

God In Heaven Does as He Pleases

July 5th, 2020

Psalm 115:1-8

Introduction

In Christendom, talking about the sovereignty of God is frequently not something that Christians want to talk about. And we Reformed types can perhaps rightfully be charged with only wanting to talk about the sovereignty of God. But the truth is that everybody talks about it, and everybody operates with certain assumptions about it. When it comes to national disasters or tragedies, or even as we see now in a global spread of a deadly virus, we have to try to figure out how what we believe about the sovereignty of God lines up with what we see going on in our world. I have seen our politicians declare that God had nothing to do with this virus, or that God had nothing to do with the recovery of infected patients. They are making assumptions about the sovereignty of God. So, it would be good if professing Christians did a little studying. And I believe that if we understand God's character and attributes better, we will find that the sovereignty of God is one of the most beautiful truths in the Scriptures—and that we wouldn't want it any other way.

Which God?

It is difficult for us to comprehend God and foolish for us to think that we will fully comprehend Him. But even what he has revealed of himself can be hard for us to understand. Sometimes this leads us to make things up about who God is and what he is like, such that we have now invented our own god — and *that* is called idolatry. If who God is, is dependent on what we can comprehend or understand, then we have become the inventors of a new god and not the God who has revealed himself in the creation and the scriptures. The Gospel is not about cleaning God up so that sinners will accept him; the Gospel is the glorious story of how God has made sinners acceptable to himself through the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

It's All About His Glory

Isaiah 43:1-7 – God is the creator of all things, and we see in these verses that God declares that he has made us *for his glory*. At the heart of everything, God is glorifying *himself*. And our fleshly minds bristle at this accusing God of arrogance or self-absorption. But our adjectives do not define God; instead, God defines our adjectives. God is not loving; he *is* love itself. He is not true; he *is* the truth. So if we want to know what love is, we look at him, and we see love in its perfect form. Everything God does and everything that happens in the universe will glorify God. Because he is the creator and the sustainer of everything, God ensures that his name, His grace, His character are glorified in all of creation.

John 12:27-28 – We see Christ is declaring that His hour had come, as he anticipates His crucifixion. Even in the greatest of sinful actions, God glorifies himself in the murder of his only son. If God were not exhaustively sovereign over every single event, this would have been a tragic story of a good man not receiving justice. But this story is infinitely better than that because the hands of sinners did exactly what our sovereign God foreordained to happen, and in that God glorified himself by pouring His grace out on the world and declaring His wisdom to the powers and principalities in the furthest reaches of the heavens. (Acts 4:28; Eph 3:10)

God Does As He Pleases in Blessings

God is indebted to no one, but he loves to give good and perfect gifts—because it glorifies himself. Therefore, all of the good things we have are to be received as gifts, and we render our genuine thanks to Him. He loves to give gifts, and he loves tables that are overflowing with abundance. He loves peace, and babies, and forgiveness, and hard work, and bountiful crops, and rain clouds, and elegant computer code. We are the recipients of all of these gifts and more in differing measures, but we render our thanks to Him, and all of it brings glory to His name.

God Does As He Pleases in Hard Providences

This same giver of good gifts has made this world in such a way that he also brings difficult trials. Some can be short and severe; others can last a lifetime and no less difficult. And because he did not make us able to carry omniscience, he spares us from knowing what is to come. Although we think we want Him to give us a divine “agenda” or “reveal His will” for our lives, such information would unravel us and make us unable to function.

In the midst of trials, we should find comfort in His exhaustive sovereignty. We know this trial has been brought to us by God; that it did not happen outside of His sovereignty. We also know that he is good and loves us. He is sovereign, he is good, and he loves us. Ponder those three things. Believe them—they make everything make sense. Even if you can't understand why a trial has come to you, you do know the trial giver, and that he is sovereign, good and loves you. Our Lord brings genuine comfort and gives wisdom in abundance.

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