



AREOPAGUS PROCLAMATION

Volume 21 • No. 4 • July—August 2011

A bimonthly thoughtletter
published by the
AIIA Institute
PO Box 262
Monson, Maine 04464

end evil *now*? But why not? What good can be gained by delaying justice? Isn't justice delayed justice denied?

Will: In strictly earthly terms, perhaps. Yet even here on earth we must balance

delayed justice with rushing to judgment. God never rushes to judgment.

Psalm 103:8: "The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness." His eternal plan is always right on schedule—"But when the fullness of the time came God sent forth His Son." **Galatians 4:4**

Kyle: Are you somehow suggesting that evil is good? Because if you are..."



Will: No. Evil is not good. Yet it must be good that there is evil, temporarily, here on earth. Otherwise a sovereign God would never abide it, and would answer instantly when we pray, "Thy Kingdom come." But think of the many occasions when God's delayed justice resulted in His greater plan and glory:

- Joseph in Genesis 50; see verse 20.
- Lazarus's death, John 11; see verse 6.
- The man born blind, John 9; verse 3.
- Death of the martyrs, Revelation 6.

Iain M. Duguid in *Ezekiel, The NIV Application Commentary*, 1999 Zondervan: "... the display of God's mercy is not the only reason for his delay. The persecution of the church and the martyrdom of Christians is not simply a means to an end — a way of strengthening the church and bringing about conversions — it is an end in itself. Simply put, martyrs bring glory to God as they lay down their lives."

Kyle: And are there other reasons why God would delay judging evil?

Will: If God judged us all the instant that we sinned, how would *we* fare?

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

D. A. Carson in *How Long, O Lord?*, ©1990 Baker: "Do you really want nothing but totally effective, instantaneous justice? Then go to hell."

Randy Alcorn in *If God Is Good*, ©2009 Multnomah (highly recommended for further study on this subject): "One day we'll see the answer to the age-old question, 'How long?' *Only long enough to accomplish the greatest eternal good.*"

Joni Eareckson Tada in *A Place of Healing*, ©2010 David C. Cook: "Isn't [God] aware of how endless a sleepless night, shot through with searing pain, can seem? What kind of wristwatch is He wearing?" "... in the sense of Christ's eternity, any amount of earthly time is less than a single tick of the clock. For that matter, the whole history of earth is like a day that has gone by, like a watch in the night (Psalm 90). In our Lord's humanity, however, 38 years [John 5:2-6] was more than His whole lifetime. He knows time in a personal, experiential way."

Linda Falter in *A Beautiful Anger*, *Christianity Today* magazine, p36, April 2011: "Many are angry at God for not acting against a relentless tide of wickedness. They conclude that God must not exist or doesn't care. Is God angry over sin? Yes. Why shouldn't he be? But his holy rage is under the perfect control of limitless love. He suspends final judgment for a time, until every good purpose is fulfilled. Make no mistake: his forbearance will surely come to a terrifying end. But just as surely, the nail-scarred hands of a wholly compassionate God will pull us to safety."

C.S. Lewis in *The Great Divorce*, p64, ©1946 Macmillan: "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."

Romans 8:18 "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us."

Why Doesn't God End Evil Now?

compiled by Daryl E. Witmer

Kyle: The way I see it is — if God was all-powerful, He *could* put an end to evil and suffering. And if He was all-loving, He *would* put an end to evil and suffering. The fact that there is so much evil and suffering in this world means that either He is not all-loving or He's not all-powerful. And if He's not all-powerful, then He's not really God. It's that simple.

Will: It may *seem* that simple. But it isn't. In order to draw the conclusions that you've drawn, one must assume that evil and suffering could never be the *temporarily means* of an all-powerful God accomplishing His all-loving purposes in this world.

Tim Keller in *The Reason for God*, p23, ©2008 Dutton: "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 reasoning is, of course, fallacious. Just because you can't see or imagine a good reason why God might allow something to happen doesn't mean there can't be one. Again we see lurking within supposedly hard-nosed skepticism an enormous faith in one's own cognitive faculties. If our minds can't plumb the depths of the universe for good answers to suffering, well, then, there can't be any! This is blind faith of a high order."

Kyle: So you're saying that God is *able* to end evil, but doesn't *choose* to

More Evidence in Defense and Confirmation of the Christian Faith