

# THEODICCY

## A Study on Self-Righteousness & The HOLYNESS of God Almighty

By: David A. Sargent

This study is in direct response to an interview I listened to just a few minutes prior. The interview was of a fellow by the name of Bart Ermon who says he is now an Agnostic. In this interview he tells the reason why he became an Agnostic after being converted “born again” as he puts it younger in life. He had been a member of Youth for Christ and attended College Moody Bible Institute (trained for the ministry) and earned his Doctorate in New Testament Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary. Books: Miss-Quoting Jesus, God’s Problem (why we suffer). At the time of recording he worked as a distinguish professor of Religious Studies at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Mr. Bart claims that he was “born again” and had a “personal relationship with God” and having be drawn to Christianity because of suffering and became in time more and more liberal in his “Christianity” as if that is possible. He brings up the collegiate word Theodicy and therefore this is the title of this answer to his self-righteous dichotomy which is against himself.

“Theodicy defined: In its most common form, is the attempt to answer the question of why a good God permits the manifestation of evil. Theodicy attempts to resolve the evidential problem of evil by reconciling the traditional divine characteristics of omnibenevolence, omnipotence, and omniscience, in either their absolute or relative form, with the occurrence of evil or suffering in the world. Unlike a defense, which tries to demonstrate that God's existence is logically possible in the light of evil, a theodicy provides a framework which claims to make God's existence probable.” From: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodicy>

Bart’s claim in his “theory” is that God is Almighty, all powerful, loving, etc., why then is there so much suffering in the world. There are obviously many reasons for suffering, you can’t just apply one explanation for suffering. However there is a root of all suffering that stems from self-righteousness. Bart assumes many things that are NOT Biblical. First he assumes that God is in control of this present world.

He said the reason people suffer is because they go against God in sin. God punished his people! He said people “buy” into this! His problem with this is that righteous people suffer and the wicked prosper?

Another view he says is there is a “redemptive” view of suffering using Joseph as an example. He goes on to say that in the New Testament the writers (“the gospels and Paul”) portrayed Jesus’ suffering and crucifixion as redemptive and not “as a miscarriage of justice or as a bad thing that happened to Jesus because of an exercising of freewill.” Then he says our own suffering can be good out of it. Then turns he says suffering is not redemptive at all, he thinks it is cold-hearted to say that ALL SUFFERING is redemptive! WHAT? Who said that? I see a smoke screen!

He is now not dealing with suffering at all: he said “...a lot of time, a lot of times I don’t think suffering is, is, um, redemptive at all, a, in that, I think it can be rather cold hearted to say that suffering is always redemptive; a, s, the, the, person whose, a the, the middle-aged couple whose child gets killed in a car accident on the way to the prom; a there’s nothing redemptive about that; massive starvation in the world today, there’s nothing ss, there’s nothing redemptive about it... ..so I think... .. but in the end it really doesn’t explain the suffering in the world in my opinion.”

Claims to be a Scholar because of the hepatitis he had as a child. Remember he is a distinguished professor of Religious Studies at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Now he goes into Job and claims that Job was written by two authors. Separating the first and last of the book from the middle calling the middle from chapter 3 to 42 is not a story about Job but a set of poems about the debates with Job and his three friends about why there is suffering in the world. As he claims and said most scholars agree that they are different authors because of the genres, one is a story and the other poetry. He says that in the beginning of the book God is praising Job in front of a heavenly council: “a group of sort of demigods around him (God) one of whom is named hassattan (he pronounced with all short vowels) it’s translated as Satan but this hassattan isn’t the devil of later Jewish and Christian imagination. He’s actually sort of the adversary, a, the word hassattan in Hebrew literally means adversary, and so a, I guess you can call him the devil’s advocate. He’s the one who says to God, well yea Job is righteous but it’s just because you’ve given everything, look he’s got all this cattle, and he’s got this great family, and he’s extremely wealthy, so of course he’s righteous because he gets everything out of it. And God says no, no, no, he’s not righteous for that reason, he is righteous because he knows that it’s right to be righteous. And Satan says, in fact take away everything and he will curse you to your face... ..God told Satan see he’s still righteous, and Satan said to God well see it’s because you have allowed me to hurt him.”

This altogether seems like a logical progression of reasoning, however his premise is false, ergo his conclusion will also be false.

Again I quote from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodicy>

#### “Augustinian Theodicy

The Protestant and Reformed reading of Augustinian theodicy, as promoted primarily by John Hick, is based on the writings of Augustine of Hippo, a Christian philosopher and theologian who lived from AD 354 to 430. The catholic (pre-Reformation) formulation of the same issue is substantially different and is outlined below. In Hick's approach, this form of theodicy argues that evil does not exist except as a privation—or corruption of—goodness, and therefore God did not create evil. Augustinian scholars have argued that God created the world perfectly, with no evil or human suffering. Evil entered the world through the disobedience of Adam and Eve and the theodicy casts the existence of evil as a just punishment for this original sin. The theodicy argues that humans have an evil nature in as much as it is deprived of its original goodness, form, order, and measure due to the inherited original sin of Adam and Eve, but still ultimately remains good due to existence coming from God, for if a nature was completely evil (deprived of the good), it would cease to exist. It maintains that God remains blameless and good.

