

Miracles that follow the plow :: SURPRISE...SURPRISE!!!

SURPRISE...SURPRISE!!! - posted by savannah, on: 2018/12/4 9:33

Romella asks,

“Hello Pastor John! Is it true that nothing ever takes God by surprise?”

Yes, that is true. God is never surprised. To be surprised you have to be uncertain about what is coming. You have to be ignorant. God is never ignorant about the future or about anything. He is never uncertain about what is coming.

We can know this for at least two reasons. One is that the Bible shows that knowing the future, even the future of human decisions, is part of what it means to be God. And the other is that the Bible shows that God’s foreknowledge is not the knowledge of something different from his will and plan, but that he knows the future because he plans the future. So, let’s look at those one at a time along with passages to support them.

“God knows the future because he planned the future.”

1. Isaiah 41:22-23, God calls the idols to give an account. And he challenges them to show that they are gods. How does he do it? Like this: Announce to us what is coming! “Declare the things to come . . . that we may know that you are gods.” What does that mean? In other words, in God’s mind, the capacity to predict the future belongs to God as God. It was part of his deity to be able to declare things that come afterwards.

He makes the same point in Isaiah 42:8-9. He connects the power to foreknow and divine glory. “I am the Lord; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them.” So, you see the connection. I am Yahweh, and this is part of my divine glory. Before they spring forth I proclaim them to you. Foreknowledge, knowledge of the future, is part of my glory, he says.

Here it is again in Isaiah 45:21. God throws up the challenge of whether there is any other god besides him. And he does it by asking about their powers to announce the future. “Declare” he says “and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the Lord? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me.” So, here it is again. God says that what is at stake in his capacity to announce the future affairs of men and nations “that is a lot of human decision” what is at stake is his divinity, his goodness: I, the Lord. There is no other god besides me. When I predict the future, I show that.

And then this is really important, I think, in settling the issue. Then we see Jesus do the very same thing as God. He connects his foreknowledge “even his knowledge of sinful choices like Judas’s sinful choice and Peter’s sinful choice to deny him” he connects that with his deity (just like Isaiah did with God’s deity) in John 13:19 where he says, at the Last Supper, “I am telling you this now, before it comes to pass” he is referring to Judas’s betrayal “that when it does take place you may believe that I am” period.

“Knowing the future, even the future of human decisions, is part of what it means to be God.”

Now, most of the English translations say, “that I am he,” which is understandable, because it sounds odd to just say, “that you may believe I am.” But that is what the Greek says. And we know where that phrase “I am” comes from. That is a play on the name of God from Exodus 3:14-15, “I am who I am. . . . I am has sent me to you.” Jesus is claiming to be God, and the basis of it is: I know Judas is going to betray me. This is huge.

The same thing is true of Peter’s denial. Jesus knows precisely who will deny him. He knows how many times he will deny him. He knows when in the morning he will deny him. Same thing with Judas. When, where, why. And he knew this about Judas from the beginning. We know that from John 6:64. When he chose Judas, he knew what he would do.

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2. Now, here is the text that connects the prediction of God with the planning or the performing of God: Isaiah 46:9-10. "I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me" - now, this is foreknowledge - declaring the end from the beginning. So, he declares it. He knows it. And then he goes on, "And from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my good pleasure'."

So, now we get a window on to how God knows the future. He knows it because he plans it and does it. He knows it because he plans it and performs it. Similarly, in Jeremiah 1:12 the Lord said, "I am watching over my word to perform it." God doesn't just predict; he does what he predicts. Or Ezekiel 12:25, "For I am the Lord; I will speak the word that I will speak, and it will be performed. . . . I will speak the word and perform it, declares the Lord God."

"God doesn't just predict; he does what he predicts."

In other words, God knows the future, because he performs the future. He is never surprised, because he is not surprised at his own work. Foreknowledge is not an awareness of what the fates will make happen. Foreknowledge is not an awareness of what random chance is going to bring about. Foreknowledge is not an awareness of what ultimate human autonomy is going to produce. There is no fate. There is no random chance. There is no ultimate human autonomy.

What God knows is what God will do. The future is not some kind of freewheeling reality separate from God's will that he is trying to catch on to and adapt to. He knows the future because he plans the future, and he is never surprised by what he plans. - J. Piper

Re: SURPRISE...SURPRISE!!! - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/12/4 9:54

Gross.

Re: RD - posted by savannah, on: 2018/12/4 10:19

Insightful comeback there Rodney!

Yet, I must say, it didn't surprise me!

I knew you'd be the first one to comment.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/12/4 10:30

Yep- nice baiting.

Re: fishermen use worms - posted by savannah, on: 2018/12/4 10:36

As for others who seek wisdom, I offer this;

"Consider how great it is to know the thoughts and intentions, and works of one man from the beginning to the end of his life; to foreknow all these before the being of this man, when he was lodged afar off in the loins of his ancestors, yea, of Adam. How much greater is it to foreknow and know the thoughts and works of three or four men, of a whole village or neighbourhood! It is greater still to know the imaginations and actions of such a multitude of men as are contained in London, Paris, or Constantinople; how much greater still to know the intentions and practices, the clandestine contrivances of so many millions, that have, do, or shall swarm in all quarters of the world, every person of them having millions of thoughts, desires, designs, affections, and actions! Let this attribute, then, make the blessed God honourable in our eyes and adorable in all our affections. . . . Adore God for this wonderful perfection!" - Stephen Charnock

"There is nothing man is more apt to be proud of than his knowledge; it is a perfection he glories in; but if our own kn

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nowledge of the little outside and barks of things puffs us up, the consideration of the infiniteness of God's knowledge should abate the tumor. As our beings are nothing in regard to the infiniteness of his essence, so our knowledge is nothing in regard of the vastness of his understanding. We have a spark of being, but nothing to the heat of the sun; we have a drop of knowledge, but nothing to the divine ocean. What a vain thing is it for a shallow brook to boast of its streams, before a sea whose depths are unfathomable! As it is a vanity to brag of our strength when we remember the power of God, and of our prudence when we glance upon the wisdom of God, so it is no less a vanity to boast of our knowledge when we think of the understanding and knowledge of God.

Stephen Charnock

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/12/4 15:03

Who denies God's omniscience? Certainly not I.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2018/12/4 23:14

Quote:
-----So, now we get a window on to how God knows the future. He knows it because he plans it and does it. He knows it because he plans it and performs it. Similarly, in Jeremiah 1:12 the Lord said, "I am watching over my word to perform it." God doesn't just predict; he does what he predicts. Or Ezekiel 12:25, "For I am the Lord; I will speak the word that I will speak, and it will be performed. . . . I will speak the word and perform it, declares the Lord God."

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So in other words, it sounds like according to Piper's logic and interpretation of certain scriptures, God didn't just permit and know beforehand that every evil act would occur in the future (e.g. child rape, abortion, Hitler's Holocaust, Stalin's Great Purge, adultery, etc); He foreknew them because He preperformed and predid them Himself. In other words, God knows every future event and human decision because He authors/performs/does every future event and human decision, including every evil act committed.

Friends, if that does not seem to implicate God in unholy behavior, I don't know what does.

Also, many of us believe it is more impressive that God knows every future human decision without Himself performing or doing every human decision.

For example, which of the following two scenarios would be more impressive?

Scenario # 1: Let's say I knew for certain (based on an intrinsic ability to know future events beforehand without me necessarily causing them) that my 9-year-old son was going to be selected as student of the month next June.

Scenario # 2: Let's say I knew that same data but based on a certain type of ability to pull it off somehow (let's say I had a certain type of power to make it happen by force).

Do you see how the first scenario would be more impressive in terms of "foreknowledge?" Even so we'd argue that our view of God's omniscience is more impressive than what Piper seems to advocate in the above quote, him as well as other sincere brethren.

There's a huge difference between God being in control of and permitting every human decision on the one hand, and Him being the author of every human decision on the other, which is what some sincere brethren seem to be advocating. That's a certain type of "high" view of their systematic which seems to have gained ground among them in recent times and I think it's unfortunate.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/5 6:07

Hopefully, what John Piper says is only important if he is speaking what God says. I hate string sites but in this case it might be helpful:

God Is Sovereign Over . . .

