

# EVIL AND THE JUSTICE OF GOD

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### I GENERAL INTRODUCTION

- A. Evil has once again become a hot topic
  - a. After 9/11 President Bush spoke of an "Axis of Evil".
  - b. Tony Blair spoke of the goal of good government as eliminating world evil
  - c. Any time there is a huge natural disaster some people reflect on it in terms of good and evil...Katrina was to punish New Orleans for its evil ways!
- B. The use of the sea as a metaphor for evil in the Bible
  - a. Watery Chaos at the beginning before God creates.
  - b. When the water is ordered by God it is "good"
  - c. God uses water to destroy evil in the Noah stories.
  - d. Water poses a barrier to the escape of Moses and the Hebrews. God gives them safe passage and again uses water as an instrument of judgment against His enemies. YHWH is celebrated in the Psalms as the Lord of the Sea.
  - e. In apocalyptic literature like Daniel and Revelation the sea has become dark, the place from which beasts and monsters emerge. At the end of the Book of Revelation we read "there will be no more sea". Therefore Christians are committed to the belief that evil will ultimately be conquered.
- C. Wright's Plan for this book
  - a. Lay out the problem of evil in modern terms and set that aside the classical discussions of evil in the Jewish and Christian traditions.

- b. Speak about what God is doing and what we ought to be doing about evil, specifically:
  - i. The problem of global empire
  - ii. Criminal justice and punishment
  - iii. War
- c. The role of forgiveness in dealing with evil

## II. The New Problem of Evil

- A. The old way of putting the problem: If there is an all-powerful and all good God why is there evil? Or if one is non-theistic why is there evil in the world or why good and beauty?
- B. History's effect on the question of evil
  - a. The Lisbon earthquake of 1755.
    - i. Shattered the optimism of previous generations
    - ii. Set in motion philosophical attempts to explain the meaning of evil and its role in human development. Created the distinction between natural and moral evil.
      - 1. Hegel's dialectic resulting in the belief of automatic progress.
      - 2. Social Darwinism
  - b. World War I again destroys the optimism in progress as does WWII with the Holocaust.
  - c. And yet technology and the advances made possible by science again have us believing in progress as the natural way of things
- C. The modern way of dealing with evil
  - a. Ignore it unless it hits you in the face.
  - b. Be shocked when it does
  - c. React in an immature and ineffective way to it.
    - i. Claim evil comes from evil people/ we being totally good

ii. Claim it comes from us/ we being totally evil!