

Classical Theism (18):

The Evidential Problem of Evil (2): The Evil for a Greater Good Theodicy

Where is God? Where is the Glory of God?



Classical Theism (18): The Evidential Problem of Evil (2): All Evil is for a Greater Good Theodicy

Bible Doctrines (The True-Good-Beautiful)

T/G/B

Eschatology
 Thanatology
 Ecclesiology
 Israelology
 Dispensationalism
 Doxology
 Hodology
 Soteriology
 Hamartiology
 Natural Law
 Anthropology
 Angelology
 Pneumatology
 Christology
 Paterology
 Trinitarianism
 Cosmology
 Theology Proper
 Bibliology
 Natural Theology

Opening passage: Psa. 73:24-25; Matt. 22:37-39.

Preparation for the Word of God: Rom. 1:20-25; 8:1-8. The problem of suppression and partial truth.

3 Parts to Bible Class: Testimony against Freud, Feuerbach, & religion-creating man of Rm. 1:20.

Part I: Spiritual basics: 20 minutes on love and the spiritual life.

Part II: Philosophical foundations: 5-10 minutes on hermeneutics of Heidegger.

Part III: Doctrinal development: The need for WT, TT—both natural revelation and special revelation—to keep modern mental frameworks out of our theology, anthropology, and cosmology, and SL.

Part I: The biblical, spiritual, and metaphysical nature of love and the spiritual life (5).

1. Consider how so-called “Bible-onlyism” has ruined our true understanding of love and the spiritual life.
2. The foundation and life spring of the spiritual life is love, 1 Cor. 13.
3. This love is developed in a 2nd person relationship with God.
4. Consider parallel virtues related to love and the ministry of the Holy Spirit, Gal. 5:22-23.
5. Consider what the Bible says about the power of HS & love to fulfill God’s Word, Rm 8:4-5; 13:8-14;
6. Freedom of choice to love is constrained by antecedent factors such the nature of a person’s mind and will. It is not an absolute freedom that anyone has either on a natural or supernatural level. For example, a person who lacks clear concept of good (sins of ignorance are still sins) or a disordered will is limited in capacity to love. Such a person’s freedom to love is restricted or entirely absent. Chronic carnality destroys capacity to truly love and respect God for His own sake.
7. Failure of actualized mind or will with respect to the Good diminishes capacity and restricts freedom to love God. With every choice of sin, the believer loses a basic free attitude toward God.
8. The person who has actualized the potentials of his mind and will toward God is going to have a far different mindset and desire than one who actualizes his mind and will with regard to sin.
9. Acceptance or refusal of grace comes through acceptance or refusal of God. Grace is not something you can get through conduit Christianity. Negative decisions against God is a negative decision against God.
10. The supernatural life is a matter of actualization of God’s grace in the life.
11. The believer who lives for God may fail due to a weak mind and will, but still grow in his relationship with God because of a deeper level (2nd order will) of openness to God.
11. Peace/shalom is a result of the will and the mind in harmony, on a natural and/or supernatural level. There is no full and complete peace until 1st and 2nd order will is in harmony around the Good.

5: Hermeneutics

4: Language-99

3: Epistemology 32

- Existence 50
- History 50

2:Metaphysics 32

- Trans. 50

1: Reality

- Logic 32,
- Truth 32

Part 2: Philosophy of Language (99)

Outline

- ✓ Introduction
- ✓ What is philosophy of language?
- ✓ Theories of meaning
- ✓ Plato's *Cratylus*
 - Hermogenes
 - Cratylus
 - Socrates
- ✓ Aristotle (384-322 BC)
- ✓ Transition to modern philosophy of language
- ✓ Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913)
- ✓ Gottlob Frege (1848-1925)
- ✓ Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951).

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976).

W. V. O. Quine (1908-2000).

Noam Chomsky (1928-)

Realist view of meaning.

Foundation of meaning.

Communication of meaning.

Elements of language.

Function of language

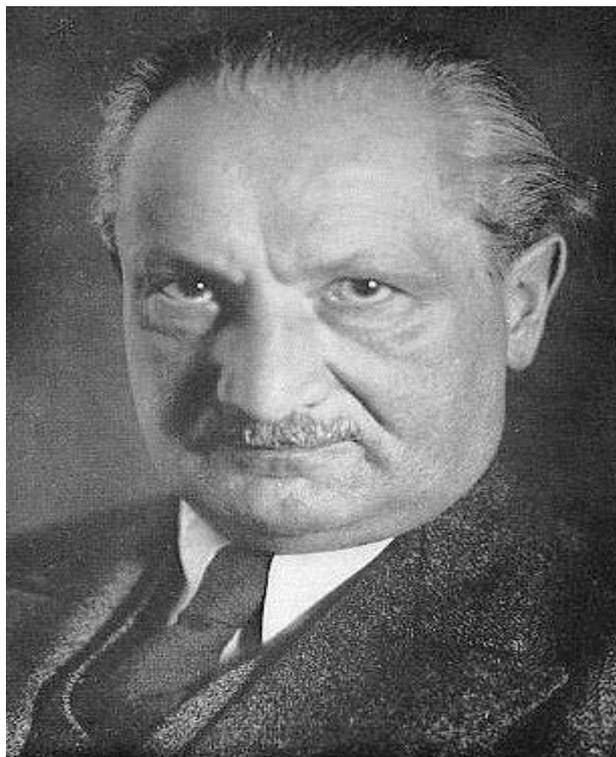
Meaningful God-talk.

