What Is The Origin Of Evil?

Intro: Even the most ardent and rabid atheists admit that evil exists. Many atheists use the existence of evil as one of the so-called proofs that God does not exist. However, atheists have no basis for determining if an action is evil or good, because there is no standard of right and wrong. The only basis for determining if there is evil is if God exists.

I. WHAT IS EVIL?
   A. Evil.
      1. It is found 622 times in 577 verses in the King James Version.
      2. Our initial thought is that it is simply sin.
      3. Evil embraces more than sin.
      4. Howley writes, “Evil has a broader meaning than *SIN. The Heb. word comes from a root meaning ‘to spoil’, ‘to break in pieces’: being broken and so made worthless. It is essentially what is unpleasant, disagreeable, offensive.”
   B. Evil is discussed under two aspects.
      1. Physical Evil
         a. This includes such things as natural calamities, diseases, droughts, etc.
         b. Luke 16:25 “But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.”
      2. Moral Evil
         a. This deals with things contrary to God’s Will, or those things which are sinful.
         b. These two aspects of evil are related, they must be considered separately.

II. ORIGIN OF EVIL
   A. The Beginning.
      1. Prior to the beginning.
         a. God existed.
         b. God’s nature; 1 John 1:5 “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”
         c. Thus when God created the world it was good.
            (1) Gen. 1:31 “And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”
            (2) At this time there was no evil.
      2. Satan came along and tempted Eve.
         a. Gen. 3
         b. Eve succumbed to the temptation and sin entered the world.
   B. Satan’s Origin
      1. The Bible does not specifically state.
      2. There are 2 possibilities.
      3. Satan is an eternal being.
         a. The dualism of Gnosticism and Zoroastrianism are false.
         b. It is impossible for him to be on par with God.
         c. Some would hold that while not omnipotent or omnipresent, Satan is still an eternal being.
4. Satan is a created being.
   a. There are again two options.
   b. God created him evil.
      (1) God is the Creator of good not evil; Jam. 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”
      (2) Some misapply; Isa. 45:7 “I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.”
         (a) This is bring calamity upon those who are evildoers.
         (b) It is a discussion of divine punishment, not the creation of Satan or evil.
      (3) God said of His creation that it was very good.
         (a) Gen. 1:31 “And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”
         (b) It would be inconsistent if he was created evil.
   c. God created him good and he became evil.
      (1) Several passages taken out of context to prove this view.
      (2) Isa. 14:12 “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!”
         (a) Many think Lucifer is Satan and fell from heaven.
         (b) Lucifer is the king of Babylon, not Satan.
      (3) Eze. 28:13-19 “Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carmubcle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. 14Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. 15Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. 16By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. 18Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. 19All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.”
         (a) This is the king of Tyre, not Satan.
         (b) Eze. 28:12 “Son of man, take up a lamentation upon the king of Tyrus, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.”
      (4) Luke 10:18 “And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.”
         (a) This is not speaking of Satan’s fall and origin.
         (b) The context is Satan’s power being destroyed by the preaching of the truth.
      (5) Parallel passages:
         (a) 2 Pet. 2:4 “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;”
         (b) Jude 6 “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation,
he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.”

(c) These deal with angels and not Satan.

(6) Rev. 12:7-9 “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, \(^6\) And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. \(^7\) And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

(a) A symbolic book.

(b) This symbolically describes the battle of the church and the forces of Satan.

(c) It shows us that the church will be victorious by the blood of the Lamb, not Satan’s origin.

5. There are difficulties with either view one holds as to Satan’s origin.

a. It seems more reasonable to me to believe that Satan was created by God.

(1) He would have been created good and became evil.

(2) He would have sinned because of pride; 1 Tim. 3:6 “Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.”

b. The fact is Satan exists.

C. Sin entered the world.

1. Satan tempted Eve.

a. She succumbed to the temptation and sin entered the world.

b. The result was God cursing the ground.

c. Gen. 3:17-19 “And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

2. Sin increased.

a. Gen. 6:5, 11-12 “And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually....11The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.”

b. God determined to destroy man from the face of the earth.

(1) Noah would be spared because he was righteous.

(2) He decided to do this by means of the global flood.

c. The flood.

(1) Prior to the flood the earth was protected by a water vapor canopy.

(a) This canopy protected the earth from harmful radiation from the sun.

