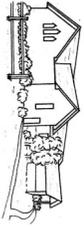


**NORTHWOODS
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**



**4723 GRIFFITH AVENUE
CHEYENNE, WY 82009**

WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH. JOHN 4:24

**The lot is cast into the lap,
But its every decision is from the LORD.
Prov 16:33**

THE NORTHWOODS NEWS

LUCK

By

Rich Cesal

It is quite usual when leaving to go somewhere or embarking on an athletic adventure, to have someone wish you luck. And of course the luck they wish is good luck. I don't think I ever heard anyone wish bad luck on anyone. At least out loud in public. On the showing of old Heehaw TV programs, they usually have a segment where four gentlemen sing a song about *Woe, Despair and Agony on Me*. In the song, the words "If it weren't for bad luck, I'd have no luck at all", tells a story about people's view of luck.

Pastor Milan once in reminding everyone during announcement time, that next Sunday is going to be our monthly carry-in dinner, announced that we would be celebrating our "monthly pot-providence" dinner since all good Presbyterians do not believe in luck.

We do not believe in luck because the Bible teaches quite definitely that God's creation does not operate on luck. In the Old Testament, the way to determine God's will in any given situation, was to cast lots. This is similar to the practice of drawing straws. The one with the short straw is the winner. The one who the lot falls upon is the chosen one.

According to Wikipedia, "The practice of casting lots occurs most often in connection with the division of the land under Joshua (Joshua chapters 14-21), a procedure that God instructed the Israelites several times in the book of Numbers (Numbers 26:55; 33:54; 34:13; 36:2). God allowed the Israelites to cast lots in order to determine His will for a given situation (Joshua 18:6-10; 1 Chronicles 24:5,31). Various offices and functions in the temple were also determined by lot (1 Chronicles 24:5, 31; 25:8-9; 26:13-14)."

The sailors on Jonah's ship (Jonah 1:7) also cast lots to determine who had brought God's wrath upon their ship. The eleven apostles cast lots to determine who would replace Judas (Acts 1:26). Casting lots eventually became a game people played and made wagers on. This is seen in the Roman soldiers casting lots for Jesus' garments (Matthew 27:35).

The Bible does not explain what exactly the lots consisted of. They could have been some kind of sticks or stones or anything that would have a unique item so that whoever that unique item fell upon, that person was chosen. Today, flipping a coin would emulate the casting of lots. This would be a casting of lots to determine the outcome between two choices.

Again, Wikipedia states that the casting of lots is mentioned 70 times in the Old Testament and seven times in the New. The true meaning of lot casting is explained in Prov 16:33, "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD."

This passage indicates, even a seemingly random outcome in the casting of lots to make a decision is determined by the hand of God. Every seemingly "chance" event — a flat tire, running into a long-lost friend, a roll of the dice, the luck of the draw, and others — has a place in God's good plan, even if we are unaware of His ultimate purposes.

Most people would say that it is a matter of luck or fate as to where the lot would fall. This practice of casting the lot is considered a game of chance. Thus the non-biblically oriented would state who gets the lot is a matter of chance. But the Proverb mentioned above tells that the falling of the lot is due to God's providence and not a matter of luck.

R. C. Sproul wrote a book twenty years ago called *Not A Chance*. Here is a quote from that book: "If chance existed, it would destroy God's sovereignty. If God is not sovereign, He is not God. If He is not God, He simply is not. If chance is, God is not. If God is, chance is not. The two cannot coexist by reason of the impossibility of the contrary." Chance is nothing. It has no being and thus cannot do anything. To argue that something can come from nothing is a denial of the law of non-contradiction. Which is to say that something cannot be A and not A at the same time in the same relationship.

This of course is true about all happenings involving people here on this earth. According to the proverb, chance has nothing to do with the outcome. Every election time, we are inundated with polls telling us the probable outcome of an election. We look at the polls and find that maybe 1000 people were asked who they would vote for and this is sufficient to project those results to the entire population. How can this be? The fact is, mathematicians have

developed the math that can be used to extend the poll from 1000 to millions. Of course mathematicians can do this because our Creator has put into reality an order and chance is never a factor.

