

Galatians 6:10 *“Therefore as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those of the household of faith.”*

December 13, 2015

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS---

- **Eyvonne Frankln, Doris Knowles, Terry Langley, Roger Key, Sue Whitehead, Tim Parker, Carl Franklin, John Ozley, Sara Ozley, Aladene Jacks, Kynethia Kelley, Amanda Kelley, Myra Garrison, Jimmy Parker, Stefani, Kate Miller, Johnny Richardson, Conner Rice, Tim Craven, Mickey Aldridge, Beverly Craven, Tuesday Pierce, Faye Wilkinson Goodwin, Sarabeth Upton, Rhonda Knowles.**
- **Sawyer Jones, Jeremiah Hughes, Robert Langley, Ana Reichelderfer & all of our servicemen and women** who are defending freedom. **Our nation** and its leaders. **Those that preach and teach the gospel**; especially those who labor under hardships. **Ben Brownfield, Shannon Brown, and Terry Tatum** (Christians' at Donaldson) and **Robert Gibson and Walter Aldridge** (released Christians who are struggling).

BLACK CREEK UPCOMING EVENTS:

- **Donaldson Bible Classes** Wednesday (M Dorm)
- **Men's and Ladies Bible Classes: 12/14/15** (Tomorrow night) @ 6:00

Area Gospel Meetings:

No Notices Received this week



Those Needing our Prayers.....

Eyvonne Franklin is recovering from her wrist break. **Carl's** condition is improved.

Roger Key continues to improve with his therapy and may be able to come home this week. His phone number is 497-6466, Ext 213.

John Ozley is gaining strength week by week.

Doris Knowles condition remains the same.

Sara Ozley continues to need prayers.

Black Creek Banner of Truth

Black Creek church of Christ

1235 Alliance Rd; Alliance, Alabama

436-4477

“You have given a BANNER to those who fear you, that it may be displayed because of the TRUTH. “ Psalms 60:4

Editor:

Van Cooper

Schedule of Services

Lord's Day

9:30 A.M. Bible Classes

10:30 A.M. Worship

Wednesday

7:00 P.M.

4:00 P.M. Worship (3 PM on the second Sunday of every month)

Elders

Philip Jacks 436-3055
Truman Wallace 483-7016
Van Cooper 491-9695

Deacons

Jeff Swindle 475-3043
Matt Carter 491-0414
Roger Key 491-3723
Mike Wood 522-5703

Evangelist

Sammy Bynum 368-3511

Who We Are: The Black Creek Church of Christ is simply a group of Christians dedicated to serving God. We believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God and it is to be our sole guide. We are committed to preaching the gospel of Christ, which is man's only hope for eternal life.

We are interested in helping anyone who is searching for the way to God. We welcome the opportunity to privately study the Bible with you. If you would contact us, we would be happy to meet with you. In addition, you are invited to visit one of our public assemblies (information is above). At our public Bible studies, we have classes for adults and children of all ages. If we can help you in knowing more about God and His Word, then please visit, call, or write us.

(Visit us on-line at (WWW.blackcreekchurch.com))

The Problem of Evil – Proof or Puzzle?

Many of you know that my wife has cancer. Her long-term prognosis is not great, but the most recent scan we had shows that the chemotherapy is reducing the size of her tumors, and we are very thankful. We are keenly aware that many other cancer patients received bad news this week, and are suffering terrible physical and emotional pain from this horrible disease.

The reality of pain and suffering – whether caused by diseases like cancer, disasters like tsunamis, or inhumanities like murder – is a great challenge to faith. The psalmist Asaph says his faith faltered as he “saw the prosperity of the wicked” (Psalm 73:2-3). In the midst of his anguish, Job complained about God’s seeming indifference: “It is all one; therefore I say, He destroys both the blameless and the wicked” (Job 9:22). And even the Lord Jesus cried out on the cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me” (Matthew 27:46, quoting Psalm 22:1).

Philosophers refer to the difficulty in reconciling the existence of suffering with the existence of God as the problem of evil. To state the argument in its classical formulation, it goes like this:

Premise 1: Evil exists.

Premise 2: If God was all-powerful, He could prevent the existence of evil.

Premise 3: If God was all-good, He would prevent the existence of evil.

Conclusion: Therefore God does not exist.

What are we to make of this argument? Christians accept the first premise – evil does indeed exist. And Christians agree with the second premise – God is all-powerful, and He could prevent the existence of evil. But what about the third premise – that if God was all-good He would have prevented the existence of

evil? This is the key contention, and it is the one that I want to focus on in a moment.

