



Cleansing the Cosmos: A Biblical Model for Conceptualizing and Counteracting Evil

E. Janet Warren

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Understanding evil spiritual forces is essential for Christian theology, yet discussion is almost always phrased in terms of "spiritual warfare" Warfare language is problematic, being dualistic, assigning a high degree of ontology to evil, and poorly applicable to ministry. This unique study proposes a biblically based model as the first alternative to a "spiritual warfare" framework for dealing with the demonic, thus providing insights for preaching, counseling, and missiology. Warren develops this model using metaphor theory and examining four biblical themes: Creation, Cult, Christ, and Church. Metaphors of cleansing, ordering, and boundary-setting are developed in contrast to battle imagery, and relevant theological issues are engaged (Boyd's warfare imagery, Barth's ideas of evil as "nothingness" and Eliade's notion of the sacred and the profane). The role of the Holy Spirit is emphasized and the ontology of evil minimized. This model incorporates concentric circles, evil being considered peripheral to divine reality, and provides a refreshing alternative to current "spiritual warfare" models.

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