Back in the 60's and 70's, I was completely taken back by the development of a computer program under the name of SPSS which could state for instance with uncanny accuracy how many checkout lanes would be required of a retail store in a mall to satisfy the needs of "random" arrival of people to checkout.

The software was released in its first version in 1968 as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) after being developed by Norman H. Nie, Dale H. Bent, and C. Hadlai Hull. Those principals were incorporated as SPSS Inc. in 1975. Early versions of SPSS Statistics were designed for batch processing on mainframes, including for example IBM and ICL versions, originally using punched cards for input.

If things happened because of luck, there could be no SPSS programs giving accurate predictions as to the "random" actions of people. How is it that the foretelling of the random actions of people can be so accurately predicted? The only answer is things are not as "random" as one would think.

The following is a quote from the Khan Academy: "We dare you to go through a day in which you never consider or use probability. Did you check the weather forecast? Busted! Did you decide to go through the drive through lane vs walk in? Busted again! We are constantly creating hypotheses, making predictions, testing, and analyzing. Our lives are full of probabilities! Statistics is related to probability because much of the data we use when determining probable outcomes comes from our understanding of statistics."

Probability and Statistics are disciplines in mathematics which study the probability of things happening and the analysis of data from such study (statistics). It is interesting to note in the history of probabilities we find an acknowledgement of a governing force behind the random happenings rather than the idea of pure randomness as being in play.

For example, when a coin is tossed, the probability of the coin falling as heads is one out of two or the probability is 1/2. But if two tons of coins are tossed, we know that one ton will fall heads and the other ton will fall tails. How can that be?

One probability textbook says, "Some find beauty in the extensive mathematical structure that emerges from a few assumptions and definitions; others, both the practical and the philosophical, enjoy discussing the meanings that may be attached to probabilistic statements. Still others admire the order that emerges from seeming chaos."

The reason for telling these probabilistic examples is to show that randomness is a myth. The created universe has no element of randomness at all. Lucky means nothing. All things happen because God has preordained them to happen thus eliminating any notion of luck. There are those scientists who insist that all reality has come to this point in time by chance happenings. But we see all sorts of evidence that there is no such thing. I once heard a scientist in an interview that responded to a question of could there exist someday another reality like ours someplace else in the universe under similar conditions and the scientist responded with no, our existence is far too complicated to be repeated. In other words chance doesn't stand a chance to repeat itself.

And so, what is luck? There is no such thing to a believer. Remember, the lot falls by the decision of the Lord. God has ultimate sovereignty and determines all outcomes.

Here is another example of randomness demonstrating that it is a myth. In the paper the other day, it was reported of a traffic accident which claimed a life. The paper said that was the 114th traffic death in Wyoming so far this year. The paper compared that with last year's deaths which were 123 for the same time. How is it that the random deaths in random traffic accidents comes to the same amount every year during the same time? Why is it not possible in that same time interval for the deaths to be 2 or 5 or 600 if accidents happen in a random way?

I remember in the 50's and 60's it was very common for a government agency to announce the prediction of the number of deaths in traffic accidents over a three day holiday weekend. These predictions were always very accurate. How can it be that random acts of traffic accidents over millions of miles by millions of people can be so predictable? How can it be that something as traffic accidents can be reduced to mathematical formulas? Is it because things are not really random but under the sovereign control of God and follow the mathematical expressions of the same?

Time and time again we see that things seem to exhibit a destiny which is fixed. We are told that someday Jesus will return. When that happens all things will cease. The present world will be engulfed in fire and brimstone. The current universe will pass away and the judgement of all on earth will begin. The sheep and the goats will be separated and the new heavens and the new earth will be created providing a place where all of God's people will live without any more suffering. There will be no more death, no more sorrow, no more crying, no more pain. There will be no more tears. You can be sure that God has fixed these future happenings at just the appropriate time. No luck here.

