

**New Book by Theologian N. T. Wright Examines the Problem of Evil
—and What Christians Can Do About It**

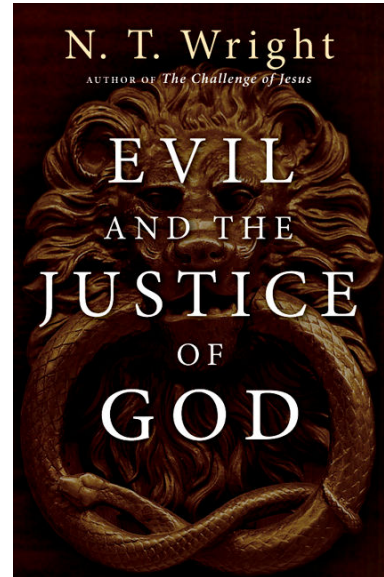
The terrorist attacks of 9/11, civilian deaths in the war-torn Middle East, and natural disasters such as the tsunami and Hurricane Katrina have awakened the world once again to the reality of evil. Now, one of the foremost theologians of our age examines this troubling question, and proposes a Christian response. In his new book *Evil and the Justice of God* (IVP Books, \$18.00, November 2006), N. T. Wright, the Anglican Bishop of Durham, England, envisions a world that can be delivered from evil.

Though neither the Old nor New Testament explains why evil exists, the Bible does tell the story of how God deals with it. Further, Bishop Wright shows, it points Christians to a time when evil will be defeated—and charges them with the responsibility to work toward that promised future.

Evil and the Justice of God offers a fresh and creative, though deeply biblical, interpretation of the meaning of the cross. Christians believe that evil is defeated by the death of Jesus. But that's not the end of the story, Bishop Wright says. The cross is an achievement to be put into practice: "It means there are now redeemed human beings ready to act as God's stewards, equipped to bring his healing order to the world." Christians are not to wait passively for a golden, trouble-free future, but rather are meant to work for it through prayer, holiness and justice.

The route to deliverance is through forgiveness. "As South Africa's Desmond Tutu has shown so graphically, [forgiveness] is the most hopeful sign of community restoration and healing known to the human race," Bishop Wright says.

The achievement of Tutu's South African Commission for Truth and Reconciliation "is the most extraordinary sign of the power of the Christian gospel in the world in my lifetime," says Bishop Wright. "How unthinkable such a thing would have been twenty-five years ago, or indeed how unthinkable such a thing would still be in Beirut, Belfast or . . . Jerusalem."



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Anticipating a future in which we are delivered from evil presents practical and political difficulties. It means “working for a world in which people no longer wish to become terrorists, in which people no longer enslave one another with crippling debt, and in which those who live at great risk of the natural elements receive special protection from civil authorities,” Bishop Wright says. “[These] are the real problems. The philosophical problems often function simply as a smoke screen behind which we try to hide.”

People tend to ignore evil when it’s not hitting them in the face, and then are surprised when it does. But unless we articulate and address the problem, we will face continued danger, especially in the areas of global empire, criminal justice and war, Bishop Wright says. And, we will continue to react in immature and often dangerous ways. The world can’t be divided into bad people (“axis of evil”) and good people (“coalition of the willing”), with the latter responsible for punishing the former. The line between good and evil is not between “us” and “them”—it runs through each person, Bishop Wright says. “There is such a thing as evil, and it is to be addressed and defeated not by ignoring it on the one hand or by blasting away at it with heavy artillery on the other . . . but by addressing it with the message and the methods of the cross.”

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