

Doctrines of Grace

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- Creation
 - The Fall of Man
 - The State of Man

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Creation

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- “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” – Genesis 1:1
 - We believe that God created everything *ex nihilo* (out of nothing)
 - How did God create everything?
 - See Genesis 1; Psalm 19
 - He Created through His Word

2

Creation Points to Christ

- How does God reveal Himself to man?
 - He speaks to us through His Word
 - He speaks through His angels and His prophets
- So we see that God creates through His Word and that He reveals Himself through His Word

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John 1:1–5 (ESV)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

”

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Hebrews 1:1–4 (ESV)

1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

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Creation Points to Christ

- Jesus is the Word of God incarnate
- God has stood before men and spoken to men as a man
- The Creation story points to Jesus because it is through Jesus that the Creation was made and then Jesus would enter into that Creation to save that Creation from its own sin

6

God's Purpose in Creating

- Why did God Create?

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Isaiah 43:6–7 (ESV)

*“I will say to the north, Give up,
and to the south, Do not withhold;
bring my sons from afar
and my daughters from the end of the earth,
everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made.”*

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Revelation 4:11 (ESV)

*11 “Worthy are you, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they existed and were created.”*

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Psalm 19:1 (ESV)

*1 The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*

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Romans 11:36 (ESV)

36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

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11

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Q. 1. Who is the first and best of beings?

A. God is the first and best of beings.

Q. 2. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

”

Baptist Catechism of 1677

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God's Purpose in Creating

- Why did God Create?
 - God created for His own glory
 - Everything that exists is to bring Him glory
- If everything is created for Him, does He have the right to do whatever He pleases with what is His?
 - Yes
 - God is not a tyrannical being, but He works from His own character

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God's Freedom in Creating

- How free is God to create?
- Does the way Creation plays out happen because:
 - A) God has designed the world to come to that conclusion
 - B) God's end is in response to man's free response
 - C) Both
 - D) Neither
- Does the future happen the way it does because it is God's plan or because man has went against God's plan?
- Does everything happen for a reason?
- How you answer this question determines a lot about how you will understand the rest of our soteriological study

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If everything happens for a reason then why was the death of millions of Jews during the Holocaust part of God's plan? If everything happens for a reason then why did God include the COVID-19 pandemic in his plan?

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<https://mhbclouisville.com/blog/the-bible-doesnt-say-that-everything-happens-for-a-reason/>

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God's Freedom in Creating

- If God has a desired outcome for this world, He is free to Create the world in such a way that outcome will come about
- The future happens because God has created it and He brings it about
- He wills the way He wants the world to go

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God's Freedom in Creating

- One may respond by saying that God knows what choices man will make and then He brings about the end according to man's free choice
- Another would say that God has looked at an endless number of possibly worlds and chosen the one world in that number that will accomplish His will
- In both of these responses, God is not free to create however He wills for His creation is bound to the free will of man
- However, God is free to create the ends and the means in which the end comes about

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God's Freedom in Creating

- A common response to that God has a plan, but we have resisted that plan and God is so sovereign that He is able to accomplish His ends in spite of our sins
- What then was God's plan?
- We will revisit this question again

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God's Providence over Creation

- We cannot speak about Creation without speaking about God's providence over Creation
 - *Sovereignty* is God's right and power to do whatever He pleases
 - *Providence* is the way in which God brings about whatever He pleases
- God is not a God who Created and sat back and watched the world turn
- How much does God work in His providence over creation?

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“ But, on the other end of the spectrum, you have people that believe that God is the ultimate micromanager. And folks on this end of the spectrum (like John Calvin) believe that in order for God to be sovereign--in order for God to be the highest authority and have dominion over all creation--that God must will and cause every single thing that happens. And, if something were to happen that was not part of God's will or plan, then it would show that God is not truly sovereign. So the basic idea here is that God cannot be sovereign unless God directly controls everything.

So the folks on this end of the spectrum see God more like a computer programmer. They believe God has written the code for everything that has ever happened or will ever happen and there is no way that anything could hack the system and cause anything to happen that God hadn't planned.

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<https://mhbclouisville.com/blog/the-bible-doesnt-say-that-everything-happens-for-a-reason/>

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And, although I will admit that there are passages in the Bible that seem to back up this point of view, there are at least a couple of major problems with it. First, if God is completely responsible for everything that happens then we are not responsible for anything that we do...

Okay, so we've spent most of this sermon talking about where the idea behind the saying, "Everything happens for a reason" comes from. And it comes from the belief that in order for God to be sovereign that God has to be in direct control over everything that happens. But we've also talked about why this idea isn't true. And it's not true because if God is responsible for everything then we are responsible for nothing, and we would have no choice in the matter.

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<https://mhbclouisville.com/blog/the-bible-doesnt-say-that-everything-happens-for-a-reason/>

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[The carnal mind] imagines that all things are sufficiently sustained by the energy divinely infused into them at first. But faith must penetrate deeper. After learning there is a Creator, it must forthwith infer that he is also a Governor and Preserver, and that, not by producing a kind of general motion in the machine of the globe as well as in each of its parts, but by a special providence sustaining, cherishing, superintending, all the things which he has made, to the very minutest, even to a sparrow.



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John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, p. 114.

