

Glendale City Church

Being Taught Error

The idea that God is unjust, while gradually learning by trial and mistake to be a little more just, is a blasphemous statement. Yet it is a primary theme of a new book by a non-Adventist writer.

The Genesis of Justice is written by Alan M. Dershowitz (O.J. Simpson's lawyer), a Jew who says he does not believe in God. The inside cover of this 288-page, soft-cover, 5½ x 8½ book includes lavish praise by various rabbis and the very secular *New York Times*.

The book is assigned reading and discussion, week by week, during Mitch Hensen's Sabbath School class at the Glendale City Seventh-day Adventist Church, the largest adult Sabbath School class. He seems extremely anxious to teach its "deep truths." Many people in the church carefully study a small portion of the book each week.

When a copy of the book was given to Velino Salazar, the Southern California Conference Secretary, he seemed not a bit concerned about the astounding Glendale weekly study project. Unfortunately, the conference has done nothing to stop it.

If you type "Alan Dershowitz" into a search engine, you will find that he claims to be an agnostic; that is, he says he does not know whether there is any God!

Yet Glendale City Church is drinking in his book, week after week. At the rate they are going, it will probably require close to two months to go through the 14 chapters. Then, under the guidance of their pastor, Mitch Hensen, they will be ready to start on something else that will move them even closer to outright atheism.

Mitch has found this book, which ridicules the God of Genesis 19, to be an excellent help in his ongoing efforts to make homosexuality acceptable.

Here are some sample quotations:

"The New Testament and the Koran teach justice largely through examples of the perfection of God, Jesus, and Mohammed. Christian or Muslim parents can hand their children the New Testament or the Koran and feel confident they will learn by example how to live a just and noble life . . . The Koran describes his life as exemplary and Mohammed himself as "of great moral character." If you pattern your behavior after Jesus or Mohammed, you will be a just person.

"In sharp contrast, the characters in the Jewish Bible [referring to the entire Old Testament]—even its heroes—are all flawed human beings . . . This tradition of human imperfection begins at the beginning, in Genesis. Even the God of Genesis can be seen as an imperfect God, neither omniscient, omnipotent, nor even always good. He "repents" the creation of man, promises not to flood the world again, and even allows Abraham to lecture Him about injustice . . . What lessons in justice are we to learn from the patriarch Abraham's attempted murder of both [sic.] his sons? Or from God's genocide against Noah's contemporaries and Lot's townfolk?"—pp. 1-2.

"To read Genesis, even as a ten-year-old, is to question God's idea of justice. What child could avoid wondering how Adam and Eve could fairly be punished for

disobeying God's commandment not to eat from the 'Tree of the Knowing of Good and Evil.'"—p. 3.

After caviling through several other Bible incidents, Dershowitz expresses pride at the fact that, even as a child, he was expressing doubts about the Bible at the Jewish schools he attended, Dershowitz says his childhood comments would upset his teachers. There is room here to only touch the surface of what Glendale City Church is being taught each week by their pastor; but here are a few more quotes from a very quick paging through of the book:

"My own favorite interpretation of God's failure to carry out His first threat [that Adam and Eve would die] is that God Himself was still learning about justice and injustice."—p. 40.

"Even the God of Genesis lacks a singular nature. He is a petulant, vengeful, demanding, and petty God, as well as a forgiving, merciful, life-affirming, and even repentant God."—p. 204.

"In the beginning, all 'law' is ad hoc [something invented at the time, soon to be changed]. It involves random orders and threats from the powerful to the powerless. God's first command, not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, lacks apparent reason and defies human nature. Sanctions are inconsistent and unpredictable . . .

"Inconsistency and unpredictability also characterized the punishment of Cain for killing his brother, Abel. This is in the nature of ad hoc punishment; it is determined not by a preexisting code of laws, but rather by an evolving yet incomplete sense of justice . . . Not surprisingly, therefore, God—the source of justice in Genesis—overreacts to His underpunishment of Adam, Eve, and Cain by destroying the entire world."—pp. 205-206.

What is the source of this overflowing hatred of God? If you type "gay marriage" into the search engine, you will find that Dershowitz is a constitutional legal expert, urgently promoting gay marriages. Perhaps that is the answer to Dershowitz' vile loathing of God. Dershowitz fills two angry chapters lamenting the fact that God killed those nice people in Sodom. Later in the book, he returns to his concern for the "victims" in Sodom: "God was too lenient on Cain, too harsh on the victims of the Flood and the brimstone."—p. 253.

Dershowitz says, "I don't know whether or not there is a hereafter—no one does."—p. 242.

This blasphemy continues throughout most of the page; indeed, throughout most of the book. Dershowitz especially vents his rage against the law of God. *I guarantee that you cannot turn to a single page in this book without being horrified.* It contains the most desolating hail of atheism I have ever read in my life. Yet, week after week, it is being taught to 25-50 adults in one of our largest churches in southern California, without a murmur of protest from the conference office.

God's people need to write the Southern California Conference about this: 818-546-8400.