

God's Vision: The Will of God in his Creation and in Eternity
The Purpose & Reason for the Existence of Evil in Creation

Recap:

We looked at the creation narrative last week to lay the foundation for what the will of God is in creation and eternity.

We learned several things about God, such as:

- God is separate from creation.
- Creation had a beginning
- Time had a beginning, since time is discerned by the created order (sun, moon, stars)
- Creation is not God
- Creation is subject to God, God is not subject to creation
- It shows that God likes to make things and this brings him pleasure.
- He desires to see things reproduce and multiply (all creatures, vegetation have seed within themselves to multiply and reproduce)
- He desires to see things bear fruit (vegetation, creatures)
- Certain aspects of creation are to guide man in his understanding (Sun, moon, and stars are for signs, seasons, days, and years)
 - The ability for us to tell time was important to God apparently.
- God works, and ceases from working: we to work and cease from working
- He gives commands and expects obedience
- He gives dominion over the earth to man, just as he has dominion over all creation

We saw that God said everything was “very good”, yet in Genesis 3, paradise was lost and evil like a cancer spread throughout the earth.

The Omniscience of God

Isaiah 46:9-10

Psalm 139:1-4

Psalm 147:5

Job 37:15-16

1 John 3:20

Scripture is crystal clear that God has all knowledge and knows the end from the beginning. If that is true, what does that mean when we look at the creation that was “very good”, then the fall of man occurs in the very garden God planted(!) that resulted in and results in so much death, sorrow, and destruction?

I think it is plainly obvious, that God knew exactly what would happen, and that he *purposefully* chose not to intervene. And it wasn't because it was the potential byproduct of free will – no, its much more than that. God knowing all things, knowing man would sin in the garden, allowed

it to happen, along with the consequences thereof, because it would be part of the bigger picture and the overall purpose in God creating in the first place.

So we must ask ourselves, why? What purpose does evil serve in God's will in creation and eternity?

The scripture tells us why evil exists. It also tells us there is no such thing as "the problem of evil", since it has never been, is not now, and never will be a problem with God!

The answer is found in the middle of **Romans 9**, but we must start from the beginning to get the broader context in which the answer is given.

Summary of Romans 9-11

The question Paul answers in **9-11** is this: If Jesus is the Messiah, how come a majority of the Jews reject Jesus as Messiah?

It was God's will for Israel to go into apostasy! (**Romans 11:11-15, 25-27**). Their rejecting Christ was part of God's will! The word of God has not failed (**Isaiah 55:10-11**), it actually accomplished what God desired, and his desire for now was to blind Israel in part and let them go into apostasy while stretching out his arms to the Gentiles calling out of them a people for his name, thus concluding all in unbelief and able to have mercy upon all through Christ!

Romans 9:1-5

- Paul addresses the physical people of Israel, to whom belong all the promises of the scriptures.

Romans 9:6-8

- Not every physical member of Israel is account of the spiritual Israel (**Romans 2:17-29**)
 - "...For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."
 - V7 – Being of Abraham's physical seed does not make you a child of God
 - The children of the promise are counted for the seed (ie. Children of God)
 - A child of God has experienced the new birth (circumcision of the heart, in the spirit)

Romans 9:9-13

- God chose Isaac instead of Ismael
- God chose Jacob instead of Esau, saying Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated
 - This was done before they were even born, before they did good or evil!
- He chose the younger in these two instance simply because that is what he chose to do. Nothing to talk about. It had nothing to do with works – it all had to do with God choosing who he wanted to chose.

Romans 9:14-16

- Is God unrighteous for doing this? NOT AT ALL!
- V15 – God has mercy on whom he wills and compassion on whom he wills
- V16 – “So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.”
 - Think about that. You can cry out to God all day and night for mercy, but the Holy Spirit tells us, God does not **have** to have mercy upon you at all. It’s up to him. Man is **not** in control of his own destiny, its all in God’s hands.
 - The notion of its up to God or not is consistent throughout all of scripture and should come as no surprise here
 - Now it just so happens, that the great God offers mercy and forgiveness to all those that repent and trust Christ! (Psalm 130:-3-4, Acts 2:38-39, 3:25-26, 15:14-18).

Romans 9:17-18

- Pharaoh was raised up for the sole purpose of God manifesting his own power (not in a good way towards him or Egypt) and getting to him a great name in all the earth: for the whole earth knows what God did to Pharaoh and Egypt!
- He has mercy on whom he wills, and harden whom he wills (referring to Pharaoh in Egypt)
 - The whole story of Exodus shows us the truth of God hardening whomsoever he wills for God’s own purpose (Exodus 7:13-14, Exodus 9:12, 10:1, 11:10, Proverbs 21:1)
 - It also says that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Exodus 8:15, 8:32)
 - True statement - [In Judaism its not one or the other, its both and]

Romans 9:19

- The proud creature might say (trying to find an alibi for his sin): “Why does God find fault, I mean, who has resisted his will? After all, he can turn the kings heart, harden a kings heart, etc.?”
 - This can be interpreted a few ways
 - God is in 100% control, we are all robots, and just acting out or preprogrammed instructions
 - God is not in 100% over man, we have a free will.
 - God is in 100% control, man is accountable for his thoughts and actions (most balanced scripturally consistent answer)
 - It is clear God is in 100% control of his creation
 - It is clear he gives man the ability to chose (Joshua 24:15, and so much more), YET if God wants to accomplish something, he can do so through us
 - God can influence man’s decisions as we saw with Pharaoh and Proverbs 21:1
 - He gives us a new heart when we are saved
 - He gives us new desires and the ability to perform those desires! (Philippians 2:12-13)

- The point is, there is a depth to this issue that God fully understands. God is Sovereign and in control, man is accountable for his thoughts and ways, and lets move on and no longer ponder things that are too wonderful for us, shall we?

