

*ЭПОХА ПУСТОТЫ. КАК ЛЮДИ НАЧАЛИ ЖИТЬ БЕЗ БОГА, ЧЕМ ЗАМЕНИЛИ РЕЛИГИЮ И ЧТО ИЗ ВСЕГО ЭТОГО ВЫШЛО [THE AGE OF NOTHING: HOW WE HAVE SOUGHT TO LIVE SINCE THE DEATH OF GOD].* BY PETER WATSON. TRANS. FROM ENGLISH BY M. ZAVALOV, N. KHOLMOGOROVAIA. (SERIES: RELIGION. THE HISTORY OF GOD). MOSCOW: EKSMO, 2017. ПЕР. С АНГЛ. М. ЗАВАЛОВА, Н. ХОЛМОГОРОВОЙ (СЕРИЯ: РЕЛИГИЯ. ИСТОРИЯ БОГА). РР. 784; ISBN 978-5-699-97046-9; 738 RUB.

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The well-known British journalist and historian Peter Watson has written a book about how it is possible to live after Nietzsche's 1882 pronouncement, repeatedly relived by Western civilization, on the "death of God." If there is no God and the universe is completely accidental and without ultimate sense, can man find any standard of values beyond that which he establishes himself? The search for a basis for life, moral decision, and the understanding of a world that has lost its concept of the supernatural and transcendent, has become the defining motif for the development of philosophy, art, science, and psychology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For many creative personalities, the awareness of man's hopelessness at his loneliness in the face of the endlessly overwhelming insensitivity of the universe has become the source of the experience of horror and confusion embodied in their works. For example, the poetry of T. S. Eliot, the novels of Fyodor Dostoevsky, and the dramas of Samuel Beckett. Watson's book takes a different tack. The author strives to present those "heroes" for whom the loss of a transcendent reference point is not a source of alarm and anxiety, but the good news of liberation, the call to a life filled with enthusiasm and resourcefulness. Proceeding from this perspective, he calls our attention to a carefully selected chronology of the search for life's meaning after the "death of God." In the course of this rich journey, the reader is acquainted with the problems of various spheres of discipline—philosophy, science, fine art, poetry, drama, and so on. Before him sweep whole processions of authors, schools, movements, and works, selected by Watson according to one criterion—can they offer a viable form of a positive answer to the question of the meaning of life in a post-religious age?

Basically, Watson holds to chronological order in his summary, which allows him to analyze intellectual shifts in their historical context. Thus, the first part, which is dedicated to the period until the First World War, examines post-Nietzschean art and literature, the philosophy of pragmatism, and also the basic ideas of phenomenology and psychoanalysis. The second part calls attention to the "abyss" of the twentieth century (World War I, the appearance of communist and fascist regimes). The author traces the

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role of Nietzsche-ism in the maturation of new cultural and ideological directions, and also gives attention to the basic philosophic trends of this period: Martin Heidegger, positivism and Ludwig Wittgenstein, the further development of psychoanalysis. The last part of the book discusses World War II and its consequences. Tragic events caused a crisis for traditional ways of human self-understanding. This was expressed in pessimism and existentialism, and also stimulated the search for possibilities of a new theology “post-Auschwitz,” which attempted to reconcile the experience of violence with faith in God. It is these directions, which accented the theme of personal human responsibility for self-determination and corresponded to the prevailing interest in therapeutic methods that could assure the development of individual potential, that updated the task of the search for meaning and wholeness of life in the post-war era. From this vantage point, Watson carefully researches the development of post-war philosophy, theology, psychology and science, and also the creativity of contemporary writers, dramatists, and poets. In particular, the effort to bring sense to the world’s existence is regarded as the basic theme of counter-cultural and psychotherapeutic experiments. With particular enthusiasm, Watson writes about post-war poetry in which he sees the form of a positive answer to the challenges of the world’s senselessness, an answer that is more complete than that of science, which is incapable of perceiving man’s unexpressed thirst for wholeness and fullness of being. This becomes possible because of poetry’s ability not only to explore the boundaries of the perceivable world, but also to invite their transcendence, as well as poetry’s ability to focus on the concrete and individual.

