

## “How Long, O Lord?” (The Problem of Evil, Part 1)

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Brian Watson

One of the biggest questions that people have about God, and one of the main reasons why people have a hard time trusting God or believing that he exists, is the presence of evil in the world. A few weeks ago, we collected questions that people would like to ask God, and many of them involved pain and suffering. Here were some of the questions:

“Why do bad things happen to good people?” [This was asked twice.]  
“Why is there so much suffering in foreign countries?”  
“Why are you letting so many people suffer in this world?”  
“Why are young children diagnosed with cancer?”  
“Why do the people we love die when they are not old?”  
“Why do bad things continue to happen to me in my life?”

These questions often cause people to doubt God. In fact, the so-called problem of evil has been called “the rock of atheism,”<sup>1</sup> because the very existence of bad things in the world is supposed to challenge the existence of God.

There are various problems of evil. One is called the logical problem of evil. This states that the very existence of evil is incompatible with a God who is omnipotent and good. Those who believe God and evil can’t coexist assume that God would never allow evil to exist in the first place, or that he would remove as quickly as possible. David Hume (1711–1776) captured this problem of evil rather famously: “Why is there any misery at all in the world? Not by chance, surely. From some cause then. Is it from the intention of the Deity? But he is perfectly benevolent. Is it contrary to his intention? But he is almighty. Nothing can shake the solidity of this reasoning, so short, so clear, so decisive.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, if God is good and loving, he would not allow misery, and if he is all-powerful, he would be able to end misery.<sup>3</sup> So, either he is one or the other, but not both.

However, if a good and all-powerful God has good reasons for allowing evil to occur, there is no reason why this God and evil cannot coexist. Perhaps God allows evil in order to

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<sup>1</sup> The German playwright Georg Büchner (1813–1837) so described the problem of evil, according to Henri Blocher, *Evil and the Cross*, trans. David G. Preston (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 9.

<sup>2</sup> David Hume, “Evil Makes a Strong Case against God’s Existence,” from *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religions*, Part X, in *Philosophy or Religion: Selected Readings*, ed. Michael Peterson, William Hasker, Bruce Reichenbach, David Basinger, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 262.”

<sup>3</sup> We might add that if God is perfectly wise, he would know how to end all misery, pain, suffering, and evil.

realize some greater good. Even if we don't know what exactly this greater good is, this idea shows that there is no logical contradiction involved in God's existence and evil's existence.

A second problem of evil is called the evidential problem of evil. In this argument, people accept that God may very well have a good reason for allowing evil to occur, but they believe that a good, all-powerful God wouldn't allow so much evil to occur in the world. In other words, some people say there simply is too much evil in the world for there to be a God, particularly the God of the Bible. But how could we possibly know how much evil there should be? What is the right amount of evil necessary to produce greater goods?

Then there is a third problem of evil, which we might call the existential problem of evil. This isn't a philosophical argument regarding the existence of God. This is a problem that we all face, whether we're Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, or atheists. This is the question of how we cope in a world full of pain, misery, suffering, heartbreak, and, yes, evil.

Today, I want to begin to explore this issue of evil. Because it's such a big question, I'll continue thinking about it next week. Here's what I want to claim today: any system of belief or worldview that doesn't acknowledge the reality of evil is false; but Christianity does acknowledge that evil is real; the existence of evil is evidence that God exists, because to acknowledge evil is to acknowledge that a standard of good and evil exists; and while the Bible doesn't tell us everything about why evil exists, it tells us that God will fix the problem of evil forever.

Before we get into this discussion, I want to define evil. Today when I use the word "evil," I don't just mean evil people like Hitler, or evil acts like murder or rape. I'm using the word in a very broad sense. When I say "evil," I mean everything that isn't the way things ought to be. We all sense the world isn't the way it ought to be. We feel out of sorts. We witness natural evils, like hurricanes and earthquakes, and also diseases and death. We witness human evils, like theft, rape, and murder. And then there are all kinds of smaller-scale suffering that we endure, like loneliness and depression. So, what is evil? Evil is anything that keeps us from being truly happy. We all want to be happy. Augustine once wrote, "It is the decided opinion of all who use their brains that all men desire to be happy."<sup>4</sup> Anything that disrupts true happiness is evil. I

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<sup>4</sup> Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (New York: Modern Library, 1993), 10.1, quoted in Stewart Goetz, "The Argument from Evil," in *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*, ed. William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 467.

would define “true happiness” as “the way God intended the world to be,” or “the way things ought to be.” I’ll come back to that idea.

