

God Uses Men, Both Good and Evil, to Perform His Counsel

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The above should forever settle it that God has determined that all prophecy shall be fulfilled: and that He Himself will bring it to pass. But stop, listen, and give particular attention to what I am now going to say. I do not believe that God acts differently in bringing these things to pass than He does in directing our steps in our every day life. Those men whom He says He will bring, or send, or stir up, or cause, to come to do these things act as freely as, and have no more thought that God is using them to fulfill His word and to carry out His purpose than does the bird that flies through the air, when He said, "O Assyrian, the rod of Mine anger, the staff in their hand is Mine indignation, I will send him against a hypocritical nation, against the people of My wrath, will I give him a chore, to take the spoil and take the prey, and tread them down like the mire of the street" (Isaiah 10:5).

God then adds to this, "Howbeit, HE MEANETH NOT SO, NEITHER DOTH HIS HEART THINK SO, but it is in his heart to cut off and destroy nations not a few" (Isaiah 10:7). God did not put in his heart to do it, for it was already in his heart to do that to any nation whenever opportunity was afforded him. Water will freely run down hill when it is not restrained from doing so, and so will the wicked. They freely do wickedly when they are not restrained from doing so. God is not thereby the author of sin, if so be it that He does not restrain it from fulfilling His counsel.

David said, "Surely, the wrath of man shall praise Thee, and the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10). God will restrain the wicked and allow them to do no more than will redound to His praise.

Let me be very clear on this point, for some have taken the position that the text in Isaiah, that says, "LORD, Thou wilt ordain peace for us, for Thou hast wrought all our works IN us", (Isaiah 26:12), means that He had

wrought all their works in them "both good and evil". We hear this false charge leveled against us repeatedly from the Limited side. If that is the truth, then universalism is the truth. For the prophet said, "Lord, Thou wilt ordain peace for US, for Thou hast wrought all OUR works in US". His assurance that God would ordain peace for them was based on the fact that He had wrought, or worked, all their works in them. If all the works done by men, "both good and bad", are wrought, or worked, in them by the LORD, and He ordains peace for all whose works are all wrought in them by Him, it follows that He will ordain peace for all men since all works, "both good and evil" would have been wrought in men by Him.

But we have plenty of instances in the Bible of how God directs the steps of men in wickedness. In the case of Job, He turned all that Job had into the hands of Satan, and said unto him, "Behold all that he (Job) hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not thine hand" (Job 1:12). Up to this time God had prospered Job, and the devil was barred from touching him or any thing that he possessed. The devil called it "having him hedged in." God has all men "hedged in", or out of Satan's reach, until He removes His hand. But as soon as God turned all that he had into the hands of the devil, the devil's servants came in and robbed him of his property and murdered his servants, and God also turned the forces of nature into his hands so that he burned up his sheep and his servants that looked after them, and an east wind blew down the house of his eldest son and killed all of his children, and then Job arose, when he heard of this, and rent his mantle and shaved his head and fell upon the ground and worshiped God and said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither, the LORD gave and the LORD hath taken away, blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:20-21). What lessons are to be found in this story for our "admonition and learning"? Why is it in the Bible? Even though Satan is doing this, Job said the Lord did this. Did he tell the truth about it? If so, then you may see how God uses Satan and wicked men in accomplishing His purposes. Job said that God did it, and the record says that, "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (Job 1:22). If Job did not sin when he said God did it,

and he did not charge God foolishly in what he said, then it was the truth. God did it. Again, when God had turned Job himself into the hands of Satan, and he afflicted him all over with sore boils, and his wife said to him, "Dust thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die." Job said to her, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speakest. What? Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil?" Here again, it is recorded, "In all this, Job did not sin with his lips," meaning, Job told the truth. This must have been recorded for just such a time as now, when Satan's forces are trying to dethrone God and rule Him out of the affairs of men and devils. But He is still enthroned as high above Satan and men, as heaven is above the earth, doing "according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Daniel 4:35). Job believed that God had appointed what was taking place with him and was also performing it; for he said, "He is in one mind and who can turn Him? and what His soul desireth, even that He DOETH. For HE PERFORMETH the thing that is APPOINTED FOR ME, and many such things are with Him" (Job 23:13-14).

