

Jay Adams, *The Grand Demonstration: A Biblical Study of the So-called Problem of Evil.* (Available from Timeless Texts, 7 Janice Drive, Hackettstown, NJ 07840, \$7.95). Reviewed by Kevin M. Backus.

Theology affects life. This is especially true when it comes to our understanding of the place of evil in the world. How does evil exist in a world created by a sovereign God? Why does a good God plan for evil? If He planned for it, why then does He punish those who sin, and do not repent? This is more than a theoretical fascination for the suffering all about us. The answer to this question will determine how we face life on a day-to-day basis. People, often *hurting* people, want to know, not only how suffering and evil can permeate God's reaction, but what its presence means for them. Is God in control, or is He not? If He is not in control of suffering and evil, then how are any of His promises trustworthy?

To save God from the charge that He planned evil's existence, most people trying to answer the question have emasculated Him! Think about it: He better have planned evil, because if He did not, the world is out of control at the most crucial point!

God has spoken clearly on this matter. Nevertheless, theologians are so heavily loaded with humanism that they are either blind to the truth, or, understanding it, they refuse to teach it out of fear of what others may say. People do not like God's answer to their question, because it lowers them to their proper place as dependent, created beings and raises God to His rightful place as Creator and Sustainer of all.

The title of Adams' book refers to Romans 9:22,23. The exegesis of this passage forms the heart of the book. Here God declares that human history is a grand demonstration of His wrath and mercy. Accordingly He has prepared some of mankind for destruction and readies others to receive His grace, displaying both aspects of His character for all to see. He punishes the vessels adapted to evil so that He might display His glory. This demonstration of Himself occurs before all His creatures (earthly and celestial). Whenever God gives a clear answer to this question, we can expect certain responses. It was so in the Apostle's day, and it continues in our own. Adams faithfully presents God's answers to man's objections. In responding the challenge to God's fairness he addresses society's underlying humanistic presupposition. Adams sets forth the proper relationship between the Sovereign Creator and His creatures. He considers man's responsibility and God's sovereignty without compromising either. While maintaining that God brings all things to pass according to the counsel of His will, Adams demonstrates that what God decreed takes place through responsible beings who without coercion do only that which they want to do. This naturally leads to a discussion of the free agency of man. Is man free? Yes, as free as God! God is free to act according to His nature; which, of course, is perfect freedom. Man is free, free to act according to His own nature.

The Grand Demonstration is classic Jay Adams. He makes a theological subject clear and easily understandable. Then, he proceeds to make it eminently personal and practical. In a chapter entitled "Election and You," he relates God's intention for this doctrine in the believer; namely, to permanently affect your world view, making it distinctly Christian.

Christians are not the only ones genuinely concerned with the answer to this question. That's why it is especially appropriate that Adams addresses another chapter to the unbeliever. This makes *The Grand Demonstration* an excellent tool to use with the unsaved. Other chapters consider the ways the rest of creation and all of history are involved in this "grand demonstration" of God's character.

To accept the teaching of Romans 9 requires radical reorientation of one's perspective on the ways of God and man. There is no way to soften the impact of the teaching of the Scripture for a humanistic mind set, whether it be in a pagan, or in a Christian who has been brainwashed by psychological and philosophical thought. The thrust of this book runs contrary to almost everything you have ever heard, not only outside but also inside the church.

The Grand Demonstration is easy to read and comprehend even for the reader who has no theological background. It clearly presents the answer of Scripture without compromise. Adams takes the subject home to the heart of every reader. Grasping its contents should humble, thrill and motivate you. †

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