Obviously, you don’t need me to tell you that there’s evil in the world. A lot of people aren’t happy. There are many times when *we* aren’t happy. What worldview, religion, or system of thought can make sense of this state of affairs?

There are some religions or beliefs that maintain that evil is just an illusion, or that suffering can be eliminated through eliminating our desires. These concepts are found in eastern religions and in New Age spirituality. My understanding of Buddhism is that Siddharta Gautama, the Buddha, taught that life is an illusion. Our problem is getting wrapped up in this illusion. Or, as one writer puts it, “The problem with existence, Gautama decided, lies in becoming attached to physical life, which is by nature impermanent. The key to salvation is to let go of everything. . . It is sometimes said that self-extinction is the goal of Buddha’s philosophy; it would be better to put it as realizing one’s self-extinctedness. Nonexistence is the reality; one simply has to become aware of it.”<sup>5</sup> All our suffering comes from thinking that we actually exist as persons, and through cravings that come with such thinking. The key to removing suffering is to realize that all is an illusion. If that is true, then evil itself is an illusion. It’s not real. Can we really say that life is an illusion? That death isn’t real?

Some forms of Hinduism are pantheistic. They hold that the individual soul (Atman) is equal to the soul of the world (Brahman). In other words, all things are one. Enlightenment consists of realizing this truth. New Age spirituality is very similar. Several years ago, a New Age teacher named Eckhard Tolle was very popular, in large part because he was endorsed by Oprah Winfrey. His two famous books are *The Power of Now* and *A New Earth*.<sup>6</sup> In the first book, he writes, “[Y]ou are one with all that is.”<sup>7</sup> Tolle believes we are all connected to the Source. For him, the only evil is not to realize this.<sup>8</sup> So, you and death are one. You and a

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<sup>5</sup> Winfried Corduan, *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1998), 223.

<sup>6</sup> Eckhard Tolle, *The Power of Now* (Novata, CA New World Library, 1999); Idem., *A New Earth* (New York: Plume, 2006).

<sup>7</sup> Tolle, *The Power of Now*, 15, quoted in Richard Abanes, *A New Earth, an Old Deception* (Bloomington, MN: Bethany House, 2008), 51.

<sup>8</sup> “If evil has any reality—and it has a relative, not an absolute, reality—this is also its definition: a complete identification with form—physical forms, thought forms, emotional forms. This results in a total unawareness of my connectedness with the whole, my intrinsic oneness with every ‘other’ as well as with the Source.” Tolle, *A New Earth*, 22, quoted in Abanes, *A New Earth, an Old Deception*, 146.

malignant tumor are one. Why fear anything then? All is one. You and Hitler and HIV are one. Does anyone really buy this? Does anyone really live that way?

Buddhists, pantheists, and New Age gurus aren't the only ones to deny the reality of evil. Some atheists do, too. I've recently mentioned that Richard Dawkins, a famous atheist and neo-Darwinist, has said that in a world that is the product of chance, where there is no god, there is no such thing as good and evil.<sup>9</sup> Michael Ruse, another atheist and Darwinist, says,

Unlike Christians, Darwinians do not see that natural evil is a problem. Obviously they do not like it and may feel one has a moral obligation to reduce it, but it is just something that happens. No one causes it, no one is to blame. Moral evil is something fairly readily explicable given Darwinism. We have a natural inclination to selfishness. That is to be expected given that selection works for the individual.<sup>10</sup>

If the world isn't guided by God, why should we expect it would be good? How can we say it's good or bad? It just is. And what we call evil, such as death, is part of the way large-scale, Darwinian evolution works. A rather unorthodox Jesuit priest named Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955), who advocated the theory of evolution, said, "Evil appears necessarily . . . not by accident (which would not much matter) but through the very structure of the system."<sup>11</sup> Without the winnowing fork of death and extinction, natural selection wouldn't work. Species with new and superior traits wouldn't emerge from old ones.<sup>12</sup> So, given what these atheists believe, what we call evil really isn't evil. It's just the way things are. We may not like it, but that's life.