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God's Providence over Creation

- If God is provident over every detail, then what about our sin?
- There are three options on this that I can see:
 - 1. God is provident over every single thing that happens in this world
 - 2. God is provident over only the good things that bring us comfort but God only lets the bad things happen
 - 3. God has given us free will to make decisions which go against God's plan but he providentially intervenes to bring about His desired ends
- It seems that everyone agrees that God has a plan, my question to anyone who denies God's providence over every detail is this, "What is God's plan?"

23

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God is deemed omnipotent, not because he can act though he may cease or be idle, or because by a general instinct he continues the order of nature previously appointed; but because, governing heaven and earth by his providence, he so overrules all things that nothing happens without his counsel.

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John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, p. 114.



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Ephesians 1:11 (ESV)

11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

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Psalm 115:1–3 (ESV)

*115 Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory,
for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness!*

*2 Why should the nations say,
“Where is their God?”*

*3 Our God is in the heavens;
he does all that he pleases.*

”

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The Case of Ahab

- 1 Kings 22
- Ahab, the king of Israel, gathered 400 prophets to hear from the Lord if they should go to battle (5-6)
- They all said, “Go up, for the Lord will give it unto the hand of the king.” (6)
- Ahab hated Micaiah because he never prophesied good about the him
- Read verses 13-23

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The Case of Joseph

- Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers because they hated him
- When the brothers are reunited, Joseph says to the brothers: Genesis 50:19–21 (ESV)

¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, “Do not fear, for am I in the place of God?
²⁰ As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. ²¹ So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.” Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.
- Joseph says God meant for what they did to be for good even though they meant it for evil
 - Does that mean God’s plan was for Joseph’s brothers to sell him into slavery?

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The Case of the Canaanites

Joshua 11:19–20 (ESV)

¹⁹ There was not a city that made peace with the people of Israel except the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. They took them all in battle.

²⁰ For it was the LORD's doing to harden their hearts that they should come against Israel in battle, in order that they should be devoted to destruction and should receive no mercy but be destroyed, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

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The Case of Assyria

- Isaiah 10:5-19
- Assyria was God's rod of His anger that He was going to use to destroy Israel
- Yet, when He finishes His work, God would judge Assyria for what they did (12, 16-19)

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The Case of Job

- In 1:6-12, Satan comes to the Lord and the Lord points Satan toward Job
 - Satan tells God , “But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you.”
 - The Lord turns Job over to Satan for this purpose
- See Job’s response in 1:21
 - Job says the Lord has taken all of it from him
 - “Though he slay me, I will hope in him” – Job 13:15
- After God responds to Job in chapters 38-41, Job says, “I know you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.”

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The Case of the Idolatrous Elders

- Ezekiel 14

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Lamentations 3:37–39 (ESV)

³⁷ Who has spoken and it came to pass,
unless the Lord has commanded it?
³⁸ Is it not from the mouth of the Most High
that good and bad come?
³⁹ Why should a living man complain,
a man, about the punishment of his sins?

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Isaiah 45:5–7 (ESV)

⁵ I am the LORD, and there is no other,
besides me there is no God;
I equip you, though you do not know me,
⁶ that people may know, from the rising of the sun
and from the west, that there is none besides me;
I am the LORD, and there is no other.
⁷ I form light and create darkness;
I make well-being and create calamity;
I am the LORD, who does all these things.

”

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Amos 3:6 (ESV)

⁶ *Is a trumpet blown in a city,
and the people are not afraid?
Does disaster come to a city,
unless the LORD has done it?*

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Proverbs 16:9 (ESV)

⁹ *The heart of man plans his way,
but the LORD establishes his steps.*

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The Case of Jesus Christ

- Was it God's will for Jesus to be crucified?
- Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12

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Acts 2:22–24 (ESV)

²² “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

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“ Acts 4:23–29 (ESV)

²⁴ And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, “ Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, ²⁵ who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit,

“ ‘Why did the Gentiles rage,
and the peoples plot in vain?’

²⁶ The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers were gathered together,
against the Lord and against his Anointed’ —

²⁷ for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, ²⁸ to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

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And, in truth, if Christ was not crucified by the will of God, where is our redemption?



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John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, p. 138.

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The Case of Jesus Christ

- Jesus was not God's "Plan B"
- God's will for this world was that Jesus Christ would die on the Cross for us to unite all things to Himself

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Ephesians 1:3–10 (ESV)

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

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42

Yes, God is Provident in All Things

- If Christ's death was God's eternal plan, how does our sinning fit into that?
- These things really are beyond us and are not really for us to understand

43

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Job 38:1–5 (ESV)

38 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said:

2 “Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?

3 Dress for action like a man;

I will question you, and you make it known to me.

4 “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?

Tell me, if you have understanding.

5 Who determined its measurements—surely you know!

Or who stretched the line upon it?

”

44

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Job 42:1–6 (ESV)

42 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

² “I know that you can do all things,
and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.

³ ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

⁴ ‘Hear, and I will speak;
I will question you, and you make it known to me.’

⁵ I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear,
but now my eye sees you;

⁶ therefore I despise myself,
and repent in dust and ashes.”

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God is Creator and Sustainer

- Our God is a God who has Created this Universe and providentially sustains it
- While we are left speechless, we are comforted by this fact
- We know that He cares for us even more than He cares for the sparrow
- How much more are we to be comforted in matters of salvation by knowing the way our God works His will to accomplish His ends?

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