

SKEPTICAL



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WHY DO BAD THINGS HAPPEN IF GOD IS GOOD?



THE THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

*“If a good and powerful God exists,
he would not allow pointless evil,
but because there is much
unjustifiable, pointless evil in the
world, it is probable that the
traditional good and powerful God
does not exist.”*

-Philosopher J.L. Mackie



Comedian George Carlin



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THE PROBLEM

Problem of Suffering: A Christian Response



APERTICAL

PROBLEM #1

God cannot be Good because
Evil Exists

If evil exists and God created everything that exists, then God created evil. Therefore, God is not good.

THE
THEOLOGICAL
QUESTIONS

Response:
God did not create evil.
It exists where God's
goodness is rejected. It
is the absence of good.

SCHEP TICAL

**“Why would God allow
evil to come into
existence?”**

APPEAL

Response:

Free Will Argument

God is relational and He is love. He has created beings with free will to choose to love him. Therefore, beings have free will to reject Him.

UNUSUAL

“Power can do everything but the most important thing: It cannot control love. He created us to love him but his most impressive displays of miracles- the kind we may secretly long for- do nothing to foster that love. ‘God’s problem’ is not that God is not able to do certain things. ‘God’s problem’ is that God loves. Love complicates the life of God as it complicates every life.” -Philip Yancey

THE PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTION

*“What is the source of evil
and suffering in the
world?”*

SCIENTIFIC

Atheism has no
explanation for evil nor
a moral response to
suffering.

**SCHEP
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**For atheism, suffering
is the universe's love
language.**

***“If there is no divine higher law,
there is no way to understand if
something is just or not. If there
is no God, than how is any
historical event unjust?”***

**-Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
*Letters From Birmingham Jail***

REFLECTIONS

SCHEP
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***“If God does not exist,
everything is permitted.”***

-Dostoevsky

THE
BIBLICAL
QUESTIONS

***“What is the source of evil
and suffering in the world?”***

**Response:
Creation and Fall
(*Breaking Shalom*)
Genesis 1-3**

THE
PHILOSOPHICAL
QUESTIONS



PROBLEM #2

*Suffering disproves
God's existence because
it is pointless.*

SCIENTIFIC

“Tucked away within the assertion that the world is filled with pointless evil is a hidden premise, namely, that if evil appears pointless to me, then it must be pointless. This shows enormous faith in one’s own cognitive faculties.”

-Tim Keller

“If you look into your tent for a St. Bernard, and you don’t see one, it is reasonable to assume that there is no St. Bernard in your tent. But if you look into your tent for a ‘no-see-um’ and you don’t see any, it is not reasonable to assume they aren’t there. Many assume that if there were good reasons for the existence of evil and suffering, they would be accessible to our minds, more like St. Bernards than like no-see-ums, but why should that be the case?” -Alvin Plantinga

NEPTICAL

Is suffering
pointless?



THEOLOGICAL

Glimpses of Reasons for Suffering

-Justice: consequences for wrong choices (Deuteronomy 28)



THEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

Glimpses of Reasons for Suffering

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- Reliance: to rely on God and not false security (2 Corinthians 1:8-9)