Seemingly random things:

The lot is cast into the lap,
but its every decision is from the LORD.
(Proverbs 16:33)

The heart of the most powerful person in the land:

The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD;
he turns it wherever he will.
(Proverbs 21:1)

Our daily lives and plans:

A man's steps are from the LORD;
how then can man understand his way?
(Proverbs 20:24)

Many are the plans in the mind of a man,
but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.
(Proverbs 19:21)

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit" yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. . . . Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that."
(James 4:13-15)

Salvation:

"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.
(Romans 9:15-16)

As many as were appointed to eternal life believed.
(Acts 13:48)

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.
(Romans 8:29-30)

Life and death:

See now that I, even I, am he,
and there is no god beside me;
I kill and I make alive;
I wound and I heal;
and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.
(Deuteronomy 32:39)

The LORD kills and brings to life;
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.

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(1 Samuel 12:6)

Disabilities:

Then the LORD said to , "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?"

(Exodus 4:11)

The death of God's Son:

Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

(Acts 2:23)

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, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

(Acts 4:27-28)

Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief. . . .

(Isaiah 53:10)

Evil things:

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?

(Amos 3:6)

I form light and create darkness,
I make well-being and create calamity,
I am the LORD, who does all these things.

(Isaiah 45:7)

"The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong. . . . "Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

(Job 1:21-22; 2:10)

sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave. . . . 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.

(Psalm 105:17; Genesis 50:21)

All things:

works all things according to the counsel of his will.

(Ephesians 1:11)

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

(Psalm 115:3)

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

(Job 42:2)

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All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,
and he does according to his will among the host of heaven
and among the inhabitants of the earth;
and none can stay his hand
or say to him, "What have you done?"
(Daniel 4:35)

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/12/5 7:06

If a master chess player takes a mallet to his chess pieces because he made a bad move, we might find it humorous but obviously we know it was not the chess pieces' fault that he didn't move them properly.

For some reason men like Piper find it perfectly acceptable that God punishes men for moves HE MAKES.

The idea is so absurd that for the life of me I cannot understand how it even gets a fair hearing.

Re: US court or the Court Above - posted by savannah, on: 2018/12/5 9:40

"...I cannot understand how it even gets a fair hearing."

I cannot help but wonder if you read the same Bible as men have been reading for millennia.

When you make statements like this what comes to mind is this;

"Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man, for I will question you, then you answer me!

"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if you have understanding."
Job 38:2-4

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/5 10:20

Todd,

God gave permission to Satan to destroy righteous Job's life.

God gave permission to Satan to sift beloved Peter like wheat.

God gave Satan permission to put a debilitating thorn in the side of faithful Paul.

God gave permission to Satan to martyr the true saints of a church in Revelation.

He has sent deceiving spirits into King's and counselors of God's people.

He caused a man to be blind from birth and for 30-40 years thereafter all so He could show His glory in that man's life after 40 years of suffering and because of no sin in the man.

Are you ok with that God?

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Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/12/5 10:28

Sure am.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2018/12/5 10:44

Quote:
-----If a master chess player takes a mallet to his chess pieces because he made a bad move, we might find it humorous but obviously we know it was not the chess piecesâ€™ fault that he didn't move them properly.

Speaking of chess, I have two more scenarios for consideration.

Scenario 1: Imagine I sat down to play chess with myself and made every move on both sides of the board, ensuring that a particular side won in the end.

Scenario 2: Imagine I played chess against Bobby Fischer and beat him due to my anticipation of his every move.

Again, which is more impressive? Yet some would have us think that God makes all the moves when it comes to every human decision in the history of the world. In other words, they would have us believe that it is God Himself who ultimately makes every decision and that there is no such thing as human autonomy, like Piper asserts in the OP article.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/5 10:55

Let me give you a scenario from the Bible. Pharaoh is proud. God knows full well that if He commands Pharaoh to let His people go that Pharaoh will do exactly what Pharaoh wants to do and, in a predetermined sense, Pharaoh at the same time will be doing exactly what God wills and plans for him to do. So God plans for Pharaohâ€™s sin, He gives the good and right command that stirs the sinful pride in Pharaohâ€™s heart and then, punishes Pharaoh severely for the sin God excited through the command.

Or,

God wants David to number his troops so that God can punish Israel severely. So He has Satan incite David to number the troops in spite of Godâ€™s clear command not to. The Holy Spirit speaking about that event says that both God and Satan incited David to do that which in one sense God did not desire but in another sense or different level is exactly what God wanted David to do. In all this man was responsible but God directed the events by steering the hearts in a certain direction.

This is indisputable from Scripture and is a truth about God that is not derived from philosophy or metaphors but is His own declaration of His ways with man.

Re: kings and queens and guillotines - posted by savannah, on: 2018/12/5 11:30

The master chess player analogy opens wide the thoughts that one has of The Almighty.

Just another piece of the image that has been erected in the mind. And now this god is the god you're comfortable with.

The other pieces of this god we have thus far is the piece that annihilates, and the piece that doesn't know all, only some, future events. Reason being is that those events are not reality as yet, or because this god limits his knowledge of such.

Maybe you can write a book about this god. Maybe it'll go viral, or be on the best seller's list. You may want to place it in close proximity on the shelf next to the Book of Mormon.

I used a small "g" because the words, language and definitions don't really mean much anyhow. It's just a matter of each one's own interpretation. Sounds like fun!

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Hey...and it may even be profitable too! You never know, just look where J. K. Rowling is now. You can even make a series, since the future is unknown anyway. You can just make it up as you go with your own freewill, I mean freestyle, writing.

You go boy! Just do it.

All American! A declaration of independence of sorts.

See you at the next Star Wars conference, or movie, whichever one comes first.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/12/5 11:38

If I write that book, it will be God making me write it, according to you. He will even be moving my fingers on the keyboard, and will even cause me to make the typos!

So if I write that book you can blame God, not me.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2018/12/5 12:09

Hi Robert, you wrote:

Quote:
-----Let me give you a scenario from the Bible. Pharaoh is proud. God knows full well that if He commands Pharaoh to let His people go that Pharaoh will do exactly what Pharaoh wants to do and, in a predetermined sense, Pharaoh at the same time will be doing exactly what God wills and plans for him to do. So God plans for Pharaoh's sin, He gives the good and right command that stirs the sinful pride in Pharaoh's heart and then, punishes Pharaoh severely for the sin God excited through the command.

Many of us would disagree with your interpretation of that account. We would argue, based on certain other scriptures, that it was Pharaoh who was fully responsible for allowing his own heart to get hardened against God and that the opportunity to repent was set before him on numerous occasions, and that God simply "judicially" hardened him (i.e. allowed him to get hardened on account of his prior willful stubbornness and refusal to repent). There are other scriptures which state that it was Pharaoh who hardened his own heart (Ex. 8:15, 32). So which is it? Did God harden Pharaoh or did Pharaoh harden himself against God? We would argue that God withdrew His mercy and allowed Pharaoh to harden himself on account of his own willful rebellion. I'd argue that that interpretation seems to fit the overall biblical picture better and fully keeps intact the revealed character and holiness of God without any contradiction.

Quote:
-----God wants David to number his troops so that God can punish Israel severely. So He has Satan incite David to number the troops in spite of God's clear command not to. The Holy Spirit speaking about that event says that both God and Satan incited David to do that which in one sense God did not desire but in another sense or different level is exactly what God wanted David to do. In all this man was responsible but God directed the events by steering the hearts in a certain direction.

Again, it is not necessary to interpret that account in that manner. When we read in 2 Sam. 24:1 that God "moved David against them to say, 'Go, number Israel and Judah,'" we must understand it as God allowing Satan to tempt David as a judgment against both David and Israel as a whole (1 Chron. 21:1). In other words, God sometimes removes His mercy, grace and intervention and allows for certain evils to occur as a judgment. James 1:13-15 clearly teaches, "God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."

