

## Scriptures and Doctrine :: My Questions for Calvinists

### My Questions for Calvinists, on: 2006/11/3 16:59

In my theological pondering, I've tried to internally perceive the world of the Calvinistic theology. Adopting, temporarily, the view of the world that a Calvinist has, and perceiving all things through the filter of the five points, I've examined to see if there are any internal inconsistencies within themselves.

This has led me to come up with a few basic and fundamental questions for Calvinists.

1. If God causes all and man causes nothing, how can men cause or be responsible for sin, or even for rejecting the truth, or even for choosing darkness over the light, if men cannot choose anything, because all choosing is entirely of God's counsel, since God causes all and man causes nothing?

2. If God is truly the author of all things, how can you reconcile the scriptures which say that God is not the "author of sin" and that God does not "tempt with evil"?

We know that confusion, temptation and evil exist in the world. If God is the author and controller of all, and man is the author and controller of nothing, then God is the author of confusion, and not only tempts men to sin, but chooses that men should sin, because God causes all and man causes nothing.

3. If sin is contrary to God's will, but all that was - is - and will be is God's will, because God causes all and man causes nothing, how can sin itself exist in the Calvinist world, if the essence of sin is what is contrary to God's will?

4. If God causes all and man causes nothing, how can a man's thinking or actions be considered immoral, if man's thinking and man's actions are ultimately God's thinking and God's actions?

5. In the Calvinistic world, how can one acknowledge and account for immorality, if God causes all and man causes nothing, without crediting and accusing God Himself of immorality?

6. How can a Calvinist apologist challenge the thoughts of an unbeliever, seeking to bring them "captive to the obedience of Christ" if all thoughts are already within God's captivity, because God causes and controls all?

7. How can a Calvinist evangelist challenge the actions of an unbeliever, seeking to see him submit to God, if all actions are caused by God, and all persons are ultimately submitted to God already?

8. How can a Calvinist properly justify debating "Calvinism vs. Arminianism" if all things are caused by God, therefore concluding that Arminians are only those who were predestined to be so?

These are just a few of my honest and sincere questions.

### Re: My Questions for Calvinists - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/11/3 19:19

Quote:

-----This has led me to come up with a few basic and fundamental questions for Calvinists.

Jesse,

I would say that your questions are aimed against hyper-Calvinists that believe that every action of man is pre-ordained and controlled by God in some way. This is an extreme position and easily refuted. But I think there are a few things about the normal doctrine of Calvinism that we need to clarify in this thread.

Firstly, Calvinism was formed more accurately by Calvin's followers and Calvin himself did not fully believe in limited atonement; he actually spoke against it in some of his later writings.

Secondly, the major 5 tenets of calvanism are in relation to "salvation" and that alone. We can define calvanism by the t he theology of those that accept the 5 points of salvation. But I would say that a biblical christian would agree with much that a strong calvanist would say minus the 5 tenets of the salvation process.

God is the author of evil and good. He created all things and upholds all things by His power. God has given man free wi ll and choice. Adam and Eve transgressed and in mankind there is a strong inclination towards sin, but still we retain fre e will in our slavery to sin but we are not able to master or overtake this foe alone.

There are many providential acts of God in the world and if you take for truth some of my prior statements then we just b eing able to type these statements and read them prove that God's providence is allowing us to do so, for he could disa nnual all of creation and things seen in a moment if he wished but in His good pleasure He is allowing men a chance to r epent and come to Him before the end of the world when this last day is finished.

I do believe the bible states that without the word of the Holy Spirit no man could be saved. But there is part of man's ch oice to confess and believe that these impressions and convictions laid there by God are true.

Thus man cannot save himself, but God cannot save man without man's choice being involved.

This is just my position without much scriptural proof.

**Re:, on: 2006/11/3 19:34**

Yes these questions are more specificky addressing "hyper-calvinism" as it is called, which teaches that God's sovereign ty and Gods omnipotence means that God causes and controls everything and that man causes and controls nothing.

