

YEAR OF  
BIBLICAL  
LITERACY  
LECTURE SERIES

# TONIGHT'S LECTURE



## Lecture on The Problem of Evil

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# Story 1: Meticulous Providence

1. God has written a plan where He controls everything to the detail. He either causes or gives permission (with a purpose) for every event of history (tapestry)
2. This is the best of all possible worlds for God's glory.
3. God is to history as Shakespeare is to Hamlet.
4. Freedom: Do what we want and what God wants. No contrary choice.
5. Sovereign: God controls every detail.
6. Mystery: How God can control every detail and humans still be responsible for evil? (Compatibilism)

# Story 2: Active Providence

1. God is working His battle plan where He directs history to its appointed goal of crushing the Serpent and establishing His pure creation. He gives us partnership in ruling the world.
2. This is a broken world where God works His glory.
3. God is to history as a Captain is to a mutinous ship.
4. Freedom: Do what we want within the limits of the ship. Limited contrary choice.
5. Sovereign: God is not accountable to anyone. His plans and purposes cannot be overcome.
6. Mystery: Why doesn't the all-powerful God just crush the Serpent now?

# Story 3: Free Will Providence

1. God has perfect knowledge of all events of history by which He makes His plan. He only occasionally interferes in people's decisions and never for salvation.
2. This is a broken world where God works His glory.
3. God is to history as a good King is to the subjects.
4. Freedom: Humans have the ability to make their own choices. While true choice is limited by humanity and character, it is not fixed by an external power.
5. Sovereign: God is not accountable to anyone. His plans and purposes cannot be overcome.
6. Mystery: How God can control history's outcome and not control people's choices?

# Faith Statements

Story 1. God is too good to do evil and too wise to make a mistake.

Story 2. God is loving enough and powerful enough to do good in the worst evil.

Story 3. God is working His rescue mission to the world. He loves us and respects our decision to join Him.

# Faith Questions

Story 1. What is God's purpose in this? What is God teaching me in this? How can God allow this?

Story 2. What is God doing in this? When will Jesus return and stop this? How can we make His glory known?

Story 3. When will people respond to God's love and join His rescue mission in the world?

# Dealing with Evil

- a. Evil is the result of morally significant free actions of God's creatures.
- b. God is loving enough and powerful enough to bring good out of the worst evil.
- c. God "works the night shift" to limit and frustrate evil.
- d. This is not Eden nor heaven, but a broken world.

# Dealing with Evil

- e. Physical calamity like disease usually comes from a broken world though it may come as a consequence of sinful actions of the sufferer or other humans.
- f. The human context of suffering/evil is a place where God's glory can be demonstrated.
- g. I believe in a theodicy of protest. This evil is wrong!
- h. I can trust a God who will die for me. In light of the life of Emanuel, I will be tenaciously loyal to the God I do not get.
- i. God is active and involved, choosing to join us in suffering as He wars against it.

# Dealing with Evil

- j. God is currently overcoming evil through the mercy of redemption with believers as part of His forces.
- k. God's glory is shown in our faith response, not in our circumstances.
- l. If God were to just eliminate evil, He would have to eliminate me.
- m. Remember that evil is fundamentally irrational.