

PROVIDENCE AND PURPOSE

John 11:17-46
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INTRODUCTION: HOW AND WHY

We often ask two questions in reaction to extraordinary or catastrophic events, “How?” and “Why?”.

These questions often come up in the Bible.

How something happens is called “providence.”

Providence (Westminster Confession V.I.)

God the great Creator of all things doth uphold; direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things; from the greatest even to the least, by His most wise and holy providence...

Providence

God ordains and directs all events.

Why something happens is called “purpose.”

Purpose of God

The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Ephesians 1:11, 12

In Him we also have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things in accordance with the plan of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in the Christ would be to the praise of His glory.

Glory

The expression of attributes or qualities of a thing, an event or an individual.

Romans 8:28

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Proposition: Jesus raised Lazarus by Divine Providence and for a Divine Purpose so that we could see His oneness with the Father. Let's look at the Providence and Purpose of Jesus in the story of Lazarus.

I. GOD'S PROVIDENCE INCLUDES PAIN, VV. 1-6, 11-15

1. Jesus Purposely Waited.
2. Lazarus Died.

Point: Sometimes God intentionally plans for or allows a bad thing to occur so that the best thing can take place.

We don't always know that best thing, but we trust God anyway.

II. GOD'S PROVIDENCE ISN'T DEVOID OF PASSION

We must never think that Providence makes us robots nor God unfeeling

A. JESUS LOVED

B. JESUS WEPT, V. 35

Point: Sometimes God intentionally allows sorrow so that a greater joy can take place.

C. JESUS WAS TROUBLED, V. 33

? What was Jesus upset about?

God's providence doesn't cause us to be unfeeling, but it should help us control our emotions.

1 Thessalonians 4:13

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope.

John 1:5

Point: Tragedy doesn't give us a right to doubt God. Instead, it provides an opportunity for us to trust Him more and prove our faith.

III. GOD'S PROVIDENCE ESTABLISHES GOD'S PURPOSE

God has a purpose. God doesn't do anything or allow anything to take place that doesn't fit within His purpose somehow.

Isaiah 46:9, 10

Glory: The expression of excellent quality in a person or thing.

A. GOD IS THE ESSENCE OF LIFE

The Bible teaches us that God is eternal.

Psalms 90:2

Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

Job 12:9, 10

“Who among all these does not know That the hand of the Lord has done this,
In whose hand is the life of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind?”

B. JESUS IS GLORIFIED AS GOD

John 5:25-29

1 John 5:11, 12

And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

C. LAZARUS EXPERIENCES GOOD

CONCLUSION:

1. God has ordained and directed every event in creation, even in your life, so that you can live to the praise of God’s glory.
2. Jesus holds the power of life and death.

APPLICATION

? How will you respond?

1. Some believed, v. 45
2. Some doubted, v. 46
3. Some hated Christ all the more, vv. 47-57