

Be on Guard for Yourselves and For all the Flock

8- The Danger of the Heresy of Socinianism

February 28, 2021

Psalm 139

For the choir director. A Psalm of David. 1 O Lord, You have searched me and known me.

2 You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar.

3 You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways.

4 Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O Lord, You know it all.

5 You have enclosed me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me.

6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it.

7 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?

8 If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there.

9 If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea,

10 Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me.

11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night,"

12 Even the darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You.

13 For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb.

14 I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well.

15 My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth;

16 Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, When as yet there was not one of them.

17 How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

18 If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand. When I awake, I am still with You.

19 O that You would slay the wicked, O God; Depart from me, therefore, men of bloodshed.

20 For they speak against You wickedly, And Your enemies take Your name in vain.

21 Do I not hate those who hate You, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?

22 I hate them with the utmost hatred; They have become my enemies.

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts;

24 And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.

To the Glory of God

About 1,000 years before Jesus was born- God the Holy Spirit “moved” King David to write down **Psalm 139**. And as we just heard this **Psalm** read aloud in our ears; and as many of us were actually looking at the inspired Words that were being read from our own Bibles- we see a *portion* of God’s Nature revealed to us. This **Psalm** open our eyes to a *part* of “Who God is”- a *part* of the Owner and Creator of the Universe’s very Own “Nature” or “Attributes”.

Listen again to David as he tells us about this portion of God’s Nature from verses 1-5:

... You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O Lord, You know it all. You have enclosed me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me.

This is a part of God called, “*Omniscience*”. Now this “three-dollar” theological term actually comes from two different Latin words: “*Omni*” meaning: “*all; every; or all-seeing*”; and “*Sciens*” which means: “*to know; or to be conscious of*”. So, for God to be “Omniscient” means that “God knows everything about everything”.

Now “Omniscience” is part of the “Big Three” Issues of understanding what God has revealed about Himself in Scripture. The Bible teaches that God is:

1. Omnipotent (all- Powerful/Almighty)
2. Omniscient (all-knowing)
3. Omnipresent (all of God is present everywhere)

... and when you combine all three of these Attributes together- you comes up with Statements like:

- God knows and understands everything
- God is fully aware of all things- because He “orders” all things
- Nothing takes God by surprise- because God is Sovereign over all things
- God is never ignorant about the future- because He controls the future
- God doesn’t fear the unknown- because nothing is unknown
- God doesn’t change His Mind- because He plans everything perfectly and He carries out all things- perfectly

So, the one, true, and living God that we find in the 66 Books of the Bible never learns new things. He is never enlightened about anything. God is never confused. God is never unaware. He is never nervous or scared. God is always in charge- of everything- including satan and the evil plans of ungodly people. God never reads the Bible. God never prays. God never asks for anything. God is never disappointed. And as a result of all this- God is the happiest Being in the Universe.

And understanding these things correctly should fill us with Wonder; and Awe; and Admiration; and reverential Respect (the Fear of the Lord). And that is why David responded to God’s Omniscience by saying,

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it

... so, God- being God should always amaze us- because over and over- all through the Bible- we see that it is God’s purposeful Intent that human beings be stunned; and amazed; and drop our jaws; and marvel at the Nature and Attributes of God.

“Now there you go again, Brother Blair- always trying to get us to be emotional about God and the Bible and the things of God. You have got to understand that some of us are not comfortable with all that talk about God- using emotional terms. We are more reserved and we don’t wear our emotions on our sleeve like you do.” Is that a fact? Well, let’s see. I would guess that most of the people in this room this morning believe that Jesus did great and mighty Works while He was on the earth, right? But now look in the Bible as to WHY Jesus did those great Works from **John 5:20**:

For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel.

... so, why did Jesus do great Works? So that we would marvel! So that we would be amazed; and so, the great Works that Jesus did- would take our breath away.

And I also pray that every one of you believe that Jesus is going to come back to this earth in spectacular Glory- at some point in the future, right? Okay, now please look as to WHY Jesus is going to come back to this earth in that way from **2Thessalonians 1:10a**:

when He [Jesus] comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed...

