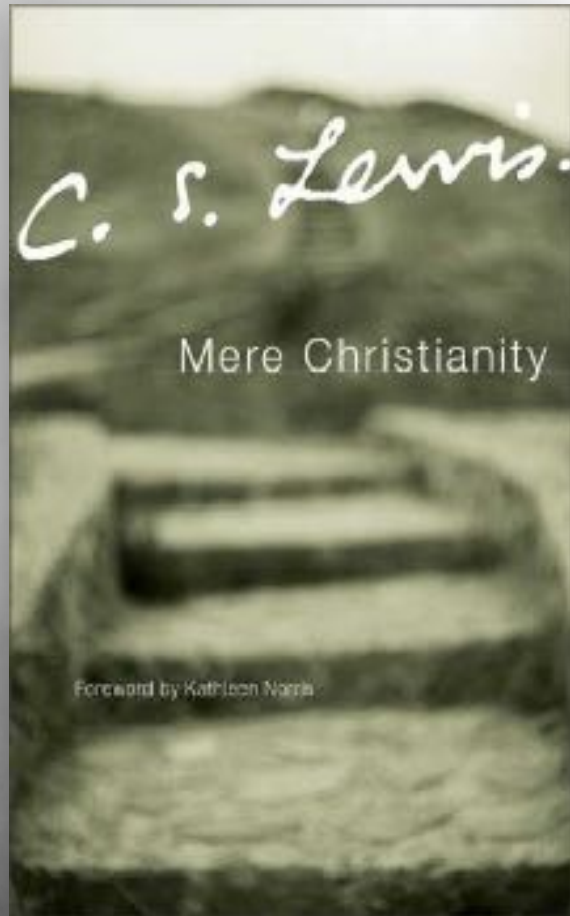


“...Of course I could have given up my idea of justice by saying it was nothing but a private idea of my own. But if I did that, then my argument against God collapsed too-for the argument depended on saying that the world was really unjust, not simply that it did not happen to please my fancies...”

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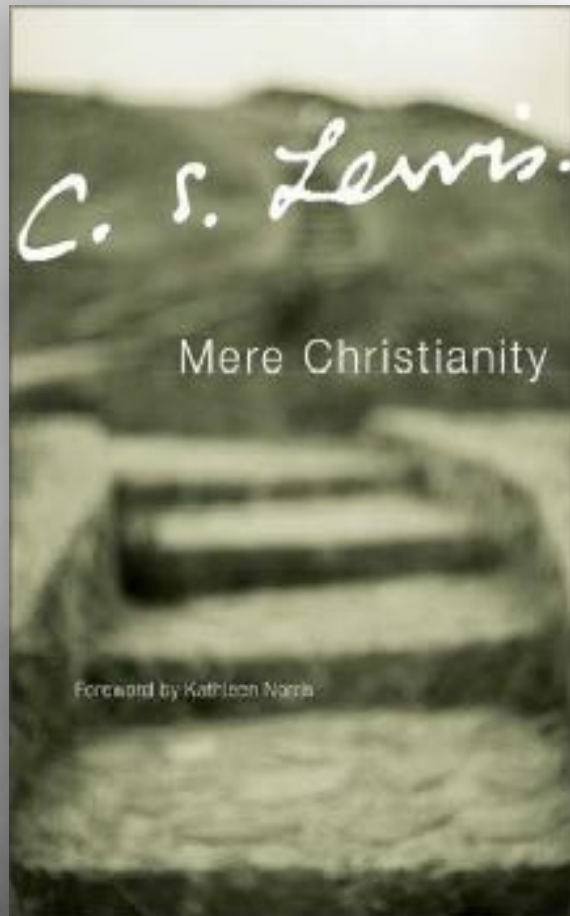


“Thus in the very act of trying to prove that God did not exist, in other words, that the whole of reality was senseless—I found I was forced to assume that one part of reality, namely my idea of justice was full of sense.”

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“JUSTICE” AND GOD?



“...Consequently atheism turns out to be too simple. If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning...”

Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis, p. 39).

