

# THE CHURCH LETTER

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## EVIL IN GOD'S WORLD

On January 17, 2010, the Sunday evening lesson at Clarkson Baptist Church led by Bro Chip Collins was entitled "Evil and God's World." How does one reconcile evil in God's world? The choice seems to be either God is willing, but not able to prevent evil, or God is able, but not willing to prevent evil. What choice is that? Must we accept that God is either weak or malevolent?

Because we believe that God is omnipotent, we must reject the first of the choices. God is indeed able to prevent evil; He places controls and limits on evil. Remember Job? Satan was allowed to act to some extent against Job, but God placed boundaries on him and what he could do.

That leaves only the second of the choices; God somehow is unwilling to prevent evil. We reject that God is malevolent. The Bible confirms many times that God is good, so the problem must exist with our understanding of God's goodness. Good is not to be defined in terms of what brings personal pleasure to us; good is what glorifies God and fulfills His will.

So where are we? We are left with this: God was and is willing to create human beings with the free will to make wrong choices, even though He knew and still knows they will make wrong choices.

As much as we are reluctant to have to admit such a thing, a total solution to the problem of evil is beyond human understanding. John Stott has written "The fact of suffering undoubtedly constitutes the single greatest challenge to the Christian faith, and has been in every generation. Its distribution and degree appear to be entirely random and therefore unfair. Sensitive spirits ask if it can possibly be reconciled with God's justice and love."

If God had created humans without free will, would we still be human? Or something lesser? Something other than "in His image"? A quote from Millard Erickson addresses this question. "If God had prevented evil, He would have had to make us other than we are. To be truly human, we must have the ability to desire to have and do things some of which will not be what God wants us to have and to do."

God created us for eternity - not just for today. John Milton in *Paradise Lost* mentioned the "fortunate fall" or "felix culpa" when he spoke of the fall of Adam and Eve. Because of this fall or wrong choice, the most selfless and righteous act in all of history, the death of the very Son of God, came to pass. The presence of sin in the world led to the redemption of mankind and our adoption as children of God which will lead to our glorification to the glory of God forever.

We praise God because He is good! We praise Him for His grace that has revealed to us that we need a Savior. We praise Him for His love that provided a Savior in His own perfect Son who was without sin and yet took on the very worst evil of the world. We praise Him for His mercy in that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

A science professor, who proclaimed that he was an atheist, asked his students one day, "Are there any Christians in this class?" One student brave enough to respond replied that he was. The professor asked, "So you believe in God?"

"Absolutely," came the student's reply.

"Is God good?"

"Sure, God is good."

"Is God all-powerful? Can God do anything?"

"Yes."

"Are you good or evil?"

"The Bible says I'm evil."

"Let's say there's a sick person here and you can cure him. Would you help him?"

"Yes, sir, I would."

"So you would help the sick person if you could even though you are evil. Most people would, but God doesn't, and He is supposed to be good."

"Here's another question, young man," said the professor, "Is Satan good?"

"No."

"Then where does Satan come from? Didn't God create him? Didn't God create everything in this

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**Evil...** (con't from page 1)

world? So if God created everything, and there is evil in the world, God had to create evil, right?"

The student had no answer.

The professor continued, "Is there sickness in this world? Is there immorality? Is there hatred? All these terrible things exist in the world, do they not?"

"Yes," answered the student.

"So, who created them? Where do they come from? Tell me, young man, do you believe in Jesus?"

"Yes, sir, I do."

"According to science, you have five senses you use to identify and observe the world around you. Have you ever seen Jesus? Have you ever heard Him? Have you ever felt Him or smelled Him or tasted Him? Have you ever had any sensory perception of Jesus?"

"No, sir, I haven't."

"Yet you still believe in him?"

"Yes."

"Based on the rules of empirical, testable, demonstrable protocol, science says your God doesn't exist. What do you say to that, son?"

"I only have my faith," replied the student.

"Yes, faith," repeated the professor. "That is the problem science has with God. There is no evidence, only faith."