... so, *why* is Jesus going to come back to this earth in breathtaking Glory? Two reasons:

1. So that He will be “glorified” IN His saints
2. So that He will be “marveled at” among all who believed

And that means that *part* of the correct, biblical Response that believers should have toward Jesus and His Works and His Second Coming- is that we marvel at Him; that we stand amazed; that we are flabbergasted; that we drop our jaws; and that we are stunned.

And I would suggest to you that this is NOT us being “emotional”- it is us being “biblical”- because marveling at God is the only correct way we sinners SHOULD respond to Him.

And I will tell you that far too many in the modern Church have lost that Wonder. They have lost their ability to marvel at God; and to be amazed at God. Now most of these people are still amazed. They are amazed at apps on their smart phones; they are flabbergasted at what technology offers us; they are stunned at special effects at movies (that aren’t even real); and they have their breath taken away at things like a perfect “10” in gymnastics; and a man running through a crowd to score a touchdown; and even at how fast sexual perversity has become normalized in this country. Their just NOT amazed at God. And that is a shame- in fact, it is a Sin.

But this loss of Wonder and marveling at God is a direct result of the shallow preaching and teaching that dominate the modern church. And it is also the result of ancient heresies, that the Christian Church confronted many hundreds of years ago and defeated- making a huge comeback in our day.

We must understand that the human mind is not stagnant. And if the mind and the heart and the soul of Man is not filled with breathtaking Truths about God- the

vacuum that is created by that absence- will be filled with something else- anything else.

You see, when Jesus is proclaimed correctly- the one who proclaims must press past all the fluff and all the “what have you done for me lately” kind of talk and begin again to be in awe of Jesus *himself*- so that those to whom he preaches may begin to see God in His absolute Supremacy.

Human beings were created to *know* God and to *love* what they know about God- so they might *enjoy* God- forever! So, we need to know the **Supremacy of His Deity**: that Jesus is equal with God the Father in all of His Attributes. And He is the Radiance of the Father’s Glory; and the exact Image of His Nature.

And we need to know the **Supremacy of His Eternality** that makes the mind want to explode with the imponderable thought that Jesus Christ never had a beginning; He is simply there; the absolute Reality with which we reckon. And so, we must rise to the Supremacy of His Eternality; while all of the Universe including this building; and your body; and this earth; and all the galaxies are very fragile and contingent- like a shadow in comparison to the eternal Substance of Jesus Christ.

And we must know the **Supremacy of His never changing Constancy**: O, to have Virtues that never change! A Character, Whose Commitment is constant- Yesterday, Today, and Forever!

O, God, please let us know the **Supremacy of His Knowledge**. That makes the Library of Congress look like a matchbox; and makes all the information on the internet look like a 1940’s Farmer’s Almanac; and makes all of quantum physics and everything that Stephen Hawkins has ever dreamed- look like a first- grade reader.

And we must also know the **Supremacy of His Wisdom** that has never been perplexed by any Problem; nor can He be counseled by any person or any being in the Universe.

And we must know the **Supremacy of His Authority**. Jesus’ Authority over both Heaven and Earth is Absolute in the changing times and seasons. So, His Authority is constant in going into wars or coming out from them; the setting up or throwing down of both kings and kingdoms; and in the dismantling of Western Civilization- Jesus does according to His Will in the host of Heaven; and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can stay His Hand or say to Him, “*What have you done?*”

And we must know the **Supremacy of His Providence** without which not a single bird in the most remote reaches of the Amazon forest has ever fallen off any limb; and without which not one hair on one head of one person on earth can turn black or white.

And we must know the **Supremacy of His Word** in that Jesus upholds the entire created Universe by the Word of His Power. So, all the Galaxies; and all the worlds; and all subatomic particles- as they exist in degrees and layers that nobody has even dreamed of yet- is all upheld by the Word of the Power of Jesus Christ.

And we must know the **Supremacy of His Power** to walk on water; and to heal the sick; and raise the dead; and to open blind eyes; and to cause lame men to walk; and deaf men to hear; and to cleanse the lepers; and cause two fish and five loaves of bread to feed five thousand men with twelve baskets of scraps; and to cause storms to cease; and with just three words, “**Lazarus, come forth!**” a dead man came to life again.

