

Episode #622 The Why Question 7: Is God To Blame?

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 in past weeks 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. Colossians 1:20. By Him to reconcile all things unto Himself.
 - 1. A favorite passage of the “universal reconciliationists.” They are so emotionally attached to their view it is probably useless to ask them to look at this passage logically. But if even the redeemed and believing Colossians have to continue in the faith if they are to be reconciled (Colossians 1:21-23), how can this possibly be universal?
 - 2. Traditional theology has attempted to make every passage it can soteriological, and that has clouded the meaning of this passage when they translated the word “reconcile,” which is made synonymous with salvation. But this is not a good translation of *apokatallasso*.
 - 3. *Ta panta* again means “all these” and refers back to the Divine creations referred to in verse 16. All these are going to be metamorphosed to Christ.
- B. Colossians 3:8. The passage from which we learn that *ta panta* means “all these,” only things in context, not all things without exception.
- C. Colossians 3:11. Christ is all in all. The subject is the “new man” or new humanity in Christ. In the former humanity were Greeks, Jews, circumcised, uncircumcised, slave, and free. In the new humanity, Christ is all this in everyone.
- D. I Timothy 6:13. God Who gives life to all things. It is true that God is the source of all life, and could even give life to inanimate objects like Aaron’s rod! But that is not what Paul is talking about. He is talking about Godly activities like pursuing righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and meekness.
- E. Hebrews 1:3. Upholding all this by the word of His power. That is, the things just mentioned in verse 2.
- F. Hebrews 2:8. You have put all things (*panta*) in subjection under His feet. For in that He put all (*ta panta*) in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not put under Him. But now we do not yet see all things (*ta panta*) put under Him.

1. This demonstrates our contention: *ta panta* is an idiom that never stands alone but is based on something that has just been said or is about to be said, whereas *panta* is not an idiom and often does stand alone.
2. The first statement, that God has put ALL in subjection under the feet of Christ, is unlimited, proven by the phrase, He left nothing that is not put under Him. But we do not yet see all these in subjection to Him. When we do, He will perpetuate or eliminate as He sees fit, Matthew 3:10-12.
3. Since *panta* means something unlimited in this context, *ta panta* means something that is unlimited as well.

G. Hebrews 2:10. For whom is all this and by whom is all this. Refers to the statement that Christ “by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

H. Revelation 4:11. Spoken by the twenty-four elders before the throne. These wear golden crowns, not just decorations but symbols of their high authority. Just before speaking these words of praise, they have cast these crowns before the throne (subjected to Him). Then they say, “You have created ALL THESE.”

I. Revelation 5:13. In heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all these that are in them. It seems to express universality, and some rush in with universalism here. Yet can it be that the same ones who are universally praising God in chapter 5 can be blaspheming Him in Revelation 16:11?

IV. We have now examined all the leadings texts used to prove that all is out of God.

A. *Ta panta* is an idiom, best translated “all this” or “all these,” referring to something in context, and is only universal if the thing it refers to in context is universal.

B. Consider James 1:12-15. Two facts: 1. Men are tempted. 2. God does not tempt any man. If temptation is not from God, God does not originate everything.

C. Jeremiah 32:35. God disclaims any responsibility for the Israelites causing their children to pass through the fire to Molech. It never even entered His mind.

V. Why is this so important? Because we must realize that tragedy often does not come from God.

A. Many seem to comfort themselves with the idea that every tragedy comes because God plans it.

B. That is all well and good when the tragedy happens to someone else. But when tragedy strikes you and you believe God planned it, that can destroy your faith.

VI. 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. The sad and tragic death of your loved one was not brought to you by God courtesy of His plan. Sin does not originate in God, and its destructive outcomes do not all originate in Him either.