

Foundations 07

It WAS very good!

"And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." (Genesis 1:31)

Introduction

Why is everything... so horrible?

If there is a good God, just why is everything so horrible?

Charles Darwin

Allegedly Darwin's studies and great knowledge of the natural world had made him question how a supposedly "loving God." could have made all the parasites, with their complex but, to our minds, horrific life-cycles.

Darwin said:

"I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created the Ichneumonidae with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of Caterpillars, or that a cat should play with mice."

David Attenborough

Attenborough has been quoted as saying:

"When creationists talk about God creating every individual species as a separate act, they always instance

hummingbirds, or orchids, sunflowers and beautiful things. But I tend to think instead of a parasitic worm that is boring through the eye of a boy sitting on the bank of a river in West Africa, [a worm] that's going to make him blind.

And [I ask them], 'Are you telling me that the God you believe in, who you also say is an all-merciful God, who cares for each one of us individually, are you saying that God created this worm that can live in no other way than in an innocent child's eyeball? Because that doesn't seem to me to coincide with a God who's full of mercy.'

We need to look at this false idea that God is “*all-merciful God*”

God is merciful, He's is loving, but He is also just and there are consequences to the action of people.

But more of that later.

Stephen Fry

It is reported that Stephen Fry was asked what he would say to God if they met? He apparently replied...

"I'd say, bone cancer in children? What's that about?"

"How dare you? How dare you create a world to which there is such misery that is not our fault. It's not right, it's utterly, utterly evil."

"Why should I respect a capricious, mean-minded, stupid God who creates a world that is so full of injustice and pain."

It is reported that police in Ireland are investigating Stephen Fry after a viewer claimed his outspoken comments about God on a TV show were blasphemous.

It might be better if the church was investigated for letting Stephen Fry be so ignorant of Christian doctrine.

The world was not full of injustice or pain, there was not bone cancer in children when God created it.

The injustice and pain is the result of the choices that mankind has made.

Choices that are extended even to Steven Fry and which he chooses to exercise in teaching people that there is no God.

Or if there is one, he is not worthy of our respect.

These are freedoms that Stephen Fry loves, but that have consequences when exercised wrongly.

But before we get into the consequences of Man's wrong doing, let us look at what the world was like at the beginning.

What it was like when God made it.

Everything was Good

Almost all of the Bible deals with life in this fallen and broken world that we live in today.

But it does give us a little information about the world as it was when fresh and clean and before we broke it.

When God had finished the creation.

"... God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good..." (Genesis 1:31)

Everything was good.

There were,

- No parasitic wasps

- No eyeball eating worms
- No bone cancer
- No misery
- No evil
- No suffering.

“... God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good...” (Genesis 1:31)

And that is not that God is stupid and made a crazy world full of evil, but looked at it and saw the evil, but called it good.

It was truly good.

Nothing ate any animal at creation.

"And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so." (Genesis 1:30)

Presumably this applied to the animals in the sea too.

We do not know fully what this meant.

But we have some idea from some other passages.

These passages speak of a time yet to come where, at least to some extent the original state of creation will have been recreated.

"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and **the lion shall eat straw** like the bullock..." (Isaiah 65:25)

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." v7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox." (Isaiah 11:6-7)

Nothing died

Before Adam and Eve sinned, there was no death.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" (Romans 5:12)

When we say there was no death, we are probably not talking about no death of skin cells or bacteria or viruses.

[Some bible critics try to tie up the Bible like this and prove that they are wiser than God.

But only a fool really believes that God and sensible people can not distinguish between the heading of dead skin and the shedding of blood unto death]

But animals that had the... well animal type life not plant type life.

The "no death" before sin is talking about two Hebrew words nephesh chayyah.

Nephesh is the word usually translated "soul" or "creature" depending on context

Chayyah is the noun form of the verb "to live."

A living soul not a plant.

No pain

Was there any pain before the fall or before sin?

This is not so easy a question.