OBJECTIVE MORALITY IS ROOTED IN THE NATURE OF GOD

- *Is morality merely an arbitrary pattern of social behavior?*
- *Is morality whatever men propose as beneficial?*

OBJECTIVE MORALITY IS ROOTED IN THE NATURE OF GOD

- **Moral standards exist independently of human standards or cultural norms.**
- **“Did God create morality” is a irrational and illogical question – “Morality is, because God is...”**

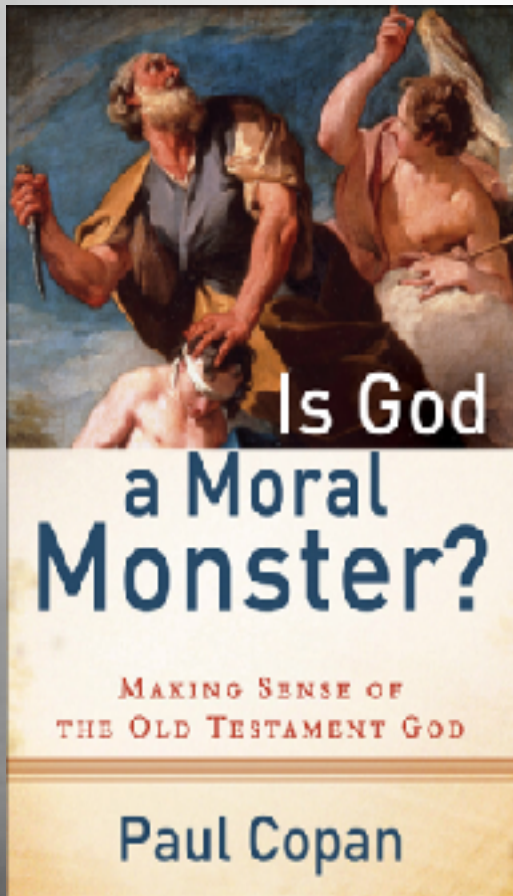
INCONSISTENCIES ARE REVEALING!

- **The atheist is grossly inconsistent when he or she appeals to objective justice and morality in their attack on God!**

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INCONSISTENCIES ARE REVEALING!



“Even secular ethical systems, whether variations on the ethical views of the philosophers Aristotle or Kant or perhaps some social contract view, may affirm many truths that believers in God affirm. These systems may agree that we ought to carry out certain moral obligations or cultivate character qualities. Even so, these systems are still incomplete because they don’t offer a **basis for human dignity and worth.”**

DENIAL OF GOD NO GOOD OR EVIL

- ***“There is at bottom no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pointless indifference. . . . We are machines for propagating DNA. . . . It is every living object’s sole reason for being?”***



QUESTIONS THE ATHEIST MUST ANSWER!

- What is the basis of objective moral values?
- What is the basis of human value on atheism?
- Why ought one to do the right thing?
- What is the basis of accountability?

TRANSCENDENCE OF GOD



- Is the issue of suffering the real reason for the denial of God or is it merely an over-simplification of the nature of God and the human condition?

“My wrath is kindled against you...because you have not spoken of Me what is right...”

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GOD'S GOODNESS AND HUMAN SUFFERING

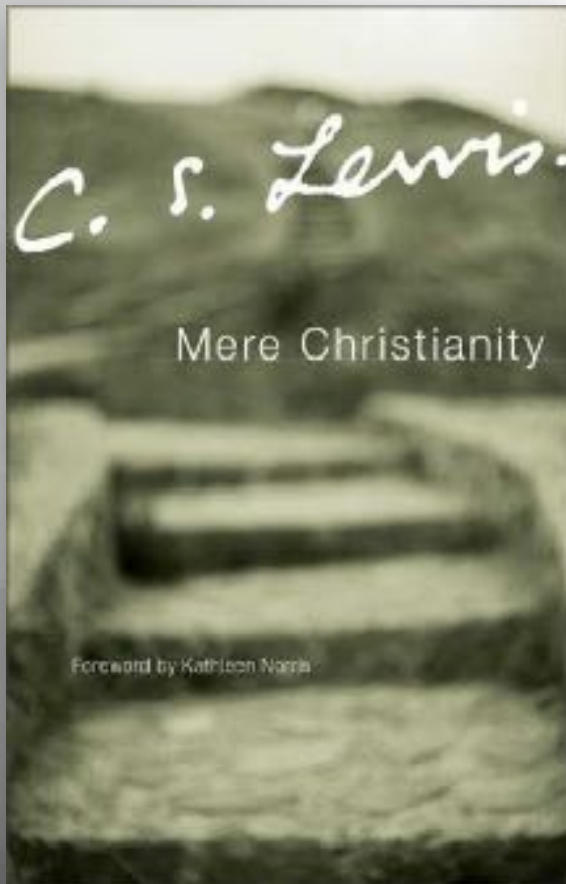
**God has a morally
justifiable reason for
having created a
world in which evil
can occur.**