And we must know the **Supremacy of His Purity**. Jesus never sinned. He never one time in any way for even a micro- second had a bad attitude or a sinful lust.

And we must know the **Supremacy of His Trustworthiness**. Jesus never breaks a Promise. He always keeps His Word- absolutely- without fail.

And we must know the **Supremacy of His Justice**. Jesus will render all Accounts to be “settled” at the end of the world- either on the Cross in gracious Salvation; or in Hell in perfect Justice- and there will be NO Injustice.

And we must know the **Supremacy of His Patience**. Jesus has endured you and me for decades. He has endured this city and this state for over two-hundred years. We can’t even begin to imagine WHY God allowed the sun to rise on this wicked, sinful, God hating city this morning; and with this world so filled with wicked rebels- Jesus caused the sun to rise in the sky this morning to give light upon the earth for yet another day- because Jesus is so patient.

And we must know the **Supremacy of His Slave- Like Sovereign Obedience**. Jesus kept every single one of His Father’s Commands- perfectly. And in the end- He embraced the Cross with Joy and total willingness.

And we must know the **Supremacy of His Meekness and Lowliness and Tenderness**- Jesus will not break a bruised reed and He will not quench a smoldering flax.

And we must know the **Supremacy of His Wrath**. One day the Wrath of Jesus will explode on this world- in such a way that all, who have rejected Him, will call for the rocks to fall on them and crush them and hide them from the Wrath of the Lamb of God. So, when I look at Muslims beheading people- and someone asks, “*Where is your supreme Christ now?*” My answer is real easy- “*Jesus is in Heaven storing up unquenchable Wrath in unquenchable Fury to pour out on all those who commit such Sins.*” That is where He is. And that is what He is doing. And so, you better get right with Him and repent- or you will all likewise perish.

And we must know the **Supremacy of His Grace**. Which gives to the spiritually dead rebels like us- new, spiritual Life- to *forcefully* open our blind

eyes; and *forcefully* unstop our deaf ears; and *forcefully* give us a heart that is willing and able to believe. And this new spiritual Life awakens Faith in hell-bound haters of God; and it justifies the ungodly with His very Own Righteousness.

And we must know the **Supremacy of His Love** which breaks our Rebellion; and shatters our Arrogance; and destroys our Pride.

And we must know the **Supremacy of His Gladness** in the fellowship of the Trinity- infinite Power; with infinite Energy; along side of infinite Joy- rising and spilling over into the Creation of a Universe and the coming for you one day- an Inheritance for every struggling saint. So, we must know- **This Is What We Were Made For!** This is the only reason we are on earth- to press on to know the Lord.

And we must know the **Supremacy of His Omniscience** in that Jesus knows and controls every thought of every human on earth- including the evil intentions of wicked men. Jesus knows us more and better than we know ourselves. And this is so true- that we **MUST** go to Him to understand ourselves. And only those who go to Jesus will ever understand themselves.

So, here is why I brought all this up: If you are filling your head and your mind and your eyes and your ears and your heart and your soul with what this world has to offer you- and you are not filling yourself up with deep and profound Divine Truths about God- that leaves you shaken and trembling; and that causes you to marvel at God- then you will never overcome Lust; you will never overcome Covetousness; and you will never overcome Fear. And your Trust and your Confidence in this infinite Christ and in His eternal Promises will be paper-thin and will *not* grow. And so, you will *not* believe that Jesus will never leave you. And you will not believe that Jesus will never forsake you. And therefore, you will make choices; and decisions; and you will live out your normal everyday life- as though Jesus never said those things.

We were created to know and to love and to enjoy Jesus Christ. We were NOT created to waste our lives doing little piddly things; and to sit and vegetate on television- as we entertain ourselves to death. We were made to know and to delight in- this massive Christ. And so, this world- and our life *in* this world- is a little “two second slice” and then we will stand in Eternity- with Jesus or not- *forever!* This is what we were made to know and to believe and to experience and to live. And when we know Christ in these ways- we have begun to know just the *outskirts* of His Supremacy.

