



Exploring Mormon Thought, Vol 4 *God's Plan to Heal Evil*

By Blake T. Ostler

Volume 4 in the Exploring Mormon Thought series

255 pages

Hardcover ISBN 978-1-58958-191-3 | \$34.95

Paperback ISBN 978-1-58958-548-2 | \$24.95

The problem of evil is perhaps the greatest challenge to belief in a loving and personal God. The challenge naturally leads us to ask, "Why, God, has this happened to me, to my loved ones, to my enemies?" Or, to ask with the Psalmist, "Where art thou God?" Or, to perhaps echo Jesus, "My God, my God, why hast thou abandoned me?"

In this fourth volume of the Exploring Mormon Thought series, *God's Plan to Heal Evil*, Blake T. Ostler examines how others in the Christian and Mormon traditions have attempted to provide solutions to this challenge and the shortcomings they contain. Ostler then looks to Mormon theology to offer what he calls the Plan of Agape, or what is perhaps the most robust explanation of how belief in a loving, personal God can be had in light of all of the suffering that exists in the world.

Subjects: Philosophy, epistemology, the problem of evil and suffering, Christianity, Mormon philosophy.



"These books are the most important works on Mormon theology ever written. There is nothing currently available that is even close to the rigor and sophistication of these volumes."

FARMS Review, BYU Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship

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Sandy, UT 84070

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Exploring Mormon Thought, Vol 4: God's Plan to Heal Evil

This book addresses how well various theological perspectives deal with the problem of evil. It also explores how three different approaches to theology in the Mormon tradition respond to the problem of evil.

Key questions addressed in this volume

- If God desires to have a world without evil, and if He can have anything he desires, then why does evil exist?
- If God could create us any way He wanted, why didn't He make us more competent to deal with evil?
- Is there any view of God's permitting evils to occur to infants that can be just and fair?
- Does Mormonism offer anything unique to the problem of evil question?
- If God permits evil to occur because it results in the greater good, shouldn't we always allow evil to occur because it always results in the greater good?

Exploring Mormon Thought: God's Plan to Heal Evil addresses the problem of evil from the perspectives of an all-controlling God (e.g. John Calvin); meticulous providence (e.g. Luis de Molina); open theology (e.g. William Hasker), process theology (e.g. Alfred North Whitehead), and also from three different perspectives in Mormon thought including the finitist view, process theology, and a view developed by the author within the prior three volumes of *Exploring Mormon Thought*: an "agape" or relational view.

Relevance to readers

This volume addresses the problem of evil in light of the best scholarship in philosophy. In it, the author presents a new argument from evil to the conclusion that a god that creates all things *ex nihilo* cannot exist. This book also elucidates for the first time three very different cosmologies that entail different approaches to how God deals with evil in the Mormon tradition.

Recommended Chapters

Chapter 4: The Less Evil Options Argument

Chapter 8: A Relational Agape Theodicy

About the Author

Blake T. Ostler is a practicing attorney specializing in educational law, employment law and intellectual property. He has published widely on Mormon philosophy in journals such as *Religious Studies*, *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion*, *Dialogue: Journal of Mormon Thought*, *BYU Studies*, *Element*, and *FARMS Review of Books*.

