

WHY DO WE HAVE HURRICANES ?

Int.

1. Aim: To discuss the problem of Evil and especially the questions about natural calamities.
2. Job. 14:1-2 “Man [that is] born of a woman [is] of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.”
3. Question: “Why do we have Hurricanes?” In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina many questions are being asked.
 - a. Will not attempt to explain how hurricanes form and come about from the scientific view
 - b. But will attempt to explain why God made this world so that hurricanes are a part of things in this world.
4. There are many atheists in this world
 - a. Atheist = one who holds that there is enough evidence to justify the conclusion that God does not exist.
 - b. Theist = one who holds that there is enough evidence to justify the conclusion that God does exist.
5. One of the reasons some are atheists is because of what is called the problem of evil, or that is “why do we have hurricanes” and other tragedies?

Discussion

I. PROBLEM OF EVIL

- A. Why do atheists claim that they know God does not exist?
 1. The enormous amount of evil on earth is the most powerful force for atheism
 2. The way they reason the characteristics of God seem to contradict the existence of evil in the world.
 - a. The Problem
 - (1) God is all powerful = omnipotent
 - (2) God is all good = omnibenevolent
 - (3) Evil exists in this world

- (4) Good is opposed to evil in such a way that it eliminates all evil, if possible.
- (5) There are no limits to what an all powerful being can do.
- (6) A good all powerful being would eliminate evil completely.

b. Conclusion reached by the Atheist - God Does Not Exist

- (1) Logical contradiction in having 3 things:
 - (a) God is all powerful
 - (b) God is good
 - (c) Evil exists
- (2) If God is all powerful and all good then evil would not exist
- (3) If God is all powerful and evil exists then God is not all good.
- (4) If God is all good and evil exists then God is not all powerful.

B. This question is a difficult one that we must face

1. There is suffering all around us:

- a. People mistreating others - murder, robbery
- b. Suffering - sickness, cancer, accidents
- c. Misery falls upon the innocent and righteous as well as the wicked
 - (1) Tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, droughts, heat waves, blizzards, tsunamis
 - (2) Animals sometimes destroy or maim humans
 - (3) Wars bring destruction of life and property

2. Questions come:

- a. Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? If so then God is not all powerful, but weak like human beings.
- b. Is God able to prevent evil, but not willing? If so then God is not good but bad!
- c. Why do we have suffering if a good, all powerful God designed and created the world?

3. Implication of these questions:

- a. If suffering exists then God does not exist
- b. Suffering exists
- c. Therefore God does not exist. This is the conclusion of the atheists !

C. We need to answer the question - We will notice these 3 things

1. What is evil ?
2. There are limits to what an all powerful being can do.
3. It is not the case that a good, all powerful being eliminates evil completely.

II. WHAT IS EVIL ?

A. Sin is the only real evil in this world

1. 1 Jn. 3:4 "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
2. Rom. 3:19 "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."
3. Rom. 4:15 "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, [there is] no transgression."
4. Sin is the transgression of God's will
 - a. Murder - Robbery
 - b. Gal. 5:19-21 - works of flesh
5. Evil does exist upon this earth
6. Later we will notice that these natural calamities such as tornadoes, hurricanes, floods and earthquakes and other things that bring human suffering are not really evil.
7. Sin is the only real EVIL in this world.

B. It is not evil that evil exists!! God is not to be blamed for sin

1. It is impossible to create a man who could not sin !
2. Man is a free moral agent. We have the choice to do evil or do good.
3. We are responsible for our own sins.
4. This life on earth is our one and only trial period in which our eternal fate will be decided. We have the choice of obeying or disobeying God.
5. If God had not created man with such freedom, then he would have been a puppet or robot.

C. The only real evil in this world is sin and man is responsible for that!!!

III. THERE ARE LIMITS TO WHAT AN ALL POWERFUL BEING CAN DO

- A. There are some things that are logical impossibilities
 - 1. Four sided triangle - a triangle by definition has only 3 sides
 - 2. Round square - by definition a square is not round
 - 3. God cannot make a rock so big that he cannot lift it !