These religions and worldviews want us to believe that evil is an illusion, or doesn't exist, or isn't so bad. But we know better. Evil is real and it's really evil. Death is an outrage. So is murder and rape, and theft. Hurricanes and earthquakes and tsunamis that kill thousands of people aren't the way things ought to be. So, if a religion or philosophy says evil isn't evil,

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<sup>9</sup> "In a universe of electrons and selfish genes, blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but pitiless indifference." Richard Dawkins, "God's Utility Function," *Scientific American* 273 (Nov. 1995): 85.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Ruse, *Darwinism as Religion: What Literature Tells Us about Evolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 192–193.

<sup>11</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (London: Collins, 1959), 313, quoted in Blocher, *Evil and the Cross*, 23.

<sup>12</sup> "Evil becomes a kind of auxiliary motor of the progress that has given rise to it. It acts as a goad to prevent us from getting stuck at the present stage of Evolution, to detach us from a world that is still imperfect, and to project us and throw us out of our own centre into God." Blocher, *Evil and the Cross*, 24.

they're asking you to deny reality. Really, they're asking you not to take them seriously. So, don't.

But Christianity is different. It affirms that evil is a reality. When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we ask God to deliver us from evil (Matt. 6:13), not from an illusion or something that we simply don't like. Evil is something that intruded into God's good creation when the power of sin entered into the world. That is, when human beings started to ignore and reject God and disobey him, evil came into the world. In fact, we might say the presence of evil started with the existence of the devil, Satan. This is somewhat mysterious, but it's very much a part of reality. It is not an illusion.

And the Bible not only describes the reality of evil, it even has many protests against evil. Throughout the Bible, God's people cry out to God and say, "This isn't right! This isn't fair! How long before you remove evil from this world?" Consider some of these verses:

- <sup>1</sup> How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?  
How long will you hide your face from me?
- <sup>2</sup> How long must I take counsel in my soul  
and have sorrow in my heart all the day?  
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? (Ps. 13:1-2)
- <sup>3</sup> O LORD, how long shall the wicked,  
how long shall the wicked exult? (Ps. 94:3)

They cried out with a loud voice, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:10)

These are but a few of the many passages in the Bible that show how evil is something to be mourned, something to be outraged by. In fact, there are whole books of the Bible that take up the theme of evil and injustice. And that is quite interesting because we believe that the Bible is the word of God. Yes, human beings wrote the Bible, but it was God working through these human authors to write what he wanted. So, God himself acknowledges the problem of evil and suffering, and he gives voice to our protests against evil.

This alone, I believe, is actually evidence that Christianity is true. These complaints against evil and injustice match our experience of life. They resonate in our soul in a way that the claims that evil is an illusion don't.

And, strangely, though evil is a problem for Christians, it is also proof that God exists. To know that something is evil, we must have some kind of standard to indicate what is good and what is evil. According to Christian thought, God is the standard of goodness. He is completely and truly good. And everything contrary to God is evil. Atheists have to cope with evil, but they not only have the problem of evil; they also have the problem of good. Why should an atheist expect goodness in a world of chance and chaos? How can an atheist say something is evil? How can they say genocide is evil? Isn't that just evolution at work, the fit competing against the unfit, the strong preying on the weak? I don't think we can discover good and evil. I believe the reality of good and evil need to be revealed to us. The first human beings got into trouble by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They wanted to determine what was good and evil on their own, instead of letting God interpret that reality for them. To know what is good and evil, we need a trustworthy, objective, transcendent standard to measure such realities. In other words, we need God.

With the rest of the time we have this morning, I want us to consider two stories from the Bible that shows how God's people complain about evil, and how God responds. The first is in the Old Testament.<sup>13</sup> It is the story of a prophet named Habakkuk. We don't know much about this prophet other than he was in Judah shortly before the Babylonians came in and attack Jerusalem. If you don't know much about the Bible, this is what is important to know: In the Old Testament, God called a people to himself, Israel. He rescued them out of slavery and Egypt and brought them into the Promised Land. He had given them his law and told them how to worship him and how to live. But they often rebelled against God and worshiped the false gods of the surrounding nations. Because of their sin, God judged them in various ways, eventually bringing in foreign armies to conquer them.

