SANCTUARY ETHICS REVIEW BOARD

SERB-009 — MALTHAEL

On Collective Extermination, Preventive Violence, and the Presumption That the Elimination of Risk Justifies the Elimination of Persons

An Institutional Inquiry into the Angel of Death, the Weaponization of Mortal Souls, the Black Soulstone, and the Attempted Destruction of Humanity in Pursuit of an End to the Eternal Conflict

Issuing Authority: Sanctuary Ethics Review Board (SERB)
Docket: SERB-009
Classification: Mass Atrocity, Population Ethics, Extraordinary Weapons, Institutional Accountability, and the Limits of Preventive Authority
Date: October 24, 2026
Status: Preliminary Findings, Institutional Determination, and Notice of Continuing Investigation

Principal Respondent:

Malthael, Former Archangel of Wisdom, Former Member of the Angiris Council, and Subsequently the Angel of Death.

Additional Respondents and Persons of Interest:

- Urzael, Former Angelic Lieutenant and Commander of Malthael's Forces
- Members of the Reaper Host
- Former Angelic Servants Who Entered Malthael's Service
- The Custodians of the Black Soulstone
- Surviving Witnesses of the Westmarch Catastrophe

Interested Institutions:

- The Angiris Council
- The High Heavens
- The Horadrim
- The Historical Authorities of Westmarch

- The Priests of Rathma
- The Mortal Communities of Sanctuary

Affected Parties:

The inhabitants of Sanctuary, including persons killed, displaced, transformed, or subjected to the extraction of their souls by forces operating under Malthael's authority.

Principal Questions:

Whether humanity's inherited demonic essence constituted an ethically legitimate basis for its destruction.

Whether the respondent's stated objective of ending the Eternal Conflict justified the deliberate killing of persons who had committed no established wrongdoing.

Whether the Black Soulstone's capacity to extract demonic essence could lawfully or ethically be employed where that extraction foreseeably destroyed the human beings possessing it.

Whether Malthael's prior participation in the Angiris Council created institutional obligations relevant to his subsequent conduct.

Whether the prevention of future harm may justify measures that themselves inflict the very harm they purport to prevent.

I. NOTICE OF INSTITUTIONAL INVESTIGATION

The Sanctuary Ethics Review Board hereby opens its ninth inquiry into the conduct of extraordinary powers exercising authority over humanity.

The present investigation concerns Malthael, formerly the Archangel of Wisdom.

The Board recognizes that the respondent occupied a position of considerable importance within the High Heavens.

As a member of the Angiris Council, Malthael participated in the governance of celestial affairs and the deliberations surrounding humanity's future.

The Board further recognizes that the respondent's subsequent actions arose within the context of the Eternal Conflict.

The dangers associated with the Burning Hells were substantial.

Infernal powers repeatedly corrupted mortal institutions, possessed human bodies, and inflicted catastrophic destruction.

The desire to prevent further infernal intervention therefore represented a potentially legitimate protective objective.

However, the respondent's chosen method raises questions of exceptional gravity.

Malthael sought to eliminate demonic corruption by extracting demonic essence from beings possessing it.

Humanity, descended from both angelic and demonic progenitors, fell within the category of beings targeted.

The extraction process threatened the integrity and continued existence of the persons affected.

The respondent nevertheless proceeded.

The Board therefore identifies a central distinction.

The elimination of a dangerous influence is not necessarily equivalent to the protection of persons affected by that influence.

Where the method employed destroys those persons, the claimed protective purpose requires examination independent of the method's technical effectiveness.

The Board recognizes the respondent's stated desire to end the Eternal Conflict.

It does not recognize that desire as sufficient justification for destroying a population that did not initiate the conflict.

The inquiry shall proceed.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A. Malthael as Archangel of Wisdom

Malthael originally occupied the Aspect of Wisdom within the Angiris Council.

His role was associated with knowledge, understanding, and the interpretation of circumstances affecting the High Heavens.

The Board recognizes that wisdom may require consideration of consequences extending beyond immediate events.

It may require the recognition of patterns invisible to persons possessing more limited experience.

However, superior knowledge does not establish unlimited authority.

Nor does the ability to anticipate danger automatically determine the ethical legitimacy of every proposed response.

The Board therefore distinguishes between understanding a problem and possessing authority to impose its solution.

B. The Vote Concerning Humanity

As examined in SERB-003, the Angiris Council considered whether Sanctuary and humanity should be destroyed.

The final historical vote resulted in preservation.

Malthael abstained.

The Board previously declined to infer the respondent's motives solely from his abstention.

That determination remains controlling.

The subsequent conduct under investigation does not establish that the respondent secretly intended humanity's extermination at the time of the earlier vote.

Nevertheless, the relationship between the events warrants examination.

A former Council member who declined to participate in the original decision later undertook unilateral action designed to eliminate the population whose existence had been debated.

The Board therefore requests evidence concerning the development of the respondent's position.

C. Destruction of the Worldstone

Following the destruction of the Worldstone, Malthael withdrew from the High Heavens.

His absence altered the composition of the Angiris Council.

The respondent subsequently pursued an understanding of death and the nature of mortal souls.

The Board recognizes that the destruction of an artifact central to cosmic affairs may have produced substantial uncertainty.

Nevertheless, the respondent's withdrawal did not automatically establish authority over the persons whose lives he later sought to end.

D. Emergence as the Angel of Death

Malthael eventually adopted the Aspect of Death.

He acquired extraordinary capabilities concerning mortal souls and the forces associated with death.

The Board recognizes that the ability to perceive, collect, or manipulate souls may represent a profound metaphysical development.

However, the acquisition of such abilities does not establish that their exercise is ethically unrestricted.

An individual capable of causing death does not necessarily possess legitimate authority to determine who should die.

The distinction is especially significant where the respondent claims authority over persons who have not voluntarily accepted his jurisdiction.

E. Seizure of the Black Soulstone

Following Diablo's defeat in the High Heavens, the Black Soulstone remained an artifact of exceptional danger.

Tyrael and the reconstituted Horadrim sought to secure it.

Malthael intervened and seized the artifact.

The Board recognizes that the Black Soulstone contained extraordinary infernal power.

Its custody therefore presented substantial risks.

Nevertheless, the respondent's seizure of the artifact must be distinguished from any legitimate protective purpose that might have been asserted.

The Board requests evidence concerning the authority under which the respondent took possession.

F. The Campaign Against Humanity

Malthael subsequently directed forces against mortal populations.

His Reapers devastated Westmarch and other areas of Sanctuary.

The respondent pursued a broader strategy employing the Black Soulstone to eliminate demonic essence.

Because humanity possessed inherited demonic essence, the measure threatened humanity's destruction.

