From New Zealand

CRIME, CRUCIFIXION AND THE FORGOTTEN ART OF LAMENT

by Christopher D. Marshall

A greatly neglected dimension in contemporary worship is the practice of lament, or God-directed complaint. Most popular worship songs cruise or hip-hop-bop along, with little reference to pain or without any hint of complaint about the state of world. They function almost as a spiritual anaesthetic, dulling our senses to the extent of suffering in the world and to the deep paradoxes and ambiguities of human experience. Yet there is so much in the world we need to lament. There is much we need to cry out to God in protest against. War and violence, death and disease, poverty and prejudice blight the lives of countless millions. We need to recover ways of articulating, in the context of worship, our perplexity and distress over such things. One feature of modern life deserving of lament is the prevalence of crime. In every developed country in the world (with the exception of Japan),[1] reported crime rates have risen dramatically in the post-war period. Why this has happened is open to debate. But what is beyond dispute is the ruinous impact crime has on all those caught up in it – victims, offenders, and their respective family and community networks.

Victims suffer most. To be the object of some conscious malice or violation by another individual can have a devastating effect on a person's sense of self-worth and psychological well-being. Victims can feel debased, dishonoured, disrespected or shamed. They may become irritable or depressed, even suicidal. They may be plagued by fears and anxieties, by anger and bitterness, by hatred and resentment, not only for the offender but also for themselves. Self-loathing and self-blaming are a common legacy of victimisation.[2]

Offenders also suffer from the crimes they commit. Their action of deliberately harming another human being brings about a moral and spiritual degradation in them. They often experience shame, guilt and self-disgust. Repeated offending leads to a coarsening of their character and a corrupting of their humanity. The more habitual their behaviour becomes, the more damage they do to themselves and the more dangerous they may become to others.

The families and friends of both victims and offenders suffer as well. They have their own feelings of betrayal, anger, grief, resentment, hatred and revenge. Their lives are also indelibly marked by the criminal act. So too is the life of the wider community. Where serious crime is perceived to be increasing and to be largely random in its occurrence, even those who have never been directly victimised can feel their freedom restricted and their lives diminished by the constant worry that they may be next to suffer.

A Cause of Lament

The manifold damage done by serious crime and its aftermath is something Christians ought to bring regularly before God in lament. But we have forgotten the art of lament. Lament has all but disappeared from our regular worship services. It is almost as if lament has been systematically filtered out of our repertoire of worship resources. This itself is lamentable, given the rich and varied lament tradition we find in Scripture. In the Psalter — Israel's hymn book — there are numerous 'psalms of lament' in which the song writer expresses profound distress at his own condition or at the condition of the nation. Other examples of lament are scattered throughout the Old Testament, and a whole biblical book is entitled 'Lamentations'.

Most telling however is the fact that Jesus frequently voices lament. John tells of Jesus grieving over the death of Lazarus.[3] Luke records Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, mourning the city's resistance to the way of peace.[4] He bewails its future destruction,[5] which would fall most heavily on its women and children.[6] According to Matthew, Jesus was 'grieved and agitated' in Gethsemane, telling his disciples, 'I am deeply grieved, even to death'.[7] Elsewhere too we find Jesus moved with compassion for human need,[8] and distressed at his contemporaries' hardness of heart.[9] We see him frustrated at his disciples' obtuseness,[10] warning them they will soon 'weep and lament and...be sorrowful', though ultimately their 'sorrow will turn into joy'.[11]

So Jesus knew a lot about lamenting in his ministry. But arguably the profoundest, most revealing, and most disturbing example of lament in entire biblical tradition comes from last three hours of Jesus' life, where, in Mark's account, he dies with a cry of lament on his lips. As his life ebbs away, Jesus avails himself of the Hebrew lament tradition to express the depths of his anguish and grief. In the so-called 'cry of dereliction', he quotes Psalm 22, the 'Lament of the Righteous Sufferer', to voice his feelings of isolation and discouragement.

> It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, 'The King of the Jews.' And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left... When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, 'Listen, he is calling for Elijah.' And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.' Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, 'Truly this man was God's Son!' (Mark 15:25-27, 33-39)

In what follows, I want to offer some reflections on this episode to help us understand the context and nature of lament, and in particular its relevance to issues of crime and justice.

