

something's wrong

module

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Consider

The Story so Far...

It all began when the eternal, personal God made everything there is as a perfect paradise. God intentionally made us as personal beings in his image and loves us passionately.

Continuing the Story...

The great Creator God made a picture-perfect world. He made humankind in his own 'likeness and image', placed them in a perfect paradise, signed them up as his deputies and appointed them rulers of the whole planet! It doesn't get any better or brighter than that.

If only we could have put the story on hold and stopped right there! If only everything had stayed that way! We will find that the biblical story records the introduction of evil and how the world turns sour very quickly. If only it hadn't happened that way, but it did. Yet God was not caught by surprise – we will find out that God promised to banish evil forever!

Day One: The Dark Side?

Ever read the daily news or watched the news programme on TV and become discouraged by the state of the world? Violence, murders, wars... our news bulletins are full of it! In fact, we all brush up against evil in one form or another every day. It's too real to deny, too ugly to call by any other name. Ron Allen wrote, "Unfortunately, something has gone radically wrong! We cannot pretend it hasn't. There is simply too much nastiness, pettiness, and selfishness among the descendants of Adam for us to see man's majesty very often – in others or, for that matter, in ourselves."⁸

The Times of London once asked several prominent authors to write a column on the theme: 'What's Wrong with the World?'

G K Chesterton answered with the shortest of letters...

Dear Sirs,
I am.
Sincerely,
G K Chesterton.

Do you think Ron Allen's and G K Chesterton's quotes ring true with the world around us? Check it out – listen to the news tonight. What's the problem?

Explore the Bible

Read Genesis 3:1–7.

How did evil enter the world?

⁸ Ronald B. Allen, *The Majesty of Man* (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1984), 98.

Day Two: If God Didn't Create Evil, then Who Did?

At some point, we all ask: Where did evil come from? How could a God who is totally good create evil? The Bible tells us that God didn't create evil: not only didn't but couldn't. He is good and absolutely hates evil. But this still leaves us with the question: If God didn't create evil, who did?

What if no one did? What if evil is not a 'thing'?

Let's think about this. Take, for example, a gun. It's incredibly well designed, precision engineered and beautifully crafted! Top-quality metal and the barrel is 'as straight as a die'. The gun is 'good'! And the bullet is also good – well designed and perfectly shaped. And the hand that holds the gun is also good – it has five good fingers that all work perfectly well. The body standing nearby is working just fine. It's good too. But to take a good gun, load it with a good bullet, put it in a good hand and point it at an innocent person and pull the trigger – that's evil.

Evil occurs when good things are wrongly related to each other. And that's how evil began. A good angel (Lucifer) in a good place (heaven) decided to rebel against God (an improper relationship) – and, when creatures rebel against their Creator, it's an improper relationship and all kinds of evil things occur as a result.

So evil is not a created thing. We can't take a slice of evil and put it on display in a cabinet. And here's the point: if evil's not a thing, God cannot have created it.

Explore the Bible

Read Genesis 3:6–10.

What changes did Adam and Eve's rebellion make to their relationship (now an improper one) with God?

Day Three: Two Poisonous Tablets...

The Bible describes Satan as a very real, very evil and very powerful personality. But he hasn't always been bad. Once he was known as Lucifer, the highest, wisest and greatest of all God's angels... the closest to God – until the day pride filled his mind. Believing he was good enough to be God, Lucifer fantasised about taking God's throne for himself. He wanted to put himself in the place of God! But he had completely overestimated himself and underestimated God. Totally disgraced, he was instantly relieved of all his duties and thrown out of heaven. Once called 'Lucifer' (the Light Bearer), he is now called 'Satan' (the enemy). His passion is to loathe God and oppose him... and establish a counterfeit kingdom of his own.