(b) This explains the long life of the patriarchs.

(2) The flood removed the canopy.

(a) This allowed the harmful radiation to affect the world and people.

(b) This results in much of the physical evil in the world.

(c) It changed the weather and the physical earth bringing earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tornados, et al.
3. Physical evil comes as a result of sin.
   a. A particular individual who is now suffering physical evil might not have personally sinned.
   b. The ultimate cause of all physical evil is sin.
      (1) All people are affected by this physical evil simply because we live on this earth.
      (2) Wayne Jackson writes: “Disease, infirmity and death are ultimately the responsibility of Satan, for by his introduction of sin into the world, he brought about such woes and hence he is really the murderer of the human family (John 8:44)”

III. ORIGIN OF EVIL PERSONALLY (MORAL EVIL).

A. Adam and Eve (particularly Eve).
   1. Satan enters the picture.
   2. He reminds Eve of God’s Word; Gen. 2:16-17 “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”
   3. He changes that word to their not dying; Gen. 3:4 “And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:”

B. Three avenues of sin.
   1. John describes them:
      a. 1 John 2:15-17 “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”
      b. Lust of the flesh
      c. Lust of the eyes
      d. Pride of life
   2. Satan’s temptation of Eve:
      a. Gen. 3:6 “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”
      b. Good for food = lust of the flesh
      c. Pleasant to the eyes = lust of the eyes
      d. Desired to make one wise = Pride of life.
      e. Eve succumbed to the temptation and moral sin (a violation of God’s law) entered the world.
   3. Satan tempted Jesus.
      a. Mat. 4:1-11
      b. Turn stones into bread
         (1) lust of the flesh; put the physical above the spiritual
         (2) Jesus had been without food for 40 days and nights
      c. Cast Himself off the pinnacle of the temple
         (1) pride of life; show how great He is and Who He is.
         (2) Satan quotes Scripture to Him, just misapplies it.
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1. Fall down and worship Satan and he would give him all the kingdoms of the world = lust of the eyes.

2. Heb. 4:15 “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”
   a. Jesus knew God’s Word, understood it, and used it to overcome the temptation.
   b. Eve knew God’s Word, understood it, but failed to use it thus succumbing to sin.

3. A battle for the heart of man between God and Satan.
   1. God
      a. Gave man everything he needed.
      b. Prepared a beautiful garden for him, and placed him in it.
      c. They had continual fellowship with one another; Gen. 3:8 “And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.”
      d. God was proving His love for man as a parent would for his child.
      e. Eve chose sin and Satan over God; God lost her heart.
   2. At birth.
      a. A child is born without sin.
      b. The child reaches the age when he knows to choose good; Isa. 7:15 “Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.”
      c. That battle for the heart of man then takes place in each one.
         (1) Satan tempts man in the same way he did Eve and Jesus to steal our hearts away from God.
         (2) God is trying to keep and win back our heart by what He has done for us.

4. James description of this process.
   1. Jam. 1:13-15 “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”
   2. God does not tempt man to sin.
      a. It would be inconsistent with His nature.
      b. He is doing all He can to keep man from sin and doing what is right.
   3. The origin of temptation.
      a. Each one is “drawn away of his own lust.”
      b. “Drawn away” is literally to draw out of.
         (1) This would indicate that desire (or lust) must first be drawn away before there is enticement.
         (2) We need to stay away from places where we will be easily enticed to sin.
            (a) There are places where one will be easily enticed to sin and other places where it will rarely come.
            (b) One is generally not enticed to sin while attending worship services.
            (c) That same person might be enticed to sin at a dance party or with friends who drink, etc.
            (d) Each should know where enticement comes and stay away from those places.
c. “Lust” is simply desire.
   (1) It is sometimes translated desire (when in a good sense).
      (a) Luke 22:15 “And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover
          with you before I suffer:"
      (b) Phi. 1:23 “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with
          Christ; which is far better:"
      (c) 1 The. 2:17 “But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not
          in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.”
   (2) When used of evil, it is translated lust.
      (a) It is a desire for something God has expressly forbidden.
      (b) Or it is a desire to have something that is right in a way that is forbidden
          by God.
   (3) These lusts entice us.

