

Grace Bible Church
Tree of Life
A Weekly Review
Week ending 06/27/10
The Doctrine of the Divine decree: Lapsarianism. Part 2

One has to be alert because like all forms of false lapsarianism, as as is often the cast there is some truth mixed with the error. They are all a distortion and therefore a heresy. Therefore we close lapsarianism with the true Biblical view that has to be expanded.

The true Biblical view of lapsarianism:

1. To create all mankind for the purpose of bringing many sons into glory (Hebrews 2:10) and resolving the angelic conflict.

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. (Heb :10)

2. To permit the fall of mankind with the subsequent extension of the angelic conflict to the human race.

3. To provide salvation for all mankind — unlimited atonement.

So far this is infralapsarianism, but the next point is different.

4. The first primary asset: The decree to provide a portfolio of invisible assets for every believer by depositing escrow blessings for every believer for time and eternity.

5. The second primary asset: The simultaneous decrees of election and predestination (Eph 1:4,5).

6. To apply salvation to those who believe in Christ and to leave all others under Just condemnation.

This is the decree, then, to provide election in eternity past as a primary asset for those who believe in Christ in time. While the sovereignty of God programmed the directive will and overruling will of God, remember that the omniscience of God programmed the permissive will of God. Though God designed the plan in eternity past, the Bible states that man is the object of grace after, not before, the fall in Joh 15:9; Rom 11:5-7; Eph 1:4-6; 1Pe 1:2.

Point 4: Standing on the border between the infinite and the finite.

The distinction between the decree and the execution of the decree in our thinking means the one logically follows the other. The execution of the decree is not simultaneous with the decree itself. For instance, the decree expresses desires of God that will not be fulfilled because of human volition. The decree occurred in eternity past, the execution occurs in human history. The false views of lapsarianism fail to take cognition of this. Distinction should be made between God's laws and God's decrees. Laws regulate human conduct, while decrees are God's plan and action in eternity past. God's laws can be broken; the decrees of God can never be broken since they permit sin and evil. Distinction between God's desires, like election, and the rejection of God's desires must be understood. The difference exists between the Sovereignty of God and the Omniscience of God. God knows all your negative acts but doesn't interfere with your free will; for this would prevent the angelic conflict from ever being settled.

While sin and spiritual death are displeasing to God and incompatible with His divine nature, nevertheless, they belong to the decrees under the category of the fall of man. For example, while loser believers are displeasing to God and incompatible with His sovereign will, nevertheless, they belong to the decrees, under the category of reap what you sew. God, in eternity past, had a file with our name on it, expressing our positive or negative volition toward God's sovereign will for our lives. The issue must stand without modification that God, who is actively and infinitely holy and who is utterly free in all His enterprises has permitted evil. God is able to create or not create and to exclude evil from that which He did create, but He has, nevertheless, permitted evil to appear and run its course in angelic and human spheres. This perplexity of God and sin is intensified to a measureless degree by the fact that God knew sin would cost Him the death of His Son. When He permitted sin to be manifest, He knew well that it would cost Him the greatest sacrifice it is possible for God to make even the death of His Son.

knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ. For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God. (1Pe 1:18-21)

The scriptures state with certainty that God is holy and sin is exceedingly evil and they offer no explanation for the dilemmas we observe. Sin not only injures us but it injures others around us. The greatest injury is to those who reject redeeming grace and continue in condemnation for all eternity. Yet, we are told all throughout the scriptures to focus on the solution and not the problem. To those who commit the sin the solution is naming and citing it. To those who are injured by another's sin the solution is forgiveness. When we focus on the solutions, which are abundant and far more powerful than the problems, we enjoy prosperity in our souls, though still yet sinners. So yes, God has permitted sin in His universe, but He also conquered it in eternity past through the unlimited atonement. The essential nature of sin is the creature. Too often it has been assumed that sin and evil are divine creations. While it is true that God knew what sin and evil were before they existed, and that God being pure comprehended that the impure could exist, there was no chance for them to exist until the creature existed that could express them.