Watson convincingly demonstrates that the loss of former faith in God has obliged humanity to look for happiness, meaning, and completeness of life in other ways. This has been expressed in attempts to hoist man himself upon the empty pedestal, the rejection of overarching narratives, experiments with therapy sessions and the use of narcotics, and the turning to science and art for salvation, as worthy replacements for religion. The inclusion of a vast number of authors, themes, and movements, which the author relates without any critical evaluation and drawing minimal conclusions at the chapters’ end, leaves the question open as to how the British intellectual himself would answer to the main challenge of the day. Only in the conclusion does Watson lift the curtain, when he nevertheless rather disjointedly sets out a few points of emphasis. It is evident that his sympathies are found, first of all, on the side of evolutionary theory, which although it is inconsistent and debatable, nevertheless continues to exert a huge influence on our worldview and ethical vision, meaning that its potential is by no means exhausted. In the second place he is inclined to a phenomenological approach to the world, giving due attention not to abstract generalizations but to the concreteness of experience, the variety of manifestations of the world and brief “moments of happiness.” Thus, Watson arrives at the conclusion that without relying on God for an explanation of the world, man is capable of finding sense and meaning in life only in intense moments of experience.

We should also note the conclusion, probably unexpected for the author himself, to which acquaintance with the book leads. By means of his analysis of secular worldviews, Watson debunks numerous attempts to find a replacement for faith in God, which actually turn out to be superficial and short-lived imitations. The progress and flourishing of

humanity that was expected after liberation from the repressive control of religion never became a reality. The “age of nothing,” which began one-hundred fifty years ago, has only exposed man’s invincible efforts to achieve a transcendent basis for his existence. The era of progressive modernization has led not to the complete collapse of religion, as was expected, but to the “post-secular condition of society” (Jürgen Habermas, Charles Taylor) and the “return of religion” (Peter Berger), which again successfully encompasses not only the private but also the public sphere (José Casanova).

Overall, the book may be recommended as the most complete investigation of the collapse of religious faith in Western civilization and the significance of that process for secular culture. Acquaintance with the trajectory of human thought may become a point of departure for the reader’s own research and thinking, even if he does not agree with most of the views presented in the book.

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*ВЕСТНИКИ ЦАРСТВА: БОГОСЛОВИЕ ВЕТХОЗАВЕТНЫХ ПРОРОКОВ.  
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9905130-8-2; 150 грн.\**

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Ветхий Завет, богословие ветхозаветных пророков в частности, – предмет на постсоветском пространстве с колоссальным дефицитом внимания со стороны как церковного, так и академического сообществ. Поэтому, любой вклад в этот предмет обладает несомненной ценностью. В 2015 г. была издана книга «Вестники Царства» Алексея Прокопенко. Согласно автору, книга явилась следствием семинара, проведенного в церкви “Слово Благодати”. Она рассчитана на широкий круг читателей, желающих познакомиться с пророческими книгами Ветхого Завета. Какой же вклад в исследования ветхозаветных учений производит данный труд?

Книга состоит из шести разделов. Первый раздел, введение, повествуют о субъективной стороне пророческого феномена. Автор рассматривает наиболее часто встречающиеся термины в Ветхом Завете: נביא (*нави*, “пророк”), חוזה (*хозе*, “провидец”), רואה (*роэ*, “прозорливец”), и איש הלל אלהים (*иш Элохим*, “человек Божий”). Однако обзор терминов производится поверхностно, очевидно, без использования богословской справочной литературы, например, *NIDOTTE*<sup>1</sup> или *TDOT*.<sup>2</sup> Далее,

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<sup>1</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974-2015.

<sup>2</sup> *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974-2015.

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