

## ***128 Greg Boyd is wrong!***

Just a quickie. I started looking on the internet, to see how people had reacted to Greg Boyd's book, which was, to me, such a revelation. This was prompted by a friend who sent me an article that purported to have an answer to "the problem of the wrath of God". I didn't read all 17,000 words, but what I did read was very erudite and very complicated, with lots of references.

So what did Greg Boyd's reviewers say? Basically, he was and is mistaken – some said he'd got it all wrong, others that he had some good ideas, but was still making some important errors.

These reviews too were very erudite and very complicated, with lots of references.

Two reviewers complained that GB was concentrating too much on the violence in the OT, at the expense of the love of God, which is there so strongly.

But that's the whole POINT of what GB has done for us. He has FACED the nasty bits and, I think, come up with a **simple** basic resolution that *all of us can understand*.

Have I changed my views of GB's book? No, I'm just as excited as I was before. To me, it has the ring of truth – it's just so simple. Occam's razor, is it? That the simplest solution is likely to be the best solution?

I think that the theologians (who are human, after all!) don't *want* to accept that it really could be that simple, not after the thousands of hours that some of them have spent, and all the books and papers they have written.

I'm excited because I think the solution really is that simple; yes, there are some complicated details, but the basic idea can be explained in a few words.

1) The cross shows us **exactly** what God is gloriously and wonderfully like. God is not like anything Jesus is not like. Jesus is the yardstick by which all other portraits of God should be judged.

2) The OT was written by men who had a distorted view of what God was like. They were heavily influenced by their surrounding culture. All the people of the ancient Near East saw their god/God/the gods as angry warriors that had to be appeased by sacrifice.

3) The Triune God of Jesus was gradually moderating that distorted view, showing more and more about what God was really like (a process that took hundreds and hundreds of years).

4) Graciously, at the same time, the Spirit of God *inspired* their writings, planting the seeds of what was to be fully and finally revealed in Jesus. ("These are the very Scriptures that testify about me", Jn 5:39)

5) So where an OT author says "God told them to kill..." or "God smote...", they are seeing God as a powerful warrior (of whom they feel they should be rightly proud) and crediting God with such things. GB's belief is that while it hurt God to be depicted in this way (which is clearly not

what Jesus is like), God nevertheless accommodated these false ideas in order, in the long run, to draw people closer and closer to the true view, in Jesus.

This is a much “nicer” view of God, and I don’t think it’s just wishful thinking on GB’s part. He has spent 10 years biblically researching this, and producing a lot of very erudite and very complicated texts, with lots of references, but his end conclusions are (something like!) what I’ve written above.

I can understand this view, I can relate to this view, I can communicate this view to my not-yet-believing friends and family, or to anyone who asks.

I perfectly understand that some theologians will find it difficult to accept that views that have been held to be true for hundreds of years might simply be wrong, but I think GB is taking us back to the beliefs of the early centuries AD.

And I also think that GB’s view will make it much easier (well, less difficult) to come to terms with suffering – but I’ll leave that for another day!

What a glorious God! What an inspiring Spirit! What a beautiful Saviour and Lord!

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