

Why God Did Decree *and* Allow Evil to Exist



The Theodicy of Divine Providence



Pastor Baltazar A. Niangar

Pastor Emeritus, Th.B., A.B., D.D

WHY GOD DID DECREE AND ALLOW EVIL TO EXIST

WHY GOD DID DECREE AND ALLOW EVIL TO EXIST

The Theodicy of Divine Providence

Pastor Baltazar A. Niangar

Pastor Emeritus, Th.B., A.B., D.D.

Why God Did Decree and Allow Evil to Exist

Copyright © 2026 Pastor Baltazar A. Niangar

All rights reserved.

No portion of this work may be reproduced, transmitted, or stored in any form without the prior written permission of the author, except for brief quotations in reviews and scholarly citation.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®)*, copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

DEDICATION

To Jesus Christ, our Lord and only Savior,

who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

To my beloved wife, Estrella,

and to my firstborn son, Dr. Ellazar,

and my only daughter, Zarelle Grace,

whose patient encouragement gave voice to these pages.

To my brothers and sisters in Holistic Enhancement

for Lay-leaders and Pastors (HELP, Inc.),

faithful servants of the Lord's vineyard.

To the brethren in San Miguel, Buenavista, Guimaras,

and to all Christian friends who have touched my heart

in ways the Lord alone can repay.

Soli Deo gloria.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	7
Preface	9
Introduction	11
I. The Ultimacy of the Question	12
II. The Ultimate Answer	15
III. The Underlying Follow-up Questions	17
IV. The Underlying Answers	20
V. The Unending Question	24
VI. The Answer That Stops the Circular Question	26
Conclusion	28
Select Bibliography	30
Scripture Index	31
About the Author	33

Acknowledgments

The study of theodicy — the righteous justice of God in the presence of evil — is one that no single mind can approach without the accumulated wisdom of the great theologians who have labored in this field before us. This essay stands on those shoulders, and it is proper that they be acknowledged with gratitude.

Among the ancient and medieval theologians, this work draws upon the thought of St. Anselm of Canterbury, whose ontological inquiry into the nature of God established terms of reference that remain indispensable; St. Augustine of Hippo, whose treatment of evil as *privatio boni* and whose doctrines of original sin and predestinating grace shape every serious engagement with theodicy; and St. Thomas Aquinas of Italy, whose synthesis of Aristotelian logic and Christian revelation provided a philosophical architecture that continues to bear weight.

Among the Reformers, the author acknowledges a particular debt to Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Knox, whose recovery of the doctrines of grace restored the sovereignty of God to its proper place at the center of Christian theology; and to Arminius of the Netherlands, whose objections have compelled Reformed theology to refine its articulation of the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

Among the modern and post-modern theologians, the author is grateful for the contributions of Drs. Abraham Kuyper, Oscar Cullmann, Karl Barth, Paul Jewett, Francis Turretin, Francis Schaeffer, R. C. Sproul, Ravi Zacharias, Benjamin Warfield, Herman Dooyeweerd, Haley, and

Gary Jong. To any whose names have been inadvertently omitted: the Lord knows your labor, and it is not forgotten.

Special gratitude is owed to Miss Joycelyn Paulo, whose diligent assistance in preparing the final typescript of this work was invaluable. The Lord remembers every act of faithful service.

Finally, this essay was written for the pastors and lay leaders of Holistic Enhancement for Lay-leaders and Pastors (HELP, Inc.), as a resource for their monthly ministry and fellowship. May it equip them for the difficult conversations that faithful pastoral ministry inevitably brings.

Preface

This essay addresses what is perhaps the most vexing question available to the human mind: Why did God — who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and perfectly good — decree and allow evil to enter the universe He created? It is a question that has troubled believers and been weaponized by skeptics in every generation since the Fall. It is the question at the heart of the philosophical discipline known as theodicy.

The author writes not as a detached academic but as a pastor who has sat with the grieving, the confused, and the angry — those for whom the reality of evil in their own lives has made this question intensely personal rather than merely theoretical. He writes, further, as one who is persuaded that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, illumined by the Holy Spirit, do provide real, if necessarily incomplete, answers to this question — answers that satisfy not by exhausting the mystery but by locating it within the larger context of God's sovereign, wise, and loving purposes.

