

Good and Evil in the Psalms

The Psalms often speak of good and evil in absolute terms that seem confusing to modern readers.

For example, the royal psalms sometimes seem to talk about a king who is perfectly good and rules for all eternity (see Psalms 2, 21, 45, 72, 110, and others).

But these psalms were initially fulfilled in a human king whose virtues were only partial and passing.

The psalmist often claims innocence for himself in a way that seems to deny the flaws found in even the most godly person (for example, see Psalm 17:3; 26:1; 86:2)

On the other hand, and perhaps the most troubling, some psalmists vehemently curse their enemies as if they were perfectly evil and eternally unredeemable (see Psalms 69, 109, and others).

Immersed in the human world around them, the psalmists are moved by the perfect, eternal quality of absolute good and absolute evil, even though the good and evil observed in human beings are only partial (only partly true) and passing (only temporarily true).

With the psalmists, we long for the perfect, eternal Kingdom of God, for complete innocence, for the complete removal of all evil.

But we can only see complete good and complete evil

through the reality of Jesus Christ.

He is the perfect, eternal King.

He is perfect innocence, and

in Him alone are we innocent.

He alone will bring ultimate destruction on the Ultimate Evil, Satan and his unrepentant followers.

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the psalms point us beyond
our imperfections and
our mortality
to the ultimate good and evil,
seen only as we look to
the Ultimate King,
the Ultimate Innocent,
the Ultimate Judge,
Jesus Christ.

Hymn:
Christ, Our Source and Goal
Psalm 109

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