The Board identifies this conduct as the principal subject of the present investigation.

III. THE RESPONDENT'S ASSERTED OBJECTIVE

The Board recognizes that Malthael sought to end the Eternal Conflict.

The historical record supports the conclusion that he considered demonic corruption a principal source of continuing danger.

Humanity's ancestry presented a particular concern.

Mortals possessed capacities associated with both celestial and infernal origins.

Their allegiance could not necessarily be predicted.

Their extraordinary powers might eventually threaten the High Heavens.

The Board acknowledges that these circumstances introduced genuine uncertainty.

Nevertheless, uncertainty concerning future conduct does not establish present culpability.

Nor does the possession of potentially dangerous capabilities establish an obligation to surrender one's life.

The Board therefore distinguishes the respondent's stated objective from the means selected to accomplish it.

Objective: The elimination of infernal corruption and the prevention of future conflict.

Method: The destruction of beings possessing demonic essence, including humanity.

The distinction is essential.

A legitimate objective may be pursued through impermissible means.

Conversely, the apparent effectiveness of a method does not establish that the objective itself is legitimate.

The Board therefore considers whether the respondent's method preserved the interests of those he purportedly sought to protect.

The available record indicates that it did not.

The proposed elimination of demonic essence would destroy human beings possessing that essence.

The respondent's plan therefore treated the continued existence of humanity as incompatible with the successful completion of his objective.

The Board identifies a fundamental contradiction.

Humanity could not receive the anticipated benefit of protection if the implementation of that protection required humanity's destruction.

IV. ON THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN CORRUPTION AND ANCESTRY

The Board next examines the classification underlying the respondent's actions.

Humanity descended from the nephalem.

The nephalem descended from angelic and demonic progenitors.

Accordingly, humanity possessed inherited characteristics associated with both celestial and infernal existence.

The respondent treated the demonic component as sufficient grounds for elimination.

The Board rejects this reasoning.

Ancestry is not conduct.

Possession of a particular metaphysical characteristic does not establish that its bearer has committed wrongdoing.

Nor does the potential for future corruption establish that corruption has already occurred.

The Board therefore distinguishes:

Inherited nature: Characteristics arising from ancestry or origin.

Actual conduct: Actions undertaken by an individual.

Present threat: A danger supported by evidence concerning current circumstances.

Predicted threat: A danger anticipated on the basis of future possibilities.

These categories may be related.

They are not interchangeable.

The respondent's approach appears to have collapsed them into a single classification.

Persons possessing demonic essence were treated as appropriate targets regardless of their individual conduct.

The Board considers this categorization fundamentally deficient.

The mixed ancestry of humanity did not establish that every human was aligned with the Burning Hells.

Nor did it establish that every human would eventually become corrupted.

The Board recognizes that humanity possessed demonic ancestry.

It does not recognize ancestry as evidence sufficient to justify extermination.

V. ON THE ETHICS OF POPULATION-WIDE DESTRUCTION

The Board considers the scope of the respondent's proposed intervention.

Malthael did not merely seek to restrain identified infernal agents.

He sought to eliminate demonic essence wherever it existed within the target population.

The measure therefore operated through a characteristic shared by humanity rather than through individualized findings of harmful conduct.

The Board identifies several ethical deficiencies.

A. Absence of Individualized Assessment

The proposed measure did not meaningfully distinguish among persons according to their actions.

B. Indiscriminate Consequences

The measure threatened persons who had neither participated in infernal aggression nor demonstrated an intention to do so.

C. Irreversibility

The destruction of a person's body and soul presents consequences that cannot be presumed reversible.

D. Absence of Consent

The affected population did not collectively authorize its destruction.

E. Disproportionality

The anticipated harm extended to the elimination of the population whose future was supposedly being secured.

The Board recognizes that certain collective protective measures may be justified where individualized treatment is impossible.

However, the deliberate destruction of persons solely because they possess a shared inherited characteristic requires a fundamentally different ethical assessment.

The measure was not merely burdensome.

It was annihilatory.

The Board therefore finds that ordinary claims of preventive necessity cannot adequately justify the proposed action.

The elimination of an entire population is not a proportionate method of protecting that population from possible future wrongdoing.

VI. THE BLACK SOULSTONE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF MASS DESTRUCTION

The Board identifies the Black Soulstone as a central instrument of the respondent's plan.

As examined in SERB-007, the artifact possessed capabilities extending beyond the original Horadric soulstones.

Its design permitted the containment of extraordinary essences.

Malthael sought to employ and alter those capabilities on a population-wide scale.

The Board recognizes that the artifact was not originally created solely for the purpose under investigation.

The responsibility of its original inventor must therefore be distinguished from the responsibility of subsequent users.

Nevertheless, the respondent's use involved a deliberate application of the artifact toward the destruction of humanity.

The Board identifies the following concerns.

A. Scale

The proposed intervention extended across Sanctuary.

B. Target Identification

Targets were identified according to the presence of demonic essence.

C. Mechanism

The extraction of that essence would destroy affected human beings.

D. Lack of Individual Safeguards

The available record does not establish any mechanism for protecting persons whose inherited nature triggered the extraction.

E. Catastrophic Failure Potential

The concentration and manipulation of extraordinary infernal power created substantial risks beyond the immediate intended effect.

The Board therefore classifies the proposed use of the Black Soulstone as a population-wide extraordinary weapon.

This classification concerns the method and intended consequences.

It does not depend upon whether the respondent regarded the operation as warfare, purification, or prevention.

An instrument that deliberately destroys an inhabited population does not cease to be destructive because its operator describes the process as removal of corruption.

VII. ON THE PRESUMPTION THAT PURIFICATION IS PROTECTION

The Board considers the language of purification.

The removal of a harmful substance or influence may constitute a legitimate protective intervention.

Where a person suffers from an identifiable condition, treatment may aim to remove the cause of injury.

However, the ethical legitimacy of treatment depends upon the relationship between the intervention and the welfare of the person receiving it.

A procedure that destroys the patient cannot automatically be justified by demonstrating that the harmful condition was also destroyed.

The Board therefore distinguishes between:

Removal of a harmful influence while preserving the person.

And:

Destruction of the person as a means of eliminating the influence.

The respondent's plan fell within the second category.

The Board recognizes that no safe method of separating humanity's demonic ancestry from its continued existence may have been available.

That limitation would have constrained the available protective options.

It did not establish that the population should therefore be destroyed.

The absence of a safe remedy does not automatically justify a fatal one.

Nor does inability to remove an inherited characteristic render the person possessing it expendable.

The Board does not recognize the destruction of a patient as successful treatment merely because the patient's condition no longer exists afterward.

