

The Sovereign Purposes of God in Life

Matthew 2:13-23

Q: Before we leave the last passage behind what purposes did the magi's gifts serve?

Gold - for a King, Incense - for Divinity, Myrrh - for the burial of our Savior. The gifts were not only prophetic but providential. Joseph and Mary would have to travel over 100 miles with an infant to get from Bethlehem to Egypt. God had to be involved in more ways than one. He protected them by sending the dream but provided also through valuable monetary gifts that could help support them in Egypt.

The Faith of Joseph affirmed again, he believes and they go.

Q: The Holy Spirit prophecies through Hosea that not only would the nation of Israel be called out of Egypt (literally and symbolically (Egypt - a spiritual wasteland to Israel - for God's promised people)) but that His actual Son, Jesus Christ, would be called out of Egypt. He then prophecies concerning the grief in this moment through Jeremiah. If God prophecies this and this circumstance was the fulfilling of those prophecies, then did God plan to use the killing of children to accomplish His will?

Yes. He also planned the crucifixion of His own Son, thousands of years in advance. There is ultimate purpose in all our our pain and pleasure, far, far beyond what we can comprehend. In order for ultimate redemption and the salvation of millions to happen, what we see as bad things, occur and are even part of the plan of God.

Q: So, if God knew children will be killed, why did He plan it and use it rather than stop it?

The most difficult questions we face in scripture are the facts of a fallen world, the sovereign will of God, and God's supremacy of knowledge. His understanding of goodness and what is necessary far surpasses our own and His understanding of what is needed transcends what we can grasp. God allows, even wills things that we cannot understand. God knows infinitely more than us. Children misunderstand their parents all the time. Both are human. How much more should we find ourselves at a loss when understanding God's mind and motives? We treat God like He's human and severely, severely! lower Him.

(rhetorical to begin) Q: To help and go farther, how should we think about death? What does God think about it?

Q: What does the world think of death?

We think of death as a terrible, horrendous loss and have, by the secular mindset, been trained to think of it as the ultimate loss, the end of ends. Society has and our own fleshly, worldly mindset has left us with the thought that death is the ultimate betrayal of God's goodness and the crime of all crimes.

Q: Is death the end? Read: Hebrews 9:27

Q: How shall we think about death? Read Genesis 18:25. Read Psalm 116:15.

The means and the horrors of how we die are part of a broken world, broken by sin, suffering physically in a fallen creation and dying at other times according to the evil that reigns in the heart of man. Yet, death is not the end. The suffering of these children is brief (though horrific) and God will do what is right with every soul. He is perfectly just. None of this makes what occurs pleasant. God still grieves over the pain in our world. Jesus himself wept over Lazarus though He knew it was not the end for him, even immediately not the end. The pain was real but the reality of eternal life ordered by a just God leaves what happens here in this world, paling in the ultimate light of heaven and hell and minimal in the scope of eternity. This does not ease the pain involved but helps us find our ground for dealing with it. God highly, highly values our souls! His Son died for them. All those children, like anyone else who dies, God will rightly judge. I do not believe scripture says that children, guaranteed go to heaven, to glory for certain but neither does it say they go to hell. What we do know is that God will judge perfectly righteously. So, if all those children who were killed went to be with the Lord, then this was an incredible homecoming. Again, in the end, regardless, God has judged each righteously.

Q: In what ways are the birth of Christ and that of Moses similar? Both came in with the threat of death and God's providence

Q: Read Exodus 4:19 alongside Verses 19-20. What do these verses say to us about Moses and Jesus?

Both the old and new covenant came with God's providential timing, with resistance. Moses was a type of Christ in many, many ways!

Q: So what have we learned about the plan and providence of God?

God keeps every promise and works in and through triumph and tragedy through His perfect wisdom.