In the catholic reading of Augustine, the issue of just war as developed in his book *The City of God* substantially established his position concerning the positive justification of killing, suffering and pain as inflicted upon an enemy when encountered in war for a just cause. Augustine asserted that peacefulness in the face of a grave wrong that could only be stopped by violence would be a sin. Defense of one's self or others could be a necessity, especially when authorized by a legitimate authority. While not elaborating the conditions necessary for war to be just, Augustine nonetheless originated the very phrase, itself, in his work *The City of God*. In essence, the pursuit of peace must include the option of fighting with all of its eventualities in order to preserve peace in the long-term. Such a war could not be pre-emptive, but defensive, to restore peace. Thomas Aquinas, centuries later, used the authority of Augustine's arguments in an attempt to define the conditions under which a war could be just.”

Augustine and others that resort to fallacies of nature like “original sin” or “the inherited original sin” are bogus premises to start with and cannot be the issue of maintaining any good theology thereupon. These words are not in the Biblical text anywhere to be found. However what is found is precisely what needs to be looked at from a Bible Believing view point.

The arrogance of anyone who claiming to be an Agnostic purports to “teach” others, when they themselves have admitted to knowing nothing; is the height of self-importance.

The issue is simpler than most even care to think about: it is self-righteousness vs. God’s righteousness. Man making himself equal with God! God’s thoughts are not like our thoughts. God wrote his words for us to know the answers to these things, as well to us by these we also know HIM.

What causes suffering in this world is not anything Mr. Bart Ermon talks about; he never dives right in there and deals with the real subject. Why? You ask? Because Bart Ermon is NOT and never was a Bible Believer.

Adam lost the image of God in the garden by his sin, but it is what he gained that caused the suffering. What was the forbidden fruit called? The knowledge of evil ONLY? NO, of Good AND evil! This is why people are moral, but are still sinful. See Adam and Eve were INNOCENT prior to eating from the tree. They were not perfect, nor were they “righteous”. These assumptions must needs be rendered as such. They did not know right OR wrong!

The idea that Adam’s sin is passed down to everyone is too much for words: When Adam sinned he lost the light by eating that fruit. God’s image is light. God’s express image is Jesus Christ. Adam had that light, but when he ate the light went out and he died spiritually that very same day. Bart should know these things if he did take all that training. The trouble is his training was NOT geared towards BELIEVING the Bible, but rather towards tearing up the text through UNBELIEF, as though it was only man’s words! Adam did gain the knowledge of GOOD and EVIL, with these two come a CHOICE from that day forward. Prior to this Adam’s choice was to obey God or harken to the voice of his wife. What was caused because of this was that the whole of the earth was put under a curse, what we eat comes from plants that get their nourishments from the earth! The suffering in this world is a direct consequence of the CURSE from Adam. Now why is that?

There is a kingdom at stake here! But who would have every thought about that? God’s kingdom was originally run by Lucifer, who rebelled against God, so God created Adam and gave the kingdom to him, and Lucifer became Satan at his fall, at least prior to Genesis 3. I would place the fall of Lucifer in Genesis 1:2-3 on the first day. At any rate, in Genesis 3 he shows up as the old serpent and deceives Eve. Had Eve already had the knowledge of Good and Evil, she may not have been so easily deceived. But she was innocent. She was not holy, or righteous, or perfect. Innocence is devoid of any ability of a conscience decision or a moral standard towards right or wrong. Innocence precludes these things. And as it looks like Eve was given the command by Adam and not God himself. This is why Eve alters the words when approached by Satan.

So why do the “righteous” suffer and the “wicked” prosper? The question is a fallacy – the premise is false, what logical reasoning you deduce from this will ultimately be untrue as well. The fact is there is NONE righteous NO NOT ONE! Righteousness is reserved for God only and who God imputes it to. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. All have SINNED before a HOLY ETERNAL GODHEAD. It was decreed that SIN must be punished with an eternal punishment because all sin is against this Eternal Holy God. But God in his infinite mercy and grace made a way to escape, by coming into this world, and dying in place of sinful men. Joining forever Man and God in the man Jesus Christ the righteous: all we need do is to receive Jesus Christ to be connected to this redemption and miss eternal judgment in Hell Fire and Damnation.

This life may be a veil of tears, but for a Christian it is all of Hell we will ever see: but for the lost it is all of heaven they will ever see.

The suffering in this life is of our own personal self-righteousness as was Job's sin: God showed himself to be the ONE who is truly WORTHY. The righteous suffer because they are NOT righteous! The wicked prosper because they get their prosperity through wickedness. It is not rocket science to know the truth if you are a Bible Believer. You just believe what God SAID! Stop altering the book God gave you in English.

