



Which is easier—  
to tear down or to build up?

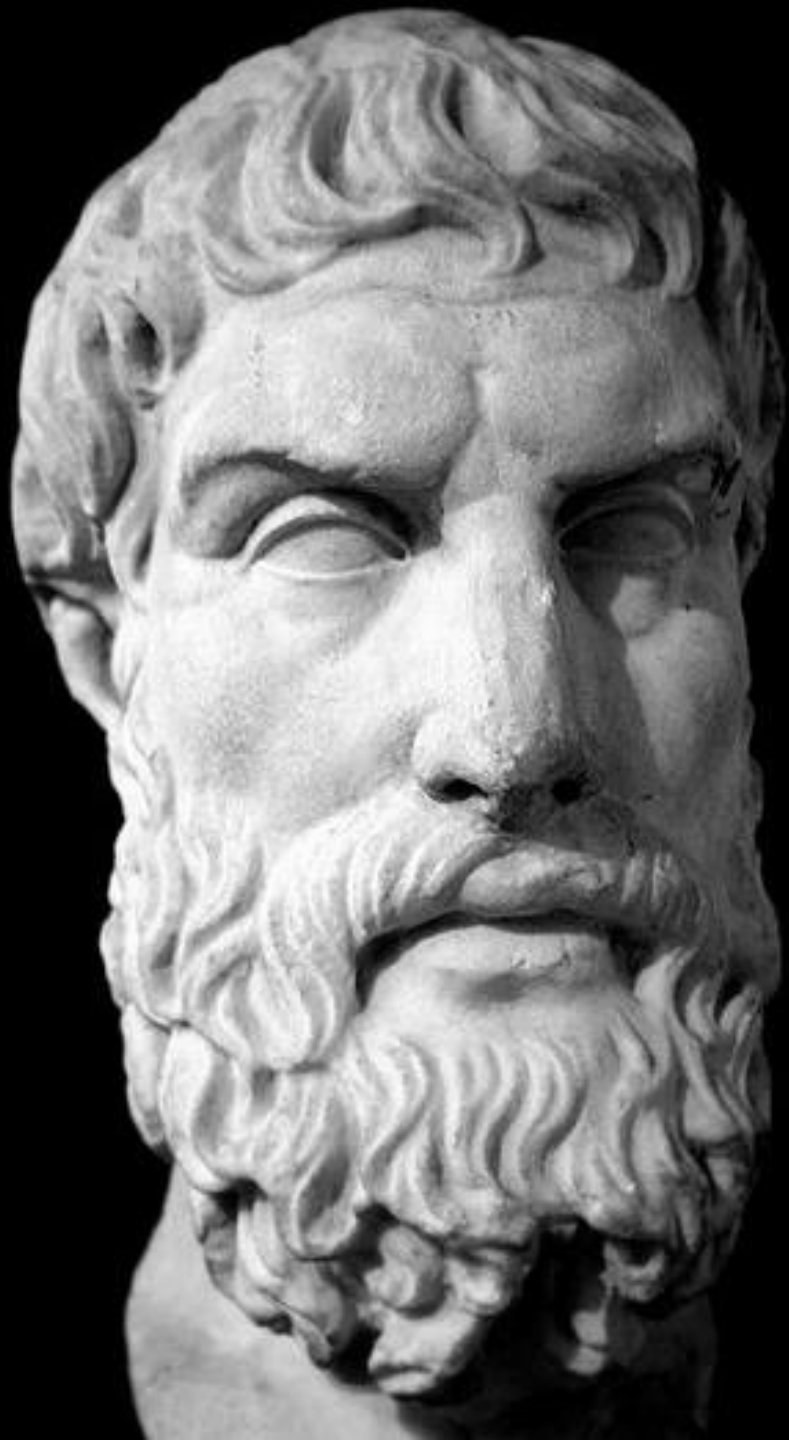
# Causes of Unbelief

## (part 2)

03.02.2025 @ 5 PM

# Evil, Pain and Suffering

Judges 6:13, “Then Gideon said to him, “O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian.”