"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

— Deuteronomy 29:29

The approach of this essay is both philosophical and biblical. It begins with the logical structure of the question itself — its ultimacy, its circularity, its limits — before proceeding to the theological answers that Scripture supplies. It does not claim to resolve all the tensions. It does claim that those tensions are not evidence against the existence and

goodness of God but are, rather, the very material through which God demonstrates His wisdom, justice, and redeeming love.

Pastor Baltazar A. Niangar
Pastor Emeritus, Th.B., A.B., D.D.

Introduction

The question of why God did decree and allow evil to exist in the universe is the most mind-boggling and confusing question available to finite human minds. It raises a cascade of further perplexing questions and yields only partial answers — answers that satisfy our reason without fully satisfying our emotions, and that illumine our minds without fully stilling our hearts.

We cannot approach this question by beginning with inductive reasoning — gathering empirical observations and moving toward a general conclusion — for the subject matter transcends the empirical order entirely. We must begin, rather, with the self-evident truths of sound philosophy (what the tradition calls a priori knowledge) and the propositional revelation of Holy Scripture. We begin with deduction, proceeding from established premises toward their logical conclusions; we then test those conclusions against the data of experience and observation; and we return again to our premises to refine them. This deductive-inductive-deductive process is the only reliable method for approaching ultimate questions.

Several preliminary observations about the nature of the question itself are necessary before we can proceed to its substance.

"Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!"

— Romans 11:33

CHAPTER I

The Ultimacy of the Question

Questions are many on any subject. But not all questions are equal, and not all are answerable — nor should they be. There are questions of fact (what?), of person or being (who?), of place (where?), of method (how?), and of choice (which?). Each has its proper domain and its proper method of resolution.

The question of ultimate origin — Who created God? — belongs to a special and dangerous category: the circular or self-referential question that generates infinite regress. If God was created by something, then who created that something? And who created that? The questioner soon finds herself on a wheel of questions with no exit. The appropriate response is not to seek an answer but to recognize the question as malformed. It violates the first law of sound philosophy: before one can deny the existence of something, one must first assert that it exists. One cannot meaningfully ask who created a being whose existence one has not yet established.

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

— Genesis 1:1

God's existence is not the conclusion of an argument but the presupposition of all arguments. He is the ground of being, the necessary precondition for the existence of anything whatsoever — including the capacity to ask questions. Before any question can be meaningful, there must be a rational order; before there is a rational order, there must be a rational Creator. To ask "Why does God exist?" or "Who caused God?"

is to ask the question from a position that could not exist without God — a self-defeating exercise.

Questions Worthy of Answer

Having set aside the questions that are not worthy of answer, we can identify those that are. They concern not the existence of God but the character of His actions. Why did God — who is omnipotent, omniscient, and perfectly good — permit evil to enter the world He created and called "very good" (Gen. 1:31)? Why does He not simply eliminate evil by divine fiat? Why do the righteous suffer? Why does wickedness sometimes prosper?

These are not circular questions. They have premises that can be assessed, arguments that can be examined, and answers — however partial — that can be given. They are the questions of theodicy, and they deserve the most careful and humble theological engagement available to us.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

— Isaiah 55:8–9

The Limits of the "Why" Question

Among all the questions that can be asked, the question of "why" — the question of ultimate reason — is the most persistent and the most recursive. Why does the sun rise in the east? Why is the east "east"? Why does anything exist rather than nothing? The regress of "why" questions is potentially infinite, and at some point the interrogation must give way to acceptance of the given reality. Even in secular philosophy, it is recognized that not every "why" admits of a further "why."

King Solomon's counsel is pertinent here: "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him yourself" (Prov. 26:4). Some questions are asked not in genuine pursuit of truth but in the hope of destabilizing the questioner's convictions. The wise person learns to

distinguish between questions that deserve engagement and those that deserve a patient refusal to engage on the questioner's own confused terms.

This is particularly important in the theodicy debate, where the question "Why does God allow evil?" is sometimes posed not as a genuine inquiry but as a rhetorical weapon — the assumption being that no satisfying answer exists and that the inability to provide one constitutes a disproof of God's existence or goodness. The Christian may acknowledge the genuine difficulty of the question while firmly resisting the rhetorical sleight of hand.