After a quiet moment, the student asked a question of his own, "Professor, is there such a thing as heat?"

"Yes," the professor answered, "there is heat."

"And is there such a thing as cold?"

"Yes, of course, there is also cold."

"No, sir, there isn't."

The professor looked at the student, obviously interested. The others in the classroom sat quietly, listening. The student offered this explanation, "You can have lots of heat, even more heat, super-heat, mega-heat, unlimited heat, white heat, a little heat, or no heat. We can hit up to 458 degrees below zero, which is absolute zero or no heat, but we can't go any further than that. If there were such a thing as cold, we would be able to go colder than the lowest negative 458 degrees. Every object or body is susceptible to study when it has or transmits energy, and heat is what makes a body or matter have or transmit energy. Absolute zero is the total absence of heat. You see, sir, cold is only a word we use to describe the absence of heat. We cannot measure cold. Heat we can measure in thermal units because heat is energy. Cold is not the opposite of heat, sir,

just the absence of it."

There is silence across the room, including the professor.

"The same thing is true of darkness, sir. Darkness is not something; it is the absence of something. We can measure light, but darkness is a word we use to designate the absence of light."

The professor began to smile, "And what point are you making, young man?"

"My point is, sir, your premise is flawed to start with, and so your conclusion is also flawed. You are working on the premise of duality. You argue that there is life and then there is death, a good God and a bad God. You are viewing the concept of God as something finite, something we can measure. Sir, science cannot even explain a thought. It uses electricity and magnetism, but has never seen, much less fully understood either one. To view death as the opposite of life is to be ignorant of the fact that death cannot exist as a substantive thing. Death is not the opposite of life, just the absence of it."

Now the student turned to his classmates and asked, "Has anyone of you ever seen the professor's brain?"

The class responded with smiles and chuckles, and the professor could not totally hide his pleasure at this lively discussion.

The student continued, "Has anyone ever heard the professor's brain? Felt his brain? Touched or smelled his brain? It doesn't seem that anyone has, so, according to the established rules of empirical, testable, demonstrable protocol, science says that you have no brain, with all due respect, sir. So, if science says you have no brain, how can we trust your lectures, sir?"

The professor looked at the student and, after a pause, said, "I guess you'll just have to take them on faith."

"One final thing, sir, is there such a thing as evil?"

At this point, the professor showed a little uncertainty, "I believe so; we see it in the daily examples of man's inhumanity to man. It is in the multitude of crimes and violence everywhere in the world. These can be labeled as nothing else but evil."

To this, the student replied, "Evil does not exist, sir, unto itself. Evil is the absence of God. God did not create evil; evil is the result of what happens when man does not allow God's love into his heart. It's like the cold that comes when there is no heat or the darkness that comes when there is no light."

**SUMMARY OF JANUARY BUSINESS MEETING**

The business meeting was called to order by moderator, David Vickery. The opening prayer was led by Larry Bratcher. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and accepted.

The treasurer's report was presented and accepted.

The clerk read a request for the church letters of Kevin and Erika Greer to First Baptist Church in Fairdale, KY. A motion was made and passed.

The moderator reported that he had researched the cost of a generator for the church to use in case of a power outage. The cost would be somewhere in the neighborhood of \$30,000 to \$50,000. No official action was taken.

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and passed, and a closing prayer was led by Don Bratcher.

**FINANCIAL REPORT - DECEMBER, 2009**

General Checking Account.....\$8,558.45

**BUILDING FUND TRANSACTIONS**

Beginning Balance.....\$1,744.78

Deposit - 12/6/09.....\$2,462.00

Deposit - 12/13/09.....\$2,765.00

Deposit - 12/20/09.....\$1,425.00

Deposit - 12/27/09.....\$1,042.00

**Total Receipts for December, 2009.....\$7,694.00**

Wilson & Muir (#108).....-\$6,800.00

Balance - December 31, 2009.....\$2,638.78

Loan balance - December 31, 2009.....\$274,628.13