A Criminal's Lament

It is noteworthy, to begin with, that this example of lament occurs in a *criminal context.* Jesus utters the cry of dereliction as a condemned criminal, suffering judicial execution, at hands of state authorities, in order to uphold rule of law. His words give expression to his plight of criminalisation and criminal punishment. Nor is this a merely incidental detail. All the gospel writers seem to emphasise the criminalisation of Jesus at the end of his life.[12] In Luke's gospel, at the Last Supper, Jesus predicts that he will be 'counted among the criminals'.[13] In Matthew, when Jesus is arrested by the Temple police, he asks: 'Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a criminal'.[14] Mark stresses how Jesus' accusers perjured themselves at his trial, thus rendering his conviction illegitimate.[15]

Both Matthew and John note it was in interests of maintaining public order that Jesus was prosecuted by the Jewish and Roman authorities.[16] In John, the Jewish leaders say to Pilate: 'If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you'.[17] In all four gospels, Pilate offers the crowd a choice between releasing Jesus and an infamous criminal called Barabbas, who is under arrest for murder.[18]

In perhaps the most revealing turn of phrase, Luke's Greek text underlines the criminal status of all three men crucified on Golgotha: 'Jesus and two *other* criminals *also* were led away to be put to death with him'.[19] Jesus dies with the legal charge against him nailed to the cross,[20] despite the fact that his innocence has been recognised by a Roman court,[21] by the Roman police,[22] and even by the criminal fraternity.[23]

So in the gospel accounts a definite stress is placed on the criminalisation of Jesus. He is deemed a dangerous criminal by his opponents, he is prosecuted according to criminal law, and he suffers a criminal's fate, in the company of two other convicted criminals. His cry of dereliction emerges directly out of this context. It therefore has something special to offer any attempt to link lament with criminal justice concerns.

Lessons from the Lament of Jesus

In focusing on the experience of Jesus on the cross we are, of course, touching on the profoundest of all mysteries. We will never fully understand what transpired there. We must be careful not to trivialise it into a string of pious platitudes. But the crucifixion narratives do, I believe, afford several insights into the nature of lament.

1. Lament is occasioned by the pervasiveness of evil, and by the evident distance of God

The story of Jesus' passion is the story of his definitive confrontation with the powers of darkness, his apocalyptic struggle to expose and defeat the mystery of evil. Evil comes to its climactic, most undiluted manifestation at the place of Jesus' death.[24] And (perhaps significantly) it does so by exploiting the mechanisms of the criminal justice system. Evil reaches its zenith in securing the legal prosecution and execution of the innocent Jesus. Luke's account of Jesus' arrest makes this connection between the abuse of policepower and power of evil quite explicit:

> Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple police, and the elders who had come for him, 'Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a criminal? When I was with you day after day in the temple, you did not lay hands on me. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness!' (Lk 22:52-53)

Jesus' reference here to 'the power of darkness' suggests that the three hours of darkness that later envelopes the place of his execution represents, at least in part, the unique concentration of evil that takes place at this horrific

event.[25] And it is Jesus' profound awareness of the overwhelming power and violence of evil, and his own sense of impotence in face of it, that leads to his woeful lament: 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'

Christian commentators, since the earliest of times, have resisted the implication that Jesus was *really* separated from God on the cross (considered to be impossible since the trinity cannot be divided). Or that he *really* accused God of failing to support him (again impossible, since despair is a sin and Christ never sinned). Various ways of softening the implication of his words have therefore been proposed.[26] But surely the most natural reading of the text is that, at the point of his most intense struggle with evil, Jesus felt completely bereft of God's presence and support. Whatever the objective, ontological reality, subjectively Jesus felt totally alienated from any sense of God's love or goodness or strength. Deprived of God's presence, and utterly appalled at the magnitude of wickedness, he cries out in agonised lament.

That is what lament is. It is an intense grief over the sheer tenacity of evil and the evident distance of God. At the same time, it is an act of identification with those who suffer at the hands of evil.