In other words, it is one thing for God to allow or permit evil actions and/or evil decisions to be made while being in complete control, and to use those same actions to accomplish His ultimate plans or purposes, and it is quite another for God to "do" or "perform" those evil actions Himself. The latter would implicate God in sin because the whole of Scripture is abundantly clear that God cannot commit or "do" or "perform" any sin.

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Quote:
-----This is indisputable from Scripture and is a truth about God that is not derived from philosophy or metaphors but is His own declaration of His ways with man.

It is true that our reasoning and philosophies must conform to Scripture and not the other way around. But we must acknowledge that we do in fact have God-given reasoning capabilities which are to be employed in a God-honoring way. Over and over we read throughout Scripture that God wants us to use our God-given reasoning abilities to consider His ways and His purposes for our lives.

One more scripture I point out here. Jeremiah 32:35 says, "And they built the high places of Baal which are in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin."

Of course, in my view, God in His omniscience foreknew (knew beforehand) that that abomination would occur. Yet it was not the intention of His heart in His plans for Judah for them to commit such abominations. Again, it's the difference between God permitting something and God Himself doing the same.

Re: in the writing of many books there's grief - posted by savannah, on: 2018/12/5 12:49

Even I, an immortal mortal, know the future.

No ifs about it. You, will write no book!

You can bank on it.

If Eu-genie could have 3 wishes granted him, methinks he'd like to have a few words with many like yourself, to warn you to turn from The Messages and messengers teaching you of their mystical god.

But...for now...I'll let you continue playing that Deity Blame Game.

You do have His permission!

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2018/12/5 12:58

Quote:
-----Even I, an immortal mortal, know the future.

No ifs about it. You, will write no book!

You can bank on it.

If Eu-genie could have 3 wishes granted him, methinks he'd like to have a few words with many like yourself, to warn you to turn from The Messages and messengers teaching you of their mystical god.

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Quick Q. Did God predetermine for Todd to "play that Deity Blame Game?"

If God predetermined and "performed" such, why should you or anyone else object to God's own predetermination or "sovereign plan" or "sovereign choice?"

Did God predetermine or choose for myself and others to believe in libertarian freewill (i.e. the ability to choose to receive or reject the gospel)? If God predetermined and chose such, why should you object to God's own predetermination or choice?

The same could be asked regarding any and all false teachings or cults. Did God predetermine for such people to believe and teach such things? Again, if so, why should you or anyone object to God's own predetermination?

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/5 14:01

Thanks Oracio. I hope my post did not suggest God does evil. I only was saying He created the circumstances that would create the evil that Satan tempts and man does in those examples. We agree that God steers the directions of men's hearts by withdrawing grace. And decrees a temptation that Satan does which situation Scripture calls a testing by God. Can we agree that His grace is meted out on some, not all in the same measure, with pure free will on God's part and by His own wisdom and decree all of which is purposeful and planned. ?

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2018/12/5 14:21

Thanks Robert for that clarification. Yeah, certain of your statements did come across as implicating God; this statement for example,

Quote:

-----So God plans for Pharaoh's sin, He gives the good and right command that stirs the sinful pride in Pharaoh's heart and then, punishes Pharaoh severely for the sin God excited through the command-----

I think we must be very careful in terms of saying things like, "God plans sin." I do think I understand what you're saying but to many it can come across as saying that God desires and intends sin as ideal. That's what Piper's article seems to clearly imply in his statements that God "performs" or "does" all things He foreknows.

Re: predetermined does not equal performed - posted by savannah, on: 2018/12/5 15:30

"If God predetermined and "performed" such..."

Todd performed such things.

Even as all others perform the acts or deeds that they do.

Predetermined does not equal performed!

We have Job's life as a record written for our learning.

God predetermined prior to Satan performing the evil.

God pre-determined Christ's crucifixion prior to the hands of wicked men performing the evil deed. See Acts 2:23.

To speak against something you do not believe to be right or good does not negate any predetermining factor in the matter.

Especially considering that I do not know the outcome.

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Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/5 15:53

Oracio, Donâ€™t you think by Scripture that God planned the sin of men that they would crucify His Son?

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2018/12/5 16:37

Hi Robert, Iâ€™d say that God planned the crucifixion of His Son for the salvation of the world. Iâ€™d say He predestined to accomplish our salvation through permitting or allowing certain evil men to perform that heinous act for which they were fully held accountable and responsible.

In other words, Iâ€™d say that His ultimate divine decree/plan/purpose was to accomplish our salvation through the atoning death and resurrection of His Son. And Iâ€™d say He chose to accomplish that ultimate purpose through certain â€œsecondaryâ€ means or causes which He permitted but didnâ€™t Himself commit or â€œplanâ€ in that sense. So Iâ€™d try to be very careful with my wording so as not to sound like Iâ€™m implicating God and thus possibly place an unnecessary stumbling block before others.

I think sometimes it's not sufficient for us to quote or refer to certain scriptures without a proper exegetical explanation of them, lest we seem to others to be implying or drawing certain unbiblical conclusions.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2018/12/5 18:52

Hi savannah, you wrote:

Quote:

-----Todd performed such things.

Even as all others perform the acts or deeds that they do.

Predetermined does not equal performed!

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To speak against something you do not believe to be right or good does not negate any predetermining factor in the matter.

Especially considering that I do not know the outcome.

That sounds like you disagree with the John Piper article you shared in your OP. Iâ€™ll share the main portion of it which I have in mind here again:

Quote:

-----So, now we get a window on to how God knows the future. He knows it because he plans it and does it. He knows it because he plans it and performs it. Similarly, in Jeremiah 1:12 the Lord said, â€œI am watching over my word to perform it.â€ God doesnâ€™t just predict; he does what he predicts. Or Ezekiel 12:25, â€œFor I am the Lord; I will speak the word that I will speak, and it will be performed. . . . I will speak the word and perform it, declares the Lord God.â€

â€œGod doesnâ€™t just predict; he does what he predicts.â€

In other words, God knows the future, because he performs the future. He is never surprised, because he is not surprised at his own work. Foreknowledge is not an awareness of what the fates will make happen. Foreknowledge is not an awareness of what random chance is going to bring about. Foreknowledge is not an awareness of what ultimate human autonomy is going to produce. There is no fate. There is no random chance. There is no ultimate human autonomy.

What God knows is what God will do. The future is not some kind of freewheeling reality separate from Godâ€™s will that he is trying to catch on to and adapt to. He knows the future because he plans the future, and he is never surprised by what he plans. - J. Piper

Again, Piper says God knows every future human decision because He â€œperformsâ€ and â€œdoesâ€ it, because it is His own â€œwork.â€ Do you now disagree with Piper and do you regret sharing the OP article?

Also, I want to point out that Piper seeks to caricature our position as a belief in "fate" or "random chance" or a "freewheeling reality separate from God's will." Nothing could be further from the truth from our perspective. The fact that God cre

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ates a world wherein He allows for humans to have a certain level of freedom of will does not equate to a world of "fate" or "random chance." In other words, the fact that humans make self-determining choices does not equate to "fate" or "random chance."

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/5 19:39

I'm confused by your language. He planned it but not in the sense of planning?? I'm not trying to be condescending but I think that is what you said. The Scripture is that evil men crucified His Son according to the predetermined plan of God. That's pretty clear. Not my interpretation

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2018/12/5 20:00

Hi Robert, you wrote:

Quote:
-----I'm confused by your language. He planned it but not in the sense of planning?? I'm not trying to be condescending but I think that is what you said. The Scripture is that evil men crucified His Son according to the predetermined plan of God. That's pretty clear. Not my interpretation

Fair enough, I'll try to explain as well. The word "plan" can have different meanings or connotations, cannot it not?

For example, in one sense we can say that God's "ideal" plan for sex was for it to be enjoyed within marriage between one man and one woman for life. God's ideal plan regarding sex was that there would be no fornication or adultery. In that sense God did not "plan" for fornication and adultery, otherwise we'd have to say that God approves of such and we know that that is absurd according to the scriptures.

In another sense, we can also say that it was God's "predetermined plan" for there to be fornication and adultery in the sense of Him allowing or permitting there to be such sins in this world of fallen, yet free moral agents.

