



SPECTRUM MULTIVIEW BOOKS

EDITED BY CHAD MEISTER
and JAMES K. DEW JR.

GOD AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

FIVE VIEWS

CONTRIBUTIONS BY
Phillip Cary, William Lane Craig, William Hasker,
Thomas Jay Oord, *and* Stephen Wykstra

By

Mark McGee

God And The Problem Of Evil Five Views (IVP Academic, 2017) is an important book to read on at least two levels. One is to see how five scholars present their view of a problem that is of deep concern to humanity. The second is to see how those same scholars respond to each others' arguments.

In addition to learning about God and the problem of evil, we also learn how to make cogent arguments for our personal views on this and other topics of importance. Being prepared to give an answer to people who ask for “a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” is vital to our service to God and fellow human beings.

The Five Views are:

- Classic View
- Molinist View
- Open Theist View
- Essential Kenosis View
- Skeptical Theism View

The five scholars are:

- Phillip Cary – Professor of Philosophy and Scholar in Residence, Templeton Honors College, Eastern University
- William Lane Craig – Research Professor of Philosophy, Talbot School of Theology, and Professor of Philosophy, Houston Baptist University
- William Hasker – Emeritus Professor of Philosophy, Huntington College
- Thomas Jay Oord – Professor of Theology and Philosophy, Northwest Nazarene University
- Stephen Wykstra – Professor of Philosophy, Calvin College

I thought each of the scholars did an excellent job presenting and defending their arguments. Which view do you believe best explains **the problem of evil**?

About Editors

Chad Meister (PhD, Marquette University) is professor of philosophy and theology at Bethel College in Mishawaka, Indiana. His publications include *Evil: A Guide for the Perplexed*, *Contemporary Philosophical Theology*, *The Oxford Handbook of Religious Diversity*, and the six-volume work *The History of Evil*.

James K. Dew Jr. (PhD, Southeastern Baptist) is associate professor of the history of ideas and philosophy and dean of the College at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the coauthor (with Mark W. Foreman) of *How Do We Know? An Introduction to Epistemology* and coeditor (with Chad Meister) of *God and Evil: The Case for God in a World Filled with Pain* and *God and the Problem of Evil: Five Views*.

Publisher's Notes

Evil abounds. And so do the attempts to understand God in the face of such evil.

The problem of evil is a constant challenge to faith in God. How can we believe in a loving and powerful God given the existence of so much suffering in the world? Philosophers and theologians have addressed this problem countless times over the centuries. New explanations have been proposed in recent decades drawing on resources in Scripture, theology, philosophy, and science.

God and the Problem of Evil stages a dialogue between the five key positions in the current debate:

- Phillip Cary: A Classic View
- William Lane Craig: A Molinist View
- William Hasker: An Open Theist View
- Thomas Jay Oord: An Essential Kenosis View

- Stephen Wykstra: A Skeptical Theism View

According to the classic position, associated especially with the Augustinian tradition, God permits evil and suffering as part of the grand narrative of divine providence to bring about the redemption of creation. Molinism modifies the classic view by adding God's middle knowledge to the picture, in which God has knowledge of what creatures would do in all possible worlds. Open theism rejects the determinism of the classic view in favor of an account of God as a risk-taker who does not know for sure what the future holds. Essential kenosis goes further in providing a comprehensive theodicy by arguing that God cannot control creatures and thus cannot unilaterally prevent evil. Skeptical theism rejects the attempt to provide a theodicy and instead argues that, if God exists, we should not expect to understand God's purposes.

Edited and with an introduction by Chad Meister and James K. Dew Jr., *God and the Problem of Evil* hosts a generous and informative conversation on one of the most pressing issues in the Christian life.”

Reviews

“It is always enlightening to listen to a conversation among scholars who care deeply about a topic, take strikingly different positions, and engage each other in considerate and substantive ways. That’s just what *God and the Problem of Evil* provides: a stimulating conversation. Well-known proponents of five distinct approaches to the most vexing of philosophical and theological topics—Why is there suffering in God’s world?—summarize their positions in clear, accessible ways. Then each shows just how his view compares to the others. The positions presented cover a broad spectrum, yet each addresses with urgency both the intellectual and personal challenges that evil presents. The book makes a valuable contribution to current considerations of the topic.” Richard Rice, Loma Linda University, author of *Suffering and the Search for Meaning*

“How do we come to philosophical and theological grips with the vast amounts of evil in a world created by a perfectly good—indeed, maximally great—Being? *God and the Problem of Evil* helpfully lays out the various sides of the debate on this issue. Five philosophical theologians present the distinctive differences in their respective views, also noting the points on which they agree. The result is a volume that will serve as an excellent, up-to-date resource for those seeking to further explore this crucial—and perennial—question.” Paul Copan, professor and Pledger Family Chair of Philosophy and Ethics, Palm Beach Atlantic University, author of *A Little Book for New Philosophers*

“*God and the Problem of Evil* will be a helpful volume for those new to the discussion of this problem and looking for a brief overview of the possible arguments and counter-arguments made by Christian philosophers and theologians.” Jake Raabe, *The Baptist Standard*, April 11, 2017

“God and the Problem of Evil offers a lucid, emotionally sensitive, and diverse set of essays on the problem of evil. It would serve well for pastors, students, and small groups who are looking for a place to start their journey into this issue, or for people who are wishing to go a bit deeper in their reflection on God and evil.” R. T. Mullins, *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies*

God And The Problem Of Evil Five Views (IVP Academic, 2017, 199 pages)

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