

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Theology Bites–God Selected Passages

PowerPoint Presentation: None

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SermonAudio blurb:

I. Introduction.

- A. We continue this small series regarding a major survey that was polled regarding orthodox Christian doctrines and what Americans believe.
- B. Before we go into the statements in the survey understand that really there are only three possible answers: Strongly agree, strongly disagree, or not sure.
- C. Today we will look at four specific questions related to God.
 - 1. In our pluralistic world there is no end of an opinion about God.
 - 2. And sadly within the church it is allowed to have the vaguest of understandings about God even though we have the bible which is God's revelation of Himself to us.

II. God as He Reveals Himself.

- A. God has authority over people because He created human beings.
 - 1. The answer is simple, yes. All that exists belongs to God. He alone stands outside of everything else.
 - 2. In fact this is where many begin to go wrong when they begin to talk about God. They bring Him into and under creation and this simply can't be done in any absolute sense.
 - 3. First, if you read through the bible even once you will find that the bible consistently points us back to God as Creator of all things.
 - a. Genesis 1:1.
 - b. Nehemiah 9:6, "You alone are the LORD. You have made the heavens, The heaven of heavens with all their host, The earth and all that is on it, The seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them And the heavenly host bows down before You."

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- (1) From here it goes on to speak of the fact that God chose Abraham to be the father of Israel.
 - (2) Then that because He is creator that He was able to destroy Pharaoh and then later to make covenant with Israel.
 - (3) In other words, because He is the creator of all things He also is intimately involved in both micro and macro realities of history.
4. Second, because He is the Creator of all things He effortlessly affects human history; frankly all history.
- a. Isaiah 40:26-31—note the tight connection between God as creator and our lives and actions.
 - b. Daniel 2:20 Daniel answered and said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, For wisdom and power belong to Him. 21 "And it is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men, And knowledge to men of understanding.
 - c. Acts 17:26 and He made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation,
 - d. Romans 13:1—note the tight connection between God as creator and us in the most mundane activities.
- B. God does not determine all that happens, He simply knows it in advance.
1. This is a common idea that shows itself in many different ways. But when it is boiled down to its essence it is merely describing “deism.” This simply acknowledges the reality of “god” but makes him so distant that he doesn’t really interact with his creation.
 2. The bible simply rejects this and really this is a sermon all by itself. I will merely give a broad swath of examples that show that God is sovereignly involved in all things:
 - a. All was created by Him, but the bible also says that all things are created **for** Him. He did not make all things and then wander of disinterestedly.
 - b. His intervention with the Fall of mankind.

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- (1) Ephesians 1:4 makes it clear it was not an accident but part of His sovereign plan.
 - (2) He again did not leave us to our own devices but instead sought out Adam and Eve.
 - (3) The promise of a Savior.
 - (a) This is the best example for each of us to think through.
 - (b) In Genesis 3:15 we have the promise of the one who would destroy Satan.
 - (c) We see God destroy the whole world yet saves Noah and family.
 - (d) We see Him choose Abraham to be the father of Israel.
 - (e) Israel would be the one out of which the Savior would come.
 - (f) In spite of their failures and sin it is out of Israel that Jesus is born (at the fulness of times).
- C. Humans exist to bring God glory and to enjoy Him.
1. Not only is this true but it is at the core of what salvation is all about.
 2. We tend to think about salvation being about us not going to hell, or having sins forgiven, or going to heaven. But the reality is that salvation brings us into a state where we can finally delight in God, our Creator.
 3. The bible is clear on this point: we were created to delight in God.
 - a. God says bluntly through Isaiah 43:6-7, “Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth (says the Lord), everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory.”
 - b. When speaking of Israel it is written in Jeremiah 13:11, “I made the whole house of Israel ... cling to me, says the Lord, that they might be for me a people, a name, a praise and a glory.”
 4. The challenge by many to this is that it seems to be egotistical.
 - a. The response back is simple, if God is our creator, if all that we are is because of Him, if He is all together glorious, and if nothing

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- compares to Him, then why would we not desire to delight in Him most of all?
- b. Romans 1 covers this in a slightly different way—Romans 1:18-25.
 - (1) We should not wonder what is wrong with this world. We have humanity pursuing everything but God as their ultimate joy and purpose.
 - (2) Many will accept God, but only on their terms and by their standards.
 - (3) The bible makes it clear that there is no one like God. Nothing that compares to Him. He is altogether glorious.
 - (4) So what else could God point to and say that it would satisfy His creatures? Only to Himself.
 - c. As it is said so succinctly in Romans 11:36.
 - d. Or, 1 Corinthians 8:6.
 - e. The New Testament writers consistently points us to the utter gloriousness of God.
 - (1) Philippians 4:20.
 - (2) 1 Timothy 1:17.
 - (3) 2 Peter 3:18.
 - (4) Jude 1:25.
5. Israel was uniquely chosen by God to be His people yet they rejected Him and received the promised cursing by God.
- a. Yet God sent His prophets over and over to call them to repentance, though they would not listen.
 - b. In Jeremiah it is written (6:16-21).
 - c. Where do we find rest? Only in God. And what was it that Jesus said again to the people of Israel in Matthew 11:29? “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.”
 - d. This is the answer that we must offer to this world. We are all creatures of our God. We were made by Him and for Him. Until we come through Jesus to our heavenly Father there is no real rest.

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6. The great lie is not that when we come to Jesus and trust in his death and resurrection for life and forgiveness that we lose joy or happiness.
 - a. Whenever I have spoken to too many who are like the rich young man in the bible who wanted eternal life but when Jesus told him to sell all that he had and give it to the poor he walked away sad, for he had much riches. All Jesus did was expose him for the poor, needy person he really was.
 - b. C. S. Lewis said it well, “The New Testament has lots to say about self-denial, but not about self-denial as an end in itself. We are told to deny ourselves and to take up our crosses in order that we may follow Christ; and nearly every description of what we shall ultimately find if we do so contains an appeal to desire. . . . Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.” (C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, p1–2)
- D. God is a perfect being and cannot make a mistake.
 1. This aspect of God touches on several points of theology—His sovereignty, His transcendence, and, obviously His perfection.
 2. As with all of this, there is a point where we either accept the Biblical message, or we are left to other devices. This is why you need to listen to the sermon on the Bible if you are having any doubts.
 3. Isaiah 14:26-27 declares a point about God that is helpful in revealing underlying prejudices against the perfection of God.
 - a. “This is the plan devised against the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out against all the nations. For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?”
 - b. Before you even bother to talk about God being perfect you have to grasp that the bible unabashedly declares that He is sovereign and does as He pleases.

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- c. Psalm 135:6, “Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.”
 - d. Cf. Ephesians 1:11; 3:11.
 - e. In other words, the bible declares God as perfect (lacking nothing) in His will, His plans, and His actions. Along with this you could add His power and ability.
4. Behind the idea of God being perfect is really the attribute that is known as “immutability.”
- a. “It is that perfection of God by which He is devoid of all change, not only in His Being, but also in His perfections, and in His purposes and promises. In virtue of this attribute He is exalted above all becoming, and is free from all accession [addition, increase] or diminution [decrease] and from all growth or decay in His Being or perfections. His knowledge and plans, His moral principles and volitions remain forever the same.” (Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p. 58)
 - b. Numbers 23:19 “God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”
 - c. Psalm 33:11, “The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation.”
 - d. Malachi 3:6, “For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.”
 - e. James 1:17, “Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.”

III. Conclusion.

- A. Behind the perfection of God is Jesus Christ.
- B. Hebrews 2:9-18.
- C. Hebrews 4:15.