I'll give another example from Scripture. It was not God's "ideal plan" for Adam and Eve to partake of the forbidden fruit and to plunge the world in the mess we've been in since. Again, otherwise we'd have to say that God approved of Adam's sin which again, would be ridiculous.

But in another sense God did "plan" for the fall in the sense of Him permitting it in accordance with His ultimate purposes

Hope that helps.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/5 20:07

Hi Oracio. I think you are saying that there was a chance men would not crucify His Son because free will by definition demands a chance for the opposite to happen. If you say that it is only foreknowledge then the word "plan" simply does not work. You can't or shouldn't redefine a word to meet your preferred understanding of God's decrees that something happen without chance that it won't. And please remember that men are still doing the choosing and acting of sin as I argue the Scripture says. I suggest you are slanting obvious meanings of words to support a philosophy, not a theology.

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Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2018/12/5 20:14

Also Robert, I don't think you quoted me fairly in your reply. You wrote:

Quote:
-----Iâ€™m confused by your language. He planned it but not in the sense of planning?? Iâ€™m not trying to be condescending but I think that is what you said.

I did not write, "He planned it but not in the sense of planning," those are your words not mine.

In reference to God's ultimate plan of redemption and the evil actions of men in crucifying Christ, I stated, "Iâ€™d say He chose to accomplish that ultimate purpose through certain â€œsecondaryâ€ means or causes which He permitted but didnâ€™t Himself commit or â€œplanâ€ in that sense."

Yet you made it seem as if I was using "double talk" of sorts, which I wasn't.

Re: disagreements - posted by savannah, on: 2018/12/5 20:16

Oracio,

Your interpretation of Piper and I goes like this;

"He foreknew them because He â€œperformedâ€ and â€œdidâ€ them Himself. In other words, God knows every future event and human decision because He authors/performs/does every future event and human decision, including every evil act committed."

I am not saying that, nor is Piper.

Piper and I agree. You've misunderstood Piper.

God performing and doing is not equal to, as you say, "...He â€œperformedâ€ and â€œdidâ€ them Himself."

God accomplishes His own purpose(s), which may at times be secret or hidden temporarily, but His purpose(s) is/are always good and perfect.

Neither I nor Piper, nor any other son of God in the family of God would indict God with the committal of an evil act, or with the accusation of being guilty of sin. For such is an impossibility. God Himself cannot sin.

I never thought that anyone would or could get the impression that anything of the sort was being said by Piper or myself.

God is Good
God is Holy
God is Just
God is Love
God is God

No disagreements there!

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Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2018/12/5 21:00

Hi Robert, you wrote:

Quote:
-----Hi Oracio. I think you are saying that there was a chance men would not crucify His Son because free will by definition demands a chance for the opposite to happen.

God can know all future possibilities and decide on which ones to allow to come to pass in the end, according to His sovereign purposes. And God can know beforehand that certain decisions will be made without Him making those decisions Himself, and He can use those decisions to accomplish His purposes. The problem I see with your view is that you seem to imply that men had to crucify Christ because God ~~performed~~ and ~~did~~ it (in the words of John Piper's article which you seem to endorse in this thread), apart from those evil men's free will decisions. Again, that would implicate God imo.

Quote:
-----If you say that it is only foreknowledge then the word ~~explain~~ simply does not work.

I never said it was ~~only~~ foreknowledge. Our view acknowledges that God is in complete control of all events and decisions and that He does ~~explain~~ them in the sense of choosing to allow them to come to pass.

There's a big difference between God being in control of all human decisions and Him meticulously controlling all human decisions. The first allows for real human accountability and responsibility while the latter seems to implicate God and contradict much of Scripture imo.

Quote:
-----You can't or shouldn't redefine a word to meet your preferred understanding of God's decrees that something happen without chance that it won't...I suggest you are slanting obvious meanings of words to support a philosophy, not a theology.

I'd encourage you to look up the English word ~~explain~~ to see if there are not different meanings, nuances or uses of it. It seems you may not be open to that based on certain presuppositions you bring to certain pertinent texts.

Quote:
-----And please remember that men are still doing the choosing and acting of sin as I argue the Scripture says.

Right, but again, according to Piper's view (which you seem to be defending here), men are doing the choosing and acting of sin because God ~~performs~~, ~~does~~ or ~~works~~ it in them, not because they use their free will or self-determination. According to Piper and you, there is no such thing as self-determination or human autonomy as we understand it in terms of the use of free will.

When it comes to the term ~~free will~~, I've found that many from your camp seek to redefine it to mean something other than the common understanding of it, in order to try to make it fit their philosophy. Others flat out deny any type of free will altogether.

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Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2018/12/5 21:23

Hi savannah, you wrote:

Quote:

-----Oracio,

Your interpretation of Piper and I goes like this;

"He foreknew them because He ~~performed~~ and ~~decided~~ them Himself. In other words, God knows every future event and human decision because He authors/performs/does every future event and human decision, including every evil act committed."

I am not saying that, nor is Piper.

Piper and I agree. You've misunderstood Piper.

God performing and doing is not equal to, as you say, "...He ~~performed~~ and ~~decided~~ them Himself."

God accomplishes His own purpose(s), which may at times be secret or hidden temporarily, but His purpose(s) is/are always good and perfect.

Neither I nor Piper, nor any other son of God in the family of God would indict God with the committal of an evil act, or with the accusation of being guilty of sin. For such is an impossibility. God Himself cannot sin.

I never thought that anyone would or could get the impression that anything of the sort was being said by Piper or myself.

God is Good
God is Holy
God is Just
God is Love
God is God

No disagreements there!

Well I'm glad to hear that that is your position but I can't honestly say it's Piper's. I do know that some, quite several, from your camp believe that God is in fact the author of sin. I can share with you a debate on YouTube wherein two from your camp seek to defend that position. As a matter of fact I'll share names here without sharing the link. It's a debate involving Sonny Hernandez and Leighton Flowers.

Here's another quote from one of Piper's sermons which I also found to be disturbing:

Quote:

-----Ephesians 1:11 goes even further by declaring that God in Christ ~~works~~ all things according to the counsel of his will. Here the Greek word for ~~works~~ is *energeia*, which indicates that God not merely carries all of the universe's objects and events to their appointed ends but that he actually brings about all things in accordance with his will. In other words, it isn't just that God manages to turn the evil aspects of our world to good for those who love him; it is rather that he himself brings about these evil aspects for his glory (see Exodus 9:13-16; John 9:3) and his people's good (see Hebrews 12:3-11; James 1:2-4).

This includes ~~'~~ as incredible and as unacceptable as it may currently seem ~~'~~ God's having even brought about the Nazis' brutality at Birkenu and Auschwitz as well as the terrible killings of Dennis Rader and even the sexual abuse of a young child: ~~The~~ LORD has made everything for or its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil (Proverbs 16:4, NASB). ~~When~~ times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other (Ecclesiastes 7:14, NIV).

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/6 3:21

Hi Oracio,

You continue to say that the position of John Piper and others who agree with Him is that God is performing the evil act in spite of continual insistence we aren't saying that. I'm perplexed. Second, The word ~~plan~~ in the Greek Bible usage means ~~purpose~~. Thus, Acts 2:23 could be written to say that God predetermined and purposed His Son to be crucified through the evil acts of men. How He brings about His decided will and purpose is by evil man's acts and decisions and desires. He doesn't react to men's decisions though as some seem to hold. As you seem to state, He knows how men will react in certain situations so He uses all kinds of agents to arrange those and accomplish His purpose. Is that fair to say in your mind?

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/12/6 7:20

Piper said: "This includes 'as incredible and as unacceptable as it may currently seem' God's having even brought about the Nazis' brutality at Birkenau and Auschwitz as well as the terrible killings of Dennis Rader and even the sexual abuse of a young child: 'The LORD has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil' (Proverbs 16:4, NASB). 'When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other' (Ecclesiastes 7:14, NIV- my emphasis).

Robert, why don't you just explain what Piper actually means when he says God 'brought about' Nazi brutality or the 'sexual abuse of a young child.'