Dear reader, if all this was appointed for Job as he claimed, and God performed it, as Job sincerely believed; if God took away Job's children, his servants, and all his property, and afflicted him from head to foot (as Job said that He did), then is it not a fact that God uses wicked men, and even the devil, to accomplish His purposes? He claims that He does these things Himself!

Peter tells us that unbelievers and the disobedient are appointed to disobedience. ("And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed" I Peter 2:7-8). But it does not follow that God works in them to disobey as He works in His children "both to will and to do of His good pleasure" which is well pleasing in His sight through our Lord Jesus Christ. We are often accused of believing this, but the accusation is false. It is stated very plainly in Ephesians that the "prince of the power of the air"

works in the children of disobedience. "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2). God made every thing in the universe, and He made them for Himself, and He made them because He had a use for them. The psalmist said, "In wisdom hast Thou made them all" (Psalm 104:24). If He made them for Himself, then who will deny that He made them suitable for the purpose for which He made them? And who will deny that He is using them for the purpose for which He made them? He even made the prince of the power of the air, which is the serpent, the devil and Satan, and dragon that is in the sea; and is called "leviathan" in Job 41, and in Isaiah 27. No one will take the position that an intelligent being would make a thing for himself, that he had no use for, or control over; and no intelligent man will take the position that any one making any thing for himself will not make it suitable for the place or purpose for which they are making it.

There are many, however, of late years that are denying that God made the devil! On this point hinges the concept of the predestination of all things. For if God did not make the devil, there is one thing in existence, the existence of which God did not predestinate. They knowingly take this position in order to deny God's sovereignty over most of what occurs. For proof that God made him, I will first quote John 1:3, "ALL THINGS WERE MADE BY HIM; and without Him was not any thing made that was made." The objector, however, argues that the last part of this text, which says, "And without Him was not any thing made that was made," signifies that there is something that was not made. Listen to the first part of the text again: "For by Him were ALL things made." Do you see it? To argue that the last part implies there is something that was not made is to make the first part of the sentence to contradict the last. The man that cannot see this is blind to the first part that declares that God made all things, and cannot see the last part right. In Ephesians, Paul said of God, "Who CREATED ALL THINGS by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church, the manifold

wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3: 9-11). Here is a wonderful text and it is most comprehensive in its fullness. It takes in the creation of all things and what they were created for which was that His church might know His manifold wisdom. Not merely know it according to His creative power: but that they may know it according to the eternal purpose that He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. The world, even the wicked can see His manifold wisdom by seeing the things that He has made. Paul said in Romans, "For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). The world can see that it took wisdom and power to make the things that are made, but they do not see that these were all made to conform to God's eternal purpose that He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. His church is to see all creation as it relates to God's eternal purpose in Christ Jesus. They can see how wonderfully it became Him for whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, by making the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. The revealing, or making His glory known, unto His chosen people, the church, by bringing them unto this glory by making Jesus Christ who in His eternal purpose, was to be the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering, was the eternal purpose which He purposed in Jesus Christ our Lord. To this end, it is said "Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief" (Isaiah 53:10). Understand it was the LORD that bruised Him and put Him to grief, and we do not have to guess at how He did it, for His decree in the beginning, was that Satan should be the instrument by which He should be bruised, (Genesis 3:15), which bruising was completed when all the powers of hell were combined in the person of "Herod, Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together for to do whatsoever God's hand and His counsel determined before to be done." When it was completed, Jesus cried with a loud voice, "It is finished, and He bowed His head and gave up the ghost." Dear reader, what could you have ever known of the wonderful mercy and wrath of God, if sin

had not entered into the world? But I hope to say more on this point before I am through.

In Colossians, it is written, "For by Him were ALL THINGS created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible or invisible, whether they be thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers; ALL THINGS were created BY HIM, and FOR HIM: and He is before all things, and BY HIM ALL THINGS CONSIST" (Colossians 1:16-17). Reader, can you imagine why so many of the writers have stressed this point in their writings? Do you ever hear any one except those who believe in the predestination of all things stress it in these days? Paul said in I Corinthians 8:6; "But to us there is one God of whom are ALL THINGS." And in Romans 2, "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are ALL THINGS: to whom be glory forever. Amen." Again, in Revelation, "The four and twenty elders cast their crowns before His throne, crying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, honor, and power, FOR THOU HAST CREATED ALL THINGS, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created" (Revelations 4:11).