Time would fail me today to speak of His Supreme Severity; and His Supreme Invincibility; and His Supreme Dignity; and His Supreme Simplicity; and His Supreme Complexity; and His Supreme Resoluteness; and His Supreme Calmness; and His Supreme Depth; and His Supreme Courage. So, if there is *anything* admirable; if there is *anything* worthy of praise and honor and respect in

all the Universe- it is summed up in the Lord Jesus Christ- because He is *always infinitely* worthy of praise. And in everything and over everything- Jesus Christ is Supreme!

Therefore, over all the Galaxies and the endless reaches of space; over the earth- from the top of Mt. Everest- 29,000 feet up to the Marianna Trench in the Pacific Ocean- 36,000 feet down- Jesus Christ is Sovereign.

And Jesus reigns Supreme over all plants; and all animals from the peaceful blue whale to the microscopic Corona virus. Jesus- not Man; Jesus- not the devil; Jesus- not nature; Jesus is Supreme. And Jesus is Supreme over all Weather from blinding snow- storms to hurricanes and tornadoes and earthquakes and tidal waves and drought.

Jesus is Supreme over all chemical processes that heal or destroy- cancer; AIDS, malaria, flu, Pandemics, and all the amazing great life- saving Medicines and Surgeries and Treatments. Jesus is supreme over all Technology and Atomic Fusion and micro-processors and Bifocals and Vaccines that help to make life better for us that we do not deserve.

Jesus is Supreme over all Countries and Governments and Armies. Jesus is supreme over Al-Qaeda; and Boko-Haram; and all the terrorists and the kidnappings and the bombings.

Jesus is Supreme over all nuclear threats from Iran and North Korea and Syria and China.

Jesus is Supreme over all politics; and elections; and Liberals and Conservatives; and Debates; and Laws; and the Supreme Court; and all Judges.

Jesus is Supreme over the Media; and over the News; and Entertainment; and Sports; and Art; and Music; and Leisure.

Jesus is Supreme over all Universities and Education- no matter what they teach; and all Science and Research and Investigations.

Jesus Christ is Supreme over all Businesses; and over all Commerce; and over the Economy; and Money; and Finance; and Industry; and Manufacturing; and Transportation.

Jesus Christ is Supreme over the Internet; and all informational Systems. Abraham Kuyper, the 19th Century Dutch Theologian, got it right when he said,

“There is not one square inch on planet earth over which the risen Lord Jesus Christ doesn’t look at and say, ‘That is Mine! That belongs to Me! And I rule it and I am Supreme over it’”

Now some would say, *“Yea, this is just too much for me. I don’t ever get into things like this- because I’m a simple person and I just can’t appreciate things like this.”* And to a Statement like that, David wrote,

How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

So, to David- the very thoughts about God that so many professed believers of our day say is too deep; and too hard; and too much for them to even consider- those things were “precious” to David; they were sweet; and valuable; and beautiful; and lovely; and splendid.

Now the Christian Church has believed and taught about God’s Omniscience from the earliest days. But during the upheaval of the Protestant Reformation of the 16th Century- there arose a Heresy that was very dangerous back then- even as it is very dangerous today. And that Heresy was called, “Socinianism”.

During the later part of the 16th and the early 17th centuries, two Italians,

- Lelio Sozzini (the uncle)
- Fausto Sozzini (the nephew)¹

... were first deceived themselves about the Nature and the Attributes of God that we just went over. But together- these men were used by satan to first invent; and then develop; and then propagate- a terrible assault against the God’s Nature- *specifically*, the “Tri-unity” and the “Omniscience” of God.

Now interestingly, the Heresy of Socinianism had its origin in the Arian Controversy- that attacked the full Deity of Jesus- back in the 4th Century. And so, at some point in the mid- 1500’s Lelio bought into the heretical notion that Jesus was NOT fully God- but was a “created being” like an angel. So, an ancient Heresy, that had been exposed and condemned by the Church as being a “doctrine of demons” over 1200 years earlier was still creating havoc. And, of course, since Jesus was NOT fully God- it was very easy for this man to deny the Doctrine of the Trinity as well.