- B. It is a logical contradiction to say that is possible to create an intelligent, free moral agent, and then place him in a situation in which he was beyond all possibility of sinning!
 - 1. There are some things that just cannot be done. It is not due to a lack of power or intelligence or goodness.
 - 2. There is simply no way to make a man a free moral agent and him be beyond the possibility of sinning.

- C. God wants man to love him
 - 1. John 14:15
 - 2. God desires that men obey him because of love for Him.
 - 3. In order to do this, we must be free moral agents, deciding to come in love to live as a Son of God. Love cannot be forced. It is voluntary.

- D. Man's choice to sin brought death
 - 1. 1 Cor. 15:21 "For since by man [came] death, by man [came] also the resurrection of the dead."
 - a. Adam and Eve in Garden of Eden
 - b. Were told not to eat of Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil
 - c. They did - it was sin - they were expelled from garden
 - d. They began to die because they were separated from the tree of life

2. Death brought disease and suffering into this world
 - a. John 16:33 “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”
 - b. Job 14:1-2 “Man [that is] born of a woman [is] of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.”
3. It is true that God made man with the possibility that he could sin. It was necessary that he make us this way, so we could love him. But God is not responsible for the sins committed by man!

IV. IT IS NOT THE CASE THAT A GOOD, ALL POWERFUL BEING ELIMINATES EVIL COMPLETELY

A. Summary:

1. Problem of evil - logical contradiction - A good, powerful God exists and there is evil.
2. There are limits to what an all powerful God can do or will do
 - a. He cannot make a 4 sided triangle
 - b. God cannot lie - Tit. 1:2 “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;”
 - c. God cannot make a man who is a free moral agent, without giving him the liberty to choose right or wrong.
 - d. It is an impossibility to create a man who could not sin
 - (1) It is not that God is not good - It is not that God is weak
 - (2) There is no way to make man a free moral agent and not be able to sin!!
3. The only real evil in this world is sin !
 - a. Sin is a violation of God’s laws - 1 Jn. 3:4
 - b. The world in which we live has things which produce pain and suffering - tornadoes, hurricanes, blizzards, floods and earthquakes.
 - c. Why did God create the world in such a way ?

B. Could the world be improved?

1. This world is as good as any possible world could be in serving as man's temporary abiding place.
2. Natural calamities [like tornadoes] are not in themselves evil. Rather they play an important role in making this world the ideal place for man to live.
3. God created man so he could make his own decisions about serving God. It was God's aim that all men serve Him.
 - a. John 10:10 "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have [it] more abundantly."
 - b. 1 John 2:25 "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, [even] eternal life."
4. What kind of world is suited for man?
 - a. Not a pleasure paradise in which man could not experience pain or adversity
 - b. Allows man to be a free moral agent.
 - c. Provides basic physical needs
 - d. Challenges man's intellectual powers
 - e. Challenges man to become a follower of God, but at a great sacrifice.
 - f. Where the things that occur are small in comparison to eternity.
5. This world is made for man to live where he can develop morally and spiritually, and it's as good as any world could be for that purpose!

C. God is all knowing - omniscient

1. God knows all things, including the future
2. God knew that man would fall into sin before that sin actually occurred.
 - a. Because of his love and mercy He desired to save man from the consequences of his sin
 - b. God knew that a man would need a place to develop so he could come back and obey God.
3. So God created this world for this purpose. There can be no better world, for the purpose of learning to obey God, than the one God created!