d. “Entice” is from a word meaning to bait.
   (1) Used figuratively as to trap by enticing delights.
   (2) It is used of a fisherman who uses an attractive bait or the most alluring fly
       to lure or induce the fish to leave the safety of the rocks and crevices and to
       strike the bait.
      (a) When the fish strikes the bait, the fish is hooked and caught by the
          fisherman.
      (b) Satan uses the same method in using those things we most desire.
   (3) Illustration is seen in the description of a harlot by Solomon.
      (a) Pro. 7:6-27
      (b) We see the desire as he passes by her house.
      (c) Notice the harlot:
         i) She is dressed in the attire to seduce the man.
         ii) She is loud and stubborn.
         iii) She catches him and kisses him.
         iv) She speaks seductively telling him how she has decked her bed and
             made it ready for him and making love to him till the new day
             begins.
      (d) The result: Pro. 7:21 “With her much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the
          flattering of her lips she forced him.”

4. When the will yields to lust and it has conceived, then sin is born.
   a. Lust itself is not sinful only when it is conceived does it become sin.
   b. Sin is described as a conception and birth.
      (1) There must be the action and concurrence of two parties operating in the
          individual before the conception and birth can take place.
      (2) Likewise, there must be the action and concurrence of two parties operating
          in the individual before sin can take place.
         (a) Desire
         (b) The influence of Satan over the will.
   c. There is no way to prevent fleeting ideas coming into one’s mind.
      (1) It is impossible for us to purge our minds of fleeting desires, improper
          thoughts, questionable ideas.
(2) They appear unwanted and without prior notice.
(3) What one does when they appear is the key to whether or not he sins.
(4) When they appear, we must exclude them from our mind, not harbor or entertain them.

5. Mat. 5:28 “But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”
   a. This is not just a passing look at a woman.
   b. It is a look that is conceived in the heart that would cause one to commit adultery with the one upon whom he is looking.

E. Satan cannot overpower man’s will.
   1. God created man as a free moral agent (he can choose).
   2. Neither God nor Satan can override man’s free choice.
   3. Satan is the originator of sin not the immediate cause.
   4. Lloyd Ecrement says: “Satan tempts, but he cannot compel men to do evil against their wills. A man must yield to Satan’s temptation and desire before he becomes guilty of sin....We are answerable and responsible for our own sins, notwithstanding the temptation and influence of the devil. God endowed us with reason and a free will, therefore we have the ability to choose good or evil; in other words, we are free moral agents. So our sins are our own, and our own responsibility.”
   5. We are responsible for our own actions.

F. How does Satan influence us?
   1. His wiles:
      a. 2 Cor. 2:11 “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.”
         (1) Devices means “purposes, designs, schemes.”
      b. Eph. 6:11 “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”
         (1) Wiles is from a word from which we get “methods.”
         (2) Zodhiates says of it: “to work by method. Method, the following or pursuing of an orderly and technical procedure in the handling of a subject. In the NT, connected with evil doing, a device, artifice, art, artificial method, craft or wile.”
      c. Satan follows an orderly procedure in using every method to deceive man.
   2. Deceit is one of his most powerful tools.
      a. Satan is a liar; John 8:44 “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”
      b. 2 The. 2:10 “And with all deceitableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”
         (1) He presents us with the deceit of unrighteousness.
         (2) He deceived Eve into thinking that eating the fruit would make her a god and she would not die.
         (3) He tried to deceive Jesus in the three temptations recorded, but Jesus resisted him as we must do.
c. 1 Pet. 5:8-9 “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. "Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”

G. Origin of evil (sin) within the individual:
1. Satan will try to deceive and use our lusts to entice us to sin.
2. God has given us the tools necessary to overcome Satan and all his wiles.
3. God has given us His Word to overcome temptation:
   a. When we use that Word properly, we can overcome temptation.
   b. This is how Jesus overcame temptation (Mat. 4).
   c. 1 John 2:1 “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”
   d. Psa. 119:11 “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

Conclusion: Evil exists. All people must deal with it because we live in a world where nature and natural law sometimes results in physical evil. We are to use these to strengthen our faith in God and resolve to do His Will in our lives. When dealing with moral evil, we must take a stand against it and use God’s Word to overcome the temptation to sin. We must resist Satan and draw near to God (Jam. 4:7-8 “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.”). When we do this throughout our lives, then we will hear the words “Well done, good and faithful servant...enter into the joy of thy Lord” (Mt. 25:23).