

LOVE THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR MIND: A STUDY IN LOGICAL THINKING



EXAMPLES

‘EPICUREAN PARADOX’

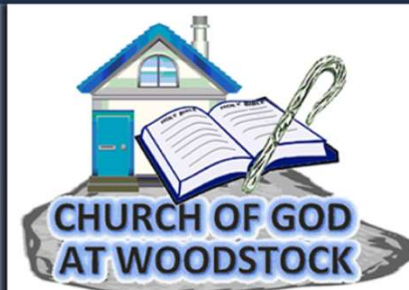


**TRUTH ON THE
WEB MINISTRIES**

WWW.TOTW.ORG

EPH 6:17 AND TAKE...THE SWORD OF THE
SPIRIT WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD

A CHURCH OF GOD IN WOODSTOCK, ILLINOIS





Homework

How would you respond to this argument?

- There is evil in the world.
 - God either cannot or will not stop evil.
- Therefore**, God is not worthy to be worshipped.

Send responses to **ron@totw.org**





First, God did not create evil. Satan convinced man to sin and brought evil into God's world. This is now a fallen world and is no longer God's. God is worthy of worship because he loves man and always will. That does not mean that God loves the evil in man's heart. Scripture talks of how man has sinned since the creation, man cannot be changed. God has already restarted creation after Noah and sin continues. It's not God, it's us. God brings love into the world, man chooses to sin and destroy. I choose to worship a God who loves and protects his people.





People's hearts are evil. God gives us free will. So it's up to people to choose good rather than evil to make this world better. But in order to do that this world needs to repent and turn to God. He is worthy to be praised because He shows us each and every day how much He loves and cares for each and every one of us through His Sons sacrifice.

Maybe some people don't understand that or believe all of this so I guess I'll keep thinking about other ways to answer this to someone who doesn't believe in Christ.





There is evil in the world. This premise is true based on observation of things that we can see happening all around us to people, animals and the environment. The earth groans for justice. Rom 8:22.

God either cannot or will not stop evil. Based on the Bible this premise is false. We know that when the Kingdom of God will be realized in its fullness, there will be no one residing there who does anything evil Rev 21:27; 22:15. Everything will be holy and perfect just as God is.

Based on the world view of people that are in the world when they see bad things happen, many times they accuse God for causing it or not being able to stop it. These folks refuse to worship a God who allows this.

Therefore, God is not worthy to be worshipped. The conclusion is false because God did not or does not cause evil. He allows it for the perfecting of his saints and to show the world how evil Satan is who is the prince of the power of the air Eph 2:2; 6:11-12. Satan has deceived all the peoples and kingdoms of the world from the fall of man into the future until he is confined for 1000 years Rev 12:9; 20:2-3. When he is released, he does what he does best Rev 20:8. Do you want to follow God or Satan? There are no fence sitters!! 5



The Epicurean Paradox/Dilemma

- Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able?
 - Then He is not omnipotent.
- Is He able but not willing?
 - Then He is malevolent.
- Is He both able and willing?
 - Then why is there evil?
- Is He neither able nor willing?
 - Then why call Him God?



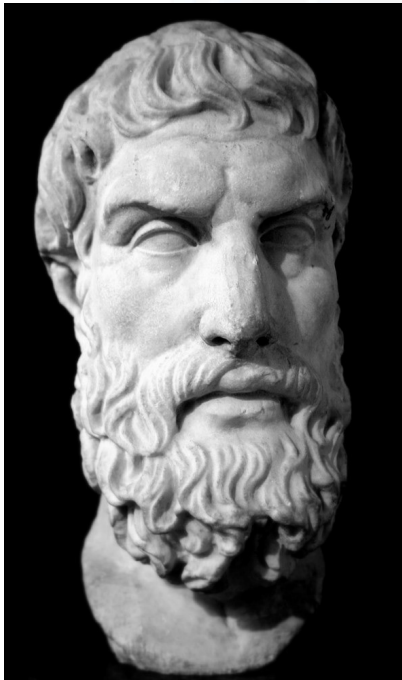
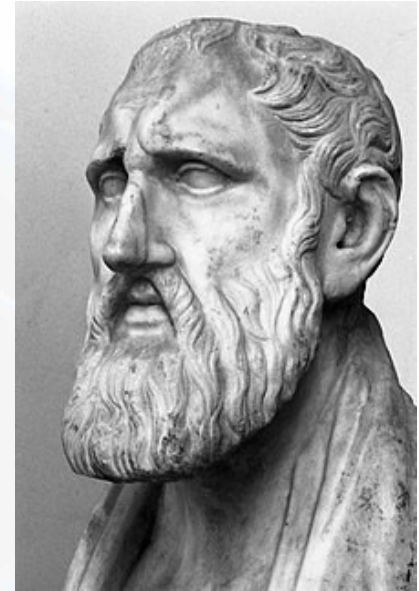


Acts 17:16–18

Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. Then certain **philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks**, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.