VIII. THE WESTMARCH CATASTROPHE

The Board turns to the respondent's campaign against Westmarch.

The city was a major center of mortal civilization.

Its inhabitants included civilians, soldiers, religious personnel, merchants, families, and others whose interests were independent of the Eternal Conflict.

Malthael's forces attacked.

The Reapers killed inhabitants and transformed some of the dead into instruments of further violence.

The Board recognizes the extraordinary threat posed by these operations.

It further recognizes that the destruction extended beyond conventional military objectives.

The respondent's forces targeted the living because they were living members of the population marked for elimination.

The Board therefore identifies substantial grounds for findings of deliberate mass killing.

The available record does not permit a sufficiently precise accounting of every death attributable to the campaign.

The Board declines to assign an unsupported numerical total.

Nevertheless, the scale of devastation was catastrophic.

The absence of an exact count does not prevent recognition of the character of the conduct.

The Board does not require a complete enumeration of the dead before recognizing that civilians were deliberately subjected to mass destruction.

The Board requests preservation of surviving records concerning casualties, displacement, and the destruction of inhabited areas.

IX. THE REAPER HOST

The Board considers the organization of the respondent's forces.

Malthael commanded a host composed of fallen angels, transformed beings, and entities associated with the manipulation of death.

These forces operated under the respondent's authority.

The Board recognizes that command responsibility must be distinguished from individual participation.

An individual commander may direct an unlawful operation.

Subordinate personnel may possess different degrees of knowledge, control, and freedom to refuse.

The Board therefore rejects automatic equivalence between the responsibilities of Malthael and every being operating under his command.

Nevertheless, the existence of an organized command structure creates grounds for examining responsibility for operations undertaken pursuant to that structure.

The Board requests evidence concerning:

1. Orders issued by Malthael.
2. The authority exercised by Urzael.
3. The recruitment or transformation of Reaper personnel.
4. The capacity of subordinate beings to refuse instructions.
5. The treatment of mortal civilians.
6. The collection and use of souls.
7. The procedures governing the transformation of slain persons into combatants.

The Board further questions whether transformed mortals retained independent agency.

Where a deceased person's remains or soul were employed without consent, the conduct raises additional concerns concerning postmortem autonomy.

These matters are reserved for examination alongside the forthcoming necromantic ethics docket.

The Board recognizes that a corpse may be operationally useful.

It does not recognize usefulness as sufficient authorization for compulsory military service after death.

X. THE ROLE OF URZAEL

The Board identifies Urzael as a principal subordinate respondent.

Urzael had previously served within the celestial hierarchy.

He subsequently became associated with Malthael's forces.

His conduct during the campaign against Westmarch warrants independent investigation.

The Board recognizes that military obedience may form part of a legitimate command structure.

However, the existence of a superior's directive does not automatically resolve the responsibility of the person implementing it.

The Board therefore requests clarification concerning Urzael's knowledge of the campaign's objectives.

Did the respondent understand that civilians were being targeted?

Did he recognize that the destruction extended to persons who had committed no hostile acts?

Was he permitted to question the orders?

Did he possess authority to limit the operation?

What role did he personally play in directing attacks?

The Board does not presume that every subordinate possessed equivalent freedom to refuse.

Nevertheless, where a commander knowingly directs attacks against civilian populations, the existence of a superior authority does not automatically eliminate personal responsibility.

The Board recognizes that Urzael served the Angel of Death.

It does not recognize obedience as an independent justification for every death caused in that service.

XI. THE USE OF MORTAL SOULS

The Board next considers the collection and manipulation of souls.

Malthael's powers permitted extraordinary interference with the spiritual existence of mortal persons.

His forces extracted souls and employed the dead in furtherance of the campaign.

The Board recognizes that Sanctuary contains established forms of necromantic practice.

Not every interaction with the dead is necessarily equivalent.

The Priests of Rathma, for example, historically maintained doctrines concerning balance and the responsible use of necromantic power.

The Board therefore declines to condemn every form of postmortem intervention merely because it involves death.

The present inquiry concerns the circumstances and purposes of the respondent's conduct.

The extraction of souls was undertaken as part of a campaign intended to destroy humanity.

The transformation of slain persons into instruments of further killing raises substantial questions concerning autonomy and exploitation.

The Board therefore distinguishes:

Respectful treatment of the dead.

Consensual or otherwise ethically justified postmortem intervention.

Nonconsensual manipulation of remains or souls.

Weaponization of the deceased against the population from which they came.

The respondent's conduct presents substantial grounds for classification within the latter categories.

The Board requests evidence concerning whether transformed persons retained awareness or the ability to refuse participation.

The absence of such evidence does not establish that the transformations were harmless.

The Board recognizes that death may alter the capacities of a person.

It does not establish that death transfers ownership of that person's remains or soul to the nearest available archangel.

XII. THE QUESTION OF PREVENTIVE VIOLENCE

The Board considers whether Malthael's actions can be justified as preventive measures.

Preventive intervention may be legitimate where credible evidence establishes a serious and foreseeable threat.

Institutions need not necessarily await catastrophe before acting to avert it.

However, preventive authority must remain connected to the nature of the danger.

It must also account for the harm caused by the intervention itself.

The Board therefore applies the following analytical standards.

Necessity

Was the intervention required to prevent an identifiable harm?

Suitability

Was the method capable of achieving a legitimate protective objective?

Discrimination

Did the method distinguish persons presenting a genuine threat from those who did not?

Proportionality

Were the anticipated protective benefits sufficient to justify the harm imposed?

Alternatives

Were less destructive means reasonably available?

Accountability

Could the decision be challenged, reviewed, or halted?

The respondent's plan fails the central requirements of this analysis.

The method deliberately destroyed persons who had committed no established wrongdoing.

It did not distinguish individual threats from ordinary members of humanity.

Its consequences were irreversible.

Its scale was catastrophic.

And its asserted benefit could not be enjoyed by the population destroyed to obtain it.

The Board therefore finds that the measure cannot be justified through ordinary principles of preventive protection.

The prevention of possible future violence does not establish a right to commit certain present violence against an entire population.

XIII. THE PROBLEM OF THE PERFECT SOLUTION

The Board identifies a particular logical difficulty in the respondent's reasoning.

The Eternal Conflict persisted because the great powers continued to struggle for dominance.

Humanity's mixed ancestry created the possibility that mortals could influence that struggle.

Malthael sought to remove the demonic component from existence.

The proposed solution promised finality.

But finality is not necessarily justice.

A conflict may cease because its participants reach an agreement.

It may cease because an underlying grievance is resolved.

It may cease because institutions establish durable restraints.

