

Presentation guide 1:

A **Chaotic** World – **Where is God?**

Few would argue that we live in a chaotic world. Few would argue that there is such a thing as evil. But the big questions are: What is evil and where did it come from?

What Is Evil?

Evil is not a substance or a thing, rather it is the corruption of a thing. It is like rust to a car or rot to a tree, it does not exist in and of itself. Like a parasite, it requires a host. Badness is only spoiled goodness, and there must first be something good before it can be spoiled. Good, then, came first; evil came after. This is precisely what Scripture reveals.

Where Did Evil Come From?

This may come as a bit of a surprise, but according to Scripture, evil began in heaven. That's right, in heaven! It began as dissatisfaction which then led to a dispute—the first ever dispute. The dispute became a controversy and the controversy became a war. Yes, you read that right: war in heaven! Consider the following insightful passages - The Controversy in heaven and on earth:

- › Revelation 12:7-9
- › Ezekiel 28:12-19
- › Isaiah 14:12-15
- › Genesis 2:17
- › Genesis 3:4,5

A discontented and fallen angel essentially accused God of being a liar. This happened first in heaven and then on earth. He tricked the woman, Eve, into believing that God was keeping something good from her. He subtly inferred that in order to be truly happy and fulfilled she would have to disobey God. This angel, Satan, disguised his true intentions by giving the impression that he was, in fact, concerned for her own good and looking out for her best interest. This narrative gives us an insight into how he deceived the angels in heaven. And right here we find the real issue behind the great controversy between good and evil. The controversy is over the character of God. Is God as He says He is, or is He as Satan says He is? This is the pivotal question—who is God and what is He like? Is He a tyrant and a withholder? Or is He a loving Father and a giver? The controversy—the dispute—is over God's character, and thus his law and government.

A Living Theater

This brings us to a remarkable statement made by the Apostle Paul found in 1 Corinthians 4:9. *"For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men."* That word "spectacle" is an interesting and important word. It means, literally, a theater. The Greek word is theatron and means a place for public show. That's what this world has become: a theater. It is a theater to God, to angels, and to men. Perhaps you've heard the saying All the world's a stage, well it's basically correct according to the Bible! What is now taking place on earth is actually affecting the whole universe. The character and governance of God has been impugned by Satan and his deceived sympathizers. And we are stuck in the middle. The plan of salvation—Jesus' life, death, and resurrection—is God's glorious, gracious mission to reveal the truth about Himself to the world. This is why Jesus said things like, *"He who has seen me has seen the Father"* (John 14:9). The angels are intensely interested in the struggle between good and evil that rages in the individual hearts of people. The Bible says that our role in this great conflict is a subject that the angels themselves *"desire to look into"* (1 Peter 1:12). Why? Because this controversy started in their backyard!

Deathblow at Calvary—a Great Paradox

Jesus' death on the cross dealt a determinative blow to Satan and his kingdom. When Jesus died humbly and undeservedly on the cross it was a crystal-clear statement to the world and to the universe of what God is really like. It was God's way of unmasking the deceptions introduced back in the Garden of Eden, and in heaven before that. Read, for example, Colossians 2:15. The passage says that Jesus made a *"public spectacle"* of Satan. Satan was seen for what he really is: a liar, a murderer, and a deceiver. See also John 8:44.

The Guarantee

Many have asked, "But how do we know that evil won't repeat its course after God makes everything new?" It's a great question! The best answer to this question is, I believe, found in something Jesus told His disciples after His resurrection. He said, *"Behold My hands and feet, that it is I Myself"* (Luke 24:39). You see, even after Jesus rose from the dead, He retained the scars on His hands and feet from His crucifixion. Consider also Zechariah 13:6: *"And one will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your hands?' Then he will answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'"* This is the answer; this is the guarantee. Throughout unending eternal ages the universe will have a constant reminder of the results of sin and evil. The reminder is there for all to witness. The scars tell a story, a sad, terrible story: sin is a murderer that will stop at nothing—not even the murder of God—to feed its insatiable appetite for power, position, and prominence. Those scars tell the story of sin, but, more importantly, they also tell the story of love—the love of God! Yes, Calvary's cross is the guarantee that evil will one day come to an end. At the cross the accusations of Satan were exposed; the real face of evil was revealed. Satan was shown to be the selfish rebel that he is, and God demonstrated His selfless love for the world. Ask yourself this question: Whose side am I on today? It's a question worth seriously pondering. More than this, it calls for a decision that's seriously worth making! Choose God! You won't regret it!