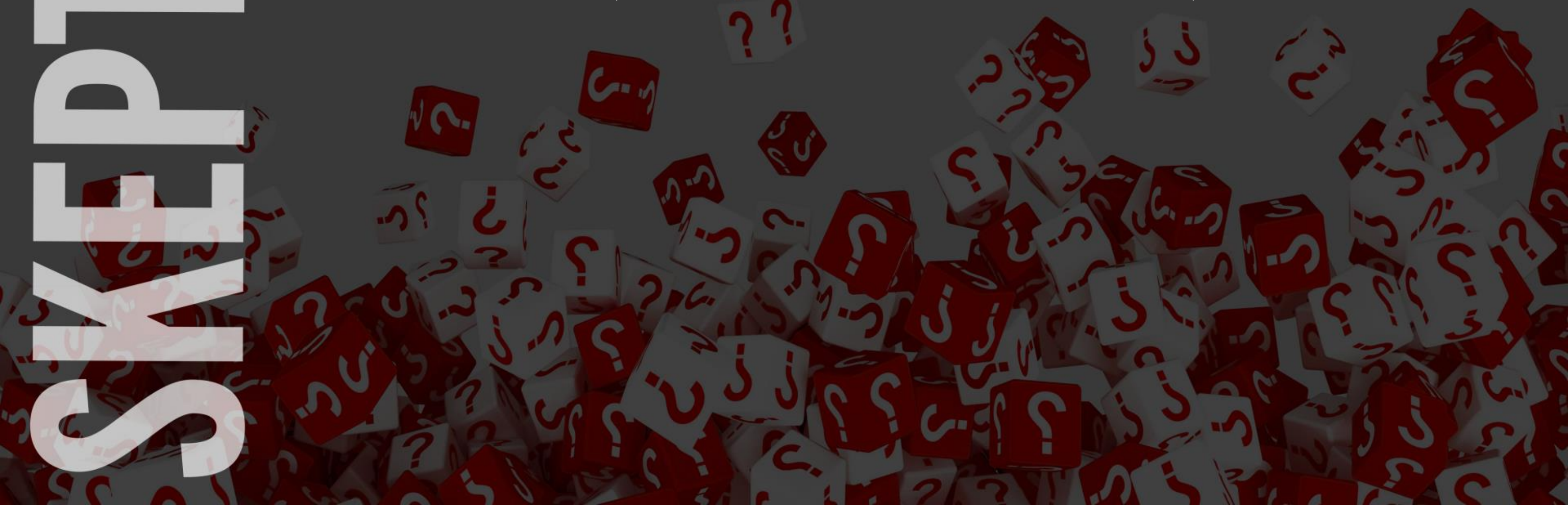
Glimpses of Reasons for Suffering

- Justice: consequences for wrong choices (Deuteronomy 28)
- Salvation: to bring people to repentance and faith (Luke 13:1-5)
- Reliance: to rely on God and not false security (2 Corinthians 1:8-9)
- Testing: To test our faith (James 1:1-5)

THEOLOGICAL

Glimpses of Reasons for Suffering

-Holiness: for humility and the
producing of Christ-like character
(Romans 8:28-30)



THEORETICAL

Glimpses of Reasons for Suffering

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Glimpses of Reasons for Suffering

- Holiness: for humility and the producing of Christ-like character
- Example: as a testament of faith to others
- Intimacy: so we can experientially know Christ and share in his suffering
- Preparation: to prepare for glory of eternity (2 Corinthians 4:17)

**CRITICAL
QUESTIONS**

**Atheism is useless for
the actual experience of
suffering.**

KEPTICAL

Christianity is rich
with resources for
suffering.

KEPTICAL

Christianity is the
only belief system
that has a God who
suffers.

***“What the Muslim
denounces as
blasphemy the Christian
holds precious: God has
wounds.”***

-Minister John Dickson

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“He is so committed to our ultimate happiness that he is willing to plunge into the greatest depths of suffering himself. He understands us, he has been there, and he assures us that he has a plan to eventually wipe away every tear. Someone might say, ‘But that’s only half an answer to the question why?’ Yes, but it is the half we need.”

-Tim Keller

Romans 8:18, 21

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us... [We have] hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.