2. Lament arises from solidarity with victims of injustice and evil

Throughout the Passion Narrative, especially in Luke's version, Jesus' legal innocence is repeatedly emphasised.[27] But Jesus was not only without any legal guilt, he was entirely 'without sin'.[28] His criminalisation and execution stemmed, therefore, not from his own fault, but from his decision to stand in solidarity with sinful, suffering humanity. He freely chose to participate unreservedly in the universal human experience of brokenness and sinful alienation from God, and suffered the full consequences of doing so.

Again, it is significant how such solidarity was exhibited. It was not just a matter of abstract sympathy for human need. It was not some legal fiction that took place in the mind of God. Christ's solidarity took the form of a concrete, experiential identification with humanity in its most abandoned, forlorn state. It took place through Jesus' assuming the status of a condemned criminal, robbed of all companionship, dying slowly under torture, in the interests of protecting state security,[29] despite his total innocence. No greater experience of human desolation is possible than this.

This costly solidarity with human estrangement explains two striking features of Jesus' lament. First, Jesus addresses God, no longer as 'Father' (abba), as was his usual habit, but simply as 'God'. His address is more distant,

more formal, more reserved than before. In the depths of his suffering, Jesus no longer knows that unique warmth of intimacy he typically enjoyed with God. Instead, he hangs before God as a weak, human creature before its Creator, dependant but distant.

Secondly, Jesus individualises his experience of human abandonment: '*my* God, *my* God, why have you forsaken *me?*' Not, why have you forsaken *them* (the human race), or why have you forsaken *us* (your own special people), but why have you forsaken *me*. So fully did Jesus identify his lot with dying, sinful humanity, so totally did he take our experience of lostness and condemnation into his own being, so utterly did he plumb the depths of human wickedness and suffering, that the entire human condition of subjection to evil and separation from God was somehow concentrated into his personal experience. The man who had known the highest degree of intimacy with God available to any human being, now experiences the deepest degree of isolation from God imaginable.

Paul reflects on the extent of Jesus' solidarity with sin-dominated humanity when he writes: 'For our sake God made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God'.[30] In saying 'God made him to be sin who knew no sin', Paul does *not* mean that God made Christ into a sinner. He means rather that God made the sinless one to share in the experience and fate of the sinful race. God allowed Christ to bear the full burden and consequences of participating in our sinful human state.

Again this was more than some abstract formula in the mind of God. The circumstances of Jesus' death, and the way in which Jesus responded to them, served to expose, and to remedy, the sinful root of the human predicament. That predicament is one in which every human being is both a sinner and one who is sinned against. We are both the perpetrators of evil and the objects of evil. We are all both victims and offenders.

On the one hand, we are all born into a state of subjection to the dominion of sin and death. We become victims of that pre-existing reality at the moment we join the human race. This happens through no fault of our own, for none of us choose to be conceived! But, on the other hand, once we are part of the human family, we all perpetuate and extend the reign of sin by resisting God's love and by inflicting harm on others. We all become offenders through own actions. We all victimise others, and we are all culpable for doing so.[31]

In his passion, Christ 'became sin' by entering fully into our condition of being both the victims of sin and the perpetrators of sin. In his death, Christ became the supreme victim of human depredation and cruelty. As 1 Peter puts it: 'He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross' (2:24). In other words, he absorbed in his own bodily experience the full impact of our sin, thus standing in solidarity with every other victim of human evil. Yet, in his victimised-state, Jesus did not perpetuate sin himself. He did not extend the reach of sin. He did not retaliate against his abusers. He did not respond to violence with violence; he refused Peter's offer of a sword to defend him.[32] He did not respond to hatred with counter-hatred. 'When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly'.[33] He did not respond to victimisation with vengeance. Instead he prayed for his offenders: 'Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing'.[34]

In short, Jesus broke the power of evil by absorbing its full consequences into himself as a victim without victimising others in return. He stood with, not against, those who sinned against him. In so doing he freed humanity from the clutches of evil by deconstructing the 'pay-back' mechanism through which evil perpetuates itself. And it is out of his immense struggle to do so that Jesus cries out, 'Why such godforsakeness'?

