



# The Theodicy Issue: Reconciling the Realities of God and Evil

*If 'God is great' and 'God is good,' why are evil  
and suffering so pervasive in this world?*

**Instructor:** Dr. Jeffrey Breshears

**Time:** Wednesdays, Aug. 18 - Nov. 3, 7:00 PM

**Location:** Johnson Ferry Baptist Church, Room 108

(Note: This course is available in-person and/or via Zoom.)

**Tuition:** \$60 per person or \$100 per couple

**Supplemental Readings (optional):**

Philip Yancey, *Where Is God When It Hurts?* Anniversary Edition (Zondervan, 2002)

C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (HarperSanFrancisco, 1961)

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *One Day In the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (Ballantine Books, 1977)

**Course synopsis:** Christians believe that God is omnipotent and benevolent, and yet we recognize that evil and suffering are pervasive realities in this world. This is troubling to many because they reason that if God were truly great, he would have the *power* to destroy evil and suffering in this world, and if God were truly good, he would *want* to eradicate evil and suffering. So how can we reconcile the coexistence of God and evil?

This is the dilemma that theologians refer to as a **theodicy**, and it has perplexed philosophers and theologians since the time of Plato and Aristotle. It is one of the perennial quandaries of human existence and perhaps the greatest intellectual obstacle to belief in God. As Thomas Aquinas acknowledged, the problem of reconciling God and evil is one that appears to contradict our whole understanding of the character and nature of God.

This course examines the problem of God and evil through three correlative means – Biblical theology, philosophy, and literary art – and in the process we address issues such as...

- What are the sources of suffering?
- Is the problem of God and evil evidence for atheism?
- The nature of good and evil.
- The irony of human freedom.
- What about natural disasters that kill innocent people?
- Suffering in the Bible.
- Why does God allow evil and suffering?
- Why didn't God create a perfect world without sin and suffering?
- Suffering as a pathway to grace and redemption.

**Note on the Instructor:** Dr. Jeffrey Breshears is an author, historian, a former university professor, and the founder and president of The Areopagus, a Christian education ministry in the Atlanta area.

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## Reconciling the Realities of God and Evil

### An Overview

Introduction

The Theodicy Triad

The Elements of Suffering

Evidence for Atheism?

An Atheistic Apologetic

A Reasoned Response

A Universal Problem

The Nature of Good and Evil

What Is Good?

What Is Evil?

The Issue of Free Will

Moral-Based Evil and Suffering

Nature and Human Suffering

Natural Disasters

Human Genetics, Viruses and Disease

Suffering Through the Bible

Mixed Messages

Blasphemous Presumptions

Amazing Grace

Why Does God Allow Evil and Suffering?

A Theocentric View

A Teleological View

Six Reasons Why God Allows Pain and Suffering?

Imagine...

Why Didn't God Create a Perfect World Without Sin, Evil and Suffering?

Why Is There So Much Evil and Suffering in the World?

The Emotional Problem of Evil and Suffering

Grace in Suffering

The Summa