Analytic Philosophy

Conclusion.

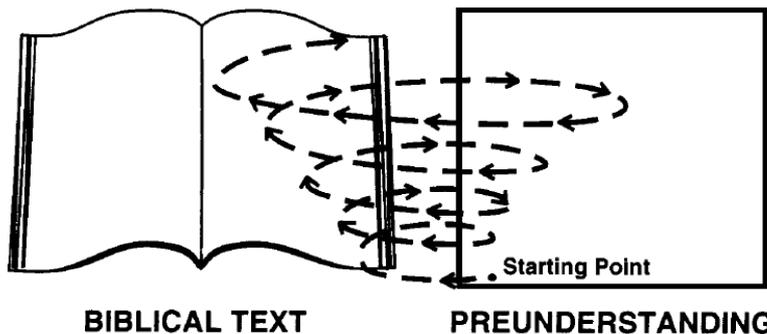
Analogy.

Metaphysical analogy.



Martin Heidegger

HERMENEUTICAL SPIRAL



1. Consider how so called “Bible-onlyism” and modern philosophy has corrupted hermeneutics in both the local church as well as among as the brightest and most accomplished Christian scholars who write books on hermeneutics (Grant Osborne, Moises Silva). They have all but given up any model for objective understanding of the Bible. This subjectivity extends to the lexicons and theological dictionaries used for exegesis (cf., Bultmann in TDNT).
2. Martin Heidegger reframed the whole question of interpretation by introducing his *Dasein*, Being, as the interpretive anchor. His *Dasein* is not the same as “being” in metaphysical realism. His *Dasein* is refers to phenomenological “reality.”
3. Martin Heidegger's “historicism” precludes objective biblical interpretation.
4. Heidegger gives us the hermeneutic circle of *Dasein*, rather than making a distinction between subject and object where the knowing subject stands over the known object.
5. With *Dasein* we have the circle between being and the text.

**Classical Theism (18):
The Evidential Problem of Evil (2)
So, where is God? Where is His glory?**



Classical Theism (18): The Evidential Problem of Evil (2)

1. William Rowe's evidential problem of evil argument against the existence of God:
 - P1- There is gratuitous suffering/evil in the world (suffering fawn).
 - P2- A good God would not allow gratuitous suffering/evil.
 - P3—Therefore, such a God does not exist.
2. Gratuitous suffering is defined as suffering that does not produce a greater amount of good or prevent some greater amount evil *in this life*. This includes both natural evil well as moral evil.
3. The move in neo-theism and contemporary Christianity is to deny P1. The greater good in this life is framed in terms of virtue or soul making. In the greater good theodicy there is always a commensurate good that accompanies any and all evil. Their goal is to exonerate God by means of sufficient *moral* reasons. There is the best of intentions of those who use the G-G theodicy.
4. Denial of P2 is more consistent with natural revelation as well as supernatural revelation.

Classical Theism (18): The Evidential Problem of Evil (2)

5. Reflection on natural and supernatural revelation regarding evil, suffering, concurrence, and providence of *Esse*: Gen. 3:14-19, 4:11-12; 20:1-7; Deut. 28:14-15; 32:4; Isa. 5:1-13; Ezek. 18:32; Matt. 5:1-16; John 15:20; 16:7-15; Rom. 3:8-20; 8:28; Eph. 2:1-3, 4:17-20; Philip. 1:29; 2:12-13; Col. 1:16-17; 1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Pet. 2:8; 3:14; Heb. 1:3; 11:1; 1 Jn. 1:5; Rev. 13:8; 17:17.
6. The POE touches almost every major doctrine in the Bible, e.g., creation, the Fall, original sin, salvation, sovereignty, metaphysics, providence, love, omniscience, omnipotence. Christians need to be able to give an appropriate response without being subversive to doctrines of the Bible or the nature of God. We must be careful not to undermine Total Truth.
7. The problem of evil is not just theoretical it is very existential and many faithful men and women of God have suffered greatly in trying to figure out the whys. Moreover, we need to move beyond Job's friends.