All this provides a pattern for our lamenting. Genuine lamenting only emerges when we strive to stand with those who suffer, to 'weep with those who weep'.[35] Our lamenting should be directed at two things — at the pain caused to innocent victims of injustice and evil, and at the distorted state of world which produces offenders who violate others so cruelly. Such lamenting is thereby an act of solidarity with both the victims of crime and with the perpetrators of crime — perpetrators who are themselves caught up in, and shaped by, a sinful reality larger than themselves. It is a reality that has victimised them before they have victimised others. This is *not* to excuse their offending, nor to minimise their moral responsibility, nor to trivialise the wrongs they have done. It is simply to recognise the falleness of the world in which we all live, and our common human capacity to hurt and be hurt, to victimise and to be victimised.

The power of restorative justice lies in this insight. It brings victims and offenders together so they can recognise their mutual involvement in the harm inflicted and can work together to bring about healing. In such a setting, offenders can see directly the pain of their victims, which is as real as their

own pain, and can seek to make amends. Victims can see the humanity of their abuser, which is as weak and prone to evil as their own, and sometimes even confer forgiveness. The miracle of restoration emerges out of a shared lament by victims and offenders, a lament for the pain caused and the pain suffered, on both sides.

3. Lament requires us to feel emotional pain

Lament is not just an intellectual objection to innocent suffering. It is a gut-wrenching participation in pain, and especially the pain of victimisation. We see this in Jesus. In identifying with our human plight, Jesus embraced pain. He endured an unjust trial, with hostile judges and lying witnesses. He underwent brutal and prolonged torture. He suffered personal rejection, even from his closest friends and followers, even from a fellow crucifixion victim. He encountered continual mockery and taunting, and a cruel attempt to prolong his suffering through offering vinegary wine to him. On top of all this, he felt repudiated by God. Twice Mark tells us that Jesus 'cried out with *loud* voice'.[36] There was nothing clinical or detached about it. He *felt* the pain of human estrangement as his own pain, and he cried out in vocal protest to God.

Paradoxically, it is the fear of experiencing vicarious pain that leads us to rely so heavily on inflicting punitive pain as the answer to crime. Rather than entering fully into the sufferings of victims, we focus on hurting the offender in return. It is much more costly for us to walk with victims through the dark valley of their grief and despair and to address their long term emotional and material needs. Rather than accepting offenders as fellow human beings in need of correction and help, we ostracise and isolate them in prisons. It is much more costly to enter into the darkness of the offender's world, to feel the pain he has known and the evil she has suffered, and to call him or her to genuine repentance and renewal.

But if the story of cross shows us anything, it shows that redemption involves experiencing pain, and especially the pain of our enemy. For offenders, this means confronting the pain of their victims, whom they have treated as enemies, and seeking to make amends. For victims, it means accepting the pain and the worth of their abuser, who has become their enemy by his actions, and allowing him the opportunity to change. Forgiveness and restoration are born out of their shared lament – a lament over the pain each has known and inflicted.

4. Lament is both a protest and a proclamation of faith

Jesus' lament is a protest. It is a protest at the persistence of evil and at God's apparent distance from the struggle. Jesus feels overwhelmed by the godforsakeness he experiences, and he asks, 'Why?' Why have you abandoned me? But his lament still occurs in the context of his ongoing relationship with God, albeit now distant and strained. His protest is not a bitter rejection of God, nor a denial of God's goodness or power. Jesus still speaks of 'my God'. He still trusts in God, despite the perplexity he feels. He still allows God to be God, since appearances can be deceptive.

God does not answer Jesus' question. No voice from heaven replies to his 'why?'. There is only silence. Only the darkness of evil. Only continued suffering and powerlessness. Not even Elijah comes to the rescue. But this does not mean that God remains aloof, untouched by pain, absent from the battle, passive in the face of evil. God's response is not to give satisfying answers to the 'why' question, but to enter into the situation personally, so as to remedy the problem from within.

At one level, as we have seen, Jesus enters totally into our sinful human condition of estrangement from God, and he feels God's absence. But in so doing he brings God's presence with him into this bleakness and desolation. In and through Jesus, God 'journeys into the far country of our estrangement and despair',[37] in order to bring healing deliverance to us.