If Piper does not really mean what he is plainly stating, then he is exceedingly and inexcusably reckless in making such comments about God.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/6 7:51

Todd. I honestly thought I did. Do you believe God 'brought about' the death of His beloved Son? That He planned it, commanded it, decreed it and willed it? How you answer that, answers all.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/12/6 9:15

You still haven't explained what he (or you) means when he says God brings about the sexual abuse of young girls.

How you answer that answer all.

ADD: Even if there is some explanation, isn't there a better way of saying it? The optics are exceedingly bad as written.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2018/12/6 10:22

Hi Robert, you wrote:

Quote:
-----You continue to say that the position of John Piper and others who agree with Him is that God is performing the evil act in spite of continual insistence we aren't saying that. I'm perplexed.

It was Piper who used the words 'performs,' 'does,' and 'work' in reference to God foreknowing every future event and human decision. Here again are Piper's own words:

'God doesn't just predict; he does what he predicts.'

'God knows the future, because he performs the future. He is never surprised, because he is not surprised at his own work.'

'What God knows is what God will do.'

That type of language is different from saying that God knows what free moral agents will choose to do of their own free will in each situation or circumstance. Piper seems to completely deny that concept and he seems to attribute every evil act and human decision ultimately to God. I know that that is an actual position among some 'high' or 'hyper' Calvinists. Piper calls himself a '7-point' Calvinist and many consider him to be a 'high' Calvinist so I'm not too surprised by his wording in those quotes to be honest.

Quote:
-----Second, The word 'plan' in the Greek Bible usage means 'purpose'. Thus, Acts 2:23 could be written to say that God predetermined and purposed His Son to be crucified through the evil acts of men. How He brings about His decided will and purpose is by evil man's acts and decisions and desires. He doesn't react to men's decisions though as some seem to hold. As you seem to state, He knows how men will react in certain situations so He uses all kinds of agents to arrange those and accomplish His purpose. Is that fair to say in your mind?

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Yeah, I did notice that the KJV uses the word "counsel" and the NKJV uses the word "purpose," while other translations use the word "plan" there. I don't have a problem with the word "plan" being used or referenced, provided that, when necessary, we explain what we mean by that and provided that our explanations are not seriously disturbing.

As to your explanation there, the only thing I may not fully agree with is this statement of yours:

Quote:

-----He doesn't react to men's decisions though as some seem to hold.

If you are referring to open theism then I agree. But in my view God does react (or "respond" may be a better word) to human decisions. That seems crystal clear throughout the biblical narrative. But again, if you simply mean that God is not surprised in the full sense of the word (because He does seem surprised and astonished at times in a certain way), then I agree. I believe God communicates to us how He feels about certain things in a way we can understand on our level, at times using anthropomorphic language.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2018/12/6 10:41

Todd wrote:

Quote:

-----If Piper does not really mean what he is plainly stating, then he is exceedingly and inexcusably reckless in making such comments about God.

Exactly. If he doesn't mean what we think he means based on those kinds of "plain" statements, he should not be so reckless or provocative and irresponsible in the choice of his wording imo. Unfortunately, I have an uneasy feeling that he does in fact mean what we think he means.

Re: - posted by TrueWitness, on: 2018/12/6 11:07

The way I understand the Bible, the reason there is evil in the world is because of the sinful choices of fallen men (and women) who are darkened in their thinking and affections. God kicked fallen humanity out of the protection and provision of the Garden of Eden shortly after our parents, Adam and Eve, fell from grace. We are now living in the world ruled by Satan. The Bible acknowledges that until Christ returns to this Earth, Satan rules over this world. We know that God does have some restraint on Satan which will be taken out of the way some time after the Antichrist shows up. And God is working in this world through the Church and the Holy Spirit to save lost souls and bring them into the kingdom of His dear Son. He also has a plan for Israel to save a remnant of them and also use them to bring about the destruction of Satan, Antichrist and the whole godless world system. But God is allowing evil to go on here because there are still souls (perhaps still not born) who are yet to be saved. Satan will win many battles here on this Earth but he will not win the war. God is giving time for sinful men to repent but usually they, being darkened in their understanding, mistake God's patience as His either His not existing or perhaps not caring which inflates man's pride and willfulness. But in the day of the Lord, God will bring them into judgement so that they will be without excuse and the proud and haughty will be brought down and they that fear the Lord will be exalted. God does allow everything that happens to happen but is being merciful and patient with men to give them time to repent. God is not the author of evil.

-Daniel

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/6 11:48

Guys. We are really digging around the issue of a theology of suffering, especially why God wills suffering for His own children. He accomplishes His will often through responsible agents. But, he also often brings it about directly for example when He stirred the hearts of Israel's enemies to attack, ravage and kill His own people, including women and children for correction or judgement. God opened the earth and swallowed entire Jewish families, children included, for the sins of Achan or of the leaders who rebelled against Moses. The children had no fault in that sin.

Todd, I have close family members who were repeatedly raped from the age of ten on for several years. I don't speak

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ak of God's sovereignty in suffering from a thirty thousand foot view.

Jesus endured suffering by no fault in order to make His obedience perfect and to be made complete. God gives at least 22 reasons in the NT for why He plans, purposes and wills suffering for His beloved children with 60-70 verses to explain those purposes.

The reason why I thought the example of Jesus would answer all, is that if the Father would purposefully plan and arrange for the crucifixion of His own Son and the pouring out of His wrath upon Him, then the temporal suffering of sinners could be seen with right "optics".

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2018/12/6 12:00

Hi Robert, from reading your last post I think we're right back to square one in our disagreement here. Regarding those particular passages of Scripture which speak of God using certain evil actions of men to accomplish His ultimate purposes, I believe you are misunderstanding and misinterpreting them, with all due respect. I know that those are common passages cited by some to prove that God is the author of sin at least in some cases. You seem to see those passages as teaching that God directly works evil in men's hearts, which again, I think would implicate God as the author of sin. I believe there is a better, more biblical interpretation and explanation than what you seem to propose, an interpretation and explanation which I've already presented here so I don't think there's a need for me to do that again. We may just have to agree to disagree.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/12/6 12:34

//We may just have to agree to disagree.//

That's what usually happens, but the discussion has been good.

For me, personally, it is simply a matter of defending God's character. Of course, HE doesn't need me to defend Him, thank goodness.

But other folks who read these threads might get wrong ideas from things that are stated about God without a whit of discomfiture.

I certainly don't have it all figured out, but God doesn't toss folks in hell for something He made them do or not do, or because He determined eons ago who He'd toss there and who He wouldn't and there's nothing anyone can do about it.

That much I do know.

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2018/12/6 12:43

ditto Todd

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/7 7:31

John 19:24 - so they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be." This was to fulfill the Scripture which says, "They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots." So the soldiers did these things,

John 19:28 - After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), "I thirst."

Acts 1:16 - "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.

It seems there is a very deliberate way of wording in these texts concerning prophesy. Events happen to fulfill the previous declaration of God that those events will in fact happen. This is entirely different from the idea of foreknowledge. Knowing the future events and predicting them in advance is one thing. Declaring the future and then arranging the events of life to fulfill that declaration is an entirely different thing. It seems that the wording of these texts is that events happen to fulfill God's declaration that they would happen without doubt. Not merely a prediction but a declaration. That is what prophesy from God is as opposed to merely prediction. The future is no surprise to God not because of omniscience of that future but because of His sovereignty over that future.

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Open theism goes the extra step of asserting that He isn't even omniscient of the future, much less in control of it.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/12/7 10:13

//Open theism goes the extra step of asserting that He isn't even omniscient of the future, much less in control of it.//

This is an extremely common but vital mis-statement of what open theism asserts.

An open theist does not believe "the future" actually exists NOW. Therefore, God is still omniscient because he knows all there is to know. There simply is no future RIGHT NOW to know.

Straight from the horse's mouth:

<https://youtu.be/gApXDGjykw>

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/12/7 10:15

When God uses instruments to accomplish his purposes, that does not make him the author of sin. Yet God called the Babylonians down on Israel. God designed and secured the death of his own Son, God chastens, corrects, rebukes through many ways and instruments.

There are plenty of texts that warn us of reaping what we sow, and when we have sown evil we become victims of evil. God sees to it this working of his word stands firm. His word stands firm to accuse us of our sins against him, it stands firm to declare punishments for repeated sinfulness, it warns and threatens and declares a guaranteed certainty that evil will be punished.