- D. But what about tornadoes, hurricanes, floods and earthquakes where many people are killed, or injured and many of them children or babies?
1. No man has the knowledge to explain every case of such calamities.
 2. But it must be remembered that God did not create this world as man's permanent dwelling place. It is only a temporary place where man makes his decision about whether to Obey God!
 3. It is good for man to realize that his life on earth will be brief and the exact time it will end is uncertain.
 4. These natural calamities help keep man to be reminded of these important facts:
 - a. Life will end - Jas. 4:14 "Whereas ye know not what [shall be] on the morrow. For what [is] your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."
 - b. That the exact time of its ending is unknown - Mt. 24:44 "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."
 - c. That the things of earth are only temporary
 - (1) Mat. 6:19-20 "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: 20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:"
 - (2) 1 Tim. 6:7-8 "For we brought nothing into [this] world, [and it is] certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and raiment let us be therewith content."

V. WHY DO THE RIGHTEOUS SUFFER ?

- A. In some cases righteous men suffer longer and more intensely than the very wicked.
1. Some would reason that if God really loved the righteous he would not allow them to suffer.
 2. Since the righteous do suffer they conclude that God does not really love them, or that God does not even exist.

- B. There are several reasons why the righteous are not exempt from pain and suffering.
1. If it automatically removed all problems then many would obey only for that reason
 - a. God does not want that.
 - b. God wants us to serve Him because we love him - Jn. 14:15 - not to escape from cancer, or to escape injuries or disease.

 2. God has not promised that the righteous will be exempt from sin and suffering. John 16:33 “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

 3. Without suffering the righteous could not sympathize with men.
 - a. We could not know how others feel and could not meet their needs.
 - b. Christ suffered just like we do. - 1 Pet. 2:21 “For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.”

 4. Pain HUMBLEs us
 - a. 2 Cor. 12:7 “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.”
 - (1) Paul’s thorn in the flesh was a problem
 - (2) It helped him not to become proud - or arrogant.
 - b. Sometimes suffering helps us realize we’re not self sufficient.
 - c. A disease or sickness helps us realize that no matter how many friends we have, no matter what our situation in life, that there are sometimes when no one can help us but God.

5. Ps. 119:71 “[It is] good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.”
 - a. Suffering helps us to see that this life soon will be over
 - b. That the truly important things in life pertain to the soul
 - c. Therefore we ought to learn God’s statutes or laws for living.

CONCLUSION

1. The problem of evil - with suffering and pain are really small when we think of eternity - either the blessings of heaven or the punishments of hell.
 - a. It will not doubt be the case that when men reach heaven, they will be amazed to recall that they ever grumbled or doubted while in the midst of suffering while on earth.
 - b. They will say that even if their suffering had been a million times more than it was, it still would have been no more than the snap of a finger in comparison with the grandeur and glory now experienced.
 - c. 2 Cor. 4:17, 18 “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight of glory; 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen [are] temporal; but the things which are not seen [are] eternal.”
 - d. The Bible teaches that the punishments of hell will be so great that even if the suffering of earthly life were a million times worse than they actually were, it would be small in comparison to what one suffers in hell.
 - e. 2 Thes. 1:7-9 “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;”

2. The length of earthly life is but a moment in comparison with the eternity in which one shall either enjoy the fellowship of God or else suffer the loss of that fellowship eternally.

3. What is evil?
 - a. Anything that interferes with our life as a child of God is evil
 - b. Rom. 6:23 - sin
 - c. Pain, misery, misfortunes of earthly living, such as tornadoes, are not evil.
4. God has some things He cannot do, because they are not subject to power.
5. A good, all powerful God does not eliminate all evil and suffering.
 - a. It is not best for man
 - b. God knew the kind of world that would be best for man and sometimes that includes things like tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes and floods.
6. God has prepared a better place for us - Heaven
 - a. Suffering helps us to be "homesick"
 - b. Suffering is not contrary to the goodness of God - even Christ was subjected to suffering - Heb. 5:8
 - c. We may not understand everything about human suffering and heartache.
 - d. But we can know enough to recognize that the charge of the Atheist that suffering proves that God does not exist is false
 - e. If man will use the wisdom that God has given to him he can use the adversities of life to mold the kind of character with which the Lord is pleased.

Bibliography

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