GOD'S GOODNESS AND HUMAN SUFFERING

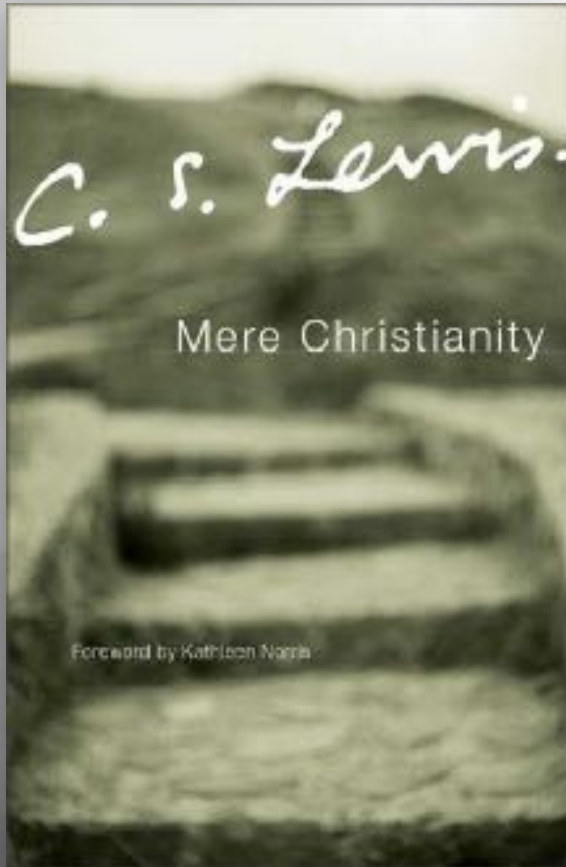
- **God's primary motive was to have loving fellowship with man.**
- **In order for love to exist – free will had to be a reality.**
- **In order for free-will to exist the possibility of either good or evil must be a real option (Joshua 24:14-16).**
- **The Biblical teaching is that when God created the world and man he said it was “very good” (Genesis 1:31), however when man sinned physical suffering and death entered the world (I Corinthians 15:22).**

DIVINE LOVE AND FREE-WILL



- ***“Of course God knew what would happen if they used their freedom the wrong way: apparently He thought it worth the risk. Perhaps we feel inclined to disagree with Him. But there is a difficulty in disagreeing with God...”***

DIVINE LOVE AND FREE-WILL

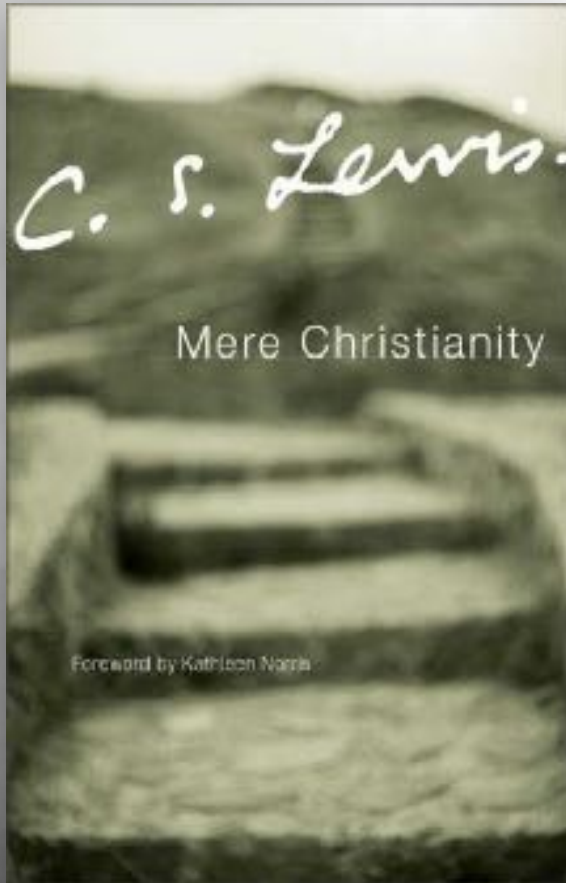


- ***“... He is the source from which all your reasoning power comes; you could not be right and He wrong any more than a stream can rise higher than its own source ...***

