

Limited Good Choices

The Urth list — 15 messages, 8 voices, 12 Aug 2010

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/5704>

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Nicholas — 12 Aug 2010, 20:00

Thats some remarkably bad theology. The common Christian view is that good is infinite and sin merely a corruption. In such a view as you accended more choice would be available. While I view Mr Wolfe as having strong gnostic and manichean tendencies I don't think he's wandered so far down the road that he views evil as liberating.

Jeff Wilson — 12 Aug 2010, 20:11 · in reply to Nicholas

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Welcome to the Urth list!

Could we have some context with your post?

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes — 12 Aug 2010, 20:14 · in reply to Nicholas

On Thu, Aug 12, 2010 at 1:00 PM, Nicholas <nickjost at yahoo.com> wrote:
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Y'ummmmm, uhhhh, _what_ is remarkably bad theology? To whom or what were you replying?

Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Paul B — 12 Aug 2010, 20:24 · in reply to Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

This new-thread business is getting tiresome. I'm pretty sure the below was meant to be a reply to Lee's post regarding his ideas about good and evil in BotNS.

Paul

On Thu, Aug 12, 2010 at 4:14 PM, Dan'l Danehy-Oakes <danldo at gmail.com> wrote:
On Thu, Aug 12, 2010 at 1:00 PM, Nicholas <nickjost at yahoo.com> wrote:

Thats some remarkably bad theology. The common Christian view is that good is infinite and sin merely a corruption. In such a view as you accended more choice would be available. While I view Mr Wolfe as having strong gnostic and manichean tendencies I don't think he's wandered so far down the road that he views evil as liberating.

Y'ummmmm, uhhhh, _what_ is remarkably bad theology? To whom or what were you replying?

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Dan'l Danehy-Oakes

Nicholas Jost — 13 Aug 2010, 02:37 · follows Paul B

One of my beefs with the list is not trimming sources. If you look in the archive there was the assumption in a post that as people moved "up" towards Yesod that choices would be limited. Nothing in the text or Catholic theology supports such silliness.

Ryan Dunn — 13 Aug 2010, 02:59 · in reply to Nicholas Jost

On Aug 12, 2010, at 10:37 PM, Nicholas Jost wrote:

One of my beefs with the list is not trimming sources. If you look in the archive there was the assumption in a post that as people moved "up" towards Yesod that choices would be limited. Nothing in the text or Catholic theology supports such silliness.

Nicholas, would "heaven" count a place Catholics "ascend" to? If heaven is a metaphor here, after all Severian uses "divine year" as a universe rebirth, then how interesting that in BotNS, humans created the Gods in their own image, and those Gods (hierogrammates) ended up shaping a subsequent iteration of humans, in a reborn universe.

...ryan

Lee Berman — 13 Aug 2010, 04:41 · follows Ryan Dunn

Nicholas Jost: If you look in the archive there was the assumption in a post that as people moved "up" towards Yesod that choices would be limited. Nothing in the text or Catholic theology supports such silliness.

I am guessing this was my post you are referring to. It is based on the idea that we humans feel we have choices because of the limits to our perception of the future. We can only guess what will happen if we do something, so we feel we have choices.

If we could see into the future we would be limited in our choices. We wouldn't wonder what we should do because we'd know what we are about to do. An omniscient being would have no choices whatsoever. He/She would know how everything in the universe(s) fits precisely with everything else at all time points and in all frames of reference. Total knowledge=no choice. Can't use a branched universe dodge because God knows exactly where every branch leads to to its end-most twig.

I apologize for going off topic a bit. It is my own general philosophical musings. And you are correct that my own general philosophies are not particularly guided by Wolfe text or the Catholic church.

Jeff Wilson — 13 Aug 2010, 04:49 · in reply to Nicholas Jost

On 8/12/2010 9:37 PM, Nicholas Jost wrote:

One of my beefs with the list is not trimming sources.

Quote trimming good, quote elimination bad.

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towards Yesod that choices would be limited. Nothing in the text or Catholic theology supports such silliness.