God's personal presence in the death of Jesus is signalled in two main ways in Mark's crucifixion narrative. The first is by the three hours of darkness (v.33). I have already suggested that this darkness symbolises the presence of evil engineering Jesus' demise. But at the same time it symbolises God's judgment on that evil. Divine judgment is often accompanied by darkness in scripture.[38]

The fact that the biblical writers use darkness to represent both evil and God's judgement on evil is striking. Perhaps it is because divine judgment often works itself out, in practice, through God allowing evil to flourish to the extent that it finally consumes those who have promoted the evil.[39] In Isaiah 10, for example, God allows the brutality of Assyrian conquest to discipline 'godless' Israel (v.6). But the depravity that Assyria inflicts on Israel eventually rebounds on them, bringing about their own destruction in return (vv.12-27). A similar thing happens at the cross. God allows the power of sin to reach its zenith in the diabolical violence of Jesus' crucifixion, so

that it may finally exhaust itself. Its power is broken when it fails to reproduce itself through provoking counter-violence and revenge from Jesus. He alone does not succumb to its authority.

The second indication of God's presence in the death of Jesus is the tearing of the temple veil from top to bottom, from heaven to earth (v.38). This dramatic event indicates that here, in the suffering and death of Jesus, God stands most fully revealed. God is never more truly God than he is in the dying of Jesus. Even the centurion acknowledges that true divinity is displayed in the manner of Jesus' death (v.39).

Lament, then, is both a protest at the senselessness of evil and a proclamation that God remains God, and that God is actively involved behind the scenes in the conquest of evil. When we are confronted with the ravages of evil, such as crime, we cannot help but ask God 'why?' Why do such bad things happen? Where the hell is God in the tragedy of criminal offending and innocent victimisation? There are however no satisfying answers to this question. God's response is not to explain the problem of evil, but to participate in its suffering and to suffer himself for its ultimate undoing.

5. Lament summons action to make things new

When Jesus laments the virulence of evil, he doesn't do so from a safe distance. He does not stand on the sidelines bemoaning how terrible things are. Instead he suffers *with* us as he actively takes up *for* us the struggle against evil. He gives his life blood to defeat the power of sin, to heal its victims and to reconcile its perpetrators to God.[40]

If we are to join with Jesus in lamenting the impact of evil, we must also join with him in working to overcome evil. And we must do so in the same way Jesus did, not by deploying coercive power to wipe out evildoers but by trusting in the power of reconciling love to restore relationships and to make things new.

With respect to crime, this means resisting the increasingly noisy demand for harsher penalties as the answer to serious crime. Violence cannot be defeated by better violence; evil cannot be overcome by further evil. A better way to combat crime is to work harder at sustaining and strengthening human relationships. When crime is committed, relationships are damaged. If we do not invest ourselves in restoring the damage, evil has the final word.

We must seek to restore victims by sharing their pain and lending them strength to deal with what has occurred. We must also seek to restore offenders, condemning their deeds yet affirming their intrinsic worth while clarifying the moral obligation they have to put things right. Formal punishment may still be necessary. But retribution itself is not the solution to crime, and it is not the essence of justice.[41] True justice is only achieved when healthy relationships are created, and it is only healthy relationships that effectively deter further crime.

Conclusion

In Mark's gospel, Jesus dies as a condemned criminal, with words of lament on his lips. His acceptance of a criminal status stems from his voluntary identification with the lostness of the human race. His lament is occasioned by the pervasiveness and power of evil, and the desolation and sense of godforsakeness that accompanies it.

Yet his lament is still directed to God and manifests his continuing trust in God, despite present experience. He trusts that, behind the scenes, God is working through him to destroy evil. This can only happen if he refuses to succumb to the logic of evil by striking back at those who hate and abuse him. Instead he loves and forgives his enemies, giving his life to reconcile estranged humanity to right relationship with God and with each other.

In all this, Jesus provides us with a pattern both for lamenting evil and for combating it. Crime is one such evil. We must do more in our regular worship services to lament the prevalence of crime in our community. We may need to forge our own psalms of lament to do so. We must also do more to fight crime. Rather than simply demanding more police on the streets and greater punishment for criminals, we must not allow crime to have the final word. Trusting in the strength of love, we must work for the healing of victims, the transformation of offenders, and the restoration of relationships. For it was for these things that Jesus died and rose again.

