



bits from bob....

Chaos

June 8, 2020

In a recent online Bible study, conversation turned to the current cultural chaos. I asked Diana Swaim to put in writing some of the thoughts she shared (italicized).

I have three definitions I refer to in times of disorder: (1) punishment – to bring order in disorder, (2) justice – to preserve order and maintain right; (3) suffering – to reveal disorder to the sinner. (Note: She had written this in her Bible without noting the original author.)

Chaos, the concept appears in Genesis 1. All is void, empty, wasted, without form, darkness. The Spirit of God was hovering, moving about above that void.

In Genesis 1-2 God brings order, but chaos soon returned to the human experience. Chaos returned because of the entry of sin. Human beings became lost—separated from God.

Void, without form. Into the darkness, Christ became / came as light. He always existed. He reveals himself in the darkness. Taking human form, he made it possible for humans to take his form, sharing and testifying to the transforming light. John was not the light but was a witness of the light.

Jesus comes and gives humans new hope, a new form/likeness/image in this world (Philippians 2). We become like him, not yet understanding what we shall be, only that we will be like him.

God's answer to chaos is made clear in John 1. The Greek word that is translated as "world" is cosmos. The word means "ordered." God made an ordered world, cosmos. Jesus enters the physical cosmos and is rejected. A theme of John's Gospel is "worlds in conflict." Jesus says, "I am not of this world, if I were of this world, my servants would fight." John describes two worlds – only one leads to genuine order in life. John's Gospel – worldviews in conflict!

The opposite of cosmos is chaos. Consider this physical world. It is orderly in the sense that it operates according to natural law. But the reality of the human experience in this physical world (cosmos) is not order but disorder (chaos). In the garden, the world became, and remains, a world of chaos – fratricide, immorality, drunkenness, pride. Genesis 3-11 is a series of "sin stories." In the midst of the same kinds of experiences today, human beings seek answers: Where can we find order, cosmos?

John's description of the cosmic Christ declares that order is possible through Jesus Christ. Not simplistic, realistic. God's logos is more powerful than legislation. Human history cannot be erased – human history examines the human experience, pointing to order in the midst of chaos. God's presence and purpose brings order right in the middle of human disorientation.

We live in a disordered world, but Christians are not part of the disorder because we are fashioned like Christ. The Christian has peace, because the God of Peace resides within us.... we are no longer wasted and desolate. We are rebuilding wasted ruins in our own lives.

Jesus' words make more and more sense in the context of John's Gospel: "Peace I leave with you. In this world you will have tribulation, but I have overcome this world." May the reality of God's peace begin with me.