It may also cease because one participant destroys everyone capable of opposing it.

These outcomes are not morally equivalent.

The Board therefore distinguishes the termination of conflict from the establishment of peace.

Peace involves more than the absence of persons capable of fighting.

The destruction of a population may eliminate certain future disputes.

It simultaneously eliminates the persons who would otherwise experience the benefits of their resolution.

The respondent's method therefore presents a profound ethical contradiction.

It sought a future free from infernal danger by eliminating those whose future was endangered.

The Board does not recognize the absence of survivors as evidence that survivors have been successfully protected.

XIV. ON WISDOM AND THE LIMITS OF CERTAINTY

The Board now considers the respondent's former office.

Malthael was once the Archangel of Wisdom.

The Board acknowledges the extraordinary knowledge associated with that position.

Nevertheless, wisdom requires more than the capacity to reach conclusions.

It may also require recognition of uncertainty, competing interests, and the limitations of one's own authority.

The Board considers whether the respondent's pursuit of a final solution reflected a failure to distinguish certainty concerning danger from certainty concerning the appropriate remedy.

Humanity possessed demonic ancestry.

Infernal powers had repeatedly exploited mortals.

Future corruption remained possible.

These propositions did not establish that extermination was the only morally permissible response.

The Board therefore rejects any inference that the respondent's former association with Wisdom rendered his later conclusions self-validating.

A decision may be intellectually coherent within a particular set of assumptions while those assumptions themselves are ethically defective.

The respondent's plan appears to have treated humanity's ancestry as sufficient evidence of its danger.

It then treated danger as sufficient justification for extermination.

The Board finds both transitions unsupported.

The ability to construct a logical argument does not establish the truth of every premise upon which it rests.

Nor does the existence of a consistent conclusion establish that the conclusion is just.

XV. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MALTHAEL AND THE ANGIRIS COUNCIL

The Board considers whether the Angiris Council bore responsibility for the respondent's subsequent conduct.

Malthael formerly occupied a position of considerable authority.

His departure affected celestial governance.

His later activities demonstrated the danger associated with an extraordinary former officeholder possessing substantial independent power.

The Board recognizes that an institution does not automatically bear responsibility for every act subsequently committed by a former member.

Responsibility may depend upon knowledge, foreseeability, available means of intervention, and the institution's actual conduct.

The Board therefore declines to attribute Malthael's entire campaign to the Angiris Council solely because of his previous membership.

Nevertheless, the circumstances warrant examination.

The Council was aware of his disappearance.

His former followers were dispatched to locate him.

Those followers did not return to their original service.

The Board therefore requests evidence concerning whether the Council recognized the development of an independent armed faction.

It further requests clarification concerning what measures were taken to evaluate the danger.

Did the Council possess information concerning Malthael's activities?

Were warnings received?

Did any member advocate intervention?

What constraints limited the Council's ability to respond?

Did prior disagreements concerning humanity affect the institution's willingness to act?

The Board makes no final determination concerning institutional responsibility.

The prior possession of authority does not establish permanent institutional liability.

It does, however, make the circumstances under which extraordinary authority was retained, abandoned, or repurposed a legitimate subject of review.

XVI. THE EARLIER ABSTENTION

The Board returns to the historical vote examined in SERB-003.

Malthael abstained when the Angiris Council considered the fate of humanity.

The Board previously recognized that abstention may arise from uncertainty, principled restraint, or other considerations.

No definitive finding concerning his motives was entered.

The present record establishes that he later undertook unilateral action intended to eliminate humanity.

The Board recognizes the significance of this transformation.

However, it declines to infer that his earlier abstention constituted an endorsement of the later campaign.

The two decisions occurred under different circumstances.

The respondent's knowledge, status, and objectives changed.

Nevertheless, the contrast raises substantial questions.

During the earlier deliberation, Malthael declined to decide.

During the later campaign, he attempted to decide without deliberation by the Council or representation of humanity.

The Board therefore requests an account of the change.

What evidence altered his judgment?

What circumstances led him to conclude that extermination was necessary?

Did he consider returning to the Council?

Did he recognize any continuing obligation to consult the population affected?

What limits did he place upon his own authority?

The Board observes that the rejection of collective deliberation may be especially consequential where the individual acting possesses extraordinary power.

The Board recognizes that a person may revise an earlier position.

It does not recognize revision as authority to impose an irreversible judgment upon an entire civilization without adequate justification.

XVII. ON CELESTIAL NEUTRALITY

The Board considers whether the High Heavens' relationship to humanity affected its response to Malthael.

The historical record indicates that celestial attitudes toward humanity were not uniform.

Some members of the Angiris Council supported humanity's continued existence.

Others regarded humanity with suspicion.

The Board recognizes that an institution may contain legitimate disagreement concerning the appropriate response to a crisis.

However, disagreement concerning the value of a population does not necessarily justify indifference toward its deliberate extermination.

The Board therefore distinguishes between neutrality concerning a political dispute and neutrality concerning conduct directed at destroying persons who have committed no established wrongdoing.

The latter raises additional ethical obligations.

An institution may lack the means to intervene.

It may possess competing responsibilities.

It may reasonably fear that intervention will cause additional harm.

These circumstances matter.

Nevertheless, the absence of a willingness to govern humanity does not automatically eliminate the possibility of a responsibility to refrain from facilitating its destruction.

The Board therefore requests evidence concerning the positions of the surviving Council members.

It particularly seeks clarification concerning whether their responses were affected by existing beliefs about humanity's ancestry.

The Board does not require celestial authorities to regard humanity as superior to other populations.

It does require that deliberate extermination be evaluated as conduct rather than as an administrative consequence of disfavored ancestry.

XVIII. THE INTERVENTION OF THE NEPHALEM

The Board recognizes that Malthael's campaign was ultimately confronted by the Nephalem.

The intervention contributed to the defeat of the respondent and the termination of his immediate extermination effort.

The Board acknowledges the substantial protective significance of this outcome.

However, the defeat of the respondent does not eliminate the need to examine the underlying institutional failures.

A threat may be stopped without the conditions that permitted it being adequately understood.

The Board therefore distinguishes between emergency intervention and subsequent accountability.

The Nephalem acted to prevent further catastrophe.

The Board does not presume that ordinary procedural deliberation could have preceded every action taken during the confrontation.

Nevertheless, the resulting victory does not retroactively resolve questions concerning the custody of the Black Soulstone, the response of the Angiris Council, or the treatment of affected mortal populations.

The Board further recognizes that Malthael's final use of the Black Soulstone and the infernal essences it contained created additional consequences.

The destruction of the artifact and the release of extraordinary powers presented dangers extending beyond the respondent's defeat.

These consequences warrant separate examination.

