

LECTURE 1:

What is the problem of evil?

I. The nature of evil

A. General meaning of

B. Evil as cause and as effect

1. As effect = suffering

a) Physical and psychological

b) Positive and negative

2. As cause

a) Personal causes

(i) God

(ii) Angels

(iii) Man

b) Impersonal (or natural) causes

C. The common distinction between "natural" and "moral" evil

	Physical suffering	Psychological suffering
Positive: Resulting from presence of what ought not be	Injuries	Insults
Negative: Resulting from absence of what ought to be	Hunger, thirst	Neglect (e.g., lack of love)

II. The problem of evil

A. General form of the problem for theism: the classical trilemma

1. **Premise 1:** If God is omniscient, he would have certainly known about every instance of evil long before it occurred

2. **Premise 2:** If God is omnipotent, He could have prevented each instance before it occurred

3. **Premise 3:** If God is omnibenevolent, He would have prevented each instance.

4. **Premise 4:** But evil has not been prevented.

5. Therefore, a God who is omniscient and omnipotent and omnibenevolent does not exist.

- B. Specific forms of the problem for Christian theism
- C. Intellectual versus emotional dimensions of the problem

III. Preliminary comments regarding the solution

- A. The intellectual and emotional problems require different solutions
- B. We must consider our audience
- C. We must uphold God's glory above our feelings or supposed needs
- D. We must avoid platitudes
- E. We must avoid the appeal to mystery unless necessary
- F. **Objection 1**: Do we have the ability to solve this problem?
- G. **Objection 2**: Do we have the right to solve the problem?

IV. An overview of the lectures