

SOVEREIGNTY AT WORK

By

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“All things are of God” (II Cor. 5:18).

God rules the world. This is His own claim. It is the claim of Jesus and the apostles. It is the only reasonable conclusion from logic: God would not be God if He were subject to any other force outside of Himself; therefore, God is Sovereign Ruler of the world.

The question arises: If God rules the world, why all the tyranny, terrorism, suffering and evil? What of the scriptures that speak of Satan as “god of this world” and “prince of this world?”

It is foolish for man to ask such questions when he cannot even answer the question of why he loses his temper or breaks the simplest commandment. Only God can know why He allows some things and doesn't allow others. Only He knows all the factors involved in all the actions of men, including their motives, the far-reaching effects of the action and the options. Whatever He allows or decrees in some way fits into His eternal purpose and plan.

Satan is called the “god of this world” but not the ruler of the world. When people serve Satan, he becomes their god, but this does not make him their ruler. Satan is not sovereign; he can have no power but that which is allowed by those who choose to obey him, and even then both Satan and his servants are under the almighty hand of God.

When Satan had the intense desire to prove that Job was righteous only because God had blessed him, he had to have permission from God before he could take Job's wealth, family and health. Even when Satan seems to succeed in his evil plan, God is able to turn events to His own purpose, as in the case of Joseph, who was sold into slavery by his brothers, then cast into prison under shamefully false charges. But when Joseph was made prince of Egypt, he said to them, “You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good” (Gen. 50:20). Even what seemed to be Satan's greatest success, the crucifixion of Jesus, was turned into his greatest defeat and a victory for God.

Because God is Sovereign, we can know: “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that you may be able to bear it” (I Cor. 10:13).

Humanism is a denial of the Sovereignty of God. Repeatedly the humanists have said that their purpose is to eliminate the belief that there is any supernatural being to which man must be subordinate. Theirs is not a new and brilliant manifesto produced by their own research but the ancient doctrine which Satan preached to Adam and Eve when he said they should eat of the forbidden fruit and become as gods, determining for themselves what is good and evil. Some of the most influential advocates of evolution have admitted that they embraced the theory, not out of scientific knowledge, but as the alternative to accounting to a Sovereign Creator.

One reason for the adverse conditions of our day is given by the prophet Isaiah, “Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your

sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perversion. None call for justice, not any plead for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies: they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity...Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity...the way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whatsoever goes therein shall not know peace” (Isa. 59:1–8).

It would appear that Isaiah had been reading the morning paper or looking at the evening news. One thing seems obvious: God’s judgment is falling stroke after stroke upon a world which denies His sovereignty and rejects His image.

The constitution, which was designed to limit the power of the state that citizens might observe the laws of God, has been abandoned, and the government approaches all law with its own humanistic value system. The state looks upon all citizens as its slaves under its sovereign lordship. The Supreme Court admits that its form of justice is based upon human precedent and consent and not an any law handed down from God.

The effort to eliminate things Christian in our society is rebellion against God’s sovereignty. Jesus said, “He that rejects me, reject Him that sent me” (Luke 10:16). The denigration of Jesus in the arts, as in the movie “The Last Temptation of Christ,” is an example of man’s hatred of God and another step in rejecting Him as man’s Sovereign Ruler. In His place man would substitute education, science and the state.

What they fail to see, whether willfully or ignorantly, is the connection between the rejection of God’s sovereignty and the breakdown in morality, order and peace. When the Creator’s order is not followed, the creature will not function properly. Psalm 2 is being fulfilled. “Why do the nations rage and the peoples meditate a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against Jehovah and against His anointed, saying Let us break their bonds asunder and cast away their cords from us.” The effort is universal, especially in education, legislation, in the arts and the media. But God has the answer. “He that sits in the heavens will laugh: the Lord will have them in derision.” He will “break them with a rod of iron” and “dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

God’s sovereignty will triumph. He Who has the power to give and sustain life will eradicate sin and evil by judgment and destruction of all who reject the life He offers. ***There can be no life apart from the Life-Giver.*** Only that which He plans and provides is possible. To reject Him is to reject the right to exist!

God is Almighty! (Gen. 17:1, 28:3, Isa. 13:6, Joel 1:15). The great upheaval of evil powers now in process through the world does not mean He has lost control. It may indicate the final step in the working of His own eternal purpose.

The fact of God’s sovereign power over the world and everything in it is taken for granted in the commands of Jesus. “Do not be anxious. Your heavenly Father feeds the birds. Are not you of much more value than they?” IT is only on the basis of absolute sovereignty that Jesus could promise to answer prayer, to provide our needs, to judge the world and give everlasting life to believers.

God, as Creator, not only controls that which He created but sets the rules by which His creatures are to live, “seeing He himself gives to all life, and breath, and all things” (Acts 17:25).

Such sovereignty demands obedience. True faith produces works. Lip service is not enough. Many may call Jesus “Lord, Lord,” but in the end He will say, “I never knew you, depart from me you that work iniquity” (Matt. 7:23). In the final judgment there is no place for those who refuse to serve the King, Who says, “But these mine enemies, that that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me” (Luke 19:27).

God’s power does not depend on the creature’s recognition of it. God has power over the rebellious, whether they know it or not. One does not escape the Sovereign’s rule merely by closing his eyes to it. He may learn only too late that in his frantic fight for freedom he has dashed himself to death against the inexorable will of the Creator.

We need to pray, as did Paul, that we might know “...what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit as his right hand in the heavenly places” (Eph. 1:19–20). True Christian faith must embrace the fact that God has put all things under the feet of Christ, Who is now Lord of lords and King of kings, which leaves absolutely nothing outside of His authority (Matt. 28:18–20, Phil. 2:9–10).

God will not fail. The believer may have perfect peace in the midst of the distressing circumstances that surround him, knowing that the Creator will bring all things to the fulfillment of His own infinite purpose. “Power belongs unto God” (Psa 62:11).

“Know you that Jehovah, he is God; It is he hat has made us, and we are his” (Psa. 100:3).

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