The defeat of an individual responsible for catastrophic harm does not establish that every danger associated with that individual's methods has ceased to exist.

XIX. THE CONSEQUENCES FOR SURVIVORS

The Board considers the condition of Sanctuary following Malthael's campaign.

Entire communities were devastated.

Persons were killed or displaced.

Institutions responsible for ordinary social life were damaged.

Survivors confronted the loss of relatives, homes, livelihoods, and systems upon which they had depended.

The Board recognizes that the consequences of mass destruction extend beyond the immediate number of deaths.

A community may survive physically while losing institutions necessary for its continued functioning.

The destruction of agricultural systems may produce famine.

The death of caregivers may leave dependents without support.

The loss of records may complicate the restoration of property, identity, and legal relationships.

The destruction of religious and civic institutions may produce instability lasting generations.

The Board therefore rejects an assessment limited solely to the immediate physical operation of the Black Soulstone.

The broader campaign caused harm through military assault, soul extraction, transformation of the dead, destruction of infrastructure, and displacement.

These consequences require examination as distinct categories.

The Board further recognizes that subsequent suffering cannot automatically be attributed to a single cause.

Political decisions, environmental conditions, and later conflicts may have contributed to Sanctuary's difficulties.

Nevertheless, the scale of Malthael's campaign provides substantial grounds for treating its aftermath as an enduring institutional concern.

The conclusion of a campaign does not establish the conclusion of the harm it caused.

XX. THE QUESTION OF REMEDY

The Board acknowledges that the principal respondent was defeated.

Ordinary remedies involving further restraint, prosecution, or correction of his conduct may therefore be unavailable.

Nevertheless, the absence of a surviving respondent capable of compliance does not eliminate the relevance of institutional review.

The Board identifies several continuing purposes.

First, the preservation of the historical record.

Second, the identification of the methods through which the campaign operated.

Third, the examination of institutional decisions that permitted the acquisition or misuse of extraordinary power.

Fourth, the recognition of persons harmed.

Fifth, the development of principles capable of informing future responses to comparable threats.

The Board recognizes that no retrospective finding can restore every life lost.

Nor can institutional judgment necessarily provide complete compensation for injuries of catastrophic scale.

Nevertheless, the inability to undo harm does not render the distinction between justified and unjustified conduct meaningless.

The Board therefore considers recognition, historical preservation, and the prevention of recurrence appropriate subjects of continued inquiry.

The Board does not presume that every injury can be repaired.

It does not follow that the injury should be left without examination.

XXI. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Following review of the available historical record, the Sanctuary Ethics Review Board enters the following findings.

Finding 1 — Legitimate Concern Concerning Infernal Corruption

The Burning Hells presented genuine dangers to Sanctuary.

The respondent's concern regarding continued infernal influence possessed a substantial factual basis.

Finding 2 — Absence of General Authority Over Humanity

The respondent's former celestial office and subsequent powers did not independently establish authority to determine the continued existence of humanity.

Finding 3 — Unjustified Reliance Upon Ancestry

Humanity's inherited demonic characteristics did not establish collective culpability.

Finding 4 — Population-Wide Destructive Intent

The respondent pursued an intervention foreseeably resulting in the destruction of humanity.

Finding 5 — Failure of Individualized Distinction

The proposed intervention did not adequately distinguish persons presenting an actual threat from those who had committed no established wrongdoing.

Finding 6 — Disproportionate Means

The destruction of an entire population cannot be justified solely by the assertion that the population might otherwise experience or contribute to future conflict.

Finding 7 — Misuse of the Black Soulstone

The respondent employed an extraordinary containment artifact toward a purpose involving population-wide destruction.

Finding 8 — Direct Responsibility for Westmarch

The respondent's forces conducted destructive operations against the inhabitants of Westmarch.

The evidence supports a finding of deliberate mass violence.

Finding 9 — Weaponization of the Dead

The transformation of slain persons into instruments of further violence raises substantial ethical concerns concerning bodily and postmortem autonomy.

Finding 10 — Responsibility of Subordinate Commanders

The conduct of Urzael and other commanders requires independent examination according to knowledge, authority, and participation.

Finding 11 — Failure of Protective Logic

A measure that destroys the persons it purports to protect cannot be justified merely by demonstrating that the source of danger would also be removed.

Finding 12 — Distinction Between Peace and Extermination

The termination of conflict through destruction of an affected population does not establish a legitimate peace.

Finding 13 — Unresolved Institutional Responsibility

The relationship between Malthael's departure and the Angiris Council's subsequent response warrants additional investigation.

Finding 14 — Limits of Abstention

The respondent's earlier abstention did not establish authority for his later unilateral campaign.

Finding 15 — Significance of the Nephalem's Intervention

The respondent's defeat prevented the completion of his intended destruction.

It did not eliminate all consequences of the campaign.

Finding 16 — Continuing Harm

The destruction of mortal communities created injuries extending beyond immediate casualties.

Finding 17 — Necessity of Historical Accountability

The respondent's defeat does not remove the value of investigating the circumstances that permitted the campaign.

Finding 18 — Ethical Insufficiency of Extermination

The Board finds no adequate ethical justification for the deliberate destruction of humanity on the basis of inherited demonic essence.

XXII. QUESTIONS DIRECTED TO MALTHAEL

The Board hereby enters the following questions into the historical record.

Question One:
What specific conduct by humanity justified its classification as an appropriate target for extermination?

Question Two:
Did the respondent distinguish between inherited demonic essence and demonstrated infernal allegiance?

Question Three:
What evidence established that every human posed a threat to the High Heavens?

Question Four:
Did the respondent consider that humanity also possessed celestial ancestry?

Question Five:
What principle authorized the destruction of persons who had committed no established wrongdoing?

Question Six:
Was the extraction of demonic essence expected to preserve the lives of those affected?

Question Seven:
If not, in what sense was the operation intended to protect those persons?

Question Eight:
Were alternatives to population-wide extraction considered?

Question Nine:
What authority permitted the seizure and alteration of the Black Soulstone?

Question Ten:
What risks associated with the concentration of infernal essences were evaluated?

Question Eleven:
Were the anticipated consequences for civilian populations documented?

Question Twelve:
What instructions were issued concerning the killing and transformation of Westmarch's inhabitants?

Question Thirteen:
Did the respondent recognize any limitation upon the use of mortal souls?

Question Fourteen:
What authority governed the recruitment of former celestial servants into the Reaper Host?

Question Fifteen:
Did subordinate personnel possess meaningful freedom to refuse participation?

Question Sixteen:
What communication, if any, occurred with the Angiris Council before the campaign?

Question Seventeen:
Why did the respondent consider unilateral action preferable to collective deliberation?

