

James Rafferty Q1-L7-2025-The Problem of Evil-Feb 9

Lesson 7: The Problem of Evil (Sabbath)

February 8-14

Lesson 7

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NEXT WEEK-Free Will, Love, *and* Divine Providence

The Problem of Evil

Sabbath Afternoon

Read for This Week's Study: *Job 30:26; Matt.27:46; Job 38:1-12; Psalm 73; Gen. 2:16, 17; Rev. 21:3, 4.*

Memory Text: “ ‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away’ ” (*Revelation 21:4, NKJV*).

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erhaps the greatest problem facing Christianity is the problem of evil—how to reconcile the fact that God is perfectly good and loving, with the fact of evil in this world. In briefest terms, if God is all-good and all-powerful, why is there evil, and so much of it, too?

This is not merely an academic problem but something that deeply troubles many people and that keeps some from coming to know and love God.

“To many minds the origin of sin and the reason for its existence are a source of great perplexity. They see the work of evil, with

its terrible results of woe and desolation, and they question how all this can exist under the sovereignty of One who is infinite in wisdom, in power, and in love. Here is a mystery of which they find no explanation.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 492.

Many atheists identify the problem of evil as the reason that they are atheists. But as we will see in this week and in coming weeks, the God of the Bible is entirely good, and we can trust Him—even despite the evil that so infects our fallen world.

**Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, February 15.*

SE-1Q-2025, *God’s Love and Justice*, by John C. Peckham

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Lesson 7: The Problem of Evil (Sunday)

February 8-14

Sunday *February 9*

“How Long, O Lord?”

The problem of evil is voiced not only in contemporary contexts but in Scripture itself.

Read Job 30:26, Jeremiah 12:1, Jeremiah 13:22, Malachi 2:17, and Psalm 10:1. How do these texts bring the problem of evil to the forefront of human experience?

Job 30:26- **26** When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness.

Jeremiah 12:1 **1** Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with Thee: yet let me talk with Thee of Thy

judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? *wherefore* are all they happy that deal very treacherously? (Context Gods apostate people).

Malachi 2:17, Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?

Psalms 10:1 **1** Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? *why* hidest thou *thyself* in times of trouble?

These texts raise many questions that are still with us today. Why does it seem like the wicked prosper and those who do evil benefit from their evil, if not always but still often enough? Why do the righteous suffer so much? Where is God when evil occurs? Why does God sometimes appear to be far from us, even hidden?

Whatever we say about these questions and the problem of evil more generally, we should be sure *not to trivialize evil*. We should not try to resolve the problem by downplaying the kind, or amount, of evil in the world. Evil is very bad—and God hates it even more than we do. Thus, we might join in the cry that rings throughout Scripture in response to the many evils and injustices in the world: “How long, O Lord?”

Read Matthew 27:46. How do you understand these words of Jesus? What do they convey about how evil touched God in the most striking of ways?

**FATHER AND SON WERE NEVER SEPARATED EVER
THROUGHOUT ALL TIME - AND THEY ARE ETERNAL**

On the cross, Jesus Himself voiced the question: “ ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’ ” (*Matt. 27:46, NKJV*). Here especially we see that God Himself is touched by evil, an amazing truth powerfully highlighted in the suffering and death of Christ on the cross, where all the evil of the world fell upon Him.

But even here there is hope. What Christ did on the cross defeated the source of evil, Satan, and will eventually undo evil entirely. Jesus quoted those words from Psalm 22:1, and the rest of the Psalm ends in triumph.

On the cross, Jesus looked forward to a hope that, at the time, He could not see. How can we draw comfort from His experience when we, too, cannot see hope before us?

SE-1Q-2025, *God's Love and Justice*, by John C. Peckham