Cornelius Van Til, a graduate of Calvin College, Princeton Theological Seminary and Princeton University, and prized for mer professor of Westminster Theological Seminary, taught that God causes and controls absolutely everything. He stro ngly stresses this point in his classic "Christian Apologetics" book.

And Theodore Beza who was John Calvins successor at the Academy of Geneva actually publicly taught that God was the "author of sin", though neither St. Augustine nor John Calvin took it was far as Beza. But there are some today who do.

These questions are for those who are of the Beza and Van Til persuasion.

**Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/11/3 19:44**

Quote:

-----And Theodore Beza who was John Calvins successor at the Academy of Geneva actually publicly taught that God was the "author of sin", though neither St. Augustine nor John Calvin took it was far as Beza. But there are some today who do.  
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What does it mean to be "the author of sin" ? How does that break down in your mind brother? As I stated I believe that God made evil and good and also makes the ability to sin because He made the "commandment"

I would like to hear what you think on this issue more specifically?

**Re:, on: 2006/11/3 19:49**

The teaching that God is the author of sin is not merely saying that God gave man the ability (that much is obvious) but t hat God actually predestined man to sin (rape, murder, lie, steal, molest, etc) totally independant upon mans free will.

Ultimately it is to teach that mans sin is ultimately God's sin, that there is no such thing as willful sin as Hebs 10:26 spea ks of, because man doesn't have free will, only God does, so all actions and thoughts (including sinful ones) are caused because of the counsel of God before the foundation of the world.

I'd say that there is no greater slander on God's character then to say that He is the author of sin, and thus to make man the victim of sin.

**Re:, on: 2006/11/4 17:43**

Anyone who believes that "God causes everything" want to maybe answer at least one of these questions.

They are not meant to be trick questions or anything like that. They are honest and sincere.

If it's biblically true that "God causes everything" then there must be a biblical answer for all those questions. I just don't know what they are, within the system of Calvinism.

Of coarse the Arminian answer is that God does not cause everything, for example sin, temptation, confusion, etc. Thou gh certainly He has allowed these things.

**Re: - posted by 777 (), on: 2006/11/8 15:25**

Hello my fellow Bretheren in Christ I hope this clears things up...

Question: "Did God create evil?"

Answer: At first it might seem that if God created all things then evil must have been created by God. However, there is an assumption here that needs to be cleared up. Evil is not a "thing" - like a rock or electricity. You can't have a jar of evil ! Rather, evil is something that occurs, like running. Evil has no existence of its own - it is really a lack in a good thing. F or example, holes are real but they only exist in something else. We call the absence of dirt a hole - but it cannot be sep arated from the dirt. So when God created, it is true that all that existed was good. One of the good things that God mad e was creatures who had the freedom to choose good. In order to have a real choice, God had to allow there to be some thing besides good to choose. So God allowed these free angels and humans to choose good or non-good (evil). When a bad relationship exists between two good things we call that evil, but it does not become a "thing" that required God to create it.

Perhaps a further illustration will help. If I were to ask the average person "does cold exist?" - his/her answer would likely be yes. However, this is incorrect. Cold does not exist. Cold is the absence of heat. Similarly, darkness does not exist. D arkness is the absence of light. Similarly, evil is the absence of good, or better, evil is the absence of God. God did not h ave to create evil, but rather only allow for the absence of good.

Look at the example of Job in Job chapters 1-2. Satan wanted to destroy Job, and God allowed Satan to do everything b ut kill Job. God allowed this to happen to prove to Satan that Job was righteous because he loved God, not because Go d had blessed him so richly. God is sovereign and ultimately in control of everything that happens. Satan cannot do anyt hing unless he has God's "permission." God did not create evil, but He allows evil. If God had not allowed for the possibil ity of evil, both mankind and angels would be serving God out of obligation, not choice. He did not want Â“robotsÂ” that simply did what He wanted them to do because of their "programming." God allowed for the possibility of evil so that we could genuinely have a free will and choose whether we wanted to serve Him or not.