TEMPERALS

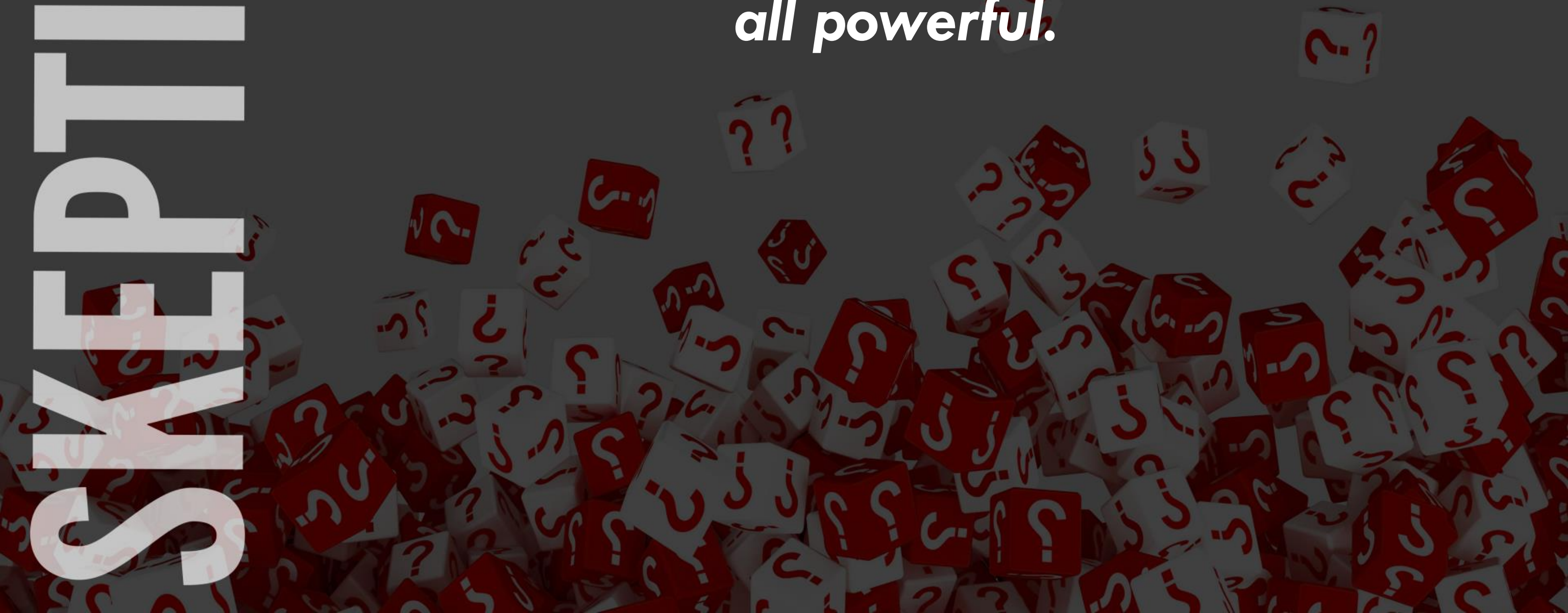
“They say of some temporal suffering, ‘No future bliss can make up for it,’ not knowing that Heaven, once attained, will work backwards and turn even that agony into a glory.”

– C.S. Lewis

APERTICAL

Atheist Says:

If God is an all-good God he would destroy evil, if God is all-powerful he could destroy evil. Evil exists and therefore God is not all good or all powerful.