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DIVINE LOVE AND FREE-WILL

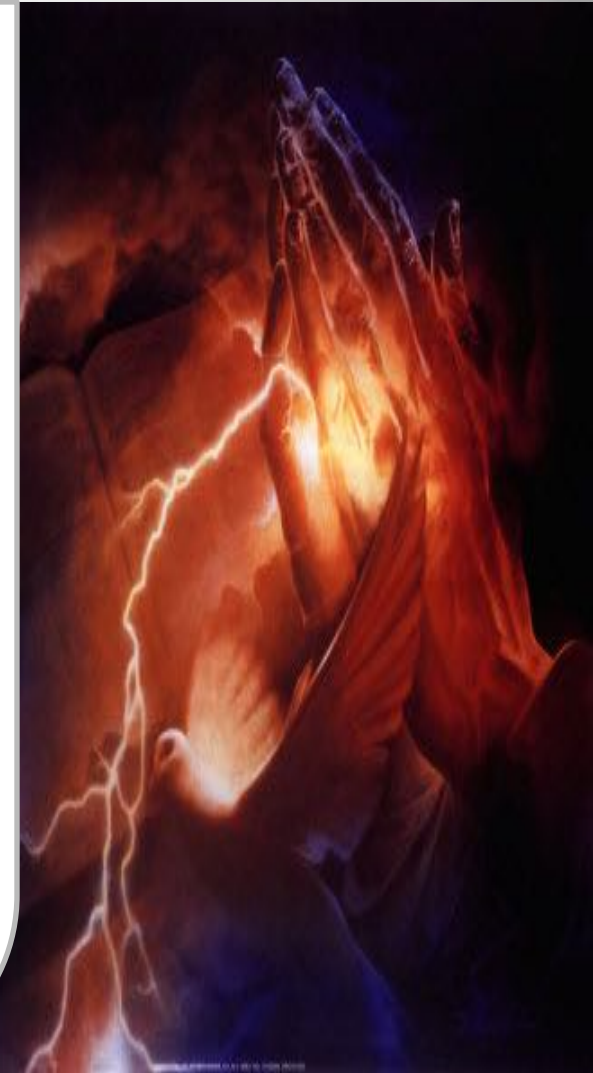


“...When you are arguing against him you are arguing against the very power that makes you able to argue at all: it is like cutting off the branch you are sitting on. If God thinks this state of war in the universe a price worth paying for free will...then we may take it -- it is worth paying”

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- **Misunderstanding God's Attributes:**
 - **Omnipotence** – God has the power to do all those things he wishes to do which are consistent with His nature and purpose.
 - (God cannot lie, Heb. 6:18 and He cannot sin, 1 John 1:5).



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- **Misunderstanding God's Attributes:**
 - **Goodness:**
 - **Man's spiritual interests may not fit with his physical desires.**
 - **His goodness is always expressed in harmony with his justice and mercy (Romans 11:22).**



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- *“We want, in fact, not so much a Father in Heaven as a grandfather in Heaven—a senile benevolence...whose plan for the universe was simply that it might be said at the end of each day, ‘A good time was had by all.’ ... I should very much like to live in a universe which was governed on such lines. But since it is abundantly clear that I don’t, and since I have reason to believe, nevertheless, that God is love. I conclude that my conception of love needs correction.”*

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Rather than **denying** the reasonable conclusion that God exists, perhaps we should *rethink our definition of goodness and love* as it surpasses the selfishness and shortsightedness of our own human expressions of love.

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- ***How Should We React to Suffering?***
 - ***Paul trusted God (2 Cor. 12:10).***
 - ***Christians should glorify Christ (1 Peter 4:16).***
 - ***Opportunity to share Christ (1 Peter 3:15).***

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- ***How Should We React to Suffering?***
 - ***Worship God (Job 1:20-21; Psalm 73:16-17, 22).***
 - ***Refuse to blame God (Job 1:22; 2:9-10).***
 - ***Grow in faith (James 1:2-4).***

MAKING SENSE OF OLD TESTAMENT?

- ***There can be no denial that God commanded Israel to destroy the Canaanites (Deut. 7:1-6; 20:16-18).***





MAKING SENSE OF OLD TESTAMENT?

- **“These stories offend our moral sensibilities. Ironically, however our moral sensibilities in the West have been largely, and for many people unconsciously, shaped by our Judeo-Christian heritage, which has taught us the intrinsic value of human beings, the importance of dealing justly rather than capriciously, and the necessity of the punishment’s fitting the crime. *The Bible itself inculcates the values that these stories seem to violate.*”**

MAKING SENSE OF OLD TESTAMENT?

- For the atheist is there really any such thing as “immoral” or “evil”?
- Is God arbitrary or does he have reasons for His judgments (Gen. 15:13, 16)?
- Inconsistency of accusing God both for intervention and non-intervention re: evil.



MAKING SENSE OF OLD TESTAMENT?

- Did God commit murder as the Creator?
- The O.T. was not the ideal – Israel would bring a universal Messiah into the world.
- Is the deepest problem for the atheist children suffering or a God who will bring judgment upon all of humanity?



