

Episode #621 The Why Question 6: What Does “All Things” Mean?

I. One of the most difficult questions we must ask ourselves regarding God, life, and the world is the “why” question. We who believe that there is a God Who is all-good and all-loving and Who made the world must answer why then this world is such a terrible place and in such a mess.

II. Though Satan might be the one who brought calamity into the world of humanity, and though God might have created Satan for a good purpose from which Satan fell, yet still isn’t God ultimately responsible for what Satan does if God determines everything that happens?

- A. Some people insist that God determines everything that ever happens. This would mean that all the calamities and sad circumstances of life are all His fault. But is this really the Bible’s teaching on the matter?
- B. The passages used to prove this all hinge on the meaning of the crucial phrase *ta panta*, literally meaning “the all” and often translated “all things.”
- C. We showed last time that this phrase is an idiom meaning “all this” or “all these,” depending on the context.
- D. We are examining every occurrence of the Greek *ta panta* to demonstrate that this phrase is always limited by the context in which it appears.

III. Concordance of *ta panta* reconsidered.

- A. Ephesians 1:11. Being predestined according to the purpose of Him Who works all things according to the counsel of His will.
 - 1. This is the passage constantly put forward as a proof text by those who insist every detail in the universe has been determined by God.
 - 2. Otis Q. Sellers on the writings of Arthur W. Pink.
- B. Ephesians 1:23. The Resultant Version: Which is His body, the complement of the One filling all these in all ways.
- C. Ephesians 3:9. God Who created all things through Jesus Christ.
 - 1. God is the Creator of all things by Jesus Christ, John 1:3. However, that is not the truth being taught by this passage.
 - 2. Having set forth the glorious truth of God’s secret administration, Paul declares that up to this time it had been hidden in God Who created all this. The context is limited to the matter under consideration.
- D. Ephesians 4:10. He ascended up far above all of the heavens (the exalted ones) that He might fill all these. Those He captivated and gave gifts.
- E. Ephesians 4:15. Are we to grow up into Him in all evil things as well as all good things? We should grow into Him in all this.
- F. Ephesians 5:13. All things is limited to the things that are reprov’d, clearly.
- G. Philippians 3:8. Paul had not lost his salvation. All these things, clearly.
- H. Philippians 3:21. He is able to subject all this to Himself. True, everything is to be subject to Him, but that is not the truth declared here.
- I. Colossians 1:16-17. This is the epistle that gives us the crystal clear meaning of *ta panta*, so I will not let myself be backed into believing these are universal statements.
 - 1. The Resultant Version: For in Him were all these creations created, those creations that are among the exalted ones, those creations that are on the earth, visible creations and invisible creations, whether these creations be thrones, or lordships, or sovereignties, or authorities: all these creations were created

through Him, and for Him: And He takes precedence over all, and in Him all these creations have their standing.

2. Again we do not deny Christ created everything, John 1:3. But that is not what Paul is saying here.
3. The question here is “what is a creation?” I Peter 2:13, shows that things like kings and governors are human creations. Paul is speaking of the same sorts of things, only those created by God.
 - a. Matthew 19:28. Twelve thrones God will create.
 - b. Luke 1:32, a throne God created.
 - c. I Peter 2:13. These were NOT created in Christ, but by man.
4. There are many positions created by God which are currently in rebellion against Him. The glorious truth is that someday all these will be subjected to Jesus Christ and conform to Him.

IV. Conclusion: The idea that God exercises complete control over everything that happens is thought to bring Him glory, but it does not make sense when we bring all the ugly things in the world into consideration. Passages that use the phrase “all things,” the Greek *ta panta*, are used to prove this, but our study has revealed that this phrase means certain things in context, not all things without exception. God is not the author or originator of all the terrible calamities that take place in this world.