Ultimately, there is not an answer to these questions that we can fully comprehend. We, as finite human beings, can nev er fully understand an infinite God (Romans 11:33-34). Sometimes we think we understand why God is doing something , only to find out later that it was for a different purpose than we originally thought. God looks at things from an eternal pe rspective. We look at things from an earthly perspective. Why did God put man on earth knowing that Adam and Eve wo uld sin and therefore bring evil, death, and suffering on all mankind? Why didnÂ’t He just create us all and leave us in H eaven where we would be perfect and without suffering? The best answer I can come up with is this: God didnÂ’t want a race of robots who did not have a free will. God had to allow the possibility of evil for us to have a true choice of whether to worship God or not. If we never had to suffer and experience evil, would we truly know how wonderful heaven is? God did not create evil, but He allowed it. If He hadnÂ’t allowed evil, we would be worshipping Him out of obligation, not by a choice of our own free will.

God Bless

**Re:, on: 2006/11/8 15:42**

So if it's true that "God causes everything"

Then who causes evil?

Who causes lying?

Who causes stealing?

Who causes blasphemy?

Who causes murder?

Who causes idolatry?

Who causes these things?

**Re: - posted by GraceAlone (), on: 2006/11/8 16:33**

So if it's true that "God causes everything"

Then who causes evil?

God is not the author of Sin. God is omnipotent and causes everything to work towards His glory. Man is responsible for sinning. The demons and man cause evil. Though God is not the author of evil: evil is limited to God's decree.

<http://www.ligonier.org/> has a video debate between RC Sproul and John Gerstner on the sovereignty of man vs sovereignty of God. Its 10/1/06 and is called "is God or man sovereign?"

Romans 1:28

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting;

Here Romans says that God will give you over to a debased mind if you reject Him. Now does that mean that God is at fault for your debased mind? NO. He has sovereignly decreed your rebellion.

A good question would be why did God LET Adam bite the fruit? My simple response is FOR HIS GLORY.

**Re:, on: 2006/11/8 17:14**

So I would be correct by saying that God uses all things but doesn't cause all things? That some things, like sin, are caused by man?

It would be correct to say that God uses all circumstances for His good, but God does not originate all circumstances to begin with, but man originates sin.

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/11/9 7:47**

Quote:  
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This quote reminds me of the Presbyterian Charles Finney's reasoning. To him sin was only a verb, while I believe scripture reveals sin as a verb and a noun (Sin and sins). Sin with a capital 'S' is described in Romans as having 'entered' the human race and death followed after it.

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (Romans 5:12)

Sin is older than the human race. Whatever Sin is (and we are not now talking about 'sins' as the act, but Sin as that alien spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience and operates according to the law of sin that was in our members) it is something and it is something that *exists* in all who are 'in' Adam. If any man be 'in' Christ he/she is a new creature, etc. It is not just the absence of communion with God that a sinner must deal with (spiritual death), but the *presence* of the spirit that is working in them unto disobedience (Ephesians 2:2) that gives them the nature to commit sins.

This Sin is described as a ruler and sinners as the servants. Sin can have 'dominion'. Sin is 'personified' (as it were) and must be 'died to'. Christ took Sin down into death and freed us from it if we are in Him. He is free from Sin- so the Truth that is in Him must also be the truth that is in us. The Cross is where Sin is dealt with. Not just the removal of the offense towards God- but the DEATH of our Old Man. Our Old Man needed to die because he was a slave to Sin itself. He was servant of that spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience (Eph. 2:2). Whatever Sin is- it came through the door and entered the race destroying and bringing death. This is why men must be born again. they have to die to the Sin and come alive unto Christ.

