

## INTRODUCTION

It has been said and rightfully so, God is too wise to make a mistake; too good to do evil; and too deep to explain Himself. In the Book of Job, Job, his three friends (with friends like these, who needs enemies?), and then lastly Elihu (a self-proclaimed Messiah), spent thirty-five chapters debating and discussing the “deep theological” basis of Job’s suffering. After God had seen and heard enough, He interrupted their debate, and in-turn asked Job a series of questions:

“Who is this who darkens counsel  
By words without knowledge?  
[Why do you confuse the issue?  
Why do you talk without knowing what you’re talking about?]  
Now prepare yourself like a man;  
I will question you, and you shall answer Me.  
Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?  
Tell Me, if you have understanding.  
Who determined its measurements?  
Surely you know!  
Or who stretched the [measuring] line upon it?  
To what were its foundations fastened?  
Or who laid its cornerstone,  
When the morning stars sang together,  
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job 38:2-7)

Just as a side note, we are so locked-in to time and space, that we sometimes forget that God is working from-and-for eternity. There is no past or future with God. Everything is one great eternal present. In fact, God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” He is the eternal, self-existent God. He knows *from* all eternity that which shall be *to* all eternity. “Known to God from eternity are all His works” (Acts 15:18).

After God’s interrogation of Job, Job’s response was:

“I know that You can do everything,  
And that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You.  
You asked, ‘Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?’  
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,  
Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.” (Job 42:2-3)

God didn’t need Job’s help when God spoke the worlds into existence and formed them out of nothing. Job realized that God had gotten along just fine without him. He realized he had overstepped his bounds; somehow thinking he had more insight and information on things than God did. God didn’t need Job’s advice and counsel on how to create and sustain this universe, but Job realized He needed God’s help. Although God didn’t need to learn from Job, Job realized he needed to hear and learn from God. Through it all, Job knew and understood he desperately needed a Redeemer and One Who would plead His case before a Holy God.

In Isaiah 40, God once again used a series of questions in order to remind Israel of His greatness and His majesty; that there is absolutely nothing, humanly speaking that compares to Him. He is the matchless One. Beside Him, there is no other.

Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD,  
Or as His counselor has taught Him?  
With whom did He take counsel,  
and who instructed Him,  
And taught Him in the path of justice?  
Who taught Him knowledge,  
And showed Him the way of understanding? (Isa. 40:13-14)

In Isaiah 46:9-10, the LORD said:

“Remember the former things of old,  
For I am God, and there is no other;  
I am God, and there is none like Me,  
Declaring the end from the beginning,  
And from ancient times things that are not yet done,  
Saying, ‘My counsel shall stand,  
And I will do all My pleasure.’”

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God doesn’t need a counselor or instructor as to how to run His universe. Nothing ever surprises God. Nothing ever catches Him off guard. He never sleeps or even dozes off. He never goes on vacation. He is never “stumped” as to what to do. He never has to “phone a friend” or “poll the audience.” He never forgets, overlooks, or loses interest in the affairs of this world. And that could never be any truer, than when it comes to man’s salvation.

Before the foundation of the world, according to the eternal counsel of God, from eternity past, God purposed in Himself salvation for fallen man.

[We are redeemed] with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. *He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world*, but was manifest [revealed] in these last times for you. (1 Pet. 1:19-20; italics added)

All who dwell on the earth will worship him [the beast], whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb *slain from the foundation of the world*. (Rev. 13:8; italics added)

“Him, being delivered by the *determined purpose and foreknowledge of God*, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death.” (Acts 2:23; italics added)

“For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do *whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done*.” (Acts 4:27-28; italics added)

“And truly the Son of Man goes *as it has been determined*, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!” (Luke 22:22; italics added)

Just as God didn’t need Job around to advise and assist Him in creation, God didn’t need us around to advise or assist Him regarding His new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). His decision and plan to give His Son, and His Son’s decision to give His life, were totally independent of man. Where were you when God created this vast universe? Where were you, when out of His very nature He formulated a plan, whereby He would freely give His Son, and His Son would freely give His life? *The only cause of God giving His Son, is God Himself*. It was totally *uncaused* by man, because man wasn’t even around before the foundation of the world!

This salvation is also *unmerited*: there was nothing we *could* do.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:8)

But this salvation is *unlimited* as well:

Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. (Heb. 7:25)

According to the good pleasure of His will. (Eph. 1:5)

According to the riches of His grace. (Eph. 1:7)

In his book *In The Heavenlies*, Dr. H. A. Ironside explains to us the deep meaning of the words “according to”:

It does not say “out of” His riches, but “according to” His riches. Here is a millionaire to whom you go on behalf of some worthy cause. He listens to you and says, “Well, I think that I will do a little for you,” and he takes out his pocketbook and selects a ten-dollar bill. Perhaps you had hoped to receive a thousand from him. He has given you “out of” his riches, but not “according to” his riches. If he gave you a book of signed blank checks all numbered, and said, “Take this, fill in what you need,” that would be “according to” His riches.

According to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself. (Eph. 1:9)

According to the counsel of His will. (Eph. 1:11)

According to the working of His mighty power. (Eph. 1:19)

According to His eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Eph. 3:11)

According to the riches of His glory. (Eph. 3:16)

## CONCLUSION

You might think however, that if God works all things according to His eternal plan and will, and that absolutely nothing can thwart His eternal purpose, then you’re off the hook. Not so.

“Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, *you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death.*” (Acts 2:23; italics added)

“*For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatsoever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done.*” (Acts 4:27-28; italics added)

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The Jews, the Romans, Herod, Pilate, and Judas, were all responsible for their own actions. They were not puppets on a string. Each one had a free will to make his own choice and so do you. You, or anyone else, will never be able to point an accusing finger at God and say, “I had no choice.”

*Jesus is standing in Pilate's hall  
Friendless, forsaken, betrayed by all:  
Hearken! what meaneth the sudden call!  
What will you do with Jesus?*

*Will you evade Him as Pilate tried?  
Or will you choose Him, what e'er betide?  
Vainly you struggle from Him to hide:  
What will you do with Jesus?*

*Will you like Peter, your Lord deny?  
Or will you scorn from His foes to fly,  
Daring for Jesus to live or die?  
What will you do with Jesus?*

*What will you do with Jesus?  
Neutral you cannot be;  
Some day your heart will be asking,  
"What will He do with me?"*

—Albert B. Simpson