As in reference to God's own Children he promises to chasten his own children, and in fact if we are not chastened we are not his children. So, God may in fact bring upon us hard and difficult things to chasten us for our sins and errors.

The Christian has no deist god who stands afar and beholds evil in the world as it affects all of us...then has nothing to say, nothing to do or any influence upon it whatsoever. The Christian God is at work in the world in all peoples everywhere, he is well acquainted with every single person and knows the thoughts and intents of all humanity at every moment all through the course of human history.

Satan is God's devil and God may use him to achieve his purposes if he wishes. We see this in scripture as well, Job, David, Michaiiah, Saul.

God is no sinner, God does not tempt us to sin, but God is also much smarter and much more powerful and is able to use his enemies to accomplish his purposes just as easy as he will his own children.

God is able to make the universe from nothing...and able to make from something, something altogether different.

For some, they don't have a chastening God, they have a God that only gives them gifts and when something bad happens it's always the devil. We all know the devil comes to steal, kill and destroy, but to blame the devil for everything is silly and shows a lack of discerning. To blame God for everything is equally silly and shows a lack of biblical understanding. To blame ourselves for all evil is equally ignorant of biblical truth, for some their world is merely materialistic, all that happens is an outcome from what is natural, never what is supernatural or soulish.

It takes a man or woman of God to navigate these issues, it takes a Child of God in touch with their Heavenly Father to know what is the real causation for a thing or circumstance.

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Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/12/7 10:26

Todd: brother, that stuff is pure double-speak.

God knows the future because he is designing the future, he is planning and purposing what is now to achieve what he wants in our future and his future glory. God makes the future, we don't make it, we are simply creatures of time, ignorant and incapable of knowing what tomorrow holds. This not true for God.

The whole point to keeping "omniscience" in the open theist vocabulary is to provide a cover for a heretical view of God's omniscience and omnipotence.

We have a bible filled with prophecy to be fulfilled and that which has been fulfilled. Prophecy is God's ability to plan and determine the future from his vantage point.

This quote is proof positive of errant theology and cultic denigration of God..."There simply is no future RIGHT NOW to know now."

What that must mean is "we cannot know if Jesus will return", we are told that he will, but in that statement there can be no room for faith in God. We cannot know any 'right now' future.

All of these little 'perspectives' are not mere perspectives they are seeds of error that have yet to sprout their evil intentions and create more unbelief in God's word...and in God himself.

Will there be any faith left in the world? By way of open theism...what faith is left is being chipped away by theologians of error and those whom agree with them.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/12/7 14:19

You can argue against the position all you want and I would agree with you on some points but I don't like when an opposing view is misrepresented either intentionally or unintentionally.

Bottom line is that open theists do not deny God's omniscience or omnipotence ; they don't even define them differently.

You simply believe the future is settled now; they don't.

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/12/7 16:36

Hi Todd, yes, you've brought it down to 'future', but its going to leap away from future as soon as you begin to explain the future's non-existence...and that non-existence is due to a limitation of God...so it is God and not the future that comes into question.

It's double speak. Yes, they do. I know you think I've read nothing, spoken to no one else on the subject but I have and they do not relegate open theism to 'future', they relegate it to God's open-ness and how they interpret scripture to validate that open-ness to all varieties of human action, angelic, devil and natural.

It's all about God's limitations expressed in terms of open-ness...and how God has learned to dodge the bullets of human will.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/7 16:37

Being the misrepresenter in the crowd :), omniscience is a concept of knowing all things, not just those that can be known by humans and their limitations of mind, time and space. One just can't redefine words and thus exclude what doesn't fit one's philosophical views. Omniscience is a knowing of all that can be known by God, not a knowing of all that can be known by man. That's where the open theist is guilty of double talk.

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Re: - posted by dohzman (), on: 2018/12/7 19:16

I've read through this entire thread and have say.....Wow , you guys are way over my head , on both sides , enjoyed reading this and trying to think it through .

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2018/12/7 19:46

Robert-

Could God make a square circle, or make $1+1=3$?

Re: quick question - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/12/7 20:46

So does/has God failed at anything He tried to do?

Or Does God exercise Himself in ways He already knows won't bring about the desired outcome?

Re: ,Now I know - posted by docs (), on: 2018/12/7 22:20

And he said, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for NOW I KNOW that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son from Me." (Gen 22:12 - the angel of the Lord restraining Abraham as he sacrificed Isaac)

NOW I KNOW? I thought the Lord knew all things beforehand.

?

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/12/7 23:14

David if you read the couple of chapters previous that conclusion dismisses itself.

Re: - posted by docs (), on: 2018/12/8 0:44

In what way?

Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/12/8 1:21

Gen 18:17 The LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do,

Gen 18:18 seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

Gen 18:19 For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him."

God already knew what he was going to do with Abraham, "and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?"

Gen 22:18 and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

God's knowledge of Abraham's obedience was known by God in Genesis 18, Abraham didn't know it until he had followed through.

God's omniscience is not some made up thing, its found in Genesis and proceeds to Revelation.

As I said in an earlier post, all prophecy is God's determination of what the future will be, Abraham was not fated, coerced, forced or manipulated, God brought forth his plans and Abrahams obedience played an active part.

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Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/8 4:15

Todd, I don't know about a circle becoming a square, because I don't see that in Scripture and so I try not to imagine a bout such things on my own. What Scripture says is that He can turn the Sun back in time. He can make something out of nothing. He can take dust and make it into a living soul. Finally, when God says nothing is impossible with Him, I'm pretty much done thinking how that statement is an exaggeration or can't mean what it says because I can't imagine it

My whole thought and reasoning process has been completely given over to just believing what God says about Himself and basically if He said it, then that is the plumb line and the reference point of truth. I've given up on my own personal opinions. Relieves me from the burden of trying to think outside my pay grade.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/8 4:41

JFW,

God has a desire that no man should perish but many do.

God is completely in control of whether they perish or not and when they perish it is was their sin that caused it, but God did the "perishing". He commanded that which He did not desire in the broader sense. God did in fact desire that they perish because He isn't compelled to do anything except by the necessities of His own character.

Thus, God may desire to do two things at once. He may hate the sinner and also love the sinner at the same time. How He does that I have no idea. But Scripture says both things are true. He is against His enemies in one sense and He loves them in another sense.

So to answer your question, God hates evil, He hates suffering but He uses them to accomplish His greater purposes and His greater desires.

If God wants to display the depths and perform a lavish display of His mercy, grace and love by a predetermined plan using evil men to murder His most cherished Son, then you can see two desires at work at the same time. He loves His Son deeply and desires He only experience His love and joy for Him. While at the same time, He desires Him to suffer immensely for His very enemies. One desire is subsumed to another desire for the sake of God displaying the glory of His grace in spite of another's horrendous evil nature.

Men get into a trap when they start to project their own human limitations and expectations onto God who is able to maintain two desires at the same time but to subsume one in order to accomplish the other. Actually, men do this as well. We often have competing desires and ultimately choose to act on the desire that is the greater or wiser desire overall.

Most men think God subsumes His desire to be sovereign in all things in order that men might be sovereign in their own affairs. God is much bigger than that. He is able to allow men to act in apparent complete independence of God's sovereign planning over the affairs of men and yet, when it is all said and done, they acted in complete accord with His ultimate plan.

Just because we lack the intellectual capacity to grasp how that gets done doesn't mean we have to gloss over or reinterpret the Scriptures that establish that. I'm not saying you do that.

People would do well to stop projecting onto God themselves and their preferences of what God is like. If God says something repeatedly about Himself, we should try to synthesize that with all other Scriptures and if tension gets created in that, then we should accept the tension or discomfort and agree both things are true even if in our limitations we don't think they can be.

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Re: brother Robert - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/12/8 6:02

Thank you for responding, that was a well articulated and otherwise interesting position- some of which being less familiar than the rest.

It isn't my intention to argue so I won't take it point for point attempting to breakdown your position, rather I'd like to inquire of you further in how while holding that position you address scriptures that run counter to it...