Amen. Ω

Does your soul lift in song when you hear the first few bars of a favorite hymn? Here is a story behind the hymn “All the Way My Savior Leads Me”. This story comes from the book by Robert J. Morgan, *Then Sings My Soul*.

My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. John 10:29

When Fanny Crosby wrote, “All the way my Savior leads me, / What have I to ask beside?” she was expressing her own testimony of God’s guidance. Even her blindness, she realized, was part of His plan.

When Fanny was about six weeks old, her parents had realized with alarm that something was wrong with her eyes. The local doctor was away, but the Crosbys found a man—no one afterward recalled his name—who claimed to be a physician. He put hot poultice on the baby’s inflamed eyes, insisting it would draw out the infection. The infection did clear up, but white scars appeared, and in the months that followed the baby registered no response to objects held before her. As it turned out, Fanny was not totally blind. Even in old age she could discern day from night. But her vision was gone.

Yet this stimulated other gifts, such as her phenomenal memory. As a child, Fanny memorized whole sections of the Bible, including most of the Pentateuch, the four Gospels, all of Proverbs, and vast portions of other books. Whenever she wanted to “read” a passage, she just turned there in her mental “Bible” and read it verbatim. “This Holy Book,” she said when eighty-five, “has nurtured my entire life.”

Years later, Fanny viewed her blindness as a special gift from God, believing He had given her a particular “soul-vision” which equipped her for a special work. “It was the best thing that could have happened to me,” she declared. “How in the world could I have lived such a helpful life had I not been blind?”

“Don’t blame the doctor,” Fanny said on another occasion. “He is probably dead by this time. But if I could meet him, I would tell him that he unwittingly did me the greatest favor in the world.”



Though this hymn expressed Fanny Crosby’s lifelong testimony, it was prompted by a specific incident in 1874. One day she didn’t have enough money to pay her rent. Just as she committed the matter to God in prayer, a stranger appeared at her door and pressed a ten-dollar bill in her hand before disappearing. It was the very amount needed. That night, she wrote the words to “All the Way My Savior Leads Me.”

All the way my Savior leads me;
What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt His tender mercy,
Who through life has been my Guide?
Heav’nly peace, divinest comfort,
Here by faith in Him to dwell!
For I know, whate’er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well;
For I know, whate’er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well.

All the way my Savior leads me,
Cheers each winding path I tread;
Gives me grace for every trial,
Feeds me with the living Bread.
Though my weary steps may falter,
And my soul athirst may be,
Gushing from the Rock before me,
Lo! A spring of joy I see;
Gushing from the Rock before me,
Lo! A spring of joy I see.

All the way my Savior leads me
O the fullness of His love!
Perfect rest to me is promised
In my Father’s house above.
When my spirit, clothed immortal,
Wings its flight to realms of day
This my song through endless ages:
Jesus led me all the way;
This my song through endless ages:
Jesus led me all the way.

Why does God let random shootings, fatal accidents, and other horrible things occur?

From **Tabletalk Magazine**

Since we believe that God is the author of this planet and is sovereign over it, it's inevitable that we ask where he is when these terrible things take place. I think the Bible answers that over and over again from different angles and in different ways.

We find our first answer, of course, in the book of Genesis, in which we're told of the fall of humanity. God's immediate response to the transgression of the human race against his rule and authority was to curse the earth and human life. Death and suffering entered the world as a direct result of sin. We see the concrete manifestation of this in the realm of nature, where thorns become part of the garden and human life is now characterized by the sweat of the brow and the pain that attends even the birth of a baby.

This illustrates the fact that the world in which we live is a place that is full of sorrows and tragedy. But we must never conclude that there's a one-to-one correlation in this life between suffering and the guilt of the people on whom tragedies fall. If there were no sin in the world, there would be no suffering. There would be no fatal accidents, no random shootings. Because sin is present in the world, suffering is present in the world, but it doesn't always work out that if you have five pounds of guilt, you're going to get five pounds of suffering. That's the perception that the book of Job labors to dispel, as does Jesus' answer to the question about the man born blind (John 9:1-11).