So, as the Protestant Reformation was bringing the Light of Truth to millions, who had been kept under the Darkness of Rome- Lelio Socinus was getting deeper and deeper into the Heresy of Arius. And he came to focus on three very specific areas of biblical Truth that he was empowered by satan to attack:

1. Rational Criticism
2. Open Theism
3. Human Self-Determinism

¹ In Latin, their names were transliterated as, *Laelius and Faustus Socinus*.

Now “Rational Criticism” is the false Teaching that says that the literal meaning of the Words of the Bible have NOTHING to do with what the Bible is actually saying. Now, most of the time, the plain, obvious meaning of a verse or Passage in the Bible- is usually the most accurate. So, for example, when Jesus said in **John 11:43b&44**,

... He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

... the plain and obvious meaning of the Words in this Passage tell us that Jesus literally raised Lazarus from the dead. But “Rational Criticism” says that, since raising Lazarus from the dead is a scientific Impossibility- therefore, Jesus did NOT literally raise Lazarus from the dead. So, this Passage has to do with things like: *“Altering our thinking about Life”*; or *“Valuing human life”*; or *“Teaching us how modern- day burial procedures are superior to those back in the 1st Century”*; or *anything* other than what it actually says.

And from looking at the Scriptures- *rationally*- instead of believing that what God the Holy Spirit inspired the writers to pen down- is *exactly* what He wanted them to say- we get terrible (sinful) theological positions and perverted “world-views” like:

- The Bible is NOT the “Word of God”- it is simply a Book ABOUT God
- The Miracles in the Bible are NOT true
- The Account of Creation in **Genesis** is a myth

... and on and on.

So, “Rational Criticism” says that the BEST way to understand the Scriptures is with the carnal Mind. But that is in complete opposition to what the Apostle Paul taught in **1Corinthians 2:14**:

But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

... and since all supernatural Events and Acts go against the natural mind of fallen Man- those espousing Rational Criticism simply deny them.

Now to show you the impact that this area of the Heresy of Socinianism has had on the world, Thomas Jefferson, who wrote almost all of the foundational Documents of our Nation was so impressed with “Rational Criticism” that he actually printed a Bible that removed all the Miracles and supernatural Events from it. Other famous people, who are or who have been deceived by this portion of the Heresy of Socinianism are:

- ✓ Sigmund Freud- the “Father” of modern Psychology
- ✓ Voltaire- the “Father” of the French Revolution
- ✓ Thomas Paine- the author of *Common Sense* and one of the “Fathers” of the American Revolution
- ✓ Benjamin Franklin- another “Father” of the American Revolution
- ✓ Richard Dawkins who is known as the “pit bull” of modern Atheism
- ✓ Former conservative MSNBC analyst- Christopher Hitchens
- ✓ 20th Century Philosopher Bertrand Russell
- ✓ 17th Century Philosopher Rene Descartes
- ✓ Political Commentator Noam Chomsky
- ✓ 19th Century American political leader Robert G. Ingersoll
- ✓ Science Fiction authors Isaac Asimov, and Gene Rodenberry (the creator of the Star Trek series)

It is interesting to note that the stated reason why both Isaac Asimov and Gene Rodenberry were so interested in “Science Fiction” was so that they could bring Comfort to the masses about the future of Man- who they believed would create a world of Peace and Prosperity and Tranquility through Science and technological Advancements and the power of the human Will- all without a Savior; and without Grace; and without the Cross; and without a dead and risen Savior.

It is common today to hear modern-day “rationalists” rail out against what they call the “backward” and “superstitious” and “anti- intellectual” views of Christianity. Today, Christianity is wrongly and inaccurately portrayed as “scientifically naïve”; “politically childish”; “culturally backward”; “artistically ignorant”; and “intellectually broken.” But nothing could be further from the Truth.

