

# 26 QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD BE ASKING!

## QUESTION #8: WHO IS IN CONTROL HERE?

Q #1. Who is in control here?

A #1. God.

Q #2. How can this be?

A. #2. God is continually involved with created things in such a way that (1) he keeps them existing and maintaining the properties with which he created them; and (2) he cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do.

### 1. HE KEEPS THINGS GOING THE WAY THEY SHOULD! (PRESERVATION)

God keeps all created things existing and maintaining the properties with which he created them.

#### A. CONTINUAL CONTROL

Christ continually sustains all things in the universe.

*Acts 17<sup>28</sup> 'In him we live and move and have our being'*

*Col 1<sup>17</sup> And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

#### B. MIRACULOUS MAINTENANCE

God causes things to maintain the properties with which he created them. This is not continual creation; rather he preserves what he has already created.

*Heb 1<sup>3</sup> He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.*

#### C. CORE VALUE TO CONSIDER: DELIGHT

Pondering the way God consistently preserves all things gives us reason to delight in the greatness of His power.

### 2. HE COOPERATES WITH CREATED THINGS IN EVERY ACTION! (CONCURRENCE)

God cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do.

#### A. INANIMATE CREATION

Many things that we think of as “natural occurrences” are caused by God.

*Job 37<sup>6</sup> For to the snow he says, 'Fall on the earth,' likewise to the downpour, his mighty downpour.*

#### B. WHAT ABOUT PEOPLE?

God planned our days before we were born.

*Ps 139<sup>16</sup> Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them. .*

God influences rulers in their decisions.

*Prov 21<sup>1</sup> The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.*

God *directs*, and *works through*, the distinctive properties of created things, so that these things themselves bring about the results we see. God is the “primary cause” working behind the scenes, but we carry out the “secondary causes” which can be seen.

God’s control over what is unseen should not lead us to deny the reality of our choices and actions. Scripture affirms that we really do cause events to happen. We are responsible beings.

God causes all things that happen, but he does so in such a way that he somehow upholds our ability to make *willing, responsible choices*, choices that have *real and eternal results*, and for which we are *held accountable*.

*Acts 4<sup>27</sup> for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel,<sup>28</sup> to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.*

*Acts 2<sup>23</sup> this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.. .*

### C. WHAT ABOUT EVIL?

Scripture nowhere shows God *directly doing anything evil*, but rather as brining about evil deeds through the willing actions of moral creatures.

*Gen 50<sup>20</sup> As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.*

### D. CORE VALUE TO CONSIDER: FREEDOM

Those who truly believe in Christ alone are FREED from the penalty AND power AND pleasure of sin. They can freely love God and obey Him by the power of His Spirit.

This content of this outline is largely borrowed (and adapted) from Wayne Grudem’s chapter on “God’s Providence” (pp. 315-154) in *An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine: Sytematic Theology* (2000).