On the other hand, the Bible makes it clear that God lets these things happen and in a certain sense ordains that they come to pass as part of the present situation that is under judgment. He has not removed death from this world. Whether it's what we would consider an untimely death or a violent death, death is part of the nature of things. The only promise is that there will come a day when suffering will cease altogether.

The disciples asked Jesus about similar instances—for example, the Galileans' blood that was mingled with the sacrifices by Pilate or the eighteen people who were killed when a temple collapsed. The disciples asked how this could be. Jesus' response was almost severe. He said, "Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish," again bringing the question back to the fact that moral wickedness makes it feasible for God to allow these kinds of dreadful things to take place in a fallen world. Ω

Important Things



Aug 7th - Mark your calendar. Our annual Vedauwoo Milkcan Dinner will be held on Aug 7th. The Voslers will again cook a scrumptious dinner of sausage, potatoes, cabbage and corn on the cob all cooked in a milkcan. Don't miss it!

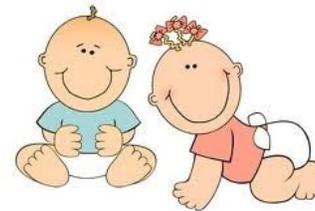
There is no Evening Service on Aug 7th.

Men's Breakfast— At the church, Saturday Morning, August 20, 8:00 AM. We always have a hearty hot breakfast and a great fellowship time. See you there.

Nursery Schedule for August

- 7th - KENDRA TUNNICLIFF
- 14th - ESTHER DAVISON
- 21st - KAIRA TUNNICLIFF
- 28th - YVONNE NEWSOM

Please trade with someone if you are unable to do nursery duty on the assigned day.



- | | | | |
|---------------|------|------------------|------|
| Mark Nelson | 15th | William Sackett | 23rd |
| Yvonne Newsom | 15th | Branda Church | 28th |
| Mike Newsom | 18th | George Holroyd | 25th |
| Kyle Nelson | 20th | Hannah Twitchell | 30th |

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Milan & Heather Norgauer | 1st |
| Mike & Yvonne Newsom | 4th |
| George & Jean Holroyd | 7th |



Session Report

Last month we said good bye to both Devota Robins and the Ropers family. Remember them in your prayers.

Please join us in welcoming Dot Hunter as a member of Northwoods. Dot is coming to us by transfer.

The one-day VBS will not happen this year. We did not get enough volunteers.

The Fall Reformation Conference is next month on September 16 & 17 2016. Our conference this year features Dr. Carl Trueman who will speak about God's work in the Reformation and how our faith gives us hope, guidance and comfort in this present age. Brochures are available in the narthex. They can be used to invite friends and family. Registration is now open. Please register online so that we will know how many to expect. Registration and more information can be found at the website - <http://conference.wyreformed.org>. You can also find a link on the church website.

By Carl R. Truman

Judge Dread

Dr. Truman is going to be our Conference speaker this year on Sept 16 & 17.

One objection that has been made a number of times to my criticisms of transgenderism is that, if someone wants to change from their birth sex to the opposite, what harm does that do to me? Why should I worry if, to borrow from Jefferson, it neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg? That is true, and from that perspective I care as little about the issue as I do about what my neighbors may or may not be doing in their bedrooms after dark. That is part of what living in a free country means. What I do care about, however, is how the issue is being used to transform the public square, in particular to undermine parental and women's rights.

A case in point: Last week, I noticed that my local school district had included a *proposed transgender student policy* in the minutes of its recent board meeting. While it is obvious that the issues raised by transgenderism and gender non-conformity are being pressed so strongly by the power-brokers that all school districts will have to address them, it struck me that the document may be well-intentioned but contains within it conceptual confusions. These confusions then provide the foundation upon which far-reaching policies are being built which will erode parental rights, grant sweeping powers to the school, and in the long run (and almost as collateral damage) wreak significant damage upon women's sports. Here is the text of the letter I sent to the school board in response:

March 31, 2016

To the Springfield Schoolboard,

I am writing as a resident of Springfield Township regarding the proposed policy for Springfield Township School District on transgender and gender non-conforming youth.