An easy example would be;

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

The issue here that is in contention is 'I would vs ye would not' ...

A battle of the wills so to speak as the term 'would' in the Greek means will in its various forms-

So here we have God saying that His will was thwarted by the will of man, in this case those in Jerusalem...

You had mentioned that you simply read the scripture and allow God to say about Himself what He will attempting to synthesize that- here in this famous passage He makes a clear statement about Himself and the dynamics of His interactions with humans that (for me) run counter to your aforementioned position.

Would you share how you synthesized this?

The reason I ask is, when I attempted to apply your position to this passage it either required me to compromise the integrity of the scripture (make it say something it doesn't) or compromise the inherent logic (make it say something crazy) found in the passage.

Thanks in advance!

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/8 6:12

Sure Fletcher,

Jesus desired that they, Jerusalem, would repent. Jerusalem, by the exercise of their own will would not. Seems like God is thwarted. Yet, at the same time, it is stated in other Scripture that it was God's predetermined plan and intention that Israel be hardened so that He would extend grace to the Gentiles to be brought in. Thus, God desired all Israel repent but they would not (not a surprise to God) and by fulfilling their will, He fulfilled His will to bless the Gentiles through their disobedience. So God uses man's disobedience even to His apparent disappointment to accomplish a greater purpose to His pleasure.

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/12/8 6:46

ok just to be clear...

either you're saying God predetermined that Israel wouldn't repent because He had hardened them but He openly and publicly shamed them for doing something He had predestined them not to do?

Or you're possibly saying that man's will prevented God's will/desire from being performed but that didn't surprise God because He was gonna use either response man gave Him to advantage His plan?

Actually it seems you're saying both simultaneously...

Or perhaps you mean something else?

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/8 7:07

What I think God says is that what man intends for evil, which evil God hates, God INTENDS or means or plans for good.

For example, in the OT, God wants Joseph to save Israel from a famine and to get Israel to live in Egypt where they will be enslaved for 400 years, all so that He can deliver them by Moses to the promised land. So, God has Joseph delivered to Egypt by his brothers' evil act performed by them because they are jealous of Joseph's statements that God is going to have Joseph rule over them. Where did Joseph get that idea? From a dream from God. Did God know that if He gave Joseph that dream that Joseph would tell his brothers who then would be jealous and who would then sell Joseph into slavery? Absolutely, that is why God gave Joseph the dream. God moved in various ways during that whole process superintending over the evil acts of Joseph's family, hating that sin, but intending it to happen so that God could ultimately save Israel from Pharaoh and take them to the promised land.

Here's an even more poignant example. God wants to save sinful men. God abominates when someone lets the guilty

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go free. Two desires in apparent conflict. Solution. The cross. Actors and Culprits....Satan and men. Over their sinful desires and acts, a Sovereign God arranges for it all to happen yet without sin. Thankfully God's plan happens without fail even though men spiritually fail in the process. I'll ask you, was God's plan for men to sin in crucifying Jesus predetermined, that is, was it bound by God's decree to happen or was it only a possibility or potential?

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/12/8 7:20

Ahhh ok,

Now that helps me understand where you're coming from-

I suppose we simply see it differently... (for me) there is a difference between potentials and literals whereas you seem to hold that when/if something happens God Himself must have willed it into being meaning that the only potentially is the literal outcome that was predetermined by God... is that a fair characterization of your position?

In any case I appreciate your candor:)

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/8 7:23

Was the predetermined plan of God to have evil men crucify His Son a possibility or potential?

Fletcher, maybe this helps. God can foreknow how sinful men will act given a particular set of circumstances. Is God in the wrong if He without any sin on His part arranges those circumstances that in fact bring about acts of sinful men that accomplish His greater purposes? He didn't force them or compel them to act on their own sinful impulses. He merely put them in situations where those sinful impulses were able to expose and express themselves. I think your answer would be that He would not do that. I think Scripture says very clearly that He does do that.

We know that the Holy Spirit led Jesus into the desert to be tempted. God did not tempt Jesus, but He led Jesus to the situation of temptation so as to test him. In this way, God arranges a circumstance or situation but it is Satan that does the tempting. God wanted to test Jesus for his good and Satan wanted to tempt Jesus unto evil. God arranged. Satan did the evil.

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/12/8 7:50

(For me) God is sovereign over His plan and only His plan, He is omniscient only regarding His plan, however He is fully aware of the potential for man to act apart from His will- so since there was a potential for man to literally fall, God provided a means of restoration before the foundation of the world. Much like a father, knowing the potential for a fall, would place a life jacket on his children before they ever even got into the boat.... not because he absolutely knew they would or because he caused them to fall out of the boat but simply being aware of the potential, he makes a provision to preserve out of love:)

Now each child has to remain or abide in the lifejacket in order to benefit from its ability to save them. Again knowing that the restrictive aspect of the lifejacket could possibly result in some or all the children putting them off, he prepares and encourages each child according to their understanding and ability to keep it on, even to the point of disciplining those whom attempt to put it off. However if they persist in their folly in spite of His admonition then He will not force them to keep it on whereby the benefits that He Himself paid for performed, predetermined, predestined etc... in regards to his children's safety are forfeited:(

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/12/8 8:02

So to be clear-

God Himself is the sole proprietor of salvation in that He does it to/for mankind thru Christ without any participation from the recipients- however He gives each the choice whether or not they submit to His provision and thereby abide in its benefits or reject it. He even goes so far so as to provide the ways and means (faith - grace) to abide in His promise... but He does not (in my understanding) thwart His own justice nor undermine His holiness by requiring them to abide.

Again not, in any way seeking debate, rather hoping to understand each other's position of faith by sharing it:)

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Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/8 8:11

Thanks Fletcher, I was typing an edit to my original post by the time I saw your answer.

This issue has been debated for centuries. The question takes us back to God's purpose in creating man. I've always struggled to understand why God put the tree of good and evil in the Garden in the first place and after putting it there, why did He let Satan into the Garden? It's clear that God knew what Satan would do and He knew what Eve and Adam would ultimately do. I know the pat answers that people try to suggest to prop up their views of God, man and God's plan. So much misery and suffering might have been avoided if God had not put the tree there or allowed Satan to tempt. Yet, knowing all that, God arranged a tree in a garden and an encounter with pure evil that would dramatically impact the creation for thousands of years and result in the damnation of billions. No matter which viewpoint we have on the sovereignty of God in man's actions, with regard to His own actions, God had the prerogative, power and freedom not to put the tree in the Garden or allow Satan there as well in the first place. At the end, we just don't know. I can tell you that at the stated purpose of creation is for Jesus to be supreme in all things and for God's grace towards sinners to be praised for eternity. Both those purposes required sin. So in a real sense, sin was allowed, circumstances were created and God had a plan for it all so that Jesus on the cross could occur to the praise of the glory of His grace.

We have to try to look at things from God's perspective and really strive not to view things from our own extremely limited wisdom and understanding. You are probably much better at that than I am, but on this issue, I'm not ashamed to say that God is sovereign over all, even over the evil acts of men, not because it gives me comfort or joy in believing that, but solely because I see it everywhere in Scripture.

Re: - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/12/8 8:33

Ha! Very good brother- for you have fleshed out where the difference is...

(For me) the purpose of God creating man was first and foremost because He wanted fellowship,... offspring:)

I see this as such, not limited to but including, in the patterns prophetically displayed in scripture as well as the functioning of the body, what we will spend eternity doing with Him in heaven, why the OT sacrifices were made, the gospel itself, etc....

And yes we most certainly agree that to (at least attempt) view things from His perspective and purpose is essential:)

In any case dear brother, thank you for sharing your faith and understanding with me:)

Blessings to you~

Re: The Cross of the Lord Jesus - posted by BranchinVINE (), on: 2018/12/8 9:55

Ex. 40:10 “

“and the altar shall be most holy.

The cross of the Lord Jesus is a most holy altar where Jesus offered Himself as the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world. There He also offered Himself as the burnt offering, meal offering and peace offering which are fire-offerings of sweet fragrance to God.

Please note:

John 12:31-33 “

"Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.