Question Eighteen:
What evidence established that the Eternal Conflict could not be reduced through means that preserved humanity?

Question Nineteen:
Did the respondent distinguish the elimination of demonic influence from the elimination of those affected by it?

Question Twenty:
What interest of humanity would remain protected following humanity's destruction?

The Board considers the final question dispositive of a substantial portion of the respondent's asserted justification.

XXIII. INSTITUTIONAL DETERMINATION

The Sanctuary Ethics Review Board finds that Malthael undertook a deliberate campaign of population-wide destruction.

The respondent's actions were directed toward the elimination of demonic essence.

Because humanity possessed inherited demonic characteristics, the method threatened the continued existence of the human population.

The Board recognizes that infernal corruption presented genuine dangers.

It further recognizes that the respondent sought to end an ancient and destructive conflict.

Neither circumstance established authority to exterminate humanity.

The Board therefore determines that the asserted protective objective was insufficient to justify the means selected.

The respondent's campaign did not constitute a legitimate exercise of preventive protection.

It constituted an attempt to eliminate a population based upon a characteristic of its inherited nature.

The resulting attacks upon civilian communities and the deliberate weaponization of mortal souls present additional grounds for grave ethical condemnation.

The Board makes no finding that every subordinate possessed identical responsibility.

It reserves individual assessments according to the evidence.

Nevertheless, the respondent's direction of the campaign establishes substantial personal responsibility for its objectives and implementation.

The Board finds that Malthael's proposed elimination of humanity was ethically impermissible.

The Board further finds that the stated intention to end the Eternal Conflict did not provide a sufficient justification for that destruction.

The conclusion does not depend upon the respondent's title, nature, or former institutional status.

It rests upon the conduct and its consequences.

The Board therefore enters a finding of grave institutional and individual misconduct.

The question of responsibility among other celestial authorities remains open.

XXIV. CONCLUDING OBSERVATION

There is a particular danger in the pursuit of a world without suffering.

It begins with an entirely understandable desire.

That pain should cease.

That violence should end.

That those who have endured the consequences of endless conflict should finally be permitted to live without fear of its return.

Such aspirations need not be dismissed.

Indeed, they may represent some of the most compelling reasons for the creation of institutions.

But the desire to eliminate suffering can become dangerous when it ceases to distinguish between suffering and the persons who experience it.

A population may be vulnerable to corruption.

It may be vulnerable to violence.

It may be capable of wrongdoing.

It may possess characteristics that powerful institutions regard as dangerous.

These conditions do not establish that the population should cease to exist.

Nor does the possibility of future catastrophe render every present life expendable.

Malthael once embodied Wisdom.

He occupied a position among the highest authorities of the High Heavens.

He witnessed the Eternal Conflict.

He knew the destruction that followed the struggles of Heaven and Hell.

He knew that humanity possessed extraordinary potential.

He also knew that humanity's nature could not be reduced entirely to either celestial or infernal ancestry.

Yet the respondent eventually treated the demonic component of humanity as sufficient grounds for its destruction.

The Board finds this transition ethically significant.

It reflects the conversion of a characteristic into a verdict.

Humanity possessed demonic essence.

Demonic essence could be associated with corruption.

Corruption could produce danger.

Therefore, humanity was to be eliminated.

The apparent simplicity of the reasoning concealed its central defect.

The persons targeted were not merely examples of a dangerous substance.

They were persons.

They possessed lives, relationships, histories, judgments, and interests of their own.

They had not collectively chosen the circumstances of their creation.

They had not initiated the Eternal Conflict.

Their ancestors' nature was not an act for which they could be held responsible.

And their future conduct could not be established solely through their origins.

The Board therefore rejects the reduction of humanity to a metaphysical ingredient.

A person is not merely the sum of characteristics that another institution considers dangerous.

A civilization is not merely a potential military resource.

And a population does not become available for destruction because an extraordinary authority believes its existence complicates the future.

The respondent's plan also presents a profound contradiction concerning protection.

Malthael sought to end the danger of demonic corruption.

He pursued a method that would destroy the persons who might otherwise suffer from that corruption.

The Board recognizes that the elimination of a person also eliminates certain risks affecting that person.

But this does not establish that the person's interests have been protected.

The destruction of a life is not the successful preservation of that life.

The elimination of every possible victim is not the prevention of victimization.

And the absence of future suffering cannot automatically be counted as a benefit to persons who have been deliberately deprived of every possible future experience.

The distinction is fundamental.

An institution exists to serve interests that remain meaningful independently of the institution's success.

Where the preservation of the institution's preferred order requires the destruction of those interests, the institution must examine whether it has ceased to serve the purpose it claims.

Malthael's campaign sought to resolve the Eternal Conflict.

Yet the Eternal Conflict was not created by the mortals he sought to destroy.

It preceded them.

It shaped the circumstances into which their ancestors were born.

It provided the conditions from which Sanctuary's founders originally sought refuge.

And it continued because the great powers remained unable or unwilling to establish a durable peace.

The Board therefore questions the ethical basis for imposing the costs of resolving that conflict upon humanity.

A population that did not initiate a war does not become responsible for ending it through its own destruction.

Nor does the inability of powerful institutions to resolve their disagreement establish that a third party must cease to exist.

The Board recognizes the difficulty of securing peace between Heaven and Hell.

It recognizes that the conflict involved extraordinary powers whose objectives may have been fundamentally incompatible.

It recognizes that the possibility of renewed violence was substantial.

Nevertheless, the impossibility of obtaining perfect safety does not establish that the pursuit of safety may disregard every competing interest.

Peace is not merely the absence of conflict.

It concerns the conditions under which persons may continue to live.

A system in which no one remains capable of disagreement may be stable.

It is not therefore just.

A realm from which every vulnerable person has been eliminated may contain fewer identifiable victims.

It is not therefore safe.

And a civilization destroyed in the name of its protection has not been preserved.

The Board therefore distinguishes the termination of danger from the preservation of those endangered.

Both may be legitimate objectives.

They are not necessarily accomplished by the same means.

This distinction becomes especially important where the power to act is extraordinary.

Malthael possessed capabilities unavailable to ordinary mortals.

He could command forces, manipulate souls, and employ artifacts capable of altering the conditions of existence across Sanctuary.

Yet extraordinary capability increased the consequences of his decisions.

It did not diminish the need for judgment.

The power to act without opposition does not establish that opposition would have been unjustified.

The power to impose a solution does not establish that the solution was necessary.

And the power to destroy an entire population does not create an ethical entitlement to determine whether that population deserves continued existence.

The Board therefore returns to the respondent's original title.

Wisdom.

