

The Atheist's /Agnostic's Question –

Why didn't God do a better job and
eliminate evil?

“The number of Americans who say they are not affiliated with any organized religion (including those who identify as agnostic or atheist) has jumped more than 6 percentage points (16.1 to 22.8) in the past seven years. Still, just 3.1 percent of Americans identify as atheist specifically, and according to a 2012 Gallup poll, only 54 percent of Americans would vote for an atheist for president, a lower mark than for a Muslim (58 percent), a gay or lesbian candidate (68 percent) or a Mormon (80 percent).”

“Arian [Foster, running back for the Texans] felt he was living a lie every time he knelt to pray. His prayers carried intensity only when he faced turmoil. If you can just get me out of this jam. It was meaningless and dishonest; he didn't believe there was anything or anyone out there capable of helping him. He read the Bible and the Quran in search of evidence that would override his skepticism. The concept of an omnipotent being nagged at him. Why is this relationship so one-sided? Why would a loving God create evil? Why would he allow eternal damnation? Foster felt like ‘a contestant in his game show.’”

“Foster, ... was raised Muslim in Albuquerque, New Mexico. "Prayed five times a day, facing east," Foster says. His father, Carl – ‘a free thinker, very intelligent, knows the Bible front and back,’ Arian says -- pushed him to ask questions and challenge convention.”

“But if God is helping *you* win, Foster wonders, isn't he by definition ensuring that the other guy loses? As is the case with Foster's street, the water must choose a side. ‘If there is a God and he's watching football, there are so many other things he could be doing,’ he says. ‘There are hungry children and diseases and famine and so much important stuff going on in the world, and he's really blessed your team? It's just weird to me.’”

He tells the story of his mother, who was raised Catholic, briefly converted to Islam and is now agnostic. 'She has internal struggles,' Foster says.

'Right now she feels like, 'What if I'm wrong?''

Foster assures her by saying, 'We've been to the moon, and there's no heaven up there. We've dug in the dirt, there's no devil down there. It's OK to think what you think.' They discuss adopting the principles of the gospels without accepting Christ's divinity.

Foster asked, “Why would a loving God create evil? Why would he allow eternal damnation?”

Where does evil come from and why does it exist?

Gen 1:31 God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Joh 1:3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

So God says He did not create evil!

But evil did exist before Adam and Eve

Gen 2:9 ... the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

If God didn't create evil, where did it come from. It had to have an origin somewhere.

Joh 8:44 "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Satan's "nature" is evil.

1Jn 1:5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

God could not create evil because it is against His very Being.

Thus, evil has always existed --

Job is thought to be the oldest book of the Bible, predating Moses writing of the 1st three books.

The book of Job tells of the struggle between good and evil – the question of whether anyone will serve God if they are not immediately rewarded for it.

Job 1:1 There was a man in the land of Uz,
whose name was Job, and that man was
blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning
away from evil. ...6 Now there was a day
when the sons of God came to present
themselves before the LORD, and Satan also
came among them. 7 And the LORD said to
Satan, "From where do you come?"

Then Satan answered the LORD and
said, "From roaming about on the earth and
walking around on it."

8 And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil."9 Then Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 "Hast Thou not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 "But put forth Thy hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse Thee to Thy face."

Satan afflicted Job with

1. Theft of all his property (v. 14, 17)

2. Natural disaster

lightening hit his flocks (v. 16)

a windstorm killed his children
(v. 18)

3. Death of his children (v. 19)

Job 2.2 Then Satan answered the LORD and said, "From roaming about on the earth, and walking around on it." 3 And the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man fearing God and turning away from evil. And he still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to ruin him without cause."

4 And Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. 5 "However, put forth Thy hand, now, and touch his bone and his flesh; he will curse Thee to Thy face."

Given a free choice, Satan thinks no one will serve God if the consequences are high enough.

God allowed Satan to strike Job.
(1:12) but God takes the blame for
what Satan does. (2:3)

“And he still holds fast his integrity, although
you incited Me against him, to ruin him
without cause.”

God can control how far we are
tempted.

Why does God allow such temptations?
He limits them for the Christian.

1Co 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

All temptations make us stronger but
falling into sin does not help us – we must
overcome!

Heb 12:7-8 It is for discipline that you
endure; God deals with you as with sons;
for what son is there whom *his* father
does not discipline? (8) But if you are
without discipline, of which all have
become partakers, then you are
illegitimate children and not sons.

There is a battle between righteousness and evil –
God and Satan watching their minions do battle.

Eph 6:12-13 For our struggle is not against flesh
and blood, but against the rulers, against the
powers, against the world forces of this darkness,
against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the
heavenly *places*. (13) Therefore, take up the full
armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in
the evil day, and having done everything, to stand
firm.

1Pe 5:8-11 Be of sober *spirit*, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. (9) But resist him, firm in *your* faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. (10) After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen *and* establish you. (11) To Him *be* dominion forever and ever.
Amen.

To answer Foster's question – Does God care who wins the football game – I don't think so. But what about the “hungry children and diseases and famine and so much important stuff going on in the world?”

God wants to know what we are going to do about it!

Jas 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Why does God allow such
temptations?

For a warning to those who
oppose God.

Rev 16:7 And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Thy judgments." 8 And the fourth angel poured out his bowl upon the sun; and it was given to it to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues; and they did not repent, so as to give Him glory.

For a warning to all mankind.

Rev 9:13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, 14 one saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound at the great river Euphrates." 15 And the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released, so that they might kill a third of mankind. ...

20 And the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk; 21 and they did not repent of their murders nor of their sorceries nor of their immorality nor of their thefts.

Foster has a daughter – Zeniah.

Most of you have children?

Why do you love them. You are made in God's image! You know that there are evil people who do not love their children. Believers in the God of heaven are taught to care for their children (Tit 2.4).

Consider the lengths that believers in the God of the Bible and their societies will go to in order to protect their children from diseases. Medicine to protect our young is an exclusive product of Bible believers or those who live among them.

No wonder Foster is confused if he was taught Islam. Daughters of Islam are thought to be a curse – not to be educated – not to be allowed to work – hidden away from the world.

Pakistan spent billions to get nuclear weapons as did India – and now Iran – but neither Muslim nor Hindu have any use for Foster's daughter.

My niece's daughter, 2 years old, Eliza Dodd was near death from an E. coli infection – why was she spared when others die? Did she get sick because of some sin her parents did?

No!

Joh 9:1-4 As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. (2) And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" (3) Jesus answered, "*It was* neither *that* this man sinned, nor his parents; but *it was* so that the works of God might be displayed in him. (4) "We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.

Russia, an atheistic nation from 1917 to 1991 built a space program, 4,480 nuclear warheads, but produced no novel medicines in its history.

Why? What's the purpose of helping others if there is no God?

God did not create evil or Satan for His creation was good.

God continues to war against evil, with Jesus being the conqueror of death. Those who obey God are His agents to carry out the fight against Satan, Eph 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

1Co 15:54-57 But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory. (55) "O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?" (56) The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; (57) but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2Th 1:7-10 and *to give* relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, (8) dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. (9) These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, (10) when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed--for our testimony to you was believed.

Where will you spend eternity?