

Aspirational Vocabulary

Term	Definition
Wisdom	The ability to use knowledge and experience to make good decisions.
Suffering	Experiencing pain, hardship, or distress.
Evil	A powerful force or action that causes harm, suffering, or moral wrong.
The Book of Job	An Old Testament book exploring why good people suffer.
Theodicy	An attempt to explain why a good and powerful God allows suffering.
Free Will	The ability to choose between different courses of action.
Salvation	Being saved from sin and its consequences; in Christianity, through Jesus Christ.
Original Sin	The idea that all humans inherit a sinful nature from Adam and Eve.
Faith	Strong belief in God or in the doctrines of a religion.
Atheism	The belief that God does not exist.

Is suffering our fault?

- Some suffering is caused by human actions (e.g., war, crime, pollution).
- Christians believe that free will allows people to choose good or evil.
- Other suffering, such as natural disasters, is harder to explain and leads to big questions about God and justice.

The Book of Job

- Job was a faithful man who suffered greatly despite being good.
- The book explores the idea that suffering is not always a punishment.
- Job learns to trust God's wisdom, even when he doesn't understand why suffering happens.

How do Christians respond to evil and suffering?

- Christians may pray, support others, and trust that God brings good from suffering.
- They believe Jesus suffered too, which helps them feel that God understands human pain.
- Charity, forgiveness, and community support are also key Christian responses.

The problem of evil

- If God is all-loving and all-powerful, why does evil exist?
- This is known as the 'problem of evil' and is one of the biggest challenges to faith.

- Christians offer different theodicies (explanations), such as the idea that suffering has a purpose or that free will is essential.

Salvation through Jesus

- Christians believe Jesus died to save humanity from sin and evil.
- Through Jesus' sacrifice, people can be forgiven and have eternal life.
- This is central to Christian beliefs about hope and overcoming suffering.

Non-religious responses to evil

- Atheists and Humanists may see evil as a human problem, not a spiritual one.
- They may focus on education, justice, and social reform to reduce suffering.
- Some argue that suffering proves God does not exist, or is not all-powerful or all-loving.

Big Questions

- 1) Why does suffering exist in the world?
- 2) What can we learn from the story of Job?
- 3) How do Christians find hope during times of suffering?
- 4) Can belief in God survive the problem of evil?
- 5) What are the strengths and weaknesses of religious and non-religious responses to suffering?