Romans 9:20 (Isaiah 29:16)

- Who are you! O Man! (Book of Job)
 - Who are we really? We are just creatures. Who are we to respond to God? He is not our equal, he is our Maker. The audacity of man to think God is doing something wrong, or unrighteous, or unjust! As if man was the measure of all things! O on the contrary, Who are you O Man!
 - We know that God is true and in him is no lie, and that he is holy and righteous

Romans 9:21 (Isaiah 64:8)

- Jeremiah 18:1-12
 - Maybe if we see God as potter and ourselves as clay, the work of his hands, in which he has full right and authority over our lives, he might announce his words to us as he did to Jeremiah
- God has the right (back to last week's study, he is the Creator, we are the creation) to do what he wants with what he creates
- He makes of the same lump some to honor and some to dishonor.

Romans 9:22-24: The answer to the existence of evil and God's purpose in allowing evil in his creation

- **God was willing to**
 - To make his wrath known (through vessels of wrath, lump made unto dishonor)
 - To make his power (authority and right) known
 - To make the riches of his glory known on the vessels of mercy (lump made unto honor)

To make his wrath known

The Scriptures state that God was willing to make his wrath known. In other words, God wanted and desired to make his wrath known. What does that tell you about God?

To make his power/authority known

Who is in control of this world? Who is the supreme being? The LORD of hosts: he is the God of gods, Lord of Lords, and King of Kings: and him allowing evil and enduring with much longsuffering the vessels of evil, he is able to make his authority known to his creation.

Satan was the first to question God's authority, and Satan thought he could mess up God's works. As it turns out, the Devil was wrong and in fact, this was all part of God's plan to begin with. And he has been the instrument God has used to make his authority known as the supreme authority to all of his creation.

To make the riches of his glory known

The objects of his glory are upon his vessels of mercy, those he has called of Jews and Gentiles (**Romans 9:24**). See **Ephesians 1**: our spiritual blessings, and all that he is doing with us, saving dirty sinners and ultimately making them like Christ in the end, does not glorify us it glorifies God. He does this to the end that he might be praised. What God is doing with the church is teaching God's wisdom (his power and authority known) to the angels (**Ephesians 3:10-11**).

What is the common thread of **Romans 9:22-24**, and what is common in the answer to the existence and purpose of evil according to God?

The whole purpose is to manifest attributes of himself to his creation that his creation would have never known otherwise. Think about it...

Adam and Eve had a choice to serve the LORD or to disobey him and die. God Almighty gave them the ability to choose. Sadly, they chose to sin and disobey the LORD.

God had a choice to make:

Should the LORD immediately deal with sin and destroy his creation at once and start anew?

OR

Should the LORD endure with much longsuffering the wicked and those that delight in evil and sin in order to make certain attributes about him known that could not be known any other way?

The LORD chose the latter.

What does this tell you about God, if he was willing to long suffer and hide himself, standing by while murder, rape, drunkenness, fornication, idolatry, and violence filled the earth. He must have a greater purpose, and that greater purpose is this: God was willing to manifest attributes of himself that without long suffering with the evil, could not have been known any other way. That was more important to God.

Is not that consistent with the whole of scripture? God wants to be known. God wants to be reconciled to man and restore fellowship. He also wants man and the rest of creation to know all that they can about him. And without allowing evil, how could his creatures meaningfully know his wrath, power, and authority and also his mercy, love, and grace?

There is no such thing as "the problem of evil". It has never been a problem for God. It was all part of his plan before the foundation of the world: to suffer long the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction and making known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy – to the end that God might be made known more fully, and his creatures honor, praise, adore and worship him in more fullness of truth.

John 4:23-24

“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

Now we can answer the question of the skeptic, or the ignorant believer, Why if there is a good and all loving God, why would he allow evil? Couldn't he stop the fall of man?

Yes, he could have, and God has promised there will be an end to evil one day, but until then evil is serving a greater purpose, in that it reveals God to us more fully and ultimately glorifies him when he judges and punishes evil. All this resounds to the glory of God! We just happen to benefit from God glorifying himself. As Jesus said in the gospel of John, Father, glorify thy name! And the Father spoke from heaven saying, “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again!”

May we as his blood bought children, join in with our Lord and Saviour, even in the midst of our suffering, in the midst of our sorrows and heartaches, say with full assurance and love, Father, Glorify thy Name!

Whether I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, whether I am experiencing the fullness of joy in his presence, in life or in death, Father, glorify thy name! And may you be pleased with the works of thy hands, as we most assuredly are pleased with you!

The thing is, evil has served God's larger plan in the first place. And God is not unrighteous in doing so. He has suffered long, he has had to hid himself from all this filth and sin, but he chose to enter into his creation in Christ Jesus, the God-man, and took upon him all the sorrow, suffering, sickness, and thank God, all our sins upon himself, and paid it all!

We look at the cross, and see the gravity of our sin, and how low man had become, that it required this kind of payment, the death of God's Son. He died beaten and bruised, naked and crucified – yet while dying for us he cried, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!

And we look in the cross and know beyond a shadow of doubt, that God loves us! How much does he loves us? The father's love for us is equal to the Father's love for his Son.

John 17:23

Look what he accomplished by allowing evil! There is a purpose for evil and it serves God's will in revealing himself more fully to his creation. And in that light, we as creatures of his, can rest with full assurance, that as the scripture says,

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” – Romans 8:28

There is a greater purpose and it all revolves around the person of Jesus Christ.

And this gives us a perfect segway into next week's lesson on Christocentricity: The eternal purpose of God in Christ Jesus.