# Evil, Pain and Suffering

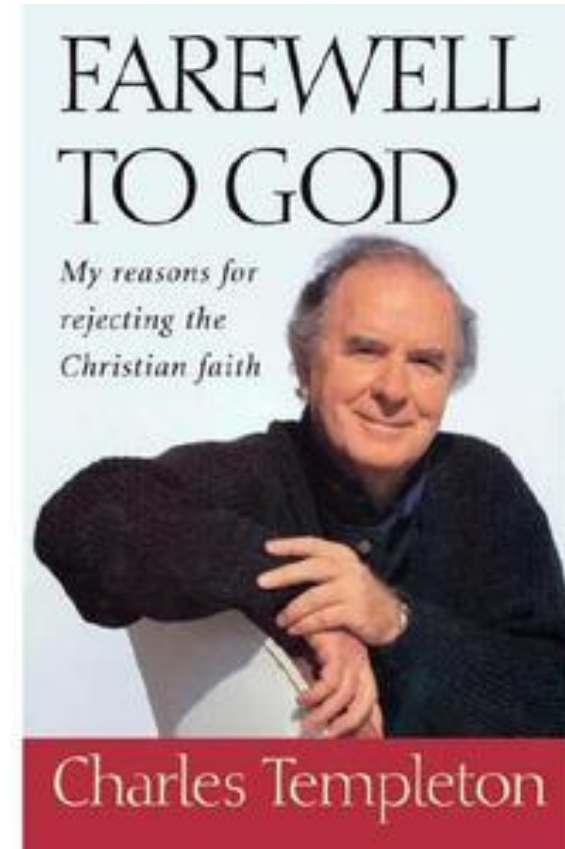
“Either God wants to abolish evil, and cannot; or he can, but does not want to; or he cannot and does not want to. If he wants to, but cannot, he is impotent. If he can, and does not want to, he is wicked. But, if God both can and wants to abolish evil, then how comes evil in the world?”

--Epicurus, B.C. 341-270

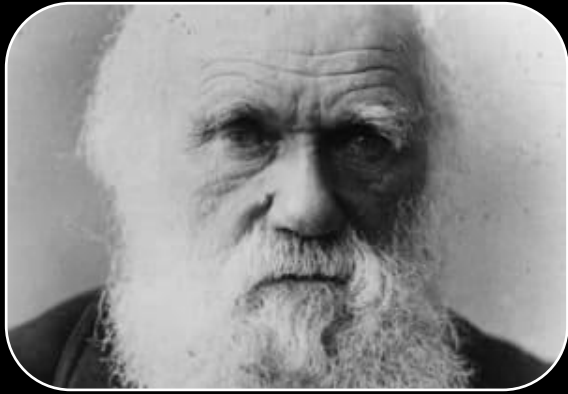
# Evil, Pain and Suffering

Charles Templeton wrote in  
*Farewell to God*,

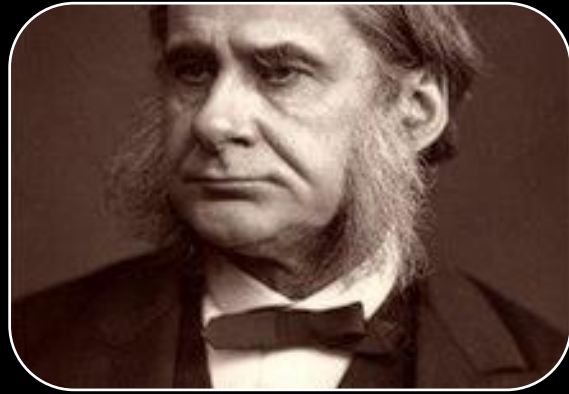
- “A loving God’ could not possibly be the author of the horrors we have been describing—horrors that continue every day, have continued since time began, and will continue as long as life exists. It is an inconceivable tale of suffering and death, and because the tale is fact—is, in truth, the history of the world—**it is obvious that there cannot be a loving God.**”



