

If God Does Not Destroy, Does He Create?

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In a previous response paper,¹ I suggested that some biblical data cannot be explained in any way other than by acknowledging that, when occasion demands, God is capable of destroying evil. Examples of this include the worldwide flood of Noah; the fire and brimstone that rained down on Sodom and Gomorrah; and the ground opening to swallow Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. There is nothing natural about such obviously supernatural events. Suggesting that these three examples show evil destroying itself is not an available option. God caused the events to happen. In my view, examples like these provide a useful context for studying God's final response to sin and evil at the end of the age.

There is another, broader, context. If sin contains the seeds of its own destruction, and is therefore suicidal, does the beginning of life contain the seeds of its own origin, and is it therefore suigeneris? Or we could ask, if God is merely an eschatological Observer as evil destroys itself, is He also a protological Observer of human origins and did life therefore create itself? Saying that it did is macro-evolution.

Many wish to split the difference and have a passive Creator who maintains a careful balance between creating and not creating. This alternative is neither creation nor evolution, but a poorly defined mix of the two. That variation on the theme is theistic evolution.²

It is possible to hold positions that are inherently contradictory. A close friend of mine subscribes to the theory that sin destroys itself, with God as a passive Destroyer. He does not, however, subscribe to the corresponding idea that life creates itself, with God as a passive Creator. On the contrary, he is a dedicated creationist. Despite this friend's intellect and training, and the amount of time he has invested in his model, I don't think he has fully confronted all the implications of his model.

Comparing one's views on protology and eschatology is one way to check for consistency in our models. Some hold that things came to be under nothing more than God's distant supervision. Some hold that the destruction of evil must take place under nothing more than God's distant supervision. Those who hold such positions are not necessarily the same groups of people. But if they were, holding both at the same time would be an internally consistent thing to do. Protology and eschatology should be studied together. There is much to learn from doing so.

¹ Hardy, "Evil Brings Its Own Reward (04/18/2021)" (http://www.historicism.org/Documents/BASG_EvilBringsItsOwnReward.pdf) .

² L. James Gibson, "Theistic evolution: Is it for Seventh-day Adventists," *Ministry*, January 1992, 22-25 (<https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1992/01/theistic-evolution>). Greg A. King, "No Middle Ground: Why Theistic Evolution and Biblical Creation are Mutually Exclusive (With Some Implications for Eschatology)," *Reflections* 63, July 2018, 2 (<https://adventistbiblicalresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Reflections-63-7-18.pdf>).