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References

1 See J. Braithwaite, Crime, Shame and Reintegration (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), 48-49.

2 L. Barnes Lampman & M. D. Shattuck (eds), God and the Victim: Theological Reflections on Evil, Victimization, Justice, and Forgiveness (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1999).

3 John 11:35-37

4 Luke 19:41-44

5 Luke 20:20-24

6 Luke 23:26-31

7 Matt 26:37-38

8 For example, Mark 1:41; Matt 15:32; 20:34; Luke 7:13

9 Mark 3:5; 6:5; 8:12; Luke 7:32

10 For example, Mark 8:17-21; 9:19; 14:40

11 John 16:20-22, cf. Mark 2:18-22.

12 Several different Greek terms are used in these verses to depict Jesus as a lawbreaker, but each term can be legitimately translated by the term “criminal”.

13 Luke 22:37

14 Matt 6:55

15 Mark 14:55-59; Matt 26:57-68

16 John 11:49-50; Matt 27:24

17 John 18:30

18 Mark 15:6-15; Matt 27:16-26; Luke 23:18-19; John 18:39-40.

19 Luke 23:32

20 John 19:17-22

21 Luke 23:14-15; Matt 27:19

22 Luke 23:47

23 Luke 23:40-41, cf. Matt 27:4

24 Cf. 1 Cor 2:8; Col 2:15

25 Darkness is often used as a symbol of sin, ignorance and death: 1 Sam 2:9; 2 Sam 22:29; Job 3:4; 5:14; 10:21; 11:17; 12:22; 15:2; 16:16; 17:12; 18:18; 20:26; 22:11,13,17; 24:17; 30:26; 34:22; 37:19; 38:17; Pss 18:28; 88:12,18; 91:6; 107:10,14; 139:11; 143:3; Prov 2;13; 4:19; 20:20; Eccl 5:17; 6:4; 11:8; Isa 5:20; 9:2; 29:18; 42:7,16; 45:5; 49:9; 50:10; 59:9; Jer 2:6,31; Matt 4:16; 6:23,27; Luke 1:79; 11:34; John 1:5; 3:19; 12:35, 46; Acts 26:18; Rom 2:19; 13:12; 1 Cor 4:5; 2 Cor 6:14; Eph 5:8,11; 6:12; Col 1:13; 1 Thess 5:4; 1 Peter 2:4; 1 John 1:5; 2:8,11.

26 On this see R. Brown, The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave (New York: Doubleday, 1994), II:1051; J.T. Carroll & J.B. Green (eds), The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995), 213.

27 See Luke 23:14, 22-23, 41, 47-48; John 19:4

28 John 8:21, 24, 46; 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26-27; 1 Peter 3:8

29 Luke 19:39; John 18:14; Acts 4:23-26.

30 2 Cor 5:21, cf. Rom 8:3

31 See especially Rom 1:18-32; 3:9-20; 5:12-21

32 Matt 26:52

33 1 Peter 2:23, cf. Heb 12:2

34 Luke 23:34

35 Rom 12:15

36 Mark 15:34, 37, cf. 1:27; 5:7

37 P.S. Fiddes, Past Event, Present Salvation (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1989), 109.

38 God is often said himself to dwell in darkness or thick darkness (Gen 15:12; Exod 20:21; Deut 5:22; 2 Chron 6:1; Ps 18:9,11; 97:2; 2 Sam 22:10,12 (cf. 1 Jn 1:5). Divine judgment is frequently accompanied by darkness (Exod 10:21-22; Deut 28:9; Job 19:8; Pss 44:19; 105:28; Isa 5:30; 8:22; Jer 13:16; 23:16; Lam 3:2,6; Ezek 34:12; Joel 2:2,31; Amos 5:18; Micah 3:6; Neh 1:8; Zeph 1:15; Matt 2:13; 25:30; Acts 2:20; 13:11; 2 Pet 2:17; Jude 1:13; Rev 16:10 (cf. Josh 24:7)

39 The classical discussion of this is Rom 1:18-32

40 2 Cor 5:17-21; Rom 5:6-11.

41. For a defence of the role of punishment within restorative justice, see my book Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime and Punishment (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2001), 97-144.