CHAPTER II

The Ultimate Answer

Only God can answer the ultimate question about evil — and He has done so, not by providing an exhaustive philosophical explanation, but by acting decisively in history. The ultimate answer to evil is not a proposition but a Person: the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ, the Second and Last Adam, who entered the domain of evil, suffered its full consequences, and conquered it through His atoning death and bodily resurrection.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

— John 3:16

This must be understood rightly. God did not stand at a distance from the problem of evil and issue a theoretical explanation of why it was necessary. He entered into the problem Himself, in the person of His Son, bearing in His own body the full weight of human sin and its consequences — physical suffering, social rejection, spiritual desolation, and death itself. The cross is not a philosophical argument about evil; it is God's definitive response to evil in action.

The theological tradition has rightly identified God's acceptance of responsibility for the problem of evil as one of the most astonishing features of the Christian revelation. While God is not the author of sin — "God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one" (James 1:13) — He did, in His sovereign counsel, permit evil to enter the created order. And having permitted it, He did not simply condemn creation but entered it as Redeemer.

"He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed."

— 1 Peter 2:24

The Omniscience of the Answerer

Only God can answer the deepest questions about His own nature and purposes, because He alone possesses complete self-knowledge. He is omniscient — all-knowing — and this omniscience extends not only to external reality but to Himself. "For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:11).

This is precisely why the theodicy question cannot be resolved by purely human reasoning. We can reason about God, and we must — theology is the queen of the sciences precisely because its object is the highest possible object of inquiry. But our reasoning can only get us so far. At some point, we must receive the answers that God Himself has been pleased to reveal, in Scripture and supremely in Christ, and acknowledge that the things He has not yet revealed remain rightly hidden in the counsel of His sovereign wisdom (Deut. 29:29).

CHAPTER III

The Underlying Follow-up Questions

Once the ultimate answer has been stated — that God has dealt with evil definitively in Christ — a series of more specific subordinate questions remains. These questions press into the particular attributes of God and challenge whether His decree and allowance of evil are compatible with them. They are the questions that thoughtful believers and honest skeptics alike have raised in every generation.

On Divine Wisdom

What is the reason behind God's decreeing and allowing evil to happen in the lives of the righteous and just, if God is wise? The question assumes that wisdom would necessarily prevent or eliminate evil. But this assumes that the elimination of evil in the short term is always the wiser course — a premise that is far from obvious. A physician who prevents a patient from experiencing any pain may be preventing the patient from receiving the very signals necessary to diagnose and treat a life-threatening condition. Divine wisdom may see that the temporary permission of evil serves purposes that only God's comprehensive perspective can encompass.

On Divine Love

What is the reason behind God's decreeing and allowing evil to happen in the lives of the righteous and just, if God is loving? Again, the question assumes that love is incompatible with the permission of

suffering. But the deepest forms of human love — the love of a parent for a child, for instance — regularly permit suffering that serves the beloved's long-term good. The father of the prodigal son did not chase his son to the far country and drag him home; he let him go, and waited. Love that refuses all permission of consequences is not love but paternalism that ultimately undermines the beloved's growth and freedom.

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

— Romans 8:28

On Divine Omnipotence

What is the reason behind God creating perfect beings that can and will eventually fall into sin, if God is all-powerful enough to prevent it? This question assumes that a God of unlimited power would exercise that power to prevent all moral failure in His creatures. But omnipotence does not mean the compulsion of creatures to act in every instance according to their Creator's will. God could have created automata — beings incapable of disobedience because incapable of genuine moral agency. That He did not do so is a choice consistent with His desire for genuine, freely offered love and worship from His creatures. A love that is programmed is not love; an obedience that is compelled is not obedience.

On Divine Impartiality

What is the reason behind God's decreeing and allowing evil to happen to personal beings only and not to other beings, if God is impartial? This question touches on the distinction between moral (or sentient) creatures — angels and human beings — who possess genuine moral agency, and the rest of creation, which does not. Evil, as a moral category, is only possible for beings who can choose between good and evil. The question of evil is therefore specifically and necessarily a question about personal, morally responsible beings, not about the physical order as such.