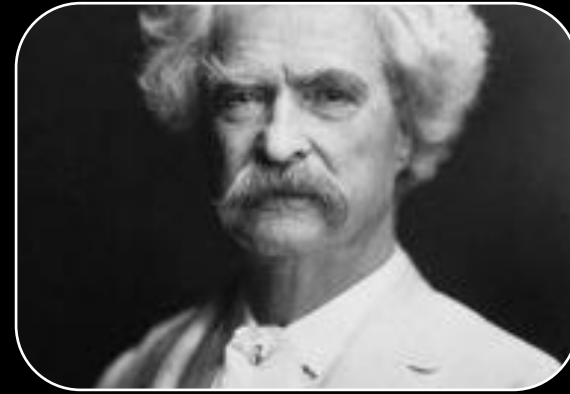
# Evil, Pain and Suffering



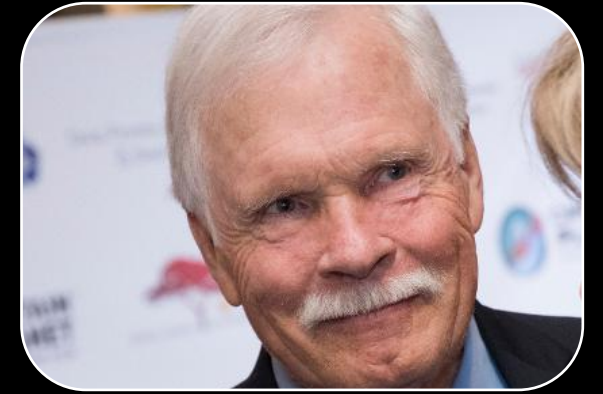
Charles Darwin



Thomas Huxley



Mark Twain



Ted Turner

# A few points to consider...

- God's creation, including man, was "very good" at its inception (Gen 1:31; 3:8,22).
- This cursed world is a direct consequence of man's sin (Gen 3:17; 6:5-6)!
- Death is the lot of all men (Genesis 3:19; Hebrews 9:27).
- Some tragedies occur because God has created a world ruled by natural laws (gravity, physics, weather patterns, cp. Luke 13:2-5).
- Pain and suffering can be a beneficial reminder this life is temporary (Hebrews 11:13-16; James 4:14; Psalm 46:1-3; 1 Peter 5:10; Rev 21:3-4).
- God is not immune to our suffering (Hebrews 5:8; 1 Peter 2:21; Romans 5:8-10; 1 John 4:9-10).

# Hypocrisy/Misconduct of Believers

“The corruptions, or shortcomings, or the hypocrisy in the lives of some believers have been used to justify the rejection of Christianity. They are viewed as adequate samples of the faith, and since the samples are not good, the faith is viewed as bad” (Bales, James. *How Can Ye Believe?* P. 49).

## Why Church?

A national survey of 1,402 adults ages 18 and older who have not attended a religious service, synagogue, or mosque, at any time in the past six months.

I believe I can have a good relationship with God without being involved in church

86% agree

The church is full of hypocrites, people who criticize others for doing the same things they do themselves

72% agree

Believing in Jesus makes a positive difference in a person's life

71% agree

Bars represent percentage who "somewhat agree" and "strongly agree" with statement.



Center for Missional Research





# Hypocrisy/Misconduct of Believers

- Yet, a few points to set the record straight.
  - God's Word sharply rebukes the sin of hypocrisy and God's servants did so too (Proverbs 25:19; 1 Timothy 1:5; Matthew 23; Galatians 2:11-14).
  - We cannot expect the church to know of every act of hypocrisy committed, but God does and He will render judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10-11).
  - Hypocrisy never kept Jesus from fulfilling His mission for us (think Judas/Peter).
  - Blaming God for the misconduct of Christians is completely illogical.
  - The most loving thing we may do when we know of hypocrisy is to expose it and forgive the sinner who repents of it (Galatians 6:1-2; Matthew 18:15-17).



# Historical Acts of Violence

- The Medieval Crusades (1095-1270 AD)
- The Inquisition (12th-16th centuries AD)
- Northern Ireland (Catholics vs. Protestants)
- Yugoslavia (Christian Serbs attacking Muslims)
- Random acts of violence by Christians (assassinations, abortion clinic bombings, mass shootings at bars, etc).



# Historical Acts of Violence

- So, how should we respond to such a tattered history?
  - First, admit it happened.
  - Second, realize God nor Christ ever forced anyone to adhere to the Divine Will (John 18:36; Luke 6:27-31).
  - Third, note it is unfair to blame God for the unjust acts committed in His name without authority (it's like blaming the law for the cruelty of a cop).
  - Fourth, separate the real believer from the counterfeit (cf. Matthew 7:15-20).
  - Fifth, again, let's not throw out Christianity because some have abused it!
- Finally: will the unbeliever apply the same standard to unbelievers who behave badly?





Unbelief → Unbelief

The more accepted a belief or “unbelief” system becomes, the more contagious unbelief is.

We Must Note the  
Causes of Unbelief  
Because of the Effects