

## The Decree of God, Election, and the Problem of Evil

Seeing God's Character and Purpose in His Sovereign Plan

Illumined by the Word of God

"In Your light do we see light." - Psalm 36:9 (LSB)

## Opening Question

If God is good and powerful, why does He let bad things happen?

## God's Decree – Defined

God's eternal plan that determines all that happens, rooted in His wisdom and good pleasure.

Major
Characteristics
of God's
Decree

- Eternal
- Unconditional
- Immutable
- Comprehensive

## Comprehensive Rule of God

He governs weather, nations, kings, and even the fall of a sparrow.

## Tensions in Scripture: What God Has Revealed and What He Hasn't

Some truths stand in tension — not contradiction.

God reveals both sides clearly, but not how they meet.

Truth #1	Truth #2
God is absolutely sovereign – He ordains all things according to His will (Eph 1:11; Isa 46:10; Dan 4:35).	Man is fully responsible for his choices – We are commanded to repent, believe, and obey (Acts 17:30; Rom 10:9–10; Josh 24:15).
God chooses whom He will save – Salvation is of the Lord (Rom 9:16; John 6:37; Eph 1:4–5).	The gospel is offered to all – Whoever believes will be saved (John 3:16; Rom 10:13; 1 Tim 2:4).
Christ's death was foreordained by God (Acts 2:23; Isa 53:10).	Men freely crucified Him in sin (Luke 22:22; Acts 2:23; 3:14–15).
God disciplines His children (Heb 12:6–7).	Yet He never stops loving them perfectly (Rom 8:38–39; Lam 3:22–23).
Jesus is fully God (John 1:1; Col 2:9).	Jesus is fully man (John 1:14; Heb 2:17).
The Bible is written by men (Luke 1:3; 2 Pet 1:21).	The Bible is inspired and authored by God (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:21).
Believers are secure in Christ (John 10:28–29; Rom 8:30).	Believers are commanded to persevere in faith (Heb 3:14; Phil 2:12).
Prayer changes things (James 5:16; Matt 7:7).	God's plan never changes (Mal 3:6; Eph 1:11).
We are called to evangelize (Matt 28:19; Acts 1:8).	Only God can open hearts to believe (John 6:44; Acts 16:14).
Suffering brings trials and sorrow (1 Pet 4:12; John 16:33).	Suffering produces endurance and joy (Rom 5:3–4; Jas 1:2–3).
The believer is free in Christ (Gal 5:1; John 8:36).	The believer is a servant of Christ (Rom 6:22; 1 Cor 7:22).

### Election – Defined

God's free and sovereign choice to set His love on certain individuals to save them through Christ.

#### Biblical Support for Election

• The doctrine of election is not man's idea—it is God's revealed truth.

• Scripture shows that God's saving choice is eternal, sovereign, and rooted in grace.

Reference	Teaching Focus
Ephesians 1:4-5	God's choice is <i>eternal</i> and <i>purposeful</i> —He chose us before creation to be holy and adopted.
Romans 8:29–30	Shows the "golden chain" of salvation—foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, glorification—all God's work.
John 6:37–39	Jesus guarantees that all whom the Father gives will come, and none will be lost.
2 Thessalonians 2:13	Election results in salvation through the Spirit and belief in the truth.
Acts 13:48	"As many as were appointed to eternal life believed." Belief is the result, not the cause, of God's appointment.
Romans 9:11–16	God's purpose in election stands apart from works or human decision—"not of him who willsbut of God who shows mercy."



## Conditional vs. Unconditional Election

• Arminian View: Based on foreseen faith.

Biblical View: Based on God's sovereign will alone.

Ephesians 1:11; Romans 9:11-13

#### The Decree of Reprobation

God's just decision to pass over some, allowing their sin to reveal His justice.

The Reformed position — affirmed by Augustine, Calvin, and the Reformed confessions — is that God's decree of election and reprobation are not parallel in manner or purpose:

Election is an act of mercy and grace.

Reprobation is an act of justice and restraint.

# "Who are you, O man, to answer back to God?"

#### Paul's Answer to the Objection

Romans 9:19-20

# The Problem of Evil — Defined



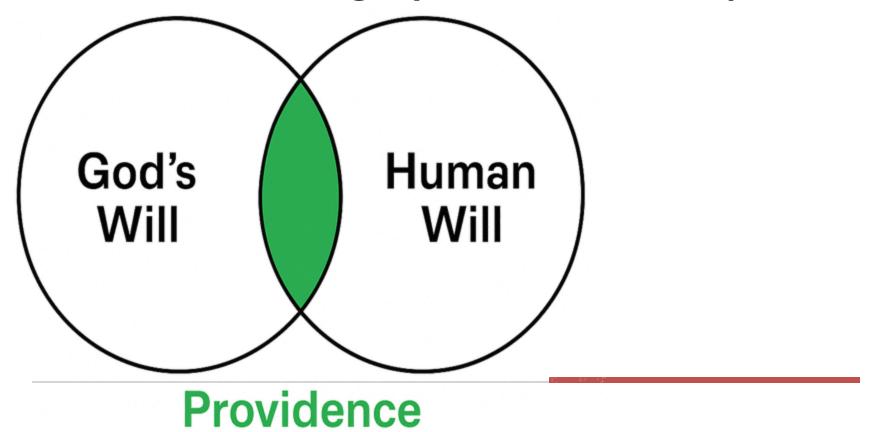
If God is good and powerful, why does He allow evil?

Scripture doesn't give speculation — it gives revelation: Evil exists, but never outside God's purpose or plan.

### God's Perspective on Evil

- Past: He ended suffering with mercy.
- Present: He uses evil for good.
- Future: He will remove evil forever.

#### **God's Sovereignty and Human Responsibility**



God determines all things, yet humans act freely according to their desires.

#### Memory Verse

• Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love, by predestining us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

#### Reflection & Discussion

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 How does this change your view of suffering?

• What does election reveal about God's character?

How should this shape our worship?