But before I address that issue, there is a crucial distinction that we need to bear in mind, and that is the distinction between a proof for something and a puzzle about something. Maybe the easiest way to illustrate the difference between proofs and puzzles is with conspiracy theories. The other day I happened to see a YouTube video produced by a “truther,” someone who denies that the attacks of 9/11 were perpetrated by terrorists. This specific video was about the attack on the Pentagon, and the gist of the video was this: the Pentagon is one of the most secure buildings in the world. It is surrounded by video cameras. And yet not one video camera covering the most secure building in the world captured any video of the plane actually hitting the Pentagon. Therefore, there was no plane, and no terrorist attack!

The point raised by the video is indeed a puzzle. Why is there no footage from a security camera that shows the attack? But— here is the key distinction – is this proof that there was no terrorist attack? Absolutely not. And the reason it is not proof that no terrorist attack occurred is that – although there is an unanswered question regarding the absence of security camera footage – there is overwhelming evidence from many lines of testimony that a plane did indeed strike the building as part of a terrorist plot. Over a hundred eyewitnesses saw the plane hit the building. Many parts of the plane were recovered from the building. Radar tracking and flight data information confirm the plane’s course into the building. So there is proof that the Pentagon was struck by a plane operated by terrorists. But there is also a question, a puzzle, that is unanswered – why no security camera footage of the moment of impact? But do you see that the fact that there is an unanswered question about the

attack does not in any way diminish the fact of the attack.

Indeed, given the fact that multiple lines of evidence provide a compelling reason to believe the attack occurred, we can reasonably conclude there is an explanation to the mystery of the absence of video footage, even if we never ascertain it. Perhaps the low angle of the plane’s trajectory at impact wasn’t covered by any camera. Maybe the camera that would normally have captured the video wasn’t working. Maybe there is footage and the government has chosen not to release it out of respect for the families who lost loved ones, or for security reasons. I can think of all kinds of possible reasons. And the reality is, I may never fully satisfy myself that I can answer this one question, solve this one puzzle, but that has absolutely no bearing on the question of whether the attack occurred. A puzzle is not proof, and an unanswered question does not erase demonstrably proven truths.

So let’s return now to the question of God and evil. In the first place, aside from the question of evil, I believe there are multiple lines of evidence that provide proof for the existence of God. I don’t have time in this article to develop them, but the ancient arguments for a First Cause that is eternal, immaterial, intelligent, and purely active are compelling. The issue of evil certainly presents a puzzle (and not just an intellectual curiosity, but a deeply challenging emotional burden, as my wife and I can testify). But this puzzle no more trumps the proof for God’s existence than the puzzle over the absence of video footage of the plane striking the Pentagon undermines the proof for the terrorist attack.

Look once more at the argument I laid out earlier:

Premise 1: Evil exists.

Premise 2: If God was all-powerful, He could prevent the existence of evil.

Premise 3: If God was all-good, He would prevent the existence of evil.

Conclusion: Therefore God does not exist.

Since Christians believe Premise 1 and Premise 2, the obvious point at which to challenge this argument is Premise 3. We would say that even though God is all-good, He has chosen not to prevent the existence of evil. But does this amount to a proof that He doesn’t exist? Of course not – not any more than the lack of security video of the plane proves there was no terrorist attack on the Pentagon. What it does amount to is a puzzle – why would God who is completely good permit the existence of evil?

And just as we can surmise many reasonable answers to the puzzle of the lack of video, we can certainly suggest many plausible reasons that God would permit evil to exist. Perhaps God values free will in His creatures, and that inhered the reality of evil. Since God is all-powerful, perhaps God chose to permit evil knowing that He would bring greater good from it. Another possibility is that God allows evil in order to give us the chance to love freely and without selfish motives, thus sharing His perfect character. These are just a few of the many reasons thoughtful Christian reflection has suggested through the centuries as to why God permits the existence of evil. And maybe we will never really know the answer to this puzzle, just like we may never know why no footage exists of the plane crashing into the Pentagon. But that gives us no warrant to ignore the good reasons we have to believe in God. It just means that we must learn to trust God when we don’t always understand His ways. Not in some blind leap of irrationality, but precisely because we have such good reasons to believe that He is, and to believe that despite the painful puzzles that break our heart, some day like Job (Job 42:5) and Asaph (Psalm 73:17) we will see Him. By ***Shane Scott***