On Divine Holiness and Justice

Is God not holy and unjust to have decreed and allowed evil to happen in this universe? This question inverts the moral calculus: it presupposes that God's holiness and justice require the prevention of all evil. But the biblical witness consistently presents God's holiness and justice as the very attributes that make the problem of evil serious in the first place — and that ultimately guarantee its resolution. A God who did not care about evil would have no reason to address it. The God of Scripture cares infinitely, and that care was demonstrated at the cross.

On Divine Sovereignty

Is God not sovereign not to have decreed and allowed evil? Or, is God still sovereign after His decree and allowance of evil? The answer to the second question is an unqualified yes. God's sovereignty is not diminished by His permission of evil; it is expressed through it. The cross — the most evil act in human history, the murder of the Son of God — was also, in the mystery of divine providence, the ordained means of the world's redemption (Acts 2:23; 4:27–28). God's sovereignty operates not by eliminating all secondary causes and creaturely choices but by governing them toward His own ultimate purposes without violating their creaturely reality.

CHAPTER IV

The Underlying Answers

Having stated the questions with precision, we can now state the answers with corresponding care. These are not exhaustive answers — the secret things belong to the Lord (Deut. 29:29) — but they are real answers, grounded in the revelation of Scripture and the wisdom of the theological tradition.

A. God Is Wise: The Best Solution to the Worst Problem

God is wise because He alone has solved the worst personal problem of mankind — sin and death — through the best possible means: the atoning death and justifying resurrection of His incarnate Son. The worst problem is not merely physical suffering or social injustice; it is the moral rupture between the holy Creator and His sinful creatures, which, left unaddressed, issues in eternal condemnation. God's wisdom is displayed precisely in that He did not ignore this problem, minimize it, or address it by some expedient that fell short of full justice. He addressed it by satisfying the full demands of His own holiness in the person of His Son, who bore the penalty of human sin and was raised as the firstfruits of the new creation.

"For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

— 1 Corinthians 1:25

B. God Is Loving: Working All Things for Ultimate Good

God is loving to the extent of giving up His only begotten Son into the hands of sinners, to be crucified on behalf of His people. This is not the love of sentiment but the love of sacrifice — a love that was willing to endure the full horror of evil in order to defeat it from within. In the meantime, God works all things — including the temporary experiences of evil, suffering, and loss that are the common lot of His people in this age — for the ultimate good of those who are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28).

The temporality of present suffering is a crucial element of the biblical response to the problem of evil. Paul writes: "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Rom. 8:18). The suffering is real; the glory is more real. The present age, with all its evil, is not the final age; it is the penultimate age, the age of labor and groaning, that gives way to the eschatological age of resurrection and renewal.

"For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen."

— 2 Corinthians 4:17–18

C. The Necessity of Moral Probation

God decreed and allowed evil to happen in the personal lives of His people because He could not, without logical contradiction, create another God. He can create finite beings who reflect His image and are capable of genuine moral agency; He cannot create an infinite being equal to Himself. All created perfection is, by definition, finite — and finite perfection is susceptible to corruption in a way that infinite divine perfection is not.

The created moral beings — angels and humans — were therefore necessarily placed under conditions of moral probation. They were created good, but their goodness was not the absolute, unconditioned goodness of God Himself; it was a derivative, creaturely goodness that required confirmation through the exercise of genuine moral choice. The possibility of failure was inherent in the nature of finite moral agency.

Sin is precisely the departure from one's proper moral state in God's holy presence — the disregard of one's creaturely identity, the disobedience to God's law for life, the distortion of love into sinful pride, lust, and violence, and the disturbance of the peace (shalom) of both the creaturely heart and the heavenly order. Both angels and humans were susceptible to this departure; some angels fell, and in Adam, the whole human race fell with him.

"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned."

— Romans 5:12

D. The Requirement of Creaturely Holiness

God decreed and allowed evil to happen to His created moral beings because He requires of them a holiness that is genuinely their own — not a programmed compliance but a freely embraced conformity to His holy character. This requirement reflects the logic of moral personhood: a person who cannot choose otherwise is not truly choosing, and an obedience that is compelled is not truly obedience. God's desire for genuine worship and genuine holiness from His creatures required that they be capable of genuine disobedience and genuine unholiness.