Habakkuk begins with this complaint. This is Habakkuk 1:1–4:

<sup>1</sup> The oracle that Habakkuk the prophet saw.

<sup>2</sup> O LORD, how long shall I cry for help,  
and you will not hear?  
Or cry to you "Violence!"  
and you will not save?

<sup>3</sup> Why do you make me see iniquity,

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<sup>13</sup> If we had more time, I would discuss the story of Job. To understand that powerful story from the Old Testament, visit <https://wbcommunity.org/job>.

- and why do you idly look at wrong?  
Destruction and violence are before me;  
strife and contention arise.
- 4 So the law is paralyzed,  
and justice never goes forth.  
For the wicked surround the righteous;  
so justice goes forth perverted.

Habakkuk, like the Psalmists and like Job, ask God, “How long?” He was complaining against the injustice of the Jews in his day. The law, God’s commands, had no power to restrain their evil. They were doing wicked things, and Habakkuk thought that justice would never come. He was wondering why God didn’t respond to his cries.

Then God spoke. Look at verses 5–11:

- 5 “Look among the nations, and see;  
wonder and be astounded.  
For I am doing a work in your days  
that you would not believe if told.
- 6 For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans,  
that bitter and hasty nation,  
who march through the breadth of the earth,  
to seize dwellings not their own.
- 7 They are dreaded and fearsome;  
their justice and dignity go forth from themselves.
- 8 Their horses are swifter than leopards,  
more fierce than the evening wolves;  
their horsemen press proudly on.  
Their horsemen come from afar;  
they fly like an eagle swift to devour.
- 9 They all come for violence,  
all their faces forward.  
They gather captives like sand.
- 10 At kings they scoff,  
and at rulers they laugh.  
They laugh at every fortress,  
for they pile up earth and take it.
- 11 Then they sweep by like the wind and go on,  
guilty men, whose own might is their god!”

God tells Habakkuk that he was going to do something that would astound him. In fact, he was already at work doing thing. God was raising up the Chaldeans, better known as the Babylonians, to punish the idolatrous and rebellious Jews, the very people God had called to himself. Babylon

was becoming the superpower of the world and their warriors were fierce. God was telling Habakkuk that justice was coming soon.

But this news caused Habakkuk to complain about something else. We see that in the next section, Habakkuk 1:12–2:1:

- <sup>12</sup> Are you not from everlasting,  
O LORD my God, my Holy One?  
We shall not die.  
O LORD, you have ordained them as a judgment,  
and you, O Rock, have established them for reproof.
- <sup>13</sup> You who are of purer eyes than to see evil  
and cannot look at wrong,  
why do you idly look at traitors  
and remain silent when the wicked swallows up  
the man more righteous than he?
- <sup>14</sup> You make mankind like the fish of the sea,  
like crawling things that have no ruler.
- <sup>15</sup> He brings all of them up with a hook;  
he drags them out with his net;  
he gathers them in his dragnet;  
so he rejoices and is glad.
- <sup>16</sup> Therefore he sacrifices to his net  
and makes offerings to his dragnet;  
for by them he lives in luxury,  
and his food is rich.
- <sup>17</sup> Is he then to keep on emptying his net  
and mercilessly killing nations forever?
- <sup>1</sup> I will take my stand at my watchpost  
and station myself on the tower,  
and look out to see what he will say to me,  
and what I will answer concerning my complaint.

Habakkuk's complaint is found in verse 13. He basically says to God, "You are too pure to even look upon evil. How can you then use the wicked Babylonians to judge those who are less wicked? This isn't fair! These Babylonians capture people like a fisherman captures fish. They continue to kill and kill your people! Where's the justice in that?"

God answers again. We'll just look at the first three verses of his response, verses 2–4 of chapter 2:

<sup>2</sup> And the LORD answered me:

"Write the vision;



- make it plain on tablets,  
 so he may run who reads it.
- <sup>3</sup> For still the vision awaits its appointed time;  
 it hastens to the end—it will not lie.  
 If it seems slow, wait for it;  
 it will surely come; it will not delay.
- <sup>4</sup> “Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him,  
 but the righteous shall live by his faith.

