

## IS GOD CONTROLLING ALL THINGS?

The question of who controls and governs this world is a question being asked by many, especially in connection with the storms and disasters of this past year. Did God send the super storm "Sandy?" Did God oversee the tragic death of the 7 adults and 20 children in Newtown? Who is controlling this world? Ultimately there are two choices- God or the devil? The prevalent view, even in Christian circles is that God is a helpless God who is not in control of all things, but is dependent on men and subject to higher powers, including the devil. God sent Jesus to die for and save all men, and desires the salvation of all men, but He is powerless to attain it. God stands helpless at the sidelines as children are murdered and men and women die without confessing Christ. The Creator and Redeemer is banished from His creation. To place the devil and his power above God is not to answer the problem, but rather to create far more problems because then the devil is Almighty. We are all doomed to everlasting destruction if that is the case.

The Bible teaches clearly that the comfort of the believer is found in the glorious truth that God is Sovereign over all of this world and over all that takes place in the world. I Chronicles 29:11 states: "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine. Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and Thou art exalted as Head over all." Psalm 115:13 teaches: "But our God is in the heavens; He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased." Isaiah 45:7 continues: "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things."

This was the experience of Job. The book of Job is a remarkable book in that it reveals clearly to the reader the relation of God to the devil and to the world. Even more remarkable is the faith that God gave Job by which Job was able to confess and understand that relationship even though he is not given the view "behind the scenes" which we are given. We see God controlling and limiting the devil's influence as the Sovereign God who directs all things. God wills to test Job, and in doing so makes use of secondary means including the devil, the Chaldeans, the Sabeans, and storms which take from Job all his possessions including his ten children in Chapter 1, and then in Chapter 2 rob him of his health. In all of this, God remains the one controlling all things, even though He avoids the accusation that He is the author of evil. God remains holy and separate from evil, but demonstrates that all evil is under his control.

Which is the greatest evil ever to take place in this world? The crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the innocent Son of God! What does the Bible teach us about that event? "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Acts 2:23. God decreed the death of Jesus Christ. He did so in the way of wicked men who betrayed and killed Jesus. These men are responsible for their actions and called to repentance by Peter. God is 100% Sovereign and at the same time men and women are 100% responsible for their actions and there is no contradiction.

Why then does God allow evil to come on His children and on the world in which we live? God has a plan and purpose for it all, a plan that is reflected in the book of Job. God's intent was to

demonstrate to the devil that the power of faith by which God joined Himself to His children was so great that the devil could not break that bond. The devil thinks he can separate people from their God. He thinks by stirring up wicked men and women to rise up and murder others he can keep people from going to heaven. God demonstrates through the book of Job not merely the strength and power of Job, but the power of His grace in preserving His children. Those whom God desires to save will be saved. They are saved in the way of grace, as they remain sinners, like Job, who question God at times, but are brought to repentance. Ultimately nothing can separate them from the love of God in Jesus Christ- not the devil or death or anything! (Romans 8:38,39). God sends storms and disasters to sound forth His call: "Be still and know that I am God!" (Psalm 46:1) Not only does He display His power but He uses these means to call some of His children home to glory.

What a joy to know and confess that Jesus Christ took full responsibility of all my sins so that by faith I have the blessed assurance that there is now no condemnation for me because I am found in Christ Jesus! Romans 8:1 No one, not even the devil can rob you of that comfort!

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