Classical Theism (18): The Evidential Problem of Evil (2)

8. A few reflections on the G-G theodicy.
 - a. Philosophical realism provides the right categories and enables one to avoid logical mistakes regarding evil, suffering, and the nature of God when examining the biblical data. Consider how WT, TT, has opened up reality as far as love, man, God, and the spiritual life.
 - b. The Bible does not teach that God promotes evil to get to a good or that He only allows evil in this world that will bring a greater good in this world.
 - c. It is a logical mistake to go from what God might do with evil and suffering to explain why He allowed the evil and suffering.

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- d. A distinction needs to be made between a reason for suffering and a purpose of suffering. We suffer because we are in a broken, fallen, and dark world. There is no *necessary* direct purpose for *all* suffering. The fawn dies because it is in fire and God upholds natural laws as He does with our genetic maladies.
- e. A distinction needs to be made between God bringing good out of evil and the notion that God authors evil for the purpose of getting good that He otherwise could not get.

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- f. The G-G theodicy makes theism less credible and coherent by positing that there exists a one to one correspondence of suffering (like the horrendous suffering of 60 million slaughtered by Stalin, the 1-3 million by Pol Pot, the 8 million by Hitler, or the pain and suffering of the 3,000 at the World Trade Tower) to proportional good designed by God. The idea is in the G-G theodicy is that there is a corresponding one-to-one greater good on a particular level rather the good on a universal level or the world as a whole. The fear is that if God does not being a greater good or lesser evil then God cannot be morally justified.
- g. The one-to-one correspondence generally collapses into some type of universalism (Hick, Adams). It is not difficult to see why.

Classical Theism (18): The Evidential Problem of Evil (2)

- h. G-G theodicy not only makes God the author of sin and sees God as needing sin to get good.
- i. G-G tends toward fatalism because it looks for a reason for every single suffering rather than realizing that some suffering is just a result of free will and life in a fallen world. This is not to deny that God can bring good out of any suffering.
- j. In concurrence, *Esse* gives man limited free will (compatibilism) and establishes a created order with universe laws and consequences that He upholds and respects. God respects the moral freedom of creatures even though this freedom causes much pain for those who abuse freedom as well as for others.
- k. The Good that the believer is to *look for* and emphasize is in the next life. Moreover, as the believer opens himself up to the grace and mercy of God in suffering, he gains hope, peace, strength, and transformation, Romans 8:28-39. It is false to teach that all things work together for good for all believers as per Demas.

DIVINE CONCURRENCE AND HUMAN FREE WILL
TO UNDERSTAND GOD'S ACTIVITY IN ALL THINGS

1. In every act there is both primary (infinite) and secondary (finite) causality.
2. While the two causes can be cognitively distinguished, they are inextricable and would not exist apart from each other.
3. Man's free will is given its existential act by God. No act can exist apart from God—none! No such thing as an autonomous free will.
4. God sustains the free will and all of its acts every instant as the primary cause.
5. However, man is the secondary cause and gives *form* to the act in his secondary causality.

6. So, God is the efficient cause of all things that be, but man gives the formal cause of free will acts.
7. The form finds its source in man's intentionality.
8. For example, when a rapist rapes a woman, both God and man are involved in the existence of all that exists.
9. God is the efficient causality in giving existence to the rapist and the rapee along with all of their activities.

10. But God is not the formal cause of the act, namely rape.
11. The form is what makes things be what they are. In this case, what makes rape rape is in the finite agent, not God.
12. God is the infinite cause and man is the finite cause of all activities.
13. Everything that is in being in the rape is caused to be by God, but what makes rape rape in the moral order comes from its form from man.

14. Again, it is the finite agent who is the principle cause of the form of the act or the effect.
15. Neither the infinite agent nor the finite agent brings about activities alone. The former leads to determinism the later to libertarianism.
16. There is a certain mystery in concurrence that can be compared to a chemical reaction in which one no longer sees the separate chemicals.

17. Libertarianism violates the basic principle of divine concurrence.
 - a. It violates the principles of *Esse* and the metaphysics of act and potential. A thing cannot actualize itself.
 - b. In libertarianism the action of the will is up to the agent's power. So, a free act is never the effect of God's power.
 - c. In libertarianism antecedent factors are not an issue.
 - d. In libertarianism there is no divine concurrence moving the will from potential to actual.
 - e. Libertarianism is a result of anthropomorphizing God. If one paints God in anthropomorphic terms, not only will the arguments from the atheists take on more weight, the believer will be disoriented and his faith will be shaken when he runs into a crisis and "his" God does not seem to be there—one who is well behaved, good, and moral like one would expect from a man-like God.

18. In making everything be, God's causality extends to everything that exists, and free choices are as real as anything else in the world.
19. There is no such thing as a creaturely reality, which is not produced or creatively made to be by God.
20. From a Realist perspective, then, the Free Will Defense is worthless as a piece of theistic apologetic because it misrepresents God. Some call the Defense positively idolatrous.
21. God is the ultimate activator of all particular agency. However, this is easy to misunderstand and confuse with determinacy.