Moral creatures are required to remain what they are: angels forever angels, humans forever humans. They are called to obey the law of identity — to know themselves as creatures before their Creator, and to act accordingly. The departure from this knowledge is the essence of sin. It is, at its root, a claim to a kind of autonomy that belongs only to God — the claim to be one's own ultimate standard of right and wrong, one's own lord and judge.

E. The Sovereignty of the Eternal Father

God is the eternal Father who is potentially sovereign over all things before creation and who becomes actually sovereign in the fullest sense after and through His creation. His sovereignty is not threatened by the existence of evil; it is expressed through His governance of evil toward

His own redemptive ends. He did not create evil, and He is not its author in any morally culpable sense. But He has, in His infinite wisdom and power, so ordered events that even the most extreme evil — the crucifixion of His Son — serves the greatest good: the redemption of a people for Himself from every nation, tribe, and tongue.

After the moral probation of His creatures — some condemned, some redeemed — God remains their Sovereign Father. To many He has decreed a just condemnation; to others He extends the grace of repentance and faith, welcoming them into His everlasting Kingdom. In both, His sovereignty is displayed: in justice toward those who remain in rebellion, and in mercy toward those whom He has called and justified.

F. God Is Glorified Through It All

Through His creation, His just governance, His redemptive love, and His providential care over all things, God is glorified. This glorification takes two forms. The condemned, in their ultimate subjection to divine judgment, acknowledge — however unwillingly — the absolute sovereignty of God over all things. The redeemed, in their free and joyful worship, acknowledge that same sovereignty with love, gratitude, and praise.

Worship is the awareness of God's spiritual, personal, holy presence; the acknowledgment of Him as eternal Creator and Sovereign over all creation; the personal attitude of wonder, awe, praise, and gratitude; and the act of submission and attention to His laws and commands. Those who are with God truly worship Him in this full sense — aware of His presence, acknowledging His lordship, filled with awe and gratitude, and ordering their lives according to His will. Through such worship, God is glorified in the fullest sense — and this glorification is the ultimate purpose of creation, the reason for which all things, including the permission of evil, were ordered from eternity.

"For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen."

— Romans 11:36

CHAPTER V

The Unending Question

God leaves the reprobate — those who persist in rebellion against Him — to their questions. They continue to ask "Why?" of the Sovereign Creator, but He is not obliged to answer them on their own terms. The question, in their mouths, is not a genuine inquiry but a protest against the divine order itself.

The book of Job is the Bible's most sustained engagement with this dynamic. Job, a righteous man who suffered extraordinary affliction — the loss of his children, his wealth, and his health — demanded an audience with God to put his case before Him. His three friends, representing the conventional wisdom of their day, insisted that Job's suffering must be the consequence of hidden sin. They were wrong, and God said so.

But when God finally answered Job, He did not explain the council scene of chapters 1–2 in which Satan had been permitted to afflict Job as a test of his faithfulness. He did not provide the philosophical rationale for Job's suffering. He responded, instead, with a series of magnificent rhetorical questions that confronted Job with the absolute disproportion between creaturely and divine wisdom:

"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding, Who determined its measurements — surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it?"

— Job 38:4–5

The effect on Job was not resentment but worship. Confronted with the incomprehensible majesty of the God who created and sustains all things, Job's protests dissolved into reverent silence: "I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you; therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5–6).

This is the biblical pattern: when God reveals Himself in His majesty, the appropriate response is not the satisfaction of intellectual curiosity but the prostration of the creature before the Creator. The questions do not disappear, but they are relativized — recognized as the questions of a finite being before an infinite God, questions that will find their full resolution only in the age to come.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD."

— Isaiah 55:8

The reprobate's unending "why" is, in its deepest nature, a refusal to worship — a refusal to acknowledge the Creator's sovereign right to govern His creation as He sees fit. It is the posture of a creature demanding that God justify Himself before the bar of creaturely reason. God is not subject to this demand. His answer to it is the same as His answer to Job: "Who are you, O man, to answer back to God?" (Rom. 9:20).