The word suggests more than knowledge.

It suggests discernment.

The ability to recognize that facts may support more than one conclusion.

The willingness to distinguish what can be done from what should be done.

The recognition that a solution may be technically effective while ethically indefensible.

And the understanding that certainty concerning a danger does not establish certainty concerning every possible remedy.

The Board does not suggest that Wisdom requires permanent indecision.

Difficult circumstances may demand action.

A danger may be so immediate that delay becomes irresponsible.

But the necessity of action does not automatically justify the elimination of every limit upon action.

The respondent's former position should have made him especially familiar with the difficulty of governing extraordinary power.

Yet he eventually employed his knowledge to devise a plan in which humanity's destruction became a necessary component of the desired outcome.

The Board finds that this conclusion reflects a failure to preserve the distinction between persons and the dangers associated with them.

It further reflects a failure to recognize the limits of preventive authority.

There is also an institutional question.

Malthael once sat among five archangels.

The Council considered the destruction of humanity.

Malthael abstained.

Years later, he acted alone.

The Board does not infer that his earlier abstention was necessarily dishonest.

Nor does it conclude that the later campaign was predetermined.

But the sequence illustrates the danger of extraordinary authority detached from meaningful review.

A question once placed before a governing institution became the subject of one individual's irreversible decision.

The lives of humanity were treated as an object of cosmic administration.

The affected population was not consulted.

Its members were not individually evaluated.

Their future was not considered independently of the respondent's objectives.

Instead, their existence became a condition to be eliminated.

The Board recognizes that Malthael did not invent the underlying conflict.

He inherited it.

He sought to end it.

But inheritance of a problem does not establish unlimited authority concerning its solution.

The burden of an ancient conflict cannot be discharged by imposing annihilation upon those who had no role in creating it.

And the exhaustion of patience with a problem does not transform atrocity into necessity.

The Board therefore rejects the respondent's proposed resolution.

It rejects the classification of humanity as expendable because of its ancestry.

It rejects the use of involuntary soul extraction as a means of achieving collective security.

It rejects the destruction of civilians in pursuit of a future they would not survive to experience.

And it rejects the proposition that the successful elimination of a risk necessarily establishes the legitimacy of eliminating everyone exposed to it.

The Board recognizes the value of ending the Eternal Conflict.

But the end of that conflict cannot be evaluated without regard to the persons who would bear the costs.

For a peace obtained through extermination does not become just merely because no one remains to contest it.

A future without humanity is not automatically a better future for humanity.

And an institution cannot establish that it has fulfilled its protective mission by demonstrating that the persons it was supposed to protect no longer exist.

The Board therefore enters its concluding observations.

Wisdom is not the possession of an answer.

It is also the capacity to question whether the answer is worthy of the problem.

Protection is not the elimination of those who require protection.

Peace is not the destruction of those who might disturb it.

And the prevention of suffering does not justify the deliberate destruction of every life capable of suffering.

The Eternal Conflict may endure.

The danger of infernal corruption may endure.

Humanity's capacity for both extraordinary good and extraordinary harm may endure.

These conditions present difficult questions.

Their difficulty does not establish that humanity must be eliminated.

The Board recognizes that Malthael sought an end to the Eternal Conflict.

It does not recognize the end of humanity as an acceptable substitute.

The inquiry remains open.

XXV. DISPOSITION

SERB-009 concludes its preliminary merits determination concerning the respondent's attempted extermination of humanity.

The Board finds that the campaign was directed toward population-wide destruction and lacked adequate ethical justification.

The Board further finds substantial grounds for examining the individual responsibilities of subordinate commanders and the institutional response of the Angiris Council.

The present proceeding remains open for historical evidence concerning:

- The command structure of the Reaper Host.
- The treatment and transformation of mortal souls.
- The destruction of Westmarch and other affected communities.
- The acquisition and modification of the Black Soulstone.
- The circumstances preceding Malthael's departure from the High Heavens.
- The response of the Angiris Council.
- The consequences of the respondent's final use of the Black Soulstone.

The Board recognizes that the principal respondent has been defeated.

No directive requiring his physical appearance is entered.

The absence of a surviving respondent does not preclude examination of the historical record.

No determination of collective responsibility shall arise solely from celestial ancestry or prior association with the respondent.

So entered.

Sanctuary Ethics Review Board
Office of Population Protection and Extraordinary Weapons Review
Division of Mass Atrocity and Preventive Authority

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM A

Regarding the Respondent's Former Title

The Office of Records has reviewed the respondent's historical designation as Archangel of Wisdom.

The designation is acknowledged.

The Office further recognizes that the respondent possessed extraordinary knowledge concerning the Eternal Conflict.

However, the institutional title does not establish that every subsequent conclusion reached by the respondent was correct.

Nor does it establish that the respondent's actions were ethically justified.

The Office therefore requests that arguments concerning the necessity of extermination address the evidence supporting that necessity.

A statement that the respondent was formerly Wisdom is not sufficient.

The Board recognizes the title.

It does not recognize the title as a substitute for the reasoning required to justify an irreversible decision.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM B

Regarding Demonic Ancestry

The Office of Population Classification has received a preliminary argument that humanity's demonic ancestry rendered its members legitimate targets.

The Office acknowledges that humanity descended from both angelic and demonic progenitors.

This fact is entered into the record.

However, the possession of inherited characteristics does not independently establish wrongdoing.

The Office therefore requests evidence concerning the individual conduct of persons targeted.

The respondent's classification appears to have operated without such distinction.

The Board consequently finds the proposed classification insufficient to establish legitimate grounds for destruction.

The Office respectfully notes that ancestry is not an offense.

The objection is not sustained.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM C

Regarding the Claimed Elimination of Corruption

The Office of Extraordinary Medical and Metaphysical Intervention has reviewed the proposed extraction of demonic essence.

The Office acknowledges that demonic corruption may cause serious harm.

It further recognizes that eliminating a harmful influence may constitute a legitimate protective objective.

However, the contemplated procedure would destroy human beings possessing the targeted essence.

The Office therefore requests clarification concerning whether any means existed to preserve the persons affected.

If no such means existed, the intervention cannot be characterized as an ordinary protective treatment.

The absence of a safe alternative does not independently justify a fatal procedure imposed upon an entire population.

The Board respectfully observes that a successful extraction resulting in the death of the subject does not establish that the subject was successfully protected.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM D

Regarding the Meaning of Peace

The Office of Institutional Ethics has received an argument asserting that the respondent's campaign would have ended the Eternal Conflict.

The Office acknowledges that the elimination of all beings capable of sustaining a particular conflict might prevent certain future hostilities.

Nevertheless, the ethical value of peace cannot be evaluated solely according to the absence of combat.

