

Bible Extra Extra

**Praying to a sovereign God
without being a fatalist**

Part 2

**MAYBE NOT
EVERYTHING HAPPENS
FOR A REASON!**

HOW DOES GOD GOVERN? 5 Views:

1. All things are directly willed by God. Free will is really an illusion. **FATALISM**
2. God does not involve himself at all. **DEISM**
3. All things are directly willed (not just permitted) by God. A limited type of free will is still somehow compatible. **CALVINISM**
4. All things are controlled by God, (at least by permission). At the same time we also have true free will. This may look like a contradiction, but it is a divine mystery. **YOUR AVERAGE CHRISTIAN**
5. Some things are God's direct will. Some things may require his permission. But many things don't actually cross his desk. God will win the war but he loses some battles along the way because he can be resisted by his creatures. **OPEN THEISM**

Open Theism

God has freely limited his own ability to control every event by giving libertarian freedom to his creatures. He is personal in his relationship with those creatures and so is affected by them as well as having an affect upon them. God is genuinely responsive to the prayers and actions of his creatures and adapts his plans and responses accordingly. God has overarching purposes and is constantly working towards them through continual interaction with his creatures. Along the way his plans may be delayed (promised land) or things may happen that he did not want to happen, but in the end his overarching purposes will be achieved.

...There will be a new heaven and a new earth, evil will be defeated, and God's children will be conformed to the likeness of Jesus. But many individuals will reject his redemptive purposes for them and miss the party. It is the *destiny* of his collective people that is predetermined, not specific individuals (Rom 8:28-30). There were risks in creating this kind of world but God decided that it was better to have a world in which free creatures love and obey him than one in which he can guarantee his own will is always done.

Everything that happens is God will?

The origins of this view are not the Bible, but classical Greek philosophy.

The scriptures show evidence of God being resisted and of God changing his plans.

The scriptures clearly teach human contingency (we reap what we sow) without any statement that there are hidden prior causes determining what we sow.

The doctrine requires God to have TWO wills, which is nowhere taught in Scripture and starts to sound like nonsense.

You cannot give free will with one hand and remove it with the other – that is also nonsense.

“His Omnipotence means power to do all that is intrinsically possible, not to do the intrinsically impossible. You may attribute miracles to Him, but not nonsense. If you choose to say, 'God can give a creature free will and at the same time withhold free will from it,' you have not succeeded in saying anything about God: meaningless combinations of words do not suddenly acquire meaning simply because we prefix to them the two other words, 'God can'....

It remains true that all things are possible with God: the intrinsic impossibilities are not things but nonentities. It is no more possible for God than for the weakest of His creatures to carry out both of two mutually exclusive alternatives; not because His power meets an obstacle, but because nonsense remains nonsense even when we talk it about God.”

CS Lewis – The Problem of Pain

God created things which had free will. That means creatures which can go wrong or right. Some people think they can imagine a creature which was free but had no possibility of going wrong, but I can't. If a thing is free to be good it's also free to be bad. And free will is what has made evil possible. Why, then, did God give them free will? Because free will, though it makes evil possible, is also the only thing that makes possible any love or goodness or joy worth having. A world of automata -of creatures that worked like machines- would hardly be worth creating. The happiness which God designs for His higher creatures is the happiness of being freely, voluntarily united to Him and to each other. And for that they've got to be free...

Of course God knew what would happen if they used their freedom the wrong way: apparently, He thought it worth the risk.... If God thinks this state of war in the universe a price worth paying for free will - that is, for making a real world in which creatures can do real good or harm and something of real importance can happen, instead of a toy world which only moves when He pulls the strings - then we may take it, it is worth paying.”

CS Lewis

Everything that happens is God will?

It is inconsistent with the character of God (Rev 3:20)

It contradicts the teaching of genesis about the nature of mankind and the role of mankind within creation

It is inconsistent with the teaching about the Kingdom of God

“And from the time John the Baptist began preaching until now, the Kingdom of Heaven has been forcefully advancing”

Mt 11:12

Everything that happens is God will?

It contradicts with everything the Bible teaches about prayer

Mt 6:10 *“Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”*

Ezek 22:30 *“I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one.”*

2 Chron 7:14

*if my people, who are called by my name, will
humble themselves and pray and
seek my face and turn from their wicked
ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will
forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

There are things
that God is going
to do regardless.

He is the King.

(Even then, he
still often moves
us to pray first.)

There are things
that God will
gladly do IF we
ask, but would not
otherwise have
done.

In his sovereignty
he leaves genuine
room for human
influence.

There are things
that God will not
do, however
much we ask.

He is King, and we
must always be
prepared to
submit to his
wisdom if says
“no”.