CHAPTER VI

The Answer That Stops the Circular Question

The answer that stops the otherwise infinite regress of "why" questions is not an impersonal logical principle but a personal divine act: the sovereign decree of the eternal "I Am." When God says "I have decreed it," the questioning does not reach a logical boundary but a personal one — the boundary of the will of the absolutely sovereign, perfectly wise, and perfectly good God.

This is not an evasion of the question but its proper resolution. The "I Am" who spoke to Moses from the burning bush (Ex. 3:14) — the God who is self-existent, self-sufficient, and absolutely sovereign — has spoken in His eternal decree. His decree encompasses all things, including the permission of evil, and it cannot be reversed, challenged, or successfully resisted. "Who can withstand His will?" (Rom. 9:19).

"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 not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose.'"

— Isaiah 46:9–10

The character of the One who decrees is the key to receiving this answer with peace rather than resentment. He is not an arbitrary tyrant who decrees capriciously and cares nothing for His creatures. He is the One who is all-wise, all-good, and all-loving — the most empathetic Person in existence, who entered creation in the person of His Son to suffer alongside and on behalf of His creatures. His decree is the decree of this God, and it can be trusted precisely because of who He is.

The Scriptures to which the Christian appeals in this confidence are many and mutually reinforcing:

"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever."

— Deuteronomy 29:29

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

— Romans 8:28

"Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!"

— Romans 11:33

"He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"

— Romans 8:32

The final answer to the problem of evil is not a proposition but a posture: the posture of faith, which trusts the character of God even when it cannot comprehend His ways. This faith is not irrational; it is the most rational response available to a finite creature confronted with the incomprehensible wisdom of an infinite God. It is the posture of Job, who fell on his face in worship when God revealed Himself. It is the posture of Mary, who said "Let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). It is the posture of the Son Himself, who prayed "Not my will, but yours, be done" (Luke 22:42) in the face of the greatest evil the world has ever known.

"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 straight your paths."

— Proverbs 3:5–6

Conclusion

The question "Why did God decree and allow evil to exist in His universe?" is, as we have seen, the ultimate question of His righteousness and justice — the question of theodicy. It is a question that cannot be fully answered from within the limits of creaturely reason alone, but it is also a question that is not left without answer by the God who has revealed Himself in Scripture and supremely in Jesus Christ.

The answers we have traced in this essay may be gathered under several heads. God is wise: His permission of evil serves purposes that only His comprehensive and eternal perspective can encompass, and He has demonstrated His wisdom supremely in providing, through the cross and resurrection of His Son, the best possible solution to the worst possible problem. God is loving: His love was not content to observe creation's ruin from a distance but entered into it as Redeemer, bearing the full penalty of human sin in the person of His Son. God is sovereign: His permission of evil does not diminish His governance of all things but is itself an expression of it, as He orders even the darkest chapters of creaturely history toward His redemptive ends. And God is glorified: through the full sweep of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation, He displays the full range of His attributes — His holiness, justice, wisdom, power, and above all His love — to the praise of His glory.

"Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him."

— Psalm 2:12

The proper response to all of this is not continued questioning but worship — the total surrender of the creature to the Creator, the

acknowledgment that He is God and we are not, the trust that His ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts than our thoughts, and the joyful submission of our lives and our sufferings into the hands of the One who works all things together for the good of those who love Him.

We have nothing to lose and everything to gain. In His providence, not a strand of our hair falls without His notice and care. Therefore, let us befriend Him, submit to Him in true worship, and kiss His Son — lest we perish in our wickedness. In His holiness, goodness, grace, and mercy, He receives all who come to Him through His only begotten Son.

Soli Deo gloria.

To God alone be the glory.

Pastor Baltazar A. Niangar

Pastor Emeritus, Th.B., A.B., D.D.