God talks of increasing the pain of child birth.

"Unto the woman he said, **I will greatly multiply thy sorrow** and thy conception; **in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children**; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." (Genesis 3:16)

Two different words used for Sorrow here.

They could be translated

Physical pain

Emotional pain.

We will not look at the emotional side of childbirth today

Physical pain.

If physical pain was to be increased dose that mean that there was pain before the fall?

Probably not.

Low level physical pain is just sensation.

Touching something warm is noticeable but not painful.

Touching something hot is noticeable too, but is not painful.

There would have undoubtedly been sensations, but probably not pain.

The fact that there will be no pain in the New Creation...

“... there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” (Revelation 21:4)

Suggest that before sin, there was no pain.

God is a good God

Let us move on to looking at who God is.

God's Attributes

God has a great many attributes, or specific characteristics that to some extent define, (or describe), who God is.

- Holiness
- Omniscience
- Immanence
- Immutability
- Infinity

And so many more.

Not all of these bring light to the subject that we are addressing today.

Was Gods creation good or evil.

Goodness

Goodness is one of the defining characteristics of God.

The Bible does tell us that God is good.

"Behold therefore the goodness... of God..." (Romans 11:22)

"Oh how great is thy goodness..." (Psalm 31:19)

Holy

In heaven, in the throne-room of God Angels cry

"... Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." (Isaiah 6:3)

Holy is a challenging term, but implies

Set apart for clean use.

Not dirty

The psalmist asks

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? v24 He that hath **clean hands**, and a **pure heart**; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." (Psalm 24:3-4)

God is too clean for anyone with a dirty life to stand in His presence.

Righteousness

"For therein is the righteousness of God revealed..." (Romans 1:17)

Righteousness = equity of character or act

Fairness or impartiality

Moral uprightness

Wisdom

God Is Wise – He Is Full of Perfect, Unchanging Wisdom

"O the depth of the riches both of the **wisdom** and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33)

Wisdom is more than just head knowledge and intelligence.

A truly wise person is someone who understands all the facts and makes the best decisions.

God is able to make the best, the right decision in every situation.

Just

" He [God], is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, **just and right is he.**" (Deuteronomy 32:4)

“all his ways are judgment” probably all His ways are well considered and right,

What does it mean that God is just? It means more than he is simply fair.

It means he always does what is right and good toward all men.

But in some ways this is brought out more by what the Bible tells us that God is not

No Darkness

"... God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." (1 John 1:5)

Putting aside that racist arguments that we can no longer use terms like "blacklist" or "whitelist"

This is not about race or the colour of your skin.

We know that...

Light exposed

Darkness hides or covers up corruption.

The very presents of God exposes.

Interestingly God exposes good and evil, by defining the standards of goodness.

Evolution can not give any standard of good or evil, right or wrong.

But God sets the standard and exposes right and wrong.

"[Jesus] **did no sin**, neither was guile found in his mouth:" (1 Peter 2:22)

"And ye know that he [Jesus] was manifested to take away our sins; and **in him is no sin.**" (1 John 3:5)

Jesus is the second person in the Trinity.

He IS God.

And He never did anything wrong.

Good verses Nice.

One of the problems we have when we speak of God as being Good, is that we have a perverted idea or vision of what good is.

Ask most children what they want for their birthday celebration...

- Broccoli
- Strawberry ice cream

The answer is probably the ice cream, though the broccoli would be healthier for them.

Ask a sinner what they think a Good God should do and they will probably talk about...

- Loving the sinner just as they are
- Letting them off with their rebellion
- Forgiving and forgetting wrong doing.

Ask them what should happen to the person who has... scratched their Porsche or who has killed their daughter...

- Throw the book at them
- Lock them up and throw the key away
- Hanging is too good for them
- ...

We do not have just standards.

Our ideas of righteousness are easily moved.

If you watch Oceans Eleven, you want the lovable thieves to get away with their wickedness.