Genuine Science is NOT in competition with Christianity for followers. True Science; real Science; scientific Science- is not anti-Christian at all- in fact true Science is the observation of God’s Creation and it actually *proves* the fantastic claims of the Bible; It *proves* the existence of an intelligent and all- powerful God; and it *proves* that the transformed life in Jesus Christ is the very *best* life that exists on earth for Man.

The same is true of all the aspects of Life. Christianity does NOT teach that we should withdraw from Society; or that we should hide from Evil; or that we

should abstain from vocal and public affirmations of our Faith. Biblical Christianity actually *promotes* these things. The best and most brilliant Scientists throughout history were either powerful Christians themselves or else they so greatly admired and respected Christianity that they praised it more than their occupations.

We need to remember that it was Christianity that created Schools so the masses of people could learn. Our most famous Universities, like Harvard, Yale, and Princeton were all created by Christians for the sole purpose of training men to become Ministers of the Gospel. In fact, the original Goal of Education was NOT to simply get smart. No, to “be smart for smart’s sake” was considered to be Idolatry and a sinful waste of time. Neither was the original Goal of Education to simply make people more qualified for a higher paying job. That too, was looked at as being selfish; and also a sinful waste of time. No, the original Goal of Education was to enlarge the mind- so that people could grasp and appreciate and value the glorious things of God; and of God’s Creation- *better* than if their minds were ignorant and closed.

It was Christianity that promoted Language; and the Arts; and Music- so that people could read what God has said; and see with their own eyes; and hear with their own ears- the glory of God’s Creation.

For example- to attend Harvard University in the 18th century, a young man was required to have 2 hours of Prayer and Bible Study under his belt *before* he was allowed to come to class- and class started at 7:00 a.m. And that was the Business School! So young, energetic men, who would become giants of American Industry and Business- were all up and praying and studying the Word of God at 5 a.m. No wonder this nation was blessed!

Princeton Theological Seminary which is now a reproach to the Lord Jesus Christ and is now a den of snakes and frogs and creeping things used to be a bastion of Gospel Purity like the world had never known. America’s greatest Theologian, Jonathan Edwards was Princeton’s first President. And part of the requirement to earn a theological Degree from Princeton was that a young man had to be able to read, write and speak fluent Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic in four years- because those were the languages of the Bible.

The second major area where Socinianism deceived people was in what is now called, “Open Theism”. Open Theism” teaches that God doesn’t know the future- anymore than we do. And so, while God desires that His Will is carried out- He can’t guarantee it. So, this part of Socinianism attacked the Sovereignty of God- by denying Omniscience.

Now, interestingly, this part of this 16th Century Heresy originated from the Pelagian Controversy back in the 4th and 5th Centuries. And this too proves that Heresies don’t die. They simply go somewhere else- to deceive somebody else.

Open Theism denies what the Bible clearly and repeatedly teaches about how God orchestrates, controls, and uses, ALL THINGS” for His Glory- even things that we call, “Evil”. For example,

Job 2:9&10a

Then his wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!” But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?”

Now several very famous television Preachers (Fred Price; Creflo Dollar, etc.) have taught that what Job said here- was nonsense. These people teach that Job was merely delirious due to his intense Suffering and wasn’t thinking clearly when he spoke these words. But whoever was used by God to write the **Book of Job** (Jeremiah?) *disagrees* with these modern-day “pied- pipers” because he added an infallible Commentary to the end of verse 10 which says,

Job 2:10b

... In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

... meaning that Job attributing his Suffering to be caused by God- was NOT wrong or sinful- but a correct way to understand the Sovereignty of God. In **Amos 3:6**, the Prophet confirmed what Job said,

If a trumpet is blown in a city will not the people tremble? If a calamity occurs in a city has not the Lord done it?

.. and in **Ephesians 1:11**, in the New Testament, God the Holy Spirit “moved” the Apostle Paul to say,

also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

One of the most precious Promises in the entire Bible is found in **Romans 8:28**. There, the Apostle said,

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Now there is only one way that God can “**cause all things to work together for good**” to those who are saved. And that is because God *controls* all things. So, this Promise is NOT that “all things” are Good. No, some things are Evil. But

this verse tells us that God sovereignly “causes” everything to *work together* for Good. So, God takes things that we would call, “Evil” and things that we would call, “Good”- and God sovereignly *causes* both of them to “work together” for the *greater Good*” of the Glory of God- and, *ultimately*, the fullness of our Joy as well.

