

LET THE REAL AUTHORITY SPEAK - HOW CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT MEANS BEING OKAY WITH THE GENOCIDE COMMITTED BY ITS FOUNDERS AND GOD

An important series of books on Christian apologetics, The Christian View of the Bible, has a very interesting second volume. Entitled The Enigma of Evil it is a good laugh. The title is appropriate in an ironic sort of way. The reason is that the book is an Enigma of Evil. The book's author is a fundamentalist nut, John Wenham.

The book uses a lot of words that never really say anything of import. It spends a lot of time spelling out the nasty bits in both the Old and New Testament as if with relish.

The book admits that Jesus accepted the Old Testament as being from God and divinely inspired (page 16). Rather than conclude from this that Jesus was a very dangerous false prophet the book goes on to explain that the perception of the New Testament as being nicer than the Old is wrong for it is actually worse (page 17). The New Testament and the Jesus on its pages reaffirms all the savagery of the Old that was commanded by God (page 21).

The book says that lying is permitted by God when it is the only way to avoid breaking a more serious moral law (page 116) and that the lie is still evil and should not be celebrated though the courage to tell it should be. And it adds that the fault of the evil is not with the liar but the evil people who forced her or him to lie. It argues that God through the prophetess Deborah approved of Jael telling lies though the Bible never says that God was speaking through her then! It is hypocrisy to praise the courage to tell a lie and then say the lie is still a terrible thing that should not be liked but merely stomachable. Are we to praise the desire of Jack the Ripper to save lives by slaying prostitutes who passed on deadly disease to men? The courage to tell a lie is courage that is warped to do evil and it is not good courage. So what praise then can a true Christian have even for one who lies to save lives? With Wenham's logic we must start saying that the man who knowingly drives a murderer to your house to kill you is a good man and does not do wrong. (See the Christian double-standard again? They would condemn the driver and then they reverse the standard to suit themselves. If that is love then you would hate to see hate). The courage and the lie are inseparable. The love behind the courage is the courage for courage is an expression of love so it follows that the love was evil as well. If we condemn everything that depends on a little evil we will praise nothing and nobody and become callous and cynical. This is one of the million reasons why the idea of a good God who has the power to stop evil but who lets it happen for a reason is anathema to informed atheists.

The book says that under the Law of Moses a woman's rights were guarded if she chose to remarry after a divorce (page 111). This is another instance of fundamentalist inability to interpret the Bible. The book allows divorce but NEVER ever allows remarriage.

The book is frightening when it says the Old Testament laws of God may still be relevant but we have to decide how far God wants us to apply them today (page 112). At least it is an admission that any Christian who wants to stone gays to death in obedience to the law is not to be classed a heretic.

The book argues that imprisonment is crueller than the capital punishment laws of the Bible (page 118). It deliberately omits the fact that the capital punishment was usually carried out by stoning which was painful and since the law never said that the stoning was to be carried out so that death would be ensured to be as rapid as possible it follows that to spend days on stoning somebody to death was permissible. Laws permit what their loopholes allow. You would rather go to jail than be stoned to death. If imprisonment is so cruel that the Old Testament law would be better then it is a duty to keep the Old Testament law. Imprisonment need not be excessively cruel. If it is this is an abuse of imprisonment and not the fault of the practicing of jailing.

It is disturbing how the book condemns the practice of making thieves pay for stealing and letting adulterers who wreck families and steal spouses from their husbands get away with it for doing worse (page 123). That could lead to adultery being made illegal. Sexual acts between consenting adults that do not cause a public outrage or disturbance are not the state's business. If we start making it the state's business then there is nowhere to draw the line. It is one of the areas in which the state has to allow privacy. The Bible infers that the state should interfere because even if the Old Testament Law was just for a theocracy and God was head of state it is still no reason for God considering private sexual sins his business as president of the nation even if they are his business other ways.

The book argues that homosexuality is often caused by overbearing mothers and absent fathers. All fathers were distant and mothers often domineering and/or smothering years ago which would lead one to expect most men who grew up with that to be gay but they are not. The book then says the Old Testament God was right to demand that his people put those who

had compulsions to engage in gay sex to death by stoning for it was a mercy for them for they would have been filled with distress at how they could only use their genitals unnaturally (page 127). This statement defies belief. The person with a compulsion is sick and should not be stoned to death or punished. And if the law only wanted compulsive gays stoned it would have said so. It said it was enough for a man to lie with a man to merit the death penalty. And how could stoning to death be a mercy? Why not cut their heads off? Or more reasonably still, their genitals? Or more reasonably still make sure they only have sex with guys who have the same compulsion. In that case, their activity wouldn't be a sin for they are forced by their inner defects. This book is whitewashing the bloodcurdling evil of the gaybashing God of the Old Testament.

