

# Adoring the God of Glory

October 15<sup>th</sup>, Class 5 – Adult Equipping Center  
God's Omnipotence and Sovereignty – Teaching Notes

## Recap

### **God is All-Powerful (Omnipotent)**

“God is able to do all his holy will” (Grudem)

[Ps. 115:3, Gen. 18:14, Jer. 32:17, Mt. 19:26, Lk. 1:37, 3:8, Job 26:14, Mt. 26:53-54, Eph. 3:20]<sup>1</sup>

Absolute vs. Ordained Power<sup>2</sup>

### **God is Sovereign**

[Rev. 4:11, 1 Tim. 6:15-16, Potter and Clay (Is. 29:16, 45:9; Jer. 18:5; Rom. 9:20-21)]

## *Providence*

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<sup>1</sup> Charnock: “The power of God is the ability and strength whereby He can bring to pass whatsoever He pleases, whatsoever His infinite wisdom may direct, and whatsoever the infinite purity of His will may resolve...God's power is like Himself: infinite, eternal, incomprehensible, it can neither be checked, restrained, nor frustrated by the creature.”

<sup>2</sup> “Since He has at His command all the power in the universe, the Lord God omnipotent can do anything as easily as anything else. All His acts are done without effort. He expends no energy that must be replenished. His self-sufficiency makes it unnecessary for Him to look outside of Himself for a renewal of strength. All the power required to do all that He wills to do lies in undiminished fullness in His own infinite being.” (p. 67, Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*).

## Three Aspects to God's Sovereignty / Providence – Acts 4:23-30

### 1. Preservation – Acts 4:24<sup>3</sup>

“God is continually involved with all created things in such a way that: 1) keeps them existing and maintaining the properties with which he created them...” (Grudem)

[Job 34:14-15, Neh. 9:6, Heb. 1:3, Col. 1:16-17, Deut. 8:11-18]

### 2. Concurrence – Acts 4:25-27

“God is continually involved with all created things in such a way that: 2) cooperates with created things in every action, directing their distinctive properties to cause them to act as they do...” (Grudem)

God directs inanimate creation (Job. 37:6-13, Ps. 104:14-15, Mt. 5:45)<sup>4</sup>

God directs and sustains animals (Ps. 104:27-30, Mt. 6:26)

God directs “random” events (Prov. 16:33)

God directs human decisions and will (Acts 17:26-location, Prov. 5:21, 16:9, 19:21; Ps. 139:16, Job 14:5-plans, Ps. 33:14-15; Phil. 2:13-internal life, Job 12:23, Ps. 22:28, Dan. 4:34-35, Prov. 21:1, Ezra 1:1, 6:22, 2 Sam. 10:11-12-nations/governments)

## Acts 4:25-27

### Divine Cause and Secondary Cause

- Pantheism
- Deism

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<sup>3</sup> “Providence does not only involve God’s mind but also his will. The origin and preservation of all things is not only a matter of foreknowledge, nor even the divine decree, but specifically in an omnipotent act of God. Hence, according to Scripture and the church’s confession, providence is that act of God by which from moment to moment he preserves and governs all things.” (Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Abridged), p. 299)

<sup>4</sup> “Science observes how the power of God operates, discovers a regular pattern somewhere and fixes it as a “law” ...The trustworthiness of God’s behavior in His world is the foundation of all scientific truth.” (Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*, p. 66)

- Christian faith<sup>5</sup>: preserving Divine cause and secondary cause
  - Cromwell – “Trust God and keep your (gun) powder dry.”
  - “Free will”
  
- Example from Grudem: Who killed King Duncan? Macbeth or Shakespeare?

### 3. Government – Acts 4:28-30

“God is continually involved with all created things in such a way that: 3) directs them fulfill his purposes.” (Grudem)

Eph. 1:11, Rom. 8:28

### **The Problem of Evil**

God is intimately involved in evil circumstances.

(Gen. 50:20, Ex. 9:15-17, Josh. 11:18-20, Judges 14:1-4, 1 Sam. 2:25, 2 Sam. 12:11-12, 15-18, 1 Kgs. 11:14, Is. 10:5, Jer. 25:9, Ezek. 14:9, Amos 3:6, 4:6-11; Lam. 3:38)

God is glorified in the judgment of evil. (Prov. 16:4, Ps. 76:10, Rom. 9:14-24)

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<sup>5</sup> “God causes all things that happen, but that 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...To say that God could not make a world in which he causes us to make willing choices...is simply to limit the power of God.” (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p. 321, 322)

God isn't to be blamed for evil. (Lk. 22:22, Mt. 18:7; James 1:13-14)<sup>6</sup>

God is sovereign over evil (Acts 2:22-23, **4:27-28**)

## Implications

1. ....
2. God is always able to do whatever He pleases. Difficult circumstances in our lives or amongst His people are not the result of God lacking power to effect change.
3. God also has the right to do as He pleases. He never needs permission or approval, including ours.
4. Because God is constantly sustaining creation, it is purposeful. This matters in the small, day to day living that to us can seem unimportant or insignificant.
5. God's sovereignty doesn't negate but incorporates human freedom. Our decisions are real and have results, therefore, God's sovereignty calls us to activity and accountability.
6. God directs all things to serve His purpose and will, even evil and suffering as Jesus has supremely demonstrated.

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## Reacting and Reflecting on the God of Glory

1. Dwell on Eph. 3:20-21 and consider what God is capable of doing. How does this meditation change how you think about the main stressors in your life?
2. When have you been disappointed or confused by God's seeming unwillingness to act? When do you slip into thinking that God owes you answers for something?
3. Consider all that God is currently sustaining this very moment. How might God's preserving sovereignty be a part of your regular thinking? How does it change something mundane in your week this week?
4. What is it important to affirm that God is the ultimate cause and that we are secondary causes? How are both of those things important for the people you love right now?
5. What feels out of control right now? What evil or suffering are you having a hard time believing are under God's sovereign control even now? Share your concerns with Jesus now, knowing that He Himself underwent suffering to accomplish God's will.

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<sup>6</sup> "In permitting evil, God does not simply let it happen but determines how far will let it go and how he will overcome it for good...God therefore can be considered neither the author of evil nor the passive spectator of evil. He only actively determines to permit evils that he has already, at great personal cost, determined to overcome for his greater glory and our ultimate good." (Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith*, p. 358, 359)