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/11/9 8:02**

Quote:  
-----Romans 1:28  
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Romans 1:28 is one of a multitude of 'if-then' passages of scripture. If you reject the knowledge of God- 'then' He will give you over to a reprobate mind. This is not the same as saying God has decreed that man will reject the knowledge of God and then be reprobated. God may well have decreed the *consequences* of rebellion, and in this way those consequences are irresistible; but again, this is an 'if-then' law that has predetermined calculations but the variables and hence the results are up to us. Otherwise it would be unconditional reprobation and would be completely out of step with the revealed attributes of God. Better would it be to say that the passages in question make no sense at all than to form a doctrine that militates against the clearly revealed character and attributes of God (Wesley).

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/11/9 8:21**

Quote:  
-----A good question would be why did God LET Adam bite the fruit? My simple response is FOR HIS GLORY.  
-----

An older question would be, "Why did God allow Satan to rebel and take with him a third of the stars?" I want to be careful as not to agree too strongly with the statement that God allowed it "for His glory." Sin does not glorify God or anything else- if it did (I speak as a fool) let us sin that God may be glorified. God is glorified in the life of a sinner because the consequences of sinning justify God's demand for obedience. No sin can go without a consequence that works against the greater good of God's creation. It is sugar in the gas tank. It is impossible that sin can bring about good unless God works through it to cause it to happen. Sin is destructive and could never be *constructive*. So the issue has to be something else.

God created all things for His 'pleasure'. God has revealed Himself primarily as a God of love. God IS love (aGape). He has created creatures on varying levels with the ability to choose. In the case of man God created a being that could choose.

ose to love or not to love. The greatest commandment outlines God's greatest objective; *that we would love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength*. This IS the great commandment and it must be God's ultimate objective in the creation of man. God was clearly desiring *love*. We can say that He desires first to be glorified, but the revelation points to His desire for man to love Him.

And this is the fulcrum of the debate. Is it all about God's glory or is it all about love? Does God seek glory in damning sinners or does God seek love by saving them? I would say that God would far prefer to be loved by saving a sinner (we love Him because He first loved us) than to be glorified by the death of the wicked. God has NO pleasure in the death of the wicked and would have all men to come to repentance. I simply refuse to believe that God has revealed Himself as the God who wants to be glorified by a vast demonstration of his sovereignty. I do not see the angels seeking to look into that at all. They desire to look into God's mercy and grace in saving man. God IS glorified already and He will continue to be glorified. The issue is that of LOVE. The great commandment is the revelation of His great objective.

**Re: - posted by GraceAlone (), on: 2006/11/15 9:39**

God left the possibility for sin to come forth and be originated by man. God did not make anybody sin against their will. He only allowed them to do it while they chose to.

Quote:  
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God does use all for His good. God is not the author of sin. Still, in His plan He has decreed that man sin to show forth His grace and forgiveness. How else could He have shown His forgiveness but to allow for the possibility of sin? God does originate all circumstances but He did not create evil. He uses evil to show forth His mercy but was not the author of it. Kind of like when God allowed Satan to hurt Job. God did it to manifest His glory. He was not the one who attacked Job- but He allowed the devil to do it so that He can show that true faith cannot be destroyed.

These things are like saying "Why did God create the devil?"

I know a lot of these things I'm saying go against Arminianism... but just hear me out.

**Re: - posted by GraceAlone (), on: 2006/11/15 9:42**

Quote:  
-----We can say that He desires first to be glorified, but the revelation points to His desire for man to love Him.  
-----

Look. God is Love AND God is HOLY HOLY HOLY. God doesn't need us to love Him. He is self-sufficient. He didn't need us. He revealed Himself to us because of His grace. In His grace and love God is glorified.

**Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2006/11/15 11:32**

Regardless if God "needs" it or not, He wants it.

Jhn 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

**Re: - posted by GraceAlone (), on: 2006/11/15 16:23**

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