

TRINITY COLLEGE OF THE BIBLE AND SEMINARY

EVIL AND THE JUSTICE OF GOD

BOOK REVIEW

A PAPER SUBMITTED TO INSTRUCTOR GREGG GROSSMAN

PH 366 THE PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM OF EVIL

BY JOSH YONTS

AUGUST 2019

Introduction

The philosophical problem of evil is a topic that the secularist has all figured out. Their defense for the problem of evil in the world is progressively getting better. That is to say, it is going through the process of evolution, thus we're becoming smarter as the days go along. As thinking Christians, we need to understand even if the world supposedly gets better as time goes along, this does not solve the all-embracing problem of evil. A secular society always exalts its reasoning over God's objective reasoning, thus we have two conflicting worldviews in regards to this problem.

In being the salt and the light, we are reflecting Jesus' death and resurrection by the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us Christians. Therefore, in the midst of this present evil age that we are engaged in we have a responsibility to uphold Christian ethic and understanding that the God in whom we love and serve has defeated evil in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Christians now are to look to the new heavens and new earth (Revelation 21), for our inheritance that is for those who are 'in Christ'. It is here that our mind and heart are longing for the very divine realm of existence, the dwelling place of God Almighty and the Lord Jesus Christ. Within the halls of heaven is where no impurities will be, thus being free from all evil. This is the case made in the book, *'Evil and The Justice of God'*, by N.T. Wright.

In this book report we will look at a summary of the main contents of the text, the key concepts of the book along with strengths and weakness of this text. The book review will discuss issues or concerns that might arise within one's life, work, or ministry. The over all

purpose of this review is (1) To summarize the author's position on the problem of evil. (2) To give an effective analysis of the author's opinion in regards to Evil and The Justice of God.

Key Concepts In The Book

In regards to the key concepts of this book the author begins by stating that evil is a reality and that it is serious. He explains the two forms of evil, (1) natural evil and (2) moral evil. Within the context of this section the concept he discusses is the problem of evil and how it appears within our own contemporary setting. In regards to the remote context of how this can apply to our life, ministry, or work as Christians we understand natural evil and moral evil are a result of sin entering the world (Genesis 3). Therefore, we address these evils with lament and sorrow, and unsmiling prayer all the while understanding evil is evil, but God is all truthful and only He is absolutely good (1 John 4:16, Hebrews 6:18).

Regarding some other key concepts, the author poses a question to his readers; what does God do about evil? In fact, the author states, "The Old Testament talks quite a lot about what God can do, is doing and will do about evil." The author proves this by tracing through biblical redemptive history (from the Tower of Babel all the way to the book of Job's sufferings), that out of the nation of Israel is going to come the solution to this problem of evil. The writer makes the case that only through these times of great suffering and great tribulation would the promised seed (Genesis 3:15), appear within the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4). Within God's plan of salvation, He brings deliverance through the person of Christ upon the drama of the cross. It is

the theology of the cross that gives us a powerful lesson on the problem of evil. The ultimate essence of evil was manifested by God suffering for what he didn't do.

Strengths and Weakness of the Text

In regards to the strengths of the text, one will see the author did an exquisite job in ruling out the possibility that the problem of evil can not and will not be solved by a time of developmental progress or evolution theory. The author makes a strong case that it was Jesus Christ that dealt with evil through His substitutionary death, burial, and bodily resurrection. Within the context of this book, he describes how the death of Jesus Christ has defeated and death's power has been exhausted. The Holy word of God confirms this objective truth, found in **Hebrews 2:14**, "Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil." Naturally we know that evil and death still remain, but for Christians death has lost its sting (1 Corinthians 15:55).

In thinking upon the weaknesses of this text; I understand that this problem of evil is theological and philosophical therefore, it is going to involve the best use of one's mind. Many would agree that we are living in the days of 'hyper fideism' (blind faith). Any deep thought or deep thinking upon such truths seems to be unwelcome among evangelical Christianity today. This book '*Evil and The Justice of God*', is a difficult subject to study, thus, I am afraid that tepid Christians will not tolerate or discipline themselves to read such books as these. I would not

change the content of this work, but would implement a longer volume to explain these golden truths to a wider audience for proper understanding.

Issues and Concerns For Ministry

In regards to walking with the Lord Jesus Christ personally, this book has given me a proper perspective of the four-letter word evil. I myself have been guilty of pointing the finger at other people that are evil, and many times have overlooked my own evils. This book has helped me in regards to a proper introspection of myself. The author has stated, “The problem of evil is not simply or purely a ‘*cosmic*’ thing; it is also a problem about me.” We must never forget as Christians that it was our own evil that murdered Jesus Christ upon the cross (Job 15:14, Eccl. 7:20, Rom.5:12-13; 3:10-11, 23:1, John 1:8). We all have a fallen and depraved nature.

