

# The Origin of Evil

1. While the origin of sin cannot be explained in a manner giving a justifiable reason for its existence, we may understand enough about its origin and consequences to demonstrate the justice and benevolence of God in how He has addressed the problem of evil.
2. What is sin? **1 John 3:1-5**. Sin is the transgression of the law, that is, lawlessness; it is willfully crossing a moral boundary line. Sin is a principal opposite to love. Sin should be viewed in terms of all of its follow-on effects.
3. What is love? **1 John 4:7-14**; 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Leviticus 19:17-18; Matthew 5:44. Love is who God is and how humans are designed to thrive. Love is the foundation of the divine government.
4. Is God responsible for the entrance for sin? **James 1:17**; Romans 6:23; 1 John 3:5
5. How did sin originate? **Ezekiel 28:12-15**. (Lucifer is described using the figure of the king of Tyre.) Sin originated with Lucifer, who was created sinless.
6. God gives the gift of free will to all, but Lucifer chose to pervert this freedom. **Ezekiel 28:16-18**. Responsibility is clearly laid in Lucifer: “your trade” “you sinned” “you corrupted your wisdom” “your iniquities.”
7. Little by little, Lucifer came to indulge a desire for self-exaltation. **Isaiah 14:13-14**
8. Satan and those who joined him in his rebellion were cast to the earth. **Revelation 12:9**
9. Who is our adversary? **1 Peter 5:8**
10. God’s angels are present on every side observing and intervening on behalf of King Jesus. **2 Kings 6:17**; 2 Chronicles 16:9; 1 Peter 1:12; Hebrews 1:14
11. Did the angels see everything that happened to Jesus? **Matthew 4:11**; Luke 2:13-14; Matthew 28:5-7. During Jesus’ earthly ministry, the character of the great deceiver was unmasked. Nothing could so effectually have uprooted Satan from the heavenly angels and the entire loyal universe as did Satan’s cruel warfare upon Jesus. The angels literally watched the murder of their King in real time.
12. What is God working to accomplish through Jesus? **2 Corinthians 5:19**. For the salvation of a fallen and sinful race, the Ruler of the universe had made the greatest sacrifice which love could make. 1 Corinthians 4:9
13. The sacrificial death of Jesus shows God’s law necessary and unchangeable. **Isaiah 42:21**
14. All the universe is closely studying the outworking of sin and the outworking of love. **Romans 3:4**; Ezekiel 7:27

**Conclusion:** what can we think of God after what we have learned today? While the origin of sin cannot be explained in a manner giving a justifiable reason for its existence, we may understand enough about its origin and consequences to demonstrate the justice and benevolence of God in how He has addressed the problem of evil.

## Some Notes

*On one.* This is called the theodicy problem. Namely, if God is good then why is there so much that is bad in His world? Uncertainty over God's actual goodness and benevolence has hindered many from accepting His revelation of right and wrong, His identification of what sin is and what right-doing is. But in the Bible we have a remarkable character-revelation of who God is and how He thinks and acts. If the Bible accurately reveals to humans what has happened and how God has addressed it, it is the world's single foremost, authoritative treasurer-trove of recorded insight recording who He is and why the life of Jesus is the ultimate revelation to humans of what the Father is like.

*On two.* The Bible describes sin as "the transgression of the law," literally, as intentional rebellion-acts against what it is right to do. When a human knows what is right, and intentionally acts contrary to that knowledge, he is choosing to sin. The sin for which human's existence will be ended is chosen, unrepented sin. While all humans are effected by the destructive results of sin, humans are not guilty of the sin others commit unless they choose to join in the rebellion-act of others. Guilt arises with one's intentional act.

*On three.* True love is a high and holy principle, altogether different in character from that love which is awakened by impulse, and which suddenly dies when severely tested. That love which is divine, and in which humans are invited to join, is other-love, the benevolent seeking of good for others. The larger picture is that there are two principles exactly contrasting with each other: love, or other-love, in contrast with sin, or self-love. These principles are incompatible with each other. This does not mean that we cannot have a proper love toward ourselves of that we must hate ourselves, but that proper self-regard should not mean disregard for others. Love requires choice. God is pleased to give to all creatures the gift of freedom. Thus, their appreciation for goodness remains voluntary; none are compelled to love goodness.

*On four.* God is not responsible for the entrance of sin. Sin is inexplicable; there is no justification for it. No full explanation could ever be given for its cause. We know this: God populated His universe with individual moral creatures. The possibility of there being good includes in itself the possibility of their being bad, yet the existence of good does not require the existence of evil. It was never necessary that even one creature choose evil.

*On five and six.* Through the prophet Ezekiel, God communicates to us about the decision of Lucifer to rebel and choose sin. Ezekiel's book is in the prophetic genre. As such, his use of symbolism and figures is unsurprising. The king of Tyre is the figure of symbol under which Satan is represented. Tyre was an independent Mediterranean port city especially known for commerce and trade. The literal king of Tyre had no seal of perfection, was not perfect in beauty, was never in Eden the garden of God, was never the anointed cherub that covers, and never walked in the midst of the stones of fire (Ezekiel 28:12-14). However, all these things were true of Lucifer at one point in time.

*On eight.* Imprisonment rather than destruction was God's reaction to the fallen angels and their rebellion. Before those creatures would be destroyed, the two principles would be given time to play out, so that the accurate outcome of each principle might be clearly understood. Only after what love is, is , and what sin is, is demonstrated, will any creature be destroyed.

*On nine.* Why does Satan concern himself with the destruction of humans? Humans are made in God's image; we are innately related to God in a special sense in which angels and other creatures are not. Since humans are God's workmanship, we are constantly reminders of His giving nature. We did into exist and He made a universe and made a place for us and brought us into being as beings like Him (even if dramatically less than Him). Satan knows that God

loves us, and therefore by striking us Lucifer strikes at God; by harming us, Satan causes our Heavenly Father to suffer.

*On eleven.* God sees all and in the conflict between good and evil He invites His creatures to observe and understand. As a being with all knowledge, God already knows the outcome of these principles. He needs no demonstration. But the unfallen angels, Humans, and any other intelligent creatures he may have created would not know until the completion of such a demonstration. Therefore, it is doubtless especially for our benefit that the conflict between good and evil has been continued until now. But in the not distant future the end-result of sin will be settled beyond dispute, as the final outcome of love will also have been fully clarified.

*On twelve.* In giving His unique Son Jesus, God the Father demonstrates that He is invested in His universe, that He has paid the most extreme price that can be paid in connection with the buying-back of humans from destruction. Jesus' sinless life sacrificed in our place shows that He suffered to make possible our restoration. These are no mock battles, no make-believe fights. The battle between good and evil is deeply costly and the revelation of God's love and faithfulness shall result in measureless good for the redeemed.

*On thirteen.* If God's law could have been changed, Jesus need not have died.

*On fourteen.* God Himself, in a sense, is being judged. Has He dealt fairly with sin? Are His judgments accurate? Is the punishment to be meted out proportional with the evil of the transgressions being punished? In the end we will agree that they are and that He has.