Then God delivers a series of “woes” to the Babylonians, saying that they will be put to shame, made to drink the cup of God’s wrath, and put to destruction (verses 15–17). He also says,

For the earth will be filled  
 with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD  
 as the waters cover the sea (verse 14).

The point is that though God was using wicked people to judge Israel, he would judge those wicked people, too. Justice would be done. And, in the end, the whole earth will be filled with God’s glory. Everyone will one day know the true God and one day all things will be made right.

In the meantime, God’s people must trust that God will make things right. That is why God says, “the righteous will live by his faith.” The one who is in a right relationship with God must trust that God will make all things right, even when everything now seems wrong. For Habakkuk, things seemed very wrong. Most of the world didn’t acknowledge the true God. Even the people who were supposed to be God’s people, the Israelites, weren’t acknowledging God. They were doing what was wrong. And Habakkuk complained to God. But God told him, “Son, just wait. I have this under control. I know what I’m doing. Trust me. I will judge everyone and all things will be well. Just trust me and you will live.”

In the third chapter of Habakkuk, the prophet responds with a psalm, a song or prayer. He says that he will wait for that day. He trusts God. He ends with these words, in verses 17–19:

- <sup>17</sup> Though the fig tree should not blossom,  
 nor fruit be on the vines,  
 the produce of the olive fail  
 and the fields yield no food,  
 the flock be cut off from the fold  
 and there be no herd in the stalls,  
<sup>18</sup> yet I will rejoice in the Lord;  
 I will take joy in the God of my salvation.  
<sup>19</sup> GOD, the Lord, is my strength;  
 he makes my feet like the deer’s;

he makes me tread on my high places.

Habakkuk says, “Even though things look bleak now, even if there’s famine now, I will rejoice in God. I look forward to the day of salvation. I will take joy in God, for he is my strength, and he will take care of me.” That is faith.

You see, Christianity is not really an explanation of every single thing that happens in the world. The Bible isn’t an encyclopedia that gives us all the answers. What it is a story about God and his world, and about his people. While it doesn’t give us all the answers, it tells us a very important story. God made a good world, and sin corrupted it. Somehow, all the evil in the world is related to the power of sin at work in the world. When the first human beings disobeyed God, the relationship between God and people was fractured. Sin separates us from God. Sin separates us from one another. Sin separates us from the creation, in the sense that there are now natural disasters and life is difficult. And sin even separates us from the people we ought to be. All the bad things in this life are a result of sin. That doesn’t mean all the bad things that happen to us are a result of our sins. Christianity is not karma. Sometimes, we suffer for reasons we don’t understand. Sometimes, other things are happening, things that we couldn’t possibly understand. I think the book of Job illustrates that quite well.

But God doesn’t leave us with the story of a broken world. If that were the end of the story—things are bad because people sinned instead of trusting God, and then you die—it would be a bad, bad story. But that’s not the end of the story.

No, God had a plan to make things right, to remove the evil in the world. And that story centers on Jesus. As I said last week, God himself entered into the world. The author of life entered into his own creation in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The Son of God became a human being. He did this in order to live the perfect life that we don’t live. God’s design for humanity was for people to represent him, rule the world under his authority, reflect his character, worship him, and love him. But we don’t do those things. We tend to act as if we are the center of reality. We try to be our own little gods. This is rebellion. But Jesus always represented and reflected God the Father perfectly. He always came under the Father’s authority and worshiped and loved him. Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s purposes for humanity. But Jesus did something else. Jesus also took the punishment that we deserve for that rebellion. Jesus took the penalty for our crimes against God. To put it more precisely, Jesus took the sins of everyone who trusts him, so that they can have their evil removed and their sins forgiven.

During Jesus' life, he experienced pain, suffering, loss, and evil. The very people who should have known who he was rejected him and mocked him. They called him names. Then they arrested him on false charges, they tortured him, and they killed him. Jesus, the Son of God, very God and very man, knows evil firsthand. And he suffered willingly, even though he was innocent, in order to rescue us from pain, suffering, and evil.

