

God Is in Control

Genesis 49:28-50:26

Is God involved in human affairs? Does He care when bad things happen to me? Is He powerless when it comes to human decisions?

As we go through life, we are tempted to doubt God's goodness and His power. For example, we might reason like this: The coronavirus is unpleasant for us. Therefore, either God is in control and not very good or He is good but has no control.

Joseph could have reasoned: Being sold into slavery by my brothers and being subjected to false accusations is painful. Therefore, God either does not care about me or He cannot do anything to care for me.

The Joseph narrative shows us that we believe in a supremely good and supremely powerful God.

In many ways, Genesis 50:20 is the theme of the whole narrative: "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."

God's plan is bigger than my personal happiness.

We live in a time of hyper-individualism. America has always been a place where personal achievement is prized, but it has only been in recent decades that we've moved to an extreme solipsism. We have defined liberty in such a way where anything that makes me the slightest bit uncomfortable is a violation of something sacred.

When we doubt God's goodness or power, it typically starts from a position of personal entitlement.

Sadly, some churches have recognized this trend and have repackaged what they offer to make Jesus fit in with people's wants. The truth is that God's plan is supreme.

God is so powerful He works good from evil.

The brothers did exactly what they wanted to do. Their motives were evil and their deeds were evil. God's power in no way limits what they wanted to do. God is not the author of evil nor does He act in evil ways.

Rather, God brings about good things from evil human actors.

Providence = God's ruling of the world and our lives

“God has decreed in Himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably, all things which should ever come to pass. Yet in such a way that God is neither the author of sin nor does He have fellowship with any in the committing of sins” (Baptist Confession of 1689, Article III).

God's plan keeps Joseph from bitterness and fear.

By thinking about God, we are able to have joy even in disappointment and pain (Cf. Gen. 45:5).

Directly after making a statement about God's control, Joseph says “do not fear” (Gen. 50:21a).

Key Take-Away: God is good. He is in control. He will work in all circumstances for His people.

Application Questions:

Describe a time when God worked good from an evil that you experienced.

How is the doctrine of God's providence comforting?

How can we be like Joseph and avoid bitterness and fear after unjust suffering (or even disappointment)?