While the issues it raises are clearly pressing, and while the welfare of all students, regardless of identity, has to be a priority, the proposed policy is conceptually incoherent. On the one hand, it asserts that a student's asserted gender identity has to be accepted, and must not be questioned or disregarded by staff. Moreover, the only exception is if staff have a "credible basis" for believing the student is "improperly" asserting a gender identity, vague and undefined terms that are open to abuse. Yet, the policy also claims that a student's transgender status may constitute confidential medical information that should not be disclosed to parents or others, suggesting it is a medical condition. Which is it?

Further, is the school really saying that it has the right, duty, and indeed the competence to hide a child's identity from its parents? This is a breathtaking assertion of authority—to claim that the school has a greater right relative to a child's identity than the parents who have raised him or her. It also creates a dangerous precedent: so long as the school district in its infinite wisdom decides that something is part of a child's core identity, it grants to itself the right to exclude parents. This is remarkably open-ended and adversarial, pitting the school district against parents and scarcely conducive to cultivating co-operative school-parent relationships which are surely to be desired in a rounded education.

In addition, the policy provides that students are entitled to access to the locker rooms and restrooms that correspond to their gender identity. This is unworkable. If gender identity is a subjective, psychological identity, and if no criteria for assessing such claims are objectively established in the policy itself, I cannot see how the school can enforce this. On what grounds does the troublemaker get distinguished from the genuine case? How can safety be guaranteed under such a vague policy? And I also wonder why the child who is distressed at a student of the opposite sex using the restroom should be the one effectively forced to use the single user restroom. What this does, in effect, is place the moral burden—and, in the current climate, the risk of being accused of bigotry and ostracized—upon those merely with concerns about personal modesty.

Under this policy, students must be allowed to participate in PE classes, intramural sports, and (to the extent consistent with PIAA regulations) interscholastic athletics consistent with their asserted gender identity. This approach is clearly going to have a detrimental effect on girls'/women's competitions and in the long run will put those women who are born such and identify as such at a permanent competitive disadvantage (as indicated by the recent incoherent attempt to produce fair and consistent regulations for transgender Olympic competition while safeguarding competitiveness). My son, for example, ran track for the University of Pennsylvania where he was a moderately good middle distance runner. Were he to identify as a woman, he would currently hold the world mile record. This is a policy which is really very detrimental to women and the future of women's sports.

In short, the proposed policy is remarkably one-sided and dangerously vague at key points. It appears to be focused exclusively on satisfying the desires of gender non-conforming students, without any effort to balance those desires with the legitimate and reasonable concerns of anyone else, whether they be parents, fellow students, or competing athletes. Springfield can and must do better.

Yours sincerely,

Carl R Trueman

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The Website

gotquestions.org Presents the following Analysis of the Bible and Luck

Question: "What does the Bible say about luck?"

Answer: The American Heritage Dictionary defines "luck" as follows:

1. The chance happening of fortunate or adverse events.
2. Good fortune or prosperity; success. . . . to gain success or something desirable by chance: "I lucked out in finding that rare book."

The main question is, do things happen by chance? If they do, then one can speak of someone being lucky or unlucky. But if they do not happen by chance, then it is inappropriate to use those terms. Ecclesiastes 9:11-12 states, "I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all. Moreover, no man knows when his hour will come: As fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds are taken in a snare, so men are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them." Much of what Ecclesiastes shares is from the perspective of a person who looks at life on earth without God, or life "under the sun." From such a perspective—leaving God out of the picture—there seems to be good luck and bad luck.

A runner in a race may be the swiftest, but because someone in front of him stumbles, he trips over him and falls and does not win the race. How unlucky for him? Or a warrior king may have the strongest army but some "chance" arrow shot up into the air at random by a no-name enemy soldier just happens to pierce his armor in its most vulnerable

location (2 Chronicles 18:33) resulting in that king's death and the loss of the battle. How unlucky for King Ahab? Was it a matter of luck? Reading the whole of 2 Chronicles 18, we find that God had His hand in the matter from the beginning. The soldier who shot the arrow was totally unaware of its trajectory, but God in His sovereignty knew all along it would mean the death of wicked King Ahab.

