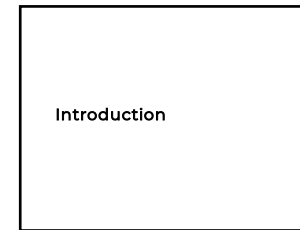


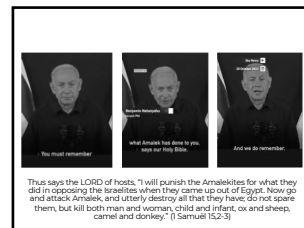
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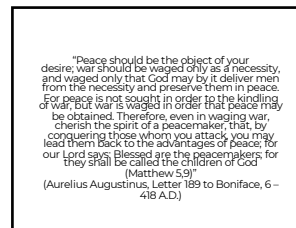
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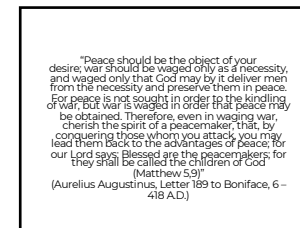
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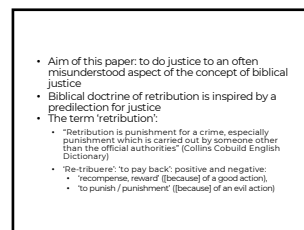
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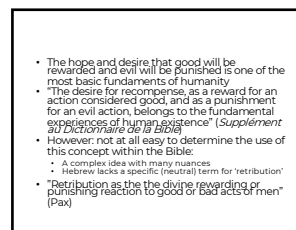
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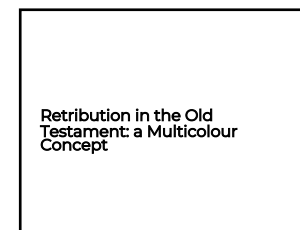
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8



9

- Old Testament 'retribution' is – at least implicitly – related to God
- 'Retribution' is often related to the concepts of divine blessing and curse: whoever does good is blessed; whoever breaks God's commandments is cursed

10

- Deut 11:13-15: "If you will only heed his every commandment that I am commanding you today – loving the LORD your God, and serving him with all your heart and with all your soul, – then he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, and you will eat your bread and livestock, and you will eat your fill."
- Deut 28:17-20: "Cursed shall be your basket and your store, and your seed, the increase of your cattle and the issue of your flock, and you shall be cursed when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out." The LORD will send upon you disaster, panic, and frustration and perdition, on account of the evil of your deeds, because you have forsaken me."
- Rewards for good deeds, as well as punishment for bad ones, is to be expected during earthly life, not during an eventual afterlife.
- Many variants

11

Individual retribution

12

- Lot's wife disobeys the divine prohibition to look back during the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and she (and only she) turns into a pillar of salt (Gen 19:15-26)
- Myriam, Moses' sister, is punished by God with leprosy in person for her opposition to her brother (Num 12:1-10)
- When Uzza takes hold of the ark of God, God punishes him alone for this offence. Uzza falls down dead (2 Sam 6:6-7)
- "Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book" (Exod 23:33)
- "If someone willfully attacks and kills another by treachery, you shall take the killer from my altar for execution" (Exod 21:14)

13

- "Forgive your neighbour the wrong he has done, and then your sins will be pardoned when you pray" (Sir 28:2)
- "He who disciplines his son will profit by him" (Sir 30:2)
- "Whoever is steadfast in righteousness will live, but whoever pursues evil will die" (Prov 11:19)
- Individual retribution: considered normal and a sign of (divine) justice that those who do good should be rewarded for it, while the evil-doer should be punished for his bad deeds

14

Collective and corporate retribution

15

- **Collective retribution:** a variant of individual retribution: the entire community is rewarded or punished for something for which the entire community is responsible
- God destroys the whole city of Sodom because of the behaviour of the Sodomites, "both young and old, all the people to the last man" (Gen 19:4)
- The fall of the kingdom of Israel: "because the people of Israel had sinned against the lord their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They had worshipped other gods and walked in the customs of the nations whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs that the kings of Israel had introduced" (2 Kings 17:7-8)