But if God did not sovereignly *control* all things- then He could not possibly cause all things to work together for “Good.” And that would mean that *some* things would NOT work out at all. And *most* things would not work out to the Glory of God. So, **Romans 8:28** would not be true- and it could not offer anyone any Comfort at all- if Open Theism was true.

Open Theism asserts that God's Wisdom and Power does NOT hold final sway (**Romans 11:33-36**), and thus God is NOT fulfilling His already decreed Plan for our “Good”- in all our Miseries. Open Theism teaches that we should NOT think about the Wisdom of God's Purpose in either overtly *causing* or in passively *permitting* our Calamities. In other words, Open Theism discourages us from asking what sanctifying Purpose God may have- in ordaining that our Misery come about.

The Truth is that the Pain and the Losses of those who have already been saved- are ALWAYS a Test of how much we treasure the all-wise, all-governing God- in comparison to what we have lost. And we can see this merciful testing of God all throughout the Scriptures. For example, in **Deuteronomy 8:3**, Moses said,

He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord.

In other words, God ordains the “hard times” (“**He . . . let you be hungry**”) to help us to understand if we have made those “good times” our god. In other words, “*Do we love bread- or do we love God?*” And if we say, “*We may love both*”, then we must ask, “*If God takes our bread away- would we still love God?*”

The Issue is whether we treasure God and trust His good Purposes in our Pain- or will we love His Gifts *more*- and then get angry or feel deprived when He takes them away?

We see this Testing again in **Psalm 66:10-12**,

For You have tried us, O God; You have refined us as silver is refined. You brought us into the net; You laid an oppressive burden upon our loins. You made men ride over our heads; We went through fire and through water, Yet You brought us out into a place of abundance.

... and we see it in the life of Paul. And in **2Corinthians 12:8&9**, when he prayed for his “thorn in the flesh” to be taken away- Jesus told him what the Purpose of the Pain was.

Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

... so, the Test for Paul was: “*Will you value the magnifying of Jesus’ Power MORE than a pain-free life?*”

And we also see this testing in with the Apostle in **1Peter 1:6&7**:

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

So, contrary to Open Theism (and most of what the modern church teaches) that simply does NOT understand Suffering- the Bible teaches that God *ordains* our Trials- to *refine* our Faith; and to Prove that we really trust His Wisdom, Grace, and Power- when the “hard times” come.

And that is why **James 1:2-4 &12** says,

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing... Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

So, do we *really* love God? That is the point of the Test. Do we cherish Jesus and the merciful Wisdom of His painful Purposes- MORE than we cherish secure and pain-free lives? That is the point of God's Testing. Our Trials reveal the measure of our Affections for this earth- both its “good things” and “bad things”. So, our Troubles expose our latent Idolatry.

So, for those who believe that God rules *purposefully* and *wisely* over all things- our response to a Loss or a Suffering- is a signal of how much Idolatry is in

our souls. Do we really treasure what we have lost MORE than God and His Wisdom? And if we find ourselves excessively angry or resentful or bitter- it may well show that we love God LESS than what we lost.

And while this is a very precious discovery- it is also a very dangerous one. Because a discovery about our own hearts like this- enables us to repent and seek to cherish Jesus as we ought- rather than being deceived into thinking that all is well.

Open Theism robs people of this wondrous Truth by denying that God always has a wise Purpose in our Calamities. And the result is that this portion of the Heresy of Socinianism *obscures* the Test of our idolatrous hearts. Open Theism does not encourage us to see or delight in the merciful Designs of God- in our Pain. It teaches that there is either no Design at all for our Suffering- or that the Design of the Evil done against us- is ultimately caused by satan or evil people.

Therefore, we may be so angry with satan or with evil people that we fail to ask whether our Anger reflects an excessive attachment to what we just lost. But if, contrary to Open Theism, we must reckon with the fact that *God's* Wisdom is the ultimate Reason we lost our Treasure, then we will be forced to do the very valuable Act of testing our hearts to see if we loved something on earth MORE than the Wisdom of God.