This is not dualism. Dualism states that if there is good there has to be evil. The reality is that God is good and He knew the potential of evil though He could never commit such a thing Himself. But since we know that every creature, both angelic and human, have fallen, we can conclude that the creature of God, made in His image, but not in His essence, always possesses the ability to reject good and choose sin or evil. Herein lies a huge problem. Since this is so it would be impossible for God to bring any sons to glory, but there is no problem too big for God. The Cross is the solution. Through redemption all sin is atoned for and God is propitiated with the result that faith in Christ allows the Justice of God to impute to the believer a seed that cannot sin.

No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (1Jo 3:9)

This is the new creature that is in union with the God man and though in time it co-exists with the OSN, the OSN has been crucified and will not exit this earth with the new creature. In eternity you will no longer have the ability to sin and in time you have power over sin through the indwelling Spirit who will convict you of sin and fill your soul when you confess that sin. Therefore, God in infinite genius and infinite grace and sacrifice, will bring many sons to glory and that glory can even now be experienced in time through humility to predestination. We brought upon ourselves a nature that trends towards sin and evil and God responded with an act that subverts and conquers that nature with a new nature that trends towards divine good. And therein lays

the great importance of the free will of the creature. He can choose for or against the gospel and if he becomes a believer he can choose which creature he will strengthen. All of this was accomplished in the mind of God in EP and God is thrilled to see it play out in time. So should we be thrilled to see the transformation in our own lives and though we think at times things are going along far too slowly, in God's eyes everything is right on track. The divine decrees, though presenting to our finite minds the infinite that we can only stand on the threshold of, should bring security, confidence, and peace to a once very troubled soul. There are many suggestions by learned men and women of God as to the purpose of allowing sin in the universe. I'm not going to go into any of them. God does not give this answer in His word so it's kind of like asking the silly question, "What if we never fell? What if Adam and the woman never ate the fruit?" It's a fruitless question since it is an historical reality. Sin is here to stay until human history is over.

The Millennial reign is the ultimate expression of this point. In a perfect environment, with perfect health, and the resurrected Lord on David's throne in Jerusalem, still millions and millions will reject Him and follow after false gods. We do know that it was not the purpose of God to avoid sin or to dispose of it before its appointed time. God could be rid of all of it with one command, but He does not. God did not make you a sinner, nor is He the author of any sin you commit, but He has found a purpose in that sin. Mankind is so focused on sin as if they are God Himself who has the right in perfection to hate it fully. I'm not saying we should love sin, but there is no way we can hate it like God did. But though God hated sin fully, His Justice was satisfied with it in EP when He decreed the unlimited atonement. Through the actions and teaching of some, you would think that God is stomping around in heaven, swearing and throwing fits over the billions of sins being committed in His universe. However through His word He states that the cross is the act that He designed so that it could be allowed and God could work in spite of it.

And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." (Jer 31:34)

"AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL remember no more." Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer *any* offering for sin. (Heb 10:17-18)

He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. (Psa 103:10)

As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. (Psa 103:12)

In heaven we sing a song of redemption and not of perfection, therefore at the end of the church God is pleased to have His saved ones sing of what He has done to free them from their self-imposed slavery just like He's going to do for His tribulational and millennial saints.

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. And Thou hast made them *to be* a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." (Rev 5:9-10)

Such contemplation should never lessen the human estimation of the divine hatred for sin, nor be any encouragement to a creature to sin. We will sin ignorantly and wilfully and the only reason we are forgiven of any of it was the death of Christ. We are not to focus on it in ourselves or others, but never take sin so lightly that you put your lifestyle into it and imagine there is no consequence. The deeds of the flesh are evident and it will destroy our lives if we let it reign over us.

Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For sin

shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone *as* slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. (Rom 6:12-18)

That sin is infinitely evil is demonstrated by the ruin it has wrought among the angels, the present depravity of humanity with all its woes, and the fact that no cure for sin could be found at a less cost than the blood of the Son of God. A believer has to find the balance between giving himself grace and forgiving others and the detrimental effects of a lifestyle of sin that keeps him away from fellowship with God. Both immoral and moral degeneracy are great destroyers of people's lives. So when you're standing on the threshold of the infinite and you find yourself unable to answer questions as to why God did this and why He did that, remember something: It is a dangerous thing for a finite creature to sit in judgement upon the course that God pursues. He is trustworthy and should be fully trusted. Blessed is he who trusts in the Lord.

Point 5: The will of God – Directive, Permissive, and Overruling.

Directive will of God: What God desires me to think, to do, and where to go. This is focused on believers since the unbeliever has but one directive from God – believe on the Lord Jesus and be saved. We will break up the directive will of God into seven categories.

1. It is the will of God that every member of the human race be born again — 2 Peter 3:9, "... not willing that any should perish."

And the world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever. (1Jo 2:17)

And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us. (1Jo 3:23)

2. It is the will of God that all believers be experientially sanctified. (We are speaking here of experiential sanctification which is *staying in fellowship*)

For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; *and* that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is *the* avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned *you*. For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. Consequently, he who rejects *this* is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you. (1Th 4:3-8)

3. It is the will of God that all believers be controlled (filled) with the Holy Spirit — Ephesians 5:18, **And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,**

4. It is the will of God that we give thanks in everything: 1 Thessalonians 5:18 correlated with Romans 8:28.

In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1Th 5:18)

If you are going to do the will of God, if you are going to be guided by God, this must be your mental attitude. This can be quite a problem since not all things that come into our lives can be qualified as pleasant. There is going to be a great deal of suffering, tragedy, and adversity in our lives, but you don't have to be concerned because there is always a purpose for it designed by God in EP.

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. (Rom 8:28)

With capacity through doctrine suffering will be a blessing for you. The promise is not that all things are good; it is that all things work together for good. Since that is true, and will be true to the believer with a strong doctrinal faith, you can thank the Lord for everything that comes into your life; the suffering, the adversities, the trials and heartaches, as well as the blessings, the successes and the victories. Suffering is designed to bless us, therefore I can give thanks in suffering. Discipline is designed to remind us to use 1 John 1:9, therefore I can give thanks for discipline. Only knowledge of doctrine supplies capacity for suffering.

5. It is the will of God that believers suffer — 1 Peter 3:17. Since it is God's will that you suffer (1 Peter 4:19) then the purpose of suffering is blessing.

For it is better, if God should will it so, that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong. (1Pe 3:17)

Therefore, let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right. (1Pe 4:19)

Suffering is:

- God's way of blessing the believer.
- God's way of bringing maturity (edification complex) in a quicker way.
- God's way of directing our attention to the things that are really important in life such as: Fellowship with Him; Knowing doctrine.

6. It is the will of God for every believer to trust the Lord.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. (Pro 3:5-6)

It is God's directive will that you depend upon divine or Biblical viewpoint in every situation. It is not God's will that you depend on human viewpoint for life. Because we have a free will and He has a directive will that blesses us He puts forth a question to us in time: "Do you want Me to direct your path and to lead you along the way?" God's decree is Sovereign and so there is not one little corner of the universe where He did not know exactly what would happen and when and even all the other possibilities of what might have happened through other causes. God therefore has not left one part of our lives to which He did not give divine guidance, even the smallest details. Therefore, there is doctrine for every aspect of our lives every day. In our free will we can choose His directive or trust in our own or another person's human guidance. If you neglect doctrine, whatever is being taught from the pulpit, then you will have no choice but human viewpoint because the word is given before the moment it's needed.

7. It is the will of God for every believer to be productive — 1 Peter 2:15.

For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.(1Pe 2:15)

Well doing or good works is the will of God for the believer. Believer's have been left on earth to represent and glorify TLJC. Part of representing Him is to be effective in the realm of production, which is the natural by-product of spiritual maturity. Just remember that this is His will for after salvation. There are no works in salvation.

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph 2:8-10)