Select Bibliography

- Anselm of Canterbury.** *Proslogion*. Translated by M. J. Charlesworth. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965.
- Aquinas, Thomas.** *Summa Theologiae*. Translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province. London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1912–36.
- Augustine of Hippo.** *Confessions*. Translated by Henry Chadwick. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Augustine of Hippo.** *The City of God*. Translated by Henry Bettenson. London: Penguin, 1984.
- Barth, Karl.** *Church Dogmatics*. Edited by G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936–77.
- Berkhof, Louis.** *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1938.
- Calvin, John.** *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960.
- Cullmann, Oscar.** *Christ and Time*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1950.
- Dooyeweerd, Herman.** *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*. 4 vols. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1953–58.
- Jewett, Paul K.** *Man as Male and Female*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975.
- Kuyper, Abraham.** *Lectures on Calvinism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1931.
- Schaeffer, Francis A.** *He Is There and He Is Not Silent*. Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1972.
- Sproul, R. C.** *The Holiness of God*. Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1985.
- Turretin, Francis.** *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*. 3 vols. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 1992–97.
- Warfield, Benjamin B.** *The Plan of Salvation*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1915.
- Zacharias, Ravi.** *Can Man Live Without God?* Dallas: Word Publishing, 1994.

Scripture Index

Genesis	1:1	<i>Chapter I</i>
Genesis	1:31	<i>Chapter III</i>
Exodus	3:14	<i>Chapter VI</i>
Deuteronomy	29:29	<i>Preface; Chapter VI</i>
Job	38:4–5	<i>Chapter V</i>
Job	42:5–6	<i>Chapter V</i>
Psalms	2:12	<i>Conclusion</i>
Proverbs	3:5–6	<i>Chapter VI</i>
Proverbs	26:4	<i>Chapter I</i>
Isaiah	46:9–10	<i>Chapter VI</i>
Isaiah	55:8	<i>Chapter V</i>
Isaiah	55:8–9	<i>Introduction</i>
Luke	1:38	<i>Chapter VI</i>
Luke	22:42	<i>Chapter VI</i>
John	3:16	<i>Chapter II</i>
Acts	2:23	<i>Chapter III</i>
Acts	4:27–28	<i>Chapter III</i>
Acts	15:14–18	<i>Chapter VI</i>
Romans	5:12	<i>Chapter IV</i>
Romans	8:18	<i>Chapter IV</i>
Romans	8:28	<i>Chapters III, VI</i>
Romans	8:32	<i>Chapter VI</i>
Romans	9:19	<i>Chapter V</i>
Romans	9:20	<i>Chapter V</i>
Romans	9:20–33	<i>Chapter VI</i>
Romans	11:33	<i>Introduction; Chapter VI</i>
Romans	11:36	<i>Chapter IV</i>
1 Corinthians	1:25	<i>Chapter IV</i>
1 Corinthians	2:11	<i>Chapter II</i>

SCRIPTURE INDEX

2 Corinthians	4:17–18	<i>Chapter IV</i>
James	1:13	<i>Chapter II</i>
1 Peter	2:4–25	<i>Chapter VI</i>
1 Peter	2:24	<i>Chapter II</i>

About the Author

Pastor Baltazar A. Niangar is a Pastor Emeritus who holds the degrees of Th.B. (Bachelor of Theology), A.B. (Bachelor of Arts), and D.D. (Doctor of Divinity). He has devoted his life and ministry to the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the theological formation of God's people, and the equipping of pastoral leaders for faithful ministry.

Dr. Niangar served for many years in partnership with Holistic Enhancement for Lay-leaders and Pastors (HELP, Inc.), a ministry organization committed to equipping the whole people of God for faithful service in church and society. He has engaged diverse congregations across multiple cultural and ecclesiastical contexts, bringing the riches of the Reformed and evangelical theological tradition to bear on the practical challenges of pastoral ministry.

His theological formation reflects deep engagement with the thought of theologians including Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, Kuyper, Warfield, Barth, Sproul, Schaeffer, and Zacharias. He approaches theology as a discipline oriented ultimately toward doxology — the praise of the Triune God who is the Alpha and Omega of all that is.

This essay on theodicy — the righteousness and justice of God in the face of evil — grows out of decades of pastoral reflection on one of the most persistent and personally urgent questions that human beings bring to the Christian faith. It is offered not as the final word on the subject but as a resource for all who seek to think carefully and biblically about the mystery of divine providence in a world that is, at once, fallen and redeemed.