First in Satan's sights was the human race. But how could Satan break Adam and Eve's allegiance to God? God had been extremely generous to Adam and Eve in giving free access to eat from all the trees in the garden except one. And God had specifically told them the consequences if they disobeyed. To break their allegiance to God, Satan went into pharmaceuticals and he concocted two poisonous tablets... two lies... as deadly as they were clever. If Satan could convince Adam and Eve to swallow these two lies, he would have them in his grip: the first poisonous pill – God is not good – he is cruel and stingy (Genesis 3:1); the second poisonous pill – sin is not bad – so there will be no consequences (Genesis 3:4).

Explore the Bible

Read Genesis 3:1–7.

Why do you think Satan chose these particular pills?

Day Four: The Pain and the Promise...

There's an old proverb that says: "Sooner or later we all sit down to the banquet of consequences". Adam and Eve had bought the two lies from Satan that God is not good (instead of the truth that God is extremely generous) and that sin is not bad (instead of the truth that disobeying commands has consequences). They must have been reeling with shock as the consequences of their decision to defy God's commandment came 'thick and fast'... just as God had warned they would. For example, for the first time they experienced:

Personal shame. That's why they felt naked and sewed fig leaves to cover up themselves and their sense of shame (Genesis 3:7).

Alienation from God. That's why Adam and Eve hid themselves from God (Genesis 3:8–10).

Distrust of each other. It's amazing how quickly the relationship deteriorated. Adam quickly blamed Eve for the situation... presumably to save his own skin! (Genesis 3:12).

Tension in marriage. The harmony and frictionless happiness Adam and Eve had known disappeared. Their relationship would now be full of tension... Eve would try and rule her husband and, in turn, he would tend to dominate his wife (Genesis 3:16).

Pain in childbearing. Having become sinners themselves, Adam and Eve passed on their spiritual DNA. They produced children in their own likeness and image. Instead of producing little kings, they produced little sinners. There would be the continual pain of seeing their children hurt and be hurt as they struggled through life as broken, sinful people in a broken, sinful world (Genesis 3:16; 4:8).

Explore the Bible

What were some other consequences of sin in Genesis 3:17–19 (find as many as you can)?

Day Five: Did God Let this Happen?

Famous American actor Woody Allen said, "If it turns out that there is a God, I don't think that he is evil. But the worst you can say about him is that he is an underachiever." Basically Woody Allen meant this... 'If God exists at all... he is not all-powerful. If he were, he would never have let this mess happen.'

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But the Bible insists God is all-powerful.

Christians believe that, in his wisdom, an all-powerful God *permitted* evil to exist. God didn't *create* evil... he is holy. But why would God even permit evil? Unless... it was the best way to bring about an even greater good. But what good could possibly be 'that good' that God would allow something so awful as evil to exist?

What if God permitted evil so he could get his hands on it and *dispose of it forever*? Had God not allowed evil to come into existence, it would have always been a lurking possibility. But God permitted evil to erupt so it could be banished forever. When that day comes, God will make a new world for us and evil will never, ever, raise its ugly head again.

But why didn't God just 'zap' evil and destroy it the moment it erupted? Maybe there is no clear answer to that question. What we do know is that, if there were no sin, we would never be able to experience the wonder of his forgiveness, the extent of his patience or his amazing mercy. Only the problems show up his brilliant solutions. It's God's great genius that he can frustrate the purpose of evil by making it the occasion for his greater glory to shine!

Explore the Bible

Read Genesis 3:14-15.

What has God promised?

Explore

Discussion starter

Q – Out of all the things that are wrong with the world, what bothers you the most?

Q – What were some of the highlights from the readings?

Reading

Read Genesis 3:1–21.

Volunteers may like to read out loud a part or all of this story.

Q – Where does the Bible place the blame for evil?

Q – What do you find interesting about this story?

View

Video episode 5 – something’s wrong

Five things God tells us about evil:

1. Evil was by God.
 2. Evil is by Satan.
 3. Evil is our
 4. Evil us.
 5. Evil last forever.
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Discuss

Questions I have

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For more information...
see www.longstoryshort.co/somethings-wrong