Philippians 1:20 teaches that “all of life” is meant to be lived- and to reflect the infinite Value of Jesus Christ. And we demonstrate His infinite Worth- by treasuring Him above all things and all persons. Believing in Jesus’ all-ruling, all-wise Sovereignty helps reveal our many Idolatries in times of Pain and Loss. Not believing that God has a wise Purpose for every Event- helps conceal our Idolatries. Thus, Open Theism, against all its conscious designs- undermines a precious “Means of Grace” that our deceptive hearts need.

Finally, the Heresy of Socinianism magnifies “Human Self-Determinism”. This is the part of this Heresy that teaches that, ultimately, humans have the Power to literally “create” Reality. So, our Words; and our choices; and our decisions; and our wills- are Sovereign.

I tell you that the 400 year- old Heresy of Socinianism is alive and well today. And you can hear it from the false Teachers, who promote financial Prosperity and physical Health- at the expense of biblical Holiness. You can hear it when the false Prophets tell people that the “New Reformation” exists- so we may build up *ourselves*- at the expense of exalting Jesus Christ. And you can hear it from the deceivers- who teach that we can “create our own position in life”; we can “create our own well- being”; and we can even “create our own Salvation”- simply by “making a choice”; or “making a decision”; or “speaking the creative Word”- *without* God; *without* Grace; *without* the Gospel; *without* Repentance; and *without* the Blood.

Now the greatest modern “prophet” of the Heresy of Socinianism was Norman Vincent Peale, who espoused the *“Power of Positive Thinking”*. This so-called “Therapeutic Gospel” or “Self- Help Gospel” removed the Cross and Grace and Repentance and Sin and Salvation from the hearts and minds of millions- as it taught that Man was capable, in and of himself, to better himself; and improve his status in this life; and even redeem himself- through the Power of his own thoughts and attitude and words. Here are some of his quotes:

“Change your thoughts and you change your world.”

“Formulate and stamp indelibly on your mind a mental picture of yourself as succeeding. Hold this picture tenaciously. Never permit it to fade. Your mind will seek to develop the picture...Do not build up obstacles in your imagination.”

Peale’s false pronouncements almost single handedly brought forth an entire industry of teachings and books and even entire Ministries that focus on the “here and now” instead of Eternity; that focus on “the Self” instead of God; that focus on temporary Happiness instead of Holiness; that focus on material Possessions instead of eternal Glory; that focus on Health instead of Salvation; that focus on Wealth instead of being blessed; that focus on feeling good about yourself instead of repenting of Sin; and that focuses on getting ahead in this life- as opposed to trembling before God and of humbly submitting to the Authority of Scripture.

Peale took the extremely popular, but completely godless concept of the “Self” from the Jewish atheist, Sigmund Freud, and brought it into the Church. Today, it is common to hear entire sermons and tapes and books and messages that teach about Self- esteem; Self- worth; Self- fulfillment; and Self- help. Self, Self, Self, Self. Self.

And Peale’s most famous disciple was Robert Schuler. And from Schuler, we have Joel Osteen- preaching and teaching the same heretical lies that was begun four Centuries earlier by Fausto Sozzini.

Now you would think that as much as the modern Church preaches about these things- that you could find them somewhere in the Bible. But of course, you can’t. The Truth is that the Bible actually teaches the very *opposite* of the “doctrine of Self”. Let’s look at **Matthew 16:24**:

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.

... it’s very hard to find the “exaltation of Self” in this verse isn’t it? Or how about **Matthew 16:25**:

"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

... and **Matthew 16:26:**

"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Beloved, we need to humble ourselves and return to Biblical Christianity. We need to return to the Authority of Scripture. We need to wake up and realize that if something appeals to our flesh- that means that it is bad and wrong and sinful.

Only that which glorifies God- not Self- is of God and only that which glorifies God will last. May we all come back home and contend earnestly for the Faith that was once for all handed down to the saints- so that we may live our lives to the Glory of God.

Amen. Let's pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.