16

- **Corporate retribution:** a whole community is rewarded or punished, even if not every member of the community is directly and personally involved or responsible
- In the name of the solidary responsibility of the group, based on the idea that each individual member represents the whole group
- God "will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he sinned" (1 Kings 14:16)
- When, after the destruction of Jericho, a certain Achan appropriated forbidden goods, God became angry with the Israelites, and allowed the inhabitants of Ai to defeat the Israelites. Only after Joshua's intervention does God agree that only the guilty Achan, with his property – including his sons and daughters, with his oxen, donkeys, and sheep" (Josh 7:24) – should be punished
- When King David, against God's will, organises a census, God lets the plague loose on Israel, causing the death of seventy thousand people (2 Sam 24,1-17)

17

"Unripe grapes and Stiff Teeth": Transgenerational retribution

18

- Different variants:
 - Children are punished or rewarded for what their parents have done
 - Several generations will feel the consequences of the behaviour of their ancestors
- The Ten Commandments: God is a "jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation" (Exod 20,5)
- For those who keep God's commandments, God shows his goodness "to the thousandth generation" (Exod 20,6)
- "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind" (John 9,2)

19

- Is a child responsible for the actions of his parents, and can it be punished (or rewarded) for them?
- Ezekiel quotes the common saying: "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezek 18,2; cf. Jer 31,29)
- Ezekiel's reaction: "a child shall not suffer for the iniquity of a parent, nor a parent suffer for the iniquity of a child; the righteousness of the righteous shall be his own, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be his own" (Ezek 18,20)

20

God as revenger or retribution as result of an immanent order?

21

- Within individual and collective/corporate retribution: God as judging agent
- Within the Bible: also 'automatic' or 'mechanical' retribution
- Klaus Koch: God was originally not presented as the one who retributes good and evil, an action inevitably had a consequence, without necessarily involving an external figure who judges good and evil
 - "In the transgression of the evil there is a snare, but the righteous sing and rejoice" (Prov 29,6)
 - "Whoever is steadfast in righteousness will live, but whoever pursues evil will die" (Prov 11,19)
 - "Whoever digs a pit will fall into it" (Prov 26,27)
 - "Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity" (Prov 26,27)

22

- What is the role of God?
- Koch: God is at the origin of this principle of action and consequence
- Psalm 7,16-18

23

Retribution: a Risky Concept

- The 'immanent order': "They make a pit, digging it out, and fall into the hole that they have made. Their mischief returns upon their own heads, and on their own heads their violence descends (vv. 16-17)
- "I will give to the LORD the thanks due to his righteousness" (v. 18)

24

- The idea of retribution: inspired by a desire of justice
- A weak and even dangerous side: if happiness and good fortune is what the poor seek, the rich and those confronted with misfortune are themselves to blame for their poverty, sickness and unhappiness
- "There are righteous people who are treated according to the conduct of the wicked, and there are wicked people who are treated according to the conduct of the righteous" (Qoh 8,14)
- The book of Job
 - Job 1-2, 42,7-17: the doctrine of retribution
 - Job 3-41: questioning the doctrine of retribution

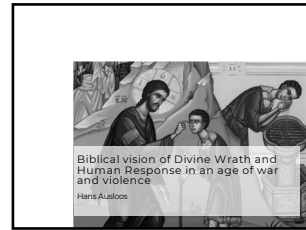
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Conclusion

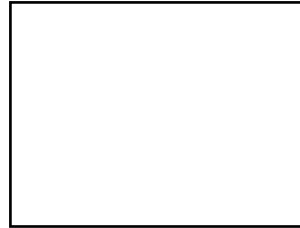
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- The desire for retribution – positive or negative – is one of the fundamental characteristics of humanity
- A pedagogic objective: to urge people to live a good life and to avoid evil
- A just world
- But the doctrine of retribution confronts with its limits: not all misfortune is the result of crime, just as not all wealth and happiness are always and rightfully rewarded

27



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