

Theodicy

An explanation for how a loving, powerful God can exist in the face of suffering and evil.

Irenaean Theodicy

Irenaeus was a 2nd Century Bishop, Greek by birth, who lived and taught in France. His teachings have been very influential in Christian thought.

Irenaeus suggested that evil and suffering, far from being evidence of God's lack of power or lack of love, may be necessary to God's plan.

God made humans *in imago Dei*; in the image of God. However humans have not yet attained the *likeness* of God. We have intelligence and imagination, but we are not wise and loving like God. In order to grow in understanding humans need the experience of evil and suffering. We also need free will in order to truly understand for ourselves how we should live.

The first stage of God's creation is complete. Humans in the *image* of God have been created. The second stage of God's creation is not yet complete, we are in the process of this second stage. The second stage will be complete when humans have reached the *likeness* of God. To reach this understanding we need to experience evil and suffering to learn and grow.

Therefore evil and suffering are necessary to human development as we progress to the second stage of creation.

Augustinian Theodicy

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo in North Africa, lived from 354- 430 CE. His work has informed major Christian belief and teachings.

God is perfectly good and God's universe is perfect. God, who created the universe from out of nothing, is not responsible for evil.

God created humans with free will. With our freedom we have disobeyed God and brought evil into the world. Humans are responsible for evil, which is simply corrupted goodness. Evil was not created by God, evil was the result of human corruption of God's perfect world.

There are different types of evil and both lead to suffering. *Moral* evil is human disobedience, greed and hatred. *Natural* evil is the world's reaction to human moral evil; the earth itself rejects us through disaster, illness and famine, and causes us to suffer.

Through our free will we can come back to God, though following Jesus. Although free will has allowed evil to come into the world, it is necessary for our salvation.