Conclusion

I have gathered in this reading project the author points to the past defeat of evil (Hebrews 2:14-15, John 12:31-32), the defeat of Satan by Christ on the cross. He has directed us to the future defeat of evil (Revelation 20:7-10, Matthew 25:41), where Christ will sentence Satan, his demons, and the disobedient to the eternal lake of fire. But, there is also a present defeat, where Christians have the ability to defeat the evil one (Romans 16:20, James 4:7) where the Bible teaches us to *resist* and to *stand firm* in our faithfulness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and prepare for the inheritance, reserved for the faithful (1 Peter 1:4).

Bibliography

1. Holy Bible, ESV. Copyright 2001 by Crossway Bibles
2. Wright, N.T. *Evil and The Justice of God*, Copyright 2006, by N.T Wright, pg. 109

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THE EMPIRE OF DARKNESS ITS RISE AND FALL
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Introduction

In regards to the problem of evil, Satan has been on the prowl ever since the objective command was first given to mankind (Genesis 2:16-17). When one studies the word of God inductively, it is very explicit that one of Satan's key attacks is upon that objective command (Genesis 3:1). Along with this attack of distorting God's word, he also is out to devour God's people (1 Peter 5:8). Therefore, Christians are instructed in the New Testament by the apostle Paul in **2 Corinthians 2:11**, "we are not to be ignorant of his schemes."

In his book, "*The Empire of Darkness: Its Rise and Fall*" by Robert Gee Witty, we are given a dynamic description of the mode of operation of Satan's agenda. That is, an agenda against the will of God, which is therefore, the essence of moral evil. This book seeks to explain the patient strategies that Satan and his demons will engage in to destroy the promised seed of the woman, who will bring restoration and defeat upon the devil (Genesis 3:15).

This review will look at a summary of the main contents of the text, the key concepts of the book along with strengths and weakness of this text. The book review will discuss issues or concerns that might arise within one's life, work, or ministry in regards to the philosophical problem of evil. Finally, this paper will close with a conclusion, on how "*The Empire of*

Darkness”, is a call for Christians to become sober in spirit, renewed in our minds, and displaying kingdom diligence for glory of God in Jesus Christ.

Strengths and Weakness of the Text

In regards to the strengths of this text, the author did an outstanding job telling the story of Satan’s beginning. The author states, “How perfect in beauty! Clothed in the translucent light of precious stones, gifted with tabrets and pipes for melodious communication, Lucifer is indeed the covering cherub! Only Elohim, the Almighty God is more glorious.” This book was written from the perspective of Satan, and the author describes his conflict, maneuvers, and final defeat in the lake of fire.

In regards to this conflict, Satan was seeking to establish his own separate kingdom, which was out to hamper the work of God. The author makes this case by diligently explaining the increase of demon activity, that was brought on rapidly by the commander Satan himself. The maneuvers of Satan are described in the context of this book very well. First, to distort God’s word. Second, to derail the people of God. Third, to divide the Church of Christ. Fourth, to procrastinate commitments to God. Fifth, to minimize evangelism’s potential. These are the methods the author uses throughout this book to establish his empire of darkness.

In regard to the weaknesses of this text, the author is very clear on his millennial view. He is writing this text from the traditional premillennialism or posttribulational view. I take the position that the premillennial view suffers from several difficulties. Some difficulties being (1)

the separation of the final resurrection of the dead into two stages one thousand years apart seems contrary to biblical teaching of what appears to be a single resurrection involving both the righteous and the wicked. Trusted conservative scholar Jack Cottrell states, “The traditional premillennialism is an unacceptable approach to the question of the millennium, it has too many difficulties, and in the end is not the best interpretation of the Book of Revelation and especially of Revelation 20.”

Issues And Concerns For Life And Ministry

This book has helped me personally to understand the warfare of the Christian. Until we as Christians understand the real source of where this evil is coming from, we will make no real contribution to the battle. In regards to life and ministry, the author has taught me the importance of the spiritual armor that God has provided for Christian’s (Ephesians 6:10-13). It is a great reminder that where the Lord’s work is being done, Satan is going to oppose it. This book has reminded me as well, that Satan’s mode of operation is not to get us to make a profession for Christ, but only to get us comfortable sitting in a building we call church. The demonic deceptions in our day such as the woman’s liberal movement, a new morality, homosexuality, and liberal theology are all right in tune with what the author of this book described.

Conclusion

As Christians we understand these seducing spirits and doctrine of demons exist (1 Timothy 4:1). Satan has corrupted the entire nation, international policies, and attacking Christians daily (1 John 2: 15-16). Therefore, within this humanistic secular society, Christians must resist the devil (James 4:7), and stand firm in their faith. We must not attempt to try to

fight sin with our own strength, but trust in the finishing work of Jesus (Hebrews 2:14) and find our strength in Him, who defeated Satan in the past, present, and the future (Romans 16:20). May we do our part in this present defeat, by resisting and standing firm (Ephesians 6:13).

Bibliography

1. Holy Bible, NASB, Copyright 1995 by The Lockman Foundation
2. Cottrell, Jack “*The Faith Once For All*”, The Millennium, Copyright 2002, College Press Publishing Company.
3. Witty, Gee. Robert, “*The Empire of Darkness Its Rise and Fall*”, Satan’s Successful Strategy, Copyright 1996, Trinity Press.