

## Lesson 17

### Why Did God Permit Sin?

Genesis 3:6

#### I. INTRODUCTION

A. The problem of sin is obvious from man's viewpoint for Adam willfully disobeyed God. But, from the divine aspect, the problem of sin is far more complex, for why would an omnipotent, holy, just and loving God allow sin to enter into His creation?

B. The origin of sin is really inexplicable. It is a mystery and inscrutable to the human mind. No human, this side of glory, will ever comprehend the problem of sin totally. The Christian may contemplate why God permitted sin, but beyond that the subject is incomprehensible and must be left in the hands of God. The ultimate answer is well stated by Luther who said, "This is so high that no other answer can be given than, that so it has pleased God."

C. The problem of sin goes back to Adam and Eve, and what applies to them applies to the problem of sin in general.

#### II. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ABOUT SIN

A. God is and sin is; therefore sin must be part of the plan, for God cannot be detached from any part of His plan, for He is sovereign. If He is detached, He is not sovereign and if not sovereign, He is not God.

B. The Bible always places the responsibility for sin on man, never God. Man in his experience always recognizes this.

C. God hates sin even though it is included in the plan.

#### III. WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

A. "God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass (Eph. 1:11; Rom. 11:33; Heb. 6:17; Rom. 9:13-14): yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin (James 1:13,17; 1 John 1:5), nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established" (Acts 2:23; Matt. 17:12; Acts 4:27-28; John 19:11; Prov. 16:33).

B. "Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions (Acts 14:10; I Sam. 23:11-12; Matt. 11:21-23); yet hath he not decreed any thing because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions" (Rom. 9:11,13,16,18).

#### IV. THE PERMISSION OF SIN

A. God, in His omniscience knew that Adam and Eve would sin and could have avoided, seeing He is omnipotent, but He did not.

B. Christ was a lamb foreordained before the foundation of the world for sin (1 Peter 1:20). Therefore we conclude that God did know about the first sin because He made provision for it in eternity past.

C. God, being perfect and holy, can do no act of sin Himself. However sin is somehow included in the plan that man is always responsible for it and yet God always has control over it.

D. God has willed to permit but He is in no sense the chargeable cause, for it was Adam and Eve who sinned, not God. God, by permission, willed the possibility of sin. The very fact that He allowed it to happen and not prevent it, shows that He willed its permission. NOTE. God takes the responsibility for the inclusion of sin in His plan. God is not shunning this relationship. However, God does not take the direct responsibility for sin. When God chose to include sin in His plan, He entered into a certain relationship to that sin in such a way that man is still held responsible.

E. When God willed to permit sin, this allowed Him to be sovereign over sin and yet not be the author of it. God is governor over sin, for He determines its exercise and regulates its bounds by permission (Psa. 76:10). He is neither the inspirer nor the infuser of sin in any of His creatures, but he is its master, by this we mean God's management of the wicked is so entire that, they can do nothing except that which His hand and counsel, from everlasting, determined should be done.

F. When God willed to permit sin, He also preserved man's responsibility (will to choose good or evil). The permissive decree merely makes God the author of free moral agents, who are themselves the authors of sin. Man is not a machine without a will or a puppet without a choice or an animal without moral responsibility. The nobility of man demands that he be a free moral agent under the sovereignty of God.

G. The inclusion of sin in the plan of God is the best plan and this will ultimately bring the most glory to God.

## V. VIEWS ON THE PERMISSION OF THE FALL OF ADAM

A. Arminian (freewiller): Some Arminians say God knew about Adam's fall but could not do anything about it, for God can never overrule man's freewill. Another school of Arminians think that God was an idle spectator, sitting in doubt while Adam fell and was quite surprised. God was thwarted by the creature of His hands.

### OBJECTIONS

1. If God knew about Adam's sin and did not do anything about it, when He had the power to do it, then He is merciless God.

2. If Adam's sin took God by surprise, then Adam frustrated God's original plan, making Adam greater than God.

B. Calvinistic (sovereignty): The Fall was foreordained by God in His permissive will. It in no sense came as a surprise to Him and that, after it occurred, He did not feel that He had made a mistake in creating man. NOTE. God could have prevented the Fall but did not; thus God had a purpose in permitting the Fall, having ordained it for His own glory.

1. God did not compel Adam to sin. He simply withheld undeserved, restraining grace, which God was under no obligation to bestow, and left Man to his freewill and this will chose against God. Adam acted freely but was under divine permission.

2. Possibly one reason God permitted the Fall was to show what freewill would do, and then, by overruling it, He showed what the blessings of His grace and the judgments of His justice can do.

## VI. WHY MIGHT GOD PERMIT SIN?

A. If there were not sin, God could not manifest His grace and love, If there were no sin, there never would have been a Cross.

B. God permitted sin that men might appreciate good as in contrast to bad. If we did not know good from evil, we would never obey or disobey. We would be machines. NOTE: Man was created to have fellowship with God and to love him. Compelled fellowship would bring no glory to God. Man is morally responsible to God.

C. Sin was a hypothetical principle that always existed and was allowed to manifest itself so it could be judged.

## VII. CONCLUSION

A. Our sinful, fallen and enslaved minds cannot begin to grasp the incomprehensible and unfathomable things of God and His purposes. We must be humble and have the courage to admit ignorance.

B. Martin Luther said, "In God's commands and affairs we must lay aside our wisdom and think thus: Does it appear foolish to me? Then in truth the only reason is that I am a great fool who cannot comprehend the Divine wisdom."