The interests of the affected population remain relevant.

The deliberate destruction of that population constitutes an injury independent of any reduction in subsequent conflict.

The Office therefore requests that the respondent's proposed outcome be evaluated according to the persons who would survive to experience it.

The Board recognizes that a world without humanity may contain fewer human conflicts.

It does not recognize that result as a demonstrated benefit to humanity.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM E

Regarding the Reaper Host

The Office of Military and Postmortem Ethics has reviewed the use of deceased persons as instruments of the respondent's campaign.

The Office recognizes that the precise degree of independent consciousness retained by transformed persons remains uncertain.

Nevertheless, the conversion of slain civilians and defenders into combatants raises substantial questions concerning consent and postmortem autonomy.

The Office therefore requests evidence concerning the method of transformation and the capacity of affected persons to refuse.

A statement that the deceased no longer possessed ordinary bodily autonomy does not establish that the respondent acquired legitimate control over their remains or souls.

The Office respectfully advises that death does not automatically constitute enlistment.

The matter is referred for further review.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM F

Regarding the Angiris Council

The Office of Celestial Accountability has reviewed the respondent's former membership in the Angiris Council.

The Office acknowledges that Malthael departed before the campaign under investigation.

It further acknowledges that the Council may not have controlled his subsequent actions.

Nevertheless, the Office requests information concerning institutional knowledge of his activities.

In particular, it seeks evidence of any warnings, attempted interventions, or assessments of risk.

No presumption of collective culpability is entered.

The Board respectfully observes that the departure of an archangel from office does not necessarily eliminate every concern associated with the extraordinary powers retained by that archangel.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM G

Regarding the Historical Abstention

The Office of Records has reviewed Malthael's abstention during the original Angiris Council vote concerning humanity.

The abstention is acknowledged.

The Office does not infer that the respondent had already formed the intentions associated with his later campaign.

However, the respondent's subsequent unilateral action raises questions concerning his revised assessment.

The Board therefore requests evidence identifying the basis upon which he considered extermination necessary.

The earlier abstention does not establish authority for the later decision.

The Office respectfully observes that declining to participate in a vote does not reserve to the abstaining member an unlimited right to decide the question independently at a later date.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM H

Regarding the Respondent's Defeat

The Office of Institutional Continuity has received confirmation of the respondent's defeat.

The Board recognizes that the principal threat associated with his immediate campaign was terminated.

Nevertheless, the consequences of his actions remain relevant.

The Board further recognizes that institutional and historical inquiries may proceed after the death or destruction of a principal actor.

Such proceedings require appropriate consideration of evidentiary limitations.

No inference of additional wrongdoing shall arise solely from the respondent's inability to participate.

However, the absence of testimony does not establish that documented conduct cannot be evaluated.

The Office respectfully notes that the respondent's death concludes his capacity for ordinary compliance.

It does not establish that the historical record has ceased to exist.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADDENDUM I

Regarding the Classification of Humanity as a Hazard

The Office of Population Protection has reviewed the proposed treatment of humanity as a source of demonic corruption.

The Office acknowledges that the inherited capacities of humanity may create substantial risks under particular circumstances.

However, classification of an entire population as a hazard requires examination of the consequences of the classification itself.

The Board does not recognize that persons become objects merely because their characteristics may be dangerous.

Nor does it recognize that an institution may eliminate all persons possessing a particular capacity solely to prevent its possible misuse.

The Office respectfully requests that future hazard assessments distinguish between a dangerous condition and the persons who may experience, possess, or be affected by that condition.

Humanity shall remain classified as a population of persons.

The proposed reclassification is denied.

FINAL ADMINISTRATIVE NOTICE

SERB-009 — REGARDING THE ASSERTED NECESSITY OF HUMAN EXTINCTION

The Sanctuary Ethics Review Board has completed its preliminary examination of the proposition that the deliberate elimination of humanity was necessary to end the Eternal Conflict.

The proposition is not sustained.

The Board recognizes the dangers associated with the Burning Hells.

It further recognizes the historical difficulty of preventing infernal corruption.

Nevertheless, these circumstances do not establish that humanity's destruction was ethically permissible.

The respondent's plan would have eliminated persons who had committed no established wrongdoing.

It would have deprived the affected population of its continued existence.

And it would have pursued the termination of conflict through the destruction of persons who had not chosen to participate in that conflict.

The Board therefore determines that the proposed measure cannot be justified as ordinary preventive protection.

The respondent's former celestial office is acknowledged.

His extraordinary powers are acknowledged.

His stated objective is acknowledged.

The Board requests no further demonstration of his capacity to administer death.

That capacity is already in evidence.

The question concerns whether the persons targeted were entitled to remain alive.

The Board finds that they were.

The Board recognizes the respondent's desire to eliminate danger.

It does not recognize the elimination of everyone endangered as an acceptable method.

The determination is entered.

END OF SERB-009

NEXT PROPOSED INQUIRY

SERB-010 — NECROMANTIC PRACTICE

On Postmortem Autonomy, the Use of Mortal Remains, and the Presumption That Death Terminates Consent

Principal Institutional Subjects:

- The Priests of Rathma
- The Necromantic Orders of Sanctuary
- Practitioners of Soul Manipulation and Corporeal Reanimation

Interested Parties:

- Rathma, Firstborn Nephalem
- Surviving Necromantic Authorities
- Persons Whose Remains or Souls Have Been Subjected to Magical Intervention
- The Families and Communities of the Deceased

Preliminary Questions:

Whether death terminates every interest a person may possess concerning their remains.

Whether a necromancer's ability to animate a corpse establishes authority to do so.

Whether a deceased person may meaningfully consent in advance to postmortem service.

Whether circumstances of extraordinary danger justify the temporary use of remains without prior authorization.

Whether the extraction, confinement, or redirection of souls constitutes a distinct category of intervention requiring additional safeguards.

Whether the Priests of Rathma possess adequate institutional procedures for distinguishing the maintenance of cosmic balance from the involuntary use of individual persons.

PRELIMINARY ADMINISTRATIVE OBSERVATION:

The Board recognizes that necromancy occupies a complex position within Sanctuary.

Certain practitioners employ their abilities in pursuit of balance and the protection of mortal populations.

Others may employ similar powers for purposes involving domination, exploitation, or destruction.

The Board therefore declines to presume that every act of necromancy is inherently unethical.

Nevertheless, the capacity to manipulate a person's remains or soul does not automatically establish the legitimacy of that manipulation.

The Office respectfully observes that the deceased may no longer be capable of registering an objection through ordinary means.

The absence of an objection is not necessarily evidence of consent.

The inquiry is reserved.

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