We have been manipulated into believing the wrong is sometimes right.

Consequences of Sin

God can not be manipulated like that.

He can do no wrong

He can not just “overlook sin”

He is not just loving, He is also Just and Holy and Righteous.

When sin entered the world. It had BIG consequences.

Before Adam and Eve sinned, there was no death.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" (Romans 5:12)

After the sin of ONE man death passed upon ALL men.

You can not see the justice in that

But the problem is that you are not just or holy

You can not see the rightness of that judgement.

“And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; v18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; v19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” (Genesis 3:17-19)

For the sin of one man, cursed is...

- The Earth
- Man's work
- Man's life, he will die or return to dust.

[One day we will look at the blessing that death actually is, stopping us having to spend eternity in our sin affected bodies.]

Why is nature designed to be red in tooth and claw?

Some might ask...

“If God made creation good, how come ‘bad’ things look destined by Him?”

How come the...

- Thorn
- Carnivore
- Parasite

All look designed by God

God knew man would sin,

He knew we would need a saviour.

“All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of **the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**” (Revelation 13:8”

God knew that man would need a saviour before the foundations of the world.

Presumably God also knew that the earth would be cursed and that there would be the need for thorns and thistles and hunting instincts and the like, in creation.

That was provided for at creation, but not expressed until after the fall.

God sends evil.

On top of all the teaching that the original sin of mankind brought about trouble for all mankind.

- Thorns and thistles
- Pain
- Death
- Etc.

The sinfulness of man also brings about evil.

First, If I abort my baby, that child dies.

You have brought about evil, from your FREE choice.

And brought blood guild on the land.

Also. If a nations becomes wicked...

“... I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast?” (Ezekiel 14:21)

God is patient with man, but eventually He brings judgments against nations that are rebellious against Him.

What we do not understand...

What we do not have the moral character to judge is that ...

When God bring these... unpleasant things, things we might call evil or diabolical...

When God does this, it is...

- Just
- Holy
- Righteous
- Good
- Fair

When we see it as being otherwise... it is because our hearts are corrupt.

Revisit the complaints.

Charles Darwin

How can a supposedly "loving God." make all the parasites.

God did not make them as parasites.

They may have been prepared for the need to be parasites.

But has man not sinned, there would have been no parasites..

Darwin said:

“I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created the Ichneumonidae [parasitic wasp] with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of Caterpillars, or that a cat should play with mice.”

God is not beneficent

Or at least not only beneficent.

He is also Holy and Just.

Our actions, mans actions, have consequences.

David Attenborough

Attenborough has been quoted as saying:

“I tend to think instead of a parasitic worm that is boring through the eye of a boy sitting on the bank of a river in West Africa, [a worm] that’s going to make him blind.”

There were not parasitic worms at creation.

Parasitic worms are part of the fallen world that...

“... was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,” (Romans 8:20)

"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." (Romans 8:22)

For a time, creation is subject to vanity or corruption.

Attenborough continues...

“Are you telling me that the God you believe in, who you also say is an all-merciful God, who cares for each one of us individually, are you saying that God created this worm that can live in no other way than in an innocent child’s eyeball? Because that doesn’t seem to me to coincide with a God who’s full of mercy.”

But Attenborough has been taught wrong by the church...

God is NOT all merciful

He is merciful, but not at the cost of his holiness or righteousness.

God hates sin and has to punish it.

The whole of creation is marred by our sinfulness and this results in sickness, disease and pain.

Stephen Fry

“bone cancer in children? What’s that about?”

That is about us living in a world that is extremely damaged by sin and our rebellion against God.

“How dare you? How dare you create a world to which there is such misery that is not our fault. It’s not right, it’s utterly, utterly evil.

“Why should I respect a capricious, mean-minded, stupid God who creates a world that is so full of injustice and pain.”

The world was not full of injustice or pain, there was not bone cancer in children when God created it.

The injustice and pain is the result of the choices that mankind has made.