Why ask the question "Why do the 'righteous' Suffer?" when there are NONE RIGHTEOUS? Why not ask: "Why do the innocent suffer?" There are some that are innocent in this world! Yet when Bart Ermon, the college professor who proclaims himself a scholar talks about all the children in the world that are starving, he misses the issue about their innocence. Do children in their innocence DIE? How about suffer? The obvious answer is YES. Ok, WHY?

SIN in the person, the CURSE on the ground, and the fact that GOD is righteous and we are all made for HIM, not the other way around. All the suffering in this life is not caused by the same direct issue: however, they ultimately are due to the fact of SIN. Not the ROMAN "original sin." If they were honest about this term they would not be talking about Adam's sin, because Eve sinned before Adam did. But then who was there that deceived Eve to SIN? Was it the Devil disguised as a serpent? Who is the Devil? Where did he come from? Was he the first SINNER? Original sin is a joke. We are not accountable for Adam's sin, and it was not his sin that was passed to all men, it was DEATH! Read this verse very carefully:

Romans 5:12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" with:

Romans 5:19, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

Mankind has the insatiable propensity to choose wrong over right nevertheless they are also capable of choosing right over wrong as Jesus Christ said: Matthew 7:11, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" And Luke 11:13, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

This is a remarkable statement considering what most people think about the human nature and sin. Fact is Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the Knowledge of Good AND Evil: not just a tree of EVIL! The disobedience had to do with the fact that God told Adam NOT to eat from it. This was Adam's SIN. Adam was NOT deceived, he blatantly disobeyed God. As a Bible Believer I take this as the absolute truth without question. No linguistics, no better translation, and no opinions or preferences!

Our esteemed professor and scholar Bart Ermon wears a chink in his armour, he did not hold the line but broke ranks. He is now by profession an Agnostic which means he knows nothing. Think for a moment about what that means! He is professing stupidity. I think he was just educated too high for his abilities. His own self-worth and self-righteousness prevails over his Bible, so much so that something so trivial as suffering uprooted his faith. No! I'm not buying it. I think he has been taken captive by the devil at his will: 2 Timothy 2:26, "And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."

When Adam sinned he forfeited the Kingdom of heaven to the DEVIL. Satan is the god of this world, he rules and had dominion over the kingdoms and offered them to the Lord Jesus Christ, who never said you can't do that they belong to my daddy! Instead Jesus Christ responded with scriptures.

Luke 4:5-8, "And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." The alteration of this passage is notable in most all modern new age versions where they take out: "...Get thee behind me, Satan..."

Notice that verse 6 that Satan says: "And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it." Where did he get this "power" that is delivered unto him to give to whomsoever he will give it? This power would come from the fact that Lucifer was the King over God's kingdom of heaven, from which God through him out of because of Lucifer's fall into sin.

Isaiah 14:12-15, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." And the context to be compared with Ezekiel 28:12-19, "Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the

mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.” Notice that in both cases these are written about a king that in either case it is not a description of any king of that kingdom. The description is of a being that in one case is named Lucifer, and in the other case is the anointed Cherubim. I maintain that these beings are both the same person Lucifer, because of the amount of similarities in the passages about them.

This is the enemy of every human soul and because of the deception of four words Eve was deceived, and offered to Adam the sin she had taken. Adam saw her condition and loved her enough to die with her. So Adam disobeyed God and the human condition became sinful, wretched, and cursed. But every person is only accountable for their own sin; not Adam’s sin, not Eve’s sin, and not Satan’s (Lucifer’s) sin.

James 1:13-15, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” The tempter is Satan: Matthew 4:1; Matthew 4:3; Mark 1:13; Luke 4:2; 1 Corinthians 7:5. We have a choice just like Jesus Christ had a choice; he passed the test completely. This is why He can be our savior, because He was perfect, and died in our place. Making reconciliation for us; however, that reconciliation is not automatic; there are three parts to that: God’s part in reconciliation that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself: Jesus Christ being God and Man was that very reconciliation; and then man’s part is to receive Jesus Christ as his own personal payment for his personal sins. Here is the difference in all these things. Rome and Calvin were wrong. You are not born dead; you are born in innocence; and your own sins kill your spirit at the age of accountability. This age is different for every individual. There is no way around this event. But this is also why children that are in innocence go to heaven if they die before the age of accountability. It is because they have a living spirit: their name is in the book of life; and when they stand at the Great White Throne Judgment: their names are there written in the book of life; when the books are opened their lives will have nothing but innocence and no sin is charged to them. They pass though this judgment.

Water baptism is not necessary for anyone’s salvation which is what Rome and Calvin teach: both groups are involved in infant water baptism; and the sacraments. Then they perpetrate and invent words like Theodicy to deceive people to think they believe the wrong thing because they believe the Bible. That is just plain old WICKEDNESS.