Homosexuality is natural for sex is about love and pleasure more than about propagating the human race. You can't kill a gay person to put them out of their misery just because society has made them feel unnecessarily dirty and to be second-class citizens. The Bible plainly says you can as long as you say God wants it.

I protest vehemently against the stereotyped assertion that for those who give up the love of God that it is "no surprise" if they soon give up the love of spouse and parent as well (page 127). Atheists who know what they are about more than just disbelieve in God they hate not him but the God concept. It is a belief we oppose not a person. We don't even believe in that person. Yet despite our hatred of the belief many of us are wonderful caring people. Since religion bases what it calls its morality on the love of God it has to say that those who disbelieve in God will soon fall deeper into the cesspool of evil. It has to make a negative stereotype of the sceptic or unbeliever. Religion is profoundly bigoted by nature and true believers in diversity will get their names off its roll books. Then the book claims that godlessness and lack of love for God has a cumulative affect and can nurture unnatural tendencies that would otherwise have done no harm until the person becomes a full-blown homosexual. To call anybody whose tendencies can be fulfilled harmlessly unnatural is patronising and sanctimonious.

The book justifies the Old Testament having no concern for insane murderers but instead sentencing them all killers to death by stoning without distinction by saying that incarcerating insane murderers in asylums is not mercy and execution is better (page 129). This is terrible. It is just justifying the Bible at all costs without regard to people. The book has the cheek to admit that it recognises that murderers are usually not right in the head. We see how scandalous it is that somebody can write such outrageous things and thanks to religion and the undeserved respect it gets can get away with it. They forbid pornography and allow this filth that is ten times worse.

It is impossible to see how God could call himself just as he decrees that certain kinds of criminals must pay with their lives when somebody who is dying could commit a capital crime on the basis that he or she is not going to live anyway. Capital punishment is worse carried out on a young person than an old one. Bible Christians need to be lacking in humanity and a sense of decency to support the Bible.

This stuff that Christians teach about us deserving death is deadly because it will lead and should lead if the person is any way normal to a lack of compassion when somebody dies or is killed tragically. It gives everybody the psychological grounding from which they can work on making themselves murderers. When Christianity cannot prove that it should say such things it is clear that it is flouting every rule against incitement to hatred in the world.

The book says that the Bible is correct to say that if you commit murder you should be killed (page 129). Then it vindictively accuses all of us of being murderous Cains and murderous Judases at heart meaning we would murder if we dared. It says that of us just because Christ made that same accusation. The true atheist who denies free will is not a Cain or Judas at heart. What he is, is a person who wants the person who bothers him to reform.

The book claims that when the Bible says that God miraculously sent bears to tear a gang of boys to pieces for mocking his prophet it does not say they were killed! (page 144). This is totally absurd. One is unlikely to be alive after being torn to pieces. God presumably froze the boys to the spot when the bears were able to attack them all when there were forty-two in number torn up.

The book justifies the divine command to Israel to destroy the Canaanites by saying that the Canaanites were so corrupt and evil that they would have weakened themselves as a nation and so it was best to have them exterminated (page 151). Presumably they were going to be exterminated anyway or get so depraved that they would self-exterminate! The Bible teaches no such thing. No nation could be that bad! If you are truly evil you want to live and preserve the life of those as evil as yourself so that evil may thrive. Dead people don't do evil.

The book glosses over the fact that when God commanded cities that turned away from him to be burned to the ground with their murdered inhabitants in them he stated that the city was never to be rebuilt (page 153) indicating that the site was sacred, indicating that it was all a human sacrifice.

The book says that the Old Testament God was right to be so severe and that love requires severity and not cruelty (page

160). But for those of us who cherish our freedom the last thing we want is severe god-worshippers. There is little difference in practice between severity and cruelty. Cruel people may claim to be severe and it is easy to hide cruelty under severity. The lines blur easily. God gave us no help in dealing with the blurs at all so when he commands action that hurts others clearly he is paving the way for cruelty.

It evilly argues that God had to be very strict with the Jews because they were to be the nation which would produce the Messiah. That is utter rot because Jesus came among an evil nation that put him to death and the severe preparation made nothing of Israel for nearly all of its history up till then. But it is undeniable that Jesus would agree for he said he was the goal of the Law and Prophets. A man who needs murder and blood and genocide needs to prove he was worth it and Jesus offered faith not proof. He is just a bad man period.