

How does God deal with evil? by Pastor Bill Hekman

Terror and evil has become a common practice in many countries and often terror and killings go unpunished as we have witnessed through the years in Russia, China, Africa, Cambodia and Indonesia. The world does not know how to deal with genocide and mass killings and terror. In some countries even children are taught how to kill. We hear much about the subject of dealing with evil. The main news on TV, Radio, newspapers and the Internet is how to deal with evil. The United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China are all proposing different programs on how to deal with evil and atomic weapons coming under possible control of evildoers.

First of all we must realize that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Jehovah, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is the One who is all-powerful. The Bible says in Matthew 28:18 that all power in heaven and earth has been given to the Lord Jesus Christ so the final authority and veto power belongs not to the USA or China. Nothing happens outside His permissive will. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that was made. (John 1:3). The conclusion is that Jesus Christ is in charge. Some day all men and women, great and small must deal with Him. To receive Jesus Christ, as Savior and Lord now is a wisest move and the best decision anyone can make.

We want to look into God's strategy in dealing with evil. In Psalm 34:14 God says, "Turn from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it." In verse 16 we read that: "The face of the Lord is against those who do evil and He will cut off the memory of them from the earth." God is a God of peace not of war. In James chapter 4 we learn that war and fighting come from lust and evil desires that battle within us.

As followers of Jesus Christ we are to preach the Gospel of peace. "Blessed are the peacemakers", said Jesus in Matthew 5:9. King David said in Psalm 120:7 "I am a man of peace but when I speak, they are of war". How can this be? Jesus is called the 'Prince of Peace'. He told His followers, "My peace I will leave with you". Yet in the same Gospel of Matthew the same Lord Jesus also said, "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace to the earth but the sword". This seems to be a contradiction. Did Jesus forget what he said in Matthew 5? No, He did not forget and there is no contradiction. The peace is related to salvation, redemption and eternal life that we have In Him. The sword is related to life here on earth as we deal with evil. So David desired peace and he was a man of peace but evil had to be dealt with and that's why he said, "When I speak, they are of war".

How did God deal with evil? What is God's strategy? There are several strategies we need to look at. In Genesis chapter 6 "the Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. **The Lord was grieved that He had made man on the earth and His heart was filled with pain**". So God decided how to deal with evil. We see His first strategy. Complete destruction and annihilation by way of a worldwide flood.

Only 8 people were saved, the family of Noah. They were the only righteous people left, still worshipping almighty God.

Another strategy of God of dealing with evil is found in Genesis 19. God was looking down from heaven at two cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. God was offended by their sin and evil. The terrible sins of Sodom and Gomorrah cried out to a holy God in heaven. Again God decided to destroy evil. God rained burning sulphur, fire and brimstone on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. This time only 3 were saved, Lot and his two daughters.

Another strategy of God dealing with evil is noted in Exodus 14. The mighty army of Egypt included all Pharaoh's horses and chariots, were trying to intervene Israel from leaving Egypt. They had been in slavery for over 400 years and now God was bringing deliverance to His people. They had just crossed the Red Sea on dry land. The Lord had driven the sea back with a strong east wind and turned that portion of the sea into dry land. The Egyptian army followed them on the dry ground through the sea with a wall of water on their right and on their left. When the last Hebrew had crossed the sea the Lord caused the water to flow back and covered the entire army of Pharaoh and they all drowned. Not one escaped! Total destruction of the entire Egyptian army.

God's strategy is never the same. In these 3 cases God acted alone and destroyed evil. Sometimes God acts alone and other times God uses leaders such as Moses, army commanders such as Joshua, judges, kings and prophets to deal with evil. We notice in 2 Samuel 23:8 how God used the mighty men of David to deal with the evil Philistines. Joseph-Basshebeth was used by God to kill 800 Philistines in one encounter. Having the odds of 1 against 800 is no problem with God. Evil will never come out a winner. For a time the evildoers prosper.

In 2 Chronicles chapter 20 we learn another fascinating strategy of God in defeating evil. God's people, under leadership of King Jehoshaphat, did not have to fight at all against the attacking Ammonites and Moabites who numbered over one million soldiers. God simply said, **“the battle is not yours, but God's. You will not have to fight this battle, stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you”.**
The Lord's strategy caused the enemy to destroy and annihilate one another!

Another strategy of God was to use the heathen Babylonians to punish the Hebrews with a 70 year Babylonian captivity. God's patience had come to an end. He had used prophet after prophet to warn Judah and Israel. Judah even sought help from Egypt against the Babylonians but it was all no use. God punished the evil of Judah with terrible plagues, famines, and total destruction of Jerusalem by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon which is now in Iraq. The king of Judah, Zedekiah with all his officials and people were executed. The heathen king showed no mercy, pity or compassion.

But the Lord made a promise to His people in Jeremiah 29:10, “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to Jerusalem. ‘For I know the plans I have for you’, declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

When you will call upon me, and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart". The people repented, cried to God for help and God heard and brought His people back to Israel. They are there today as a proof of God's faithfulness.

There is a message of hope for the believers. Last Sunday we had a former gangster speak at Calvary Life Fellowship. He witnessed about a life of sin and evil. He was in prison having committed 43 criminal offenses and the judge had threatened a death sentence. Then the Lord directed me to minister the Gospel Jesus Christ in his cell. Timbul Panggabean heard the message and believed on Jesus Christ and committed his life to serve Him. His life was changed and he was released from prison. He now pastors a Bible Church and directs a Camping and Conference center reaching scores of young people for Christ. When we repent from evil God will forgive our sins and He will remember our sins no more. **THIS IS HOW GOD DEALS WITH EVIL.** God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, Who took our punishment upon Himself, died on the cross, and rose from the dead and lives to make intercession for us today. He is our mediator to peace with God. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is all we need for the security of eternal life in heaven as well our security for protection here on earth.

We don't know what strategy God will use today to deal with evil but we can trust Him and totally depend on Him. Evil, hatred, terrorism are everywhere. But there is safe place. Fanny Crosby, the blind songwriter wrote in 1868 about this safe place,

Safe in the arms of Jesus, Safe on His gentle breast
There by His love o're shaded, Sweetly my soul shall rest.
Hark! 'tis the voice of angels, borne in a song to me
Over the fields of glory, Over the jasper sea.

Safe in arms of Jesus, Safe on His gentle breast
There by His love o'er shadowed, sweetly my soul shall rest.

Safe in the arms of Jesus, Safe from corroding care
Safe from the world's temptations, Sin cannot harm me there.
Free from the blight of sorrow, Free from my doubts and fears
Wait till I see the morning, Break on the golden shore.

Safe in arms of Jesus, Safe on His gentle breast
There by His love o'er shadowed, sweetly my soul shall rest.

Jesus my heart's dear refuge, Jesus has died for me;
Firm on the Rock of Ages, Ever my trust shall be.
Here let me wait with patience, Wait till the night is o'er;
Wait till I see the morning, Break on the golden shore.

Safe in arms of Jesus, Safe on His gentle breast
There by His love o'er shadowed, sweetly my soul shall rest.