And when Jesus was approaching the time when he would voluntarily take on God's wrath against sin—as he was approaching the time when he would experience hell on earth—he protested. The night before his death, he told his disciples that his soul was “very sorrowful, even to death” (Matt. 26:38). Then he cried out to God the Father, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me” (Matt. 26:39). In Luke's Gospel, we're told that Jesus' “sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44). Then, after being arrested and beaten, Jesus was crucified, which was an agonizing way to die. His suffering was beyond the physical pain of being nailed to a cross and left to suffer until he could no longer breathe. His true pain came from feeling as though he were separated and abandoned by God the Father. He cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt. 27:46). Yet though Jesus protested his suffering, he trusted God. When he asked whether it were possible for the cup of God's wrath to pass him, he said, “not as I will, but as you will” (Matt. 26:38). And when he died on the cross, he said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” (Luke 23:46). He trusted God, though his pain was great.

Jesus was able to trust God because he knew that all things would be well. He knew his story didn't end in death. He knew he would rise from the grave victorious, to show that he paid the penalty for sin and to show that one day God will restore his creation. All who trust in Jesus, though they may die, will rise from the grave in bodies that can never die again, and they will live in a renewed world, one without sin and suffering, one without murder and war, one without death. And then, all will be well, and all manner of things will be well. There will no longer be evil, but only peace and love.

I'm going to say more about Jesus next week, because I think the story of Jesus lets us peer into the mystery of evil. If we can say why God would allow evil to emerge in this world, we are only able to do so because of Jesus. But for now, I want us to understand the following truths.

First, the Bible says that God is good. He is the very definition of goodness and love. And he made a good world.

Second, though the origin of evil is a bit of a mystery, evil in the world is connected to the presence of sin in the world. But evil is not eternal. If the world were always evil, then I think that would pose a significant and possibly insurmountable challenge to Christianity. But evil is not the perfect match to God's goodness. In the end, evil has a limited lifespan. And evil has limited power.

Third, Christianity views evil as an outrage. Death is described as an enemy (1 Cor. 15:26), one that will be destroyed. Injustice of all kinds is an outrage. The cries against evil in the Bible resonate with the cries against evil that rise up in our own throats and that pour out in our own tears.

Fourth, though the Bible doesn't answer every question about Evil, it says that God is not aloof. He's not distant and uncaring. He does care about evil. He cares so much that he sent his own Son to experience evil. And the Son, the co-creator of the universe, entered into his own creation and subjected himself to human evil. The Bible also says that God is all-powerful and good. He is able to remove evil from the world and desires to do so. In fact, we're promised that he will do that in the end. But the way that God removes evil from his people is by experiencing that evil himself. We may not understand everything about evil—in fact, that's what makes evil so evil, because it's irrational and confusing—but we can understand that Jesus experienced evil to save us. This is a God you can trust, even if we can't understand everything about him.

Fifth, the Bible also says that one day God will finally and conclusively remove all evil from the world. For those who trust Jesus, who are united to him by faith, their evil has already been paid for. When Jesus returns, he will utterly transform us so that we won't sin anymore. And we will live forever. Indeed, those who have faith in Jesus will live because they have been declared righteous and they will be righteous. But those who don't trust Jesus will be removed from God's good creation. Those who don't trust God and his Son, who complain without faith, who claim that, if God exists, he's evil, or who don't claim that he exists at all, will be condemned. So, evil has an expiration date, but love, goodness, and justice don't. God invites us to trust his promises and have eternal life. He asks us to trust his Son and his work on our behalf.

In the end, Jesus is the answer to the problem of evil. He is the only answer. And we must put our trust in him, even when things look bleak. We trust that things will not always be that way.

I can affirm that there simply is no other satisfying response to the problem of evil. If God doesn't exist, there's no evil—and there's no good! If everything is an illusion, or if death is simply part of the engine of evolution, there's no hope. This is how things are and this is how things will always be. But if goodness triumphs over evil, and Goodness himself took the worst evil, absorbed it, and then rose from the grave, and if he'll come again to crush evil finally and ultimately, then there's hope. If you're not a Christian, I would love to tell you more about Jesus.<sup>14</sup> He is the only key that will unlock the riddle of evil. Put your faith in him and live.

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<sup>14</sup> To learn much more about Jesus, visit <https://wbcommunity.org/jesus>.