SCIENTIFIC

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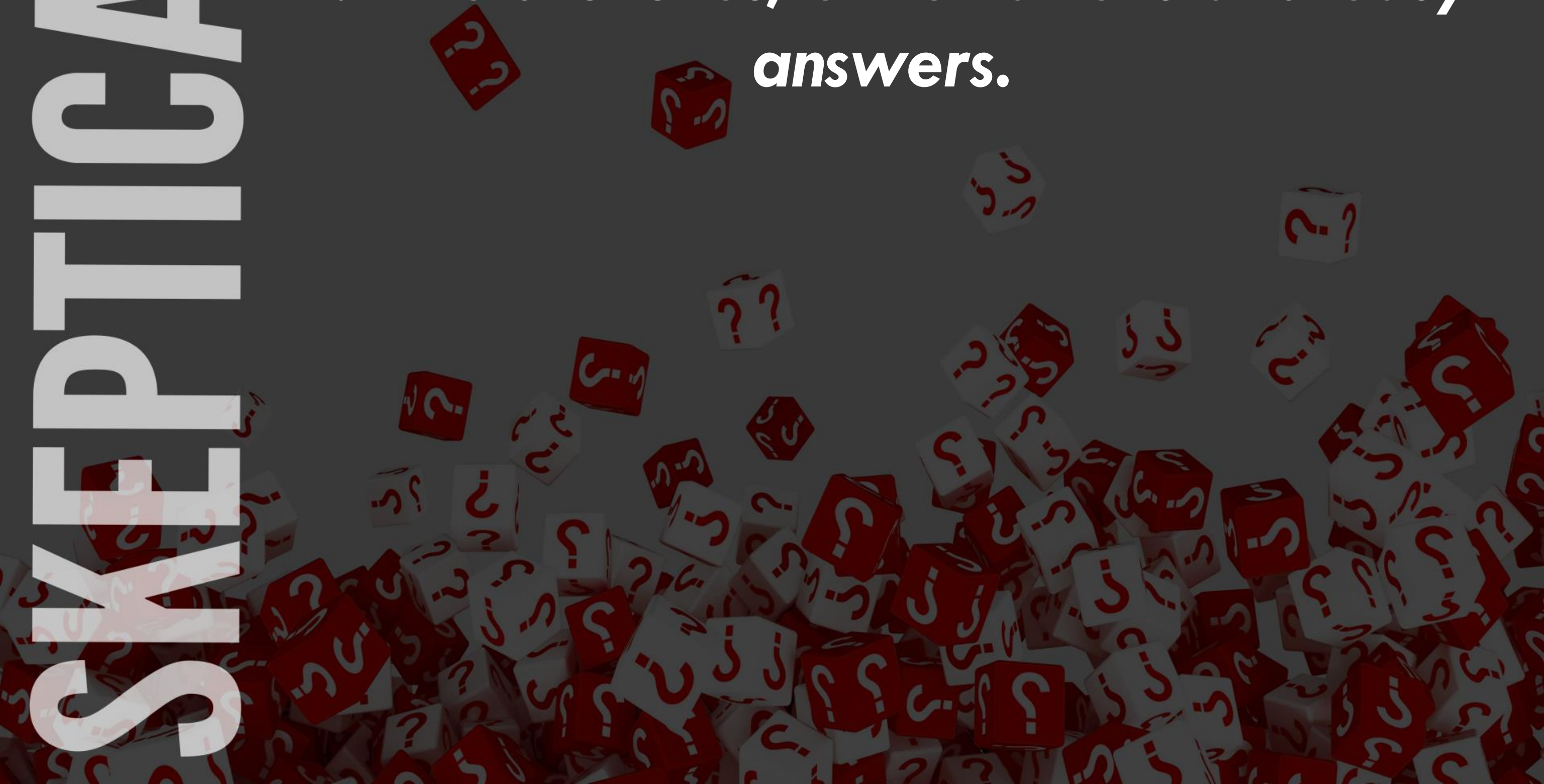
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Christian Says:

If God is all good, he will destroy evil. If God is all-powerful he can destroy evil. Evil is not yet defeated, therefore God will one day destroy evil.

REFLECT

10 Pastoral Thoughts on Suffering *1. Avoid clichés, exhortations and easy answers.*



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10 Pastoral Thoughts on Suffering

1. *Avoid clichés, exhortations and easy answers.*

2. *Grieve with those who grieve.*

3. *The only way to get through grief is to go through grief.*

4. *Suffering is always a result of the fall, but not necessarily a result of your fall.*

5. *It is OK to ask “Why?” to God and express your deepest pain to Him.*

THEPITCAL

10 Pastoral Thoughts on Suffering

6. Faith is holding on to a God you cannot put in a box or control.



THEOLOGICAL

10 Pastoral Thoughts on Suffering

6. *Faith is holding on to a God you cannot put in a box or control.*
7. *Some forms of suffering ought to be prevented or intervened upon.*



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8. **Don't lose hope.**

10 SKEPTICAL

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6. *Faith is holding on to a God you cannot put in a box or control.*
7. *Some forms of suffering ought to be prevented or intervened upon.*
8. *Don't lose hope.*
9. ***Be skeptical of anti-suffering theology.***

10 Pastoral Thoughts on Suffering

6. Faith is holding on to a God you cannot put in a box or control.

7. Some forms of suffering ought to be prevented or intervened upon.

8. Don't lose hope.

9. Be skeptical of anti-suffering theology.

10. Don't ask for suffering, but embrace the "Refining Fire" when it comes.

REFLECT

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