John 10:15,17-18 “

“I lay down My life for the sheep.

No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.

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John 19:30,33 â€

Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spiritâ€

So the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him; but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.

Heb. 12:2 â€

fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Just as Joseph told his brothers:

Gen. 50:20 â€

As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/8 11:05

Fletcher, I know you know this verse, but....:)

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-all things were created through him and for him.

And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. - Colossians 1:15-18

Jesus is the grace of God given to men (for salvation, relationship, thanksgiving and worship). but ultimately for the praise of the glory of His grace in Jesus, that grace is Jesus, to be worshipped, adored and enjoyed by millions, billions of saints and angels forever.

Re: brother Robert - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/12/8 12:42

Thanks for sharing:)

And as you might imagine, I have a totally different take on Colossians 1 as well as why God created man etc,...

Thatâ€™s ok with me, that we see it differently and have different understandings- Blessings:)

Re: - posted by Oracio (), on: 2018/12/11 0:21

Hi Robert, you wrote:

Quote:
-----I can tell you that the stated purpose of creation is for Jesus to be supreme in all things and for God's grace towards sinners to be preserved for eternity. Both those purposes required sin. So in a real sense, sin was allowed, circumstances were created and God had a plan for it all so that Jesus on the cross could occur to the praise of the glory of His grace.

We have to try to look at things from God's perspective and really strive not to view things from our own extremely limited wisdom and understanding. You are probably much better at that than I am, but on this issue, I'm not ashamed to say that God is sovereign over all, even over the evil acts of men, not because it gives me comfort or joy in believing that, but solely because I see it everywhere in Scripture.

From what I understand, your view says that Godâ€™s ultimate aim in creating man was to glorify Himself through the salvation of some and the destruction/damnation of most. When it comes to those who are "non-elect" or "reprobate," your view says that God prioritizes the glorification of Himself through their damnation in hell. By contrast, our view sees God preferring to save all sinners; we see Him going to such great lengths to provide that opportunity to all. We see Him humbling Himself and dying for His very enemies, all of them. But when it comes to the "non-elect," your view sees God preferring to step on His enemies instead of allowing them to step on Him in order to save them. Big difference

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nce indeed.

Re: My purpose... - posted by savannah, on: 2018/12/11 6:56

"From what I understand, your view says that God's ultimate aim in creating man was to glorify Himself through the salvation of some and the destruction/damnation of most. When it comes to those who are "non-elect" or "reprobate," your view says that God prioritizes the glorification of Himself through their damnation in hell. By contrast, our view sees God preferring to save all sinners; we see Him going to such great lengths to provide that opportunity to all. We see Him humbling Himself and dying for His very enemies, all of them. But when it comes to the "non-elect," your view sees God preferring to step on His enemies instead of allowing them to step on Him in order to save them. Big difference indeed."

For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE I RAISED YOU UP, TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWER IN YOU, AND THAT MY NAME MIGHT BE PROCLAIMED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE EARTH."
Romans 9:17

This verse shows, that God is not unjust in rejecting others of equal condition with the elect; for the proof of which, he cites a testimony out of Exodus 9:16. This verse must be joined with Romans 9:14.

God forbid; for the Scripture saith, i.e. God saith in the Scripture:

Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up; i.e. I have created or promoted thee to be king in Egypt. Or, (as some), I have raised or stirred thee up to oppress my people. Or, I have hardened thee, as it follows in the next verse, and given thee up to thy own rebellious and obstinate mind.

That I might show my power in thee, &c.: I have done what I have done for this very end, that the whole world may ring off my power and glory. And this shows, that it is not unjust in God to reject sinners of the children of men, because thereby he furthers his own glory. For this end all things are made, and all things are accordingly ordered and disposed, Proverbs 16:4. - M. Poole

Re: - posted by CofG (), on: 2018/12/11 7:11

Orancio,

It would probably be better to say that we both have a view hopefully based on a sincere understanding of Scriptures. It isn't a view of God that should be separated from God's own declaration of Himself and nothing more or less.

God does get glory when both His mercy and His justice are displayed. So, there is glory in mercy to sinners and there is a kind of glory in the punishment of sinners. Revelation and the Psalms most clearly say that, not me. I'm sure you know the passages that say that explicitly and very clearly so I won't restate them here. That is just a Biblical fact. So, I'm hoping you believe that as well and your criticism is misunderstood on my part.

That is why the cross is such a glorious display of God. It is a consummation of God's love, mercy, grace, Holiness, justice all intersecting at the cross and in the person of Jesus. At the cross, God's love and mercy to sinful men are totally declared while at the same time

God's justice and holiness are vindicated because the sins He previously passed over are dealt with. You know that from Scripture too.

God loves the world and desires that all men repent and turn to Him and trust in His Son. Virtually all the people who share the views I've tried to express believe that. This thread has not been an attempt to deal with that. God's Spirit strives with the conscience of men in many varied ways to turn them back to Him. The Bible says that. This is the common grace of God reaching out to sinners. The conscience is God's gift to all men to steer them by the Spirit's striving.

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The view I think I share with others much more spiritual than me is that God freely offers the Gospel in great love to man y and whosoever wants to believe in Jesus may repent and believe and they shall be saved. In love, He additionally freely displays His glory in all that He has made and in all the blessings He bestows with the express intention that mankind would worship Him. The problem is man. He to a man refuses God's gracious outreaches and strivings. That is what Romans 1 says.

God is lovingly and mercifully gracious to mankind in a myriad of ways. HE gives families, food, rain, happiness of heart and health to men. He gives men life and doesn't destroy them at the first sin. He is patient and long suffering in the hopes that His kindness would turn men to repentance.

Here's the problem. Mankind rejects God's self declaration, His kindness, His mercy, His love. Every day. That rejection is man's fault. Not God's. If God sends a man to Hell it is to punish that man for His sins.

Does that rejection by man of God's manifold and daily grace stop God from having a people that would worship and praise Himself through Jesus which is the point of creation as I read Colossians 1, Absolutely not. God goes a step further. In spite of evil mankind's rejection of God's daily goodness, God mercifully, graciously and in extravagant love saves some by overcoming their rebellion, unwillingness, hostility and sinful rejection by giving them new life and His Spirit.

So, God daily and in great love grants man opportunities daily to turn to Him. He sent His Son in great love to die for sin so that whosoever would turn to Him might have life. None want that offer because their hearts are evil and they desire the darkness. So, in spite of God's outreach in general revelation and in daily mercy and in the general offer of the Gospel which all are amazing acts of mercy and loving kindness, God also, then, mercifully secures a people for His glory who in spite of their rebellion, God makes them alive in His Son by effectively giving them new birth and changing their wants, desires, affections and wills so that they will desire Him and come to Him.

I don't know why He doesn't do that for all men. I don't know why He did that for me. However, as to all who don't receive that grace, they had previously received so much amazing grace in daily revelation, daily patience and long suffering, daily gifts of love and kindness, and the free loving offer of the Gospel. God cannot be indicted in any way for a lack of grace to all. God is unbelievably gracious in daily and glorious mercy and love to men. To suggest that going further and being merciful to an undeserving people that He chooses for Himself makes God look unloving is a very strange read and understanding of all that.

When God's grace in every man's life is revealed in that day, no one will fault God for not saving all. He daily reaches out to men and they in their sinful natures daily reject the lover of their souls. That is the great indictment. I think we will all one day be completely shocked by the exceeding sinfulness of sin and of sinful man. Right now we see a lot of God's grace in the life of men that restrains their true self. When the day of ultimate revelation comes, we will see clearly that God has been so very good and man has been very evil.

I think you know this is the position of those who share my view so I'm not sure why your gross recasting of the position is done.

It has now gotten to the point in the back and forth that people are angry at me so I'm bowing out. Just let me add that some of you guys really do mischaracterize and conflate the views of the sovereign grace believer. It is a shame that when we disagree that there is an attempt to demonize the opposition and then try to make their position irrelevant or heretical. There are some extremely Godly saints on whose shoulders your faith stands that share in substantial measure what I have shared. Recognizing that doesn't make you wrong, it just avoids you making them into believers and teachers in the doctrines of demons.

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