A similar "chance" occurrence takes place in the book of Ruth. Ruth, a widow who was caring for her widowed mother-in-law, seeks a field to glean grain to provide for them. "So she went out and began to glean in the fields behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she found herself working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelech" (Ruth 2:3). Elimelech had been the husband of her mother-in-law, Naomi, so Boaz was a relative of hers and was generous to Ruth. As Ruth returns home with a great deal more grain than Naomi expected, "her mother-in-law asked her, 'Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!' Then Ruth told her mother-in-law about the one at whose place she had been working. 'The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz,' she said. 'The LORD bless him!' Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. 'He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead.' She added, 'That man is our close relative; he is one of our kinsman-redeemers.'" (Ruth 2:19-20). So Naomi did not see it as a "chance" occurrence but as the providence of God, as do others later on (Ruth 4:14).

Proverbs 16:33 states a general principle: "The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the Lord." This refers to the use of casting lots (similar to the tossing of a coin or the rolling of dice) to settle certain judicial cases. The case involving Achan in Joshua 7 is an example in which the principle of Proverbs 16:33 is used to find the guilty party. Proverbs 18:18 states something similar: "Casting the lot settles disputes and keeps strong opponents apart." Again, the idea is that God's providence plays the determining role in the results of the casting of lots so that judicial conflicts can be resolved no matter how great the contention. Proverbs 16:33 would indicate that something as random as the rolling of dice or the tossing of a coin is not outside of God's sovereign control. And, therefore, its results are not merely of chance.

God's sovereignty involves two aspects. God's active will or sovereignty would involve something He causes to happen such as the leading of wicked King Ahab into battle (2 Chronicles 18:18-19). Ahab's death was not merely the result of a randomly shot arrow, but as 2 Chronicles 18 reveals, God actively directed the events that led Ahab into battle and used that randomly shot arrow to accomplish His intended will for Ahab that day.

God's passive will involves Him allowing, rather than causing, something to happen. Chapter 1 of the book of Job illustrates this in what God allowed Satan to do in the life of Job. It is also involved in the evil that God allowed Joseph's brothers to do to Joseph in order to accomplish a greater good, a good not apparent to Joseph until years later (Genesis 50:20).

Because we do not have the curtains drawn back to see what is taking place in heaven, we cannot always determine whether God's active or passive will is involved in the events of our lives, but we do know that all things that take place are under the umbrella of His will, whether active or passive, and, therefore, nothing is a matter of mere chance. When a person rolls the dice to play a board game, God may sometimes cause the dice to land a certain way, but more often than not in such inconsequential matters, He may allow the dice to land as His laws of nature would determine without any active involvement. But even when He is not actively involved, how the dice land is still under His sovereignty.

So it is for any event of life; no matter how small (Matthew 10:29-31) or how large (Daniel 4:35; Proverbs 21:1), God is sovereign over all (Ephesians 1:11; Psalm 115:3; Isaiah 46:9-10), and thus nothing is merely the matter of chance.

From an earthly perspective, things may seem to happen at random, but throughout the whole of Scripture, it is clear that God is in control of all of His creation and is somehow able to take the random acts of natural law, the free will of both good and evil men, and the wicked intent of demons and combine them all to accomplish His good and perfect will (Genesis 50:20; Job chapters 1 and 42; John 9:1-7). And Christians, specifically, are given the promise that God works all things, whether seemingly good or bad, together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). **Ω**

Have a need? Contact one of the officers.

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If you have a request for the prayer chain contact Branda Church 221-9206 and if not available, Kelleigh Anderson 635-2578 or send an email to churchfamily@outlook.com.

***The Lord shall preserve thee
from all evil: he shall preserve
thy soul. The Lord shall
preserve thy going out and thy
coming in from this time forth,
and even for evermore.
Hallelujah, Amen***