Stoicism was first taught by Zeno (334-262 BC) around 300 BC in the stoa poikile (painted colonnade) in the Agora in **Athens**.



Epicureanism was a Greek philosophy started by Epicurus (341-270 BC). In 306 BCE, Epicurus established his school at **Athens** in his garden, from which it came to be known as *The Garden*.



Stoicism emphasizes rationalism and logic. True Stoicism says to align one's expectations with the *logos*—the natural law of the cosmos—and not to worry about the rest.

The final stage of Stoicism is the *sage*. The sage is completely ruled by *logos*. His decisions are always logical, and he is never so impassioned that he cannot think things through to make the best choice. He does experience joy, watchfulness, and wishing, but he is not controlled by his emotions or by the actions of the outside world.



Acts 17:22-27

Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are **too superstitious**. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth **not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing**, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, **if haply they might feel after him, and find him**, though he be not far from every one of us:





Epicureanism taught that the highest state a person could attain was ataraxia—absolute peace—and aponia—complete absence of mental, emotional, and physical distress or need.

Epicurus's goal was to teach people to relax and enjoy life without worrying so much. His first step was to remove the idea of the gods from the psyche of his followers. To Epicurus, **the gods did exist, but they lived so far away from the affairs of man**, in a permanent state of ataraxia, that **they didn't interfere with humanity**—in fact, **they weren't even aware of humanity**.





With the removal of fear of the gods came two advantages for the Epicureans.

- First, there is no judgment after death.
- Second, there is no judgment during life.

So, in true Epicureanism, the best life is characterized by sufficient food, a comfortable dwelling, peaceful relationships, and good friends.

Your best life now – eat drink and be merry for tomorrow we die, etc.





Acts 17:28-31

For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we **are also his offspring**. Forasmuch then as **we are the offspring of God**, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but **now commandeth all men every where to repent**: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will **judge the world in righteousness** by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.



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Argument presupposes that evil does exist

But without God, how is evil defined? If there is no universal standard by which evil can be defined, then there really is no universal evil.

One man might say his neighbor's wife is fair game while his neighbor calls that evil.

So, in this case evil is entirely subjective and up to each individual to define, thus evil would be the fault of the definer, not the fault of the doer.

But we know (even by our own conscience) that there is an absolute standard of good and evil.





Logical fallacies

False cause – makes God the cause of evil.

False dilemma – implies there are no other valid reasons for the existence of evil.

What's missing?

Free will





“God sovereignly decreed that man should be free to exercise moral choice, and man from the beginning has fulfilled that decree by making his choice between good and evil. When he chooses to do evil, he does not thereby countervail the sovereign will of God but fulfills it, inasmuch as the eternal decree decided not which choice the man should make but that he should be free to make it”

A.W. Tozer, "The knowledge of The Holy"





Genesis 2:15–17

And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the **tree of the knowledge of good and evil**, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.





Hebrews 2:9–10

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, **to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.**

Hebrews 5:8

Though he were a Son, **yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;**





Hebrews 12:5–6

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, **My son**, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For **whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.**






God gives man life, sending rain on the just and the unjust alike, that we may all enjoy our days under the sun, that some would hear His voice and be redeemed.

Some alternatives?

- Remove free will.
 - Thus any chance for Love is eliminated.
 - No choice, no love
- Remove evil.
 - That would mean everyone would be gone.
 - This line of thought leads to each person deciding to not get rid of ALL evil (not the minor stuff they commit), but the 'BIG' evil (whatever that is).





John 3:16–21

For God so **loved the world**, that he gave his **only begotten Son**, that whosoever **believeth in him** should not perish, but have **everlasting life**. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and **men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil**. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.



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**ENJOY THE
REST OF THE
SABBATH**

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