Again, there are many years of archives. Can you at least grant us a date, if not an actual URL?

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
< <http://ieeetamut.org> >

Jeff Wilson — 13 Aug 2010, 04:59 · in reply to Lee Berman

On 8/12/2010 11:41 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

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I think this assertion has weak empirical and logical support. Humans make poor choices even when they have reasonable knowledge of the consequences, and there's no treatment of the idea that G-d may choose not to foresee everything.

Jeff Wilson - jwilson at io.com
IEEE Student Chapter Blog at
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Lee Berman — 13 Aug 2010, 06:17 · follows Jeff Wilson

Jeff Wilson: I think this assertion has weak empirical and logical support. Humans make poor choices even when they have reasonable knowledge of the consequences, and there's no treatment of the idea that G-d may choose not to foresee everything

Jeff, I am not religious and I suspect we are thus too different in our thinking to even discuss this topic but I'll give it a shot.

You mention "poor choices" but the issue of morality or positive/negative consequences is far, far from the point I am trying to make. I am discussing the very capacity to make a choice.

Let's look at Original Sin. From Adam and Eve's point of view they had a choice on whether to eat the forbidden fruit. They didn't know the future and they felt like doing it so they made a choice and they ate.

From God's point of view it is a different story. God made Adam and Eve. He gave them a sense of curiosity and a susceptibility to temptation. He put them in a garden with some very interesting fruit and a serpent to tempt them. From God's perspective there was no choice for Adam and Eve. God knew he'd given them enough curiosity and enough susceptibility to temptation that they would have no choice but to eat.

In hindsight we can recognize God's Plan. I think we can be pretty sure that God did not intend us to spend eternity running around primitive and naked in Eden. God could not have erred so badly in making us. He surely intended Adam and Eve to succumb and be kicked out of Eden

and become fruitful and multiply become civilized and build a Babel tower and speak various languages and become thoughtful and scholarly and everything else we are today.

(if you think I am being presumptuous and sacrilegious in deigning to try understanding the world from God's perspective, perhaps you are right. But I think BotNS does something of the same sort)

I know this has strayed too far off topic and this will be the last I'll discuss it. But I do think the general philosophy relates to BotNS and sort of explains why so many bad things have to happen to Severian and Urth to allow the future to fulfill itself.

David Stockhoff — 13 Aug 2010, 15:29 · in reply to Jeff Wilson

Actually, omniscience is an ancient philosophical problem. God doesn't have the choice not to foresee everything. See Severinus Boethius' The Consolation of Philosophy.

Jeff Wilson wrote:

On 8/12/2010 11:41 PM, Lee Berman wrote:

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Nicholas — 13 Aug 2010, 22:02 · follows David Stockhoff

You presume that perfect temporal choices are limited. There is no evidence for that (that is eating an apple or a pear can both be seen as Good at a given time). You also lose sight of the fact that a Christian God exists outside of time and that he can allow free choice since it happens "instantaneously" from his perspective..

Jeff Wilson — 13 Aug 2010, 23:22 · in reply to Nicholas

On 8/13/2010 5:02 PM, Nicholas wrote:

You presume that perfect temporal choices are limited.

Who presumes?

James Wynn — 13 Aug 2010, 23:28 · in reply to Nicholas

Nicholas wrote - You presume that perfect temporal choices are limited. There is no evidence for that (that is eating an apple or a pear can both be seen as Good at a given time). You also lose sight of the fact that a Christian God exists outside of time and that he can allow free choice since it happens "instantaneously" from his perspective..

Nicholas,

Friendly (albeit unrequested) advice. The best way to get people to respond to you is to quote what they said and put your response after.

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Lee Berman — 14 Aug 2010, 00:28 · follows James Wynn

James Wynn- Friendly (albeit unrequested) advice. The best way to get people to respond to you is to quote what they said and put your response after.

James please consider that perhaps Nick doesn't want to appear as though he is an experienced member of this board. If you catch my drift.