

God Is In Control

'The lot is cast into the lap but the decision is wholly of the Lord' (Proverbs 16:33). In Hebrew it reads; 'Even the events that seem accidental are really ordered by Him'. This sermon is called 'God is in control' because He is. There are many scriptures that reveal His power over the whole earth, over mankind, over the natural elements, over the animals, and of course over the devil. We cannot put every scripture in this sermon, but there is enough to show us that the Lord holds the earth in His great hands. He is the boss; He is in control of everything which gives us a strong sense of security and safety. Nothing happens without His knowledge and permission. He even takes notice of a little bird that dies of old age. 'Not one sparrow will fall to the ground (die) without your Father's consent and notice. Even the very hairs of your head are numbered. Fear not then, for you are of more value than many sparrows' (Matthew 10:29 to 31).

The Lord had complete control over all the animals that went into the ark, the rain, the fountains (geysers), and the settling of the water after the Noah's flood (Genesis chapters 7 & 8).

The Lord chooses which families to bless and multiply. 'And God pronounced a blessing on Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (Genesis 9:1).

The Lord put the fear of Man into the hearts of the animals on the earth (Genesis 9:2) so in essence the Lord was controlling the minds of the animals. Until then, animals did not fear Man.

The Lord confused the languages of the population of the whole earth (Genesis 11:9), so in essence, He was controlling their minds. 'The name of the place was called Babel (later Babylon) because there the Lord confounded the language of all the earth'.

The Lord controlled Sarah's womb to stop her having a child until He wanted Isaac to be born, that is when the timing, or the season was right. 'Lord, You have given me no child' (Genesis 15:3). 'I (the Lord) will surely return to you when the season comes round, and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son ... Abraham and Sarah were old (then aged 99 and 89)' (Genesis 18:10 to 14). 'The Lord visited Sarah as He promised ... and she bore Abraham a son' (Genesis 21:1 to 5).

The Lord precisely controlled the seismic activity that caused fire and brimstone to rain down on Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24). 'Then the Lord rained on Sodom and on Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of the heavens'.

The Lord controlled Rachael's womb to stop her having a child because He could see Leah was despised by Jacob (Genesis 29:31). 'When the Lord saw that Leah was despised, He made her able to bear children, but Rachel was barren.' Rachel became upset and argued with Jacob over her barrenness. She said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I will die!" And Jacob became very angry with Rachel and he said, "Am I in God's stead, Who has denied you children?" (Genesis 30:1 & 2). Eventually the Lord allowed Rachel to have Joseph then Benjamin – then she died in childbirth. 'Then God remembered Rachel and answered her pleading and made it possible for her to have children. She became pregnant and bore a son ... and named him Joseph (Genesis 30:22 & 23). 'Rachel suffered the pangs of childbirth and had hard labour ... as her soul was departing she called her son Ben-oni, but his father named him Benjamin. So Rachel died' (Genesis 35:16 to 19).

It is the Lord Himself who causes people to be born deaf, mute or blind (Exodus 4:11). 'Who has made man's mouth? Who makes the dumb or the deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Is it not I, the Lord?' This is confirmed by Jesus Himself. 'He was born blind in order that the workings of God should be manifested in him' (John 9:3).

There are several scriptures where the Lord controlled Pharaoh and hardened his heart so he would not let the Hebrews go. Here are just four, but there are more. 'I will make Pharaoh's heart hard' (Exodus 7:3). 'But the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh' (Exodus 9:12). 'Go to Pharaoh, for I have

made his heart hard' (Exodus 10:1). 'But the Lord made Pharaoh's heart stronger and more stubborn' (Exodus 10:27).

The Lord controlled the Red Sea; He parted it then closed it over the Egyptians, drowning them all. 'The Lord cause the sea to go back by a strong east wind ... the waters being a wall to them on their right and on their left ... and the sea returned to its normal flow and the Egyptians fled into it ... and the Israelites saw the Egyptians dead upon the shore' (Exodus 14:21 to 30).

The Lord controlled the manna, the bread from heaven; His provision of food for the desert-dwelling Israelites. Manna was angel's food (Psalm 78:25) the Israelites ate for 40 years as they wandered around in the wilderness. 'There lay a fine, round flake, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it ... they did not know what it was' (Exodus 16:14). The Israelites ate manna until they could produce their own food in the Promised Land of Israel. 'The manna ceased on the day after they ate of the produce of the land; and the Israelites had manna no more, but they ate the fruit of the land' (Joshua 5:12).

The Lord controlled a donkey's mouth and caused it to speak to Balaam. 'The Lord opened the mouth of the donkey and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you that you should strike me these three times?" And Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have provoked me!" And the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey?"' (Numbers 22:28 to 30). How did the donkey feel about being able to speak like a human instead of braying? Why was Balaam silly enough to argue with the donkey in the first place?

The Lord controlled the walls of Jericho to make them fall so the Israelites could take the city. Archaeologists have found true evidence that the walls did indeed crumble 'The people shouted and the trumpets were blown. When the people heard the sound of the trumpet, they raised a great shout and Jericho's wall fell down in its place, so that the Israelites went up into the city ... and they took the city' (Joshua 6:20).

The Lord has total and complete control over the devil and evil spirits, and He actually uses them to bring about His will in some circumstances. 'And the Lord sent an evil spirit' (Judges 9:23). 'An evil spirit from the Lord tormented Saul ... when the evil spirit from God is upon you ... when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul' (1 Samuel 16:14, 16 & 23). 'The next day an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul' (1 Samuel 18:10). 'There came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord ... so the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these false prophets' (1 Kings 22:20 to 23; 2 Chronicles 18:19 to 22). 'I (the Lord) will put a spirit in him so that he will hear a rumour' (2 Kings 19:7). 'Now there came a day when the angels of God came to present themselves before the Lord and the devil came among them' (Job 1:6; 2:1). We read in Job where the devil had to ask God for permission to destroy Job's family, animals, servants etc and God granted his request but told the devil not to kill Job, however, his ten children were killed (Job chapters 1 & 2). How many people have noticed this verse? 'Then there came to Job, all his family and friends, and they comforted him over all the distressing calamities that the Lord had brought upon him' (Job 42:11). The devil asked excessively to 'sift' Peter and the other apostles, but the Lord Jesus said "No", and He prayed for them (Luke 22:31). There are other scriptures besides these where God allowed an evil spirit to deceive, lie, cause havoc, sickness or death; but they were all completely controlled by the Lord.

We read about the birth of John the Baptist when his parents were elderly. 'There was a certain priest whose name was Zachariah ... and his wife was a descendant of Aaron and her name was Elisabeth. They were both righteous in the sight of God ... but they had no child for Elisabeth was barren, and both were far advanced in years ... The angel said to Zachariah, "Your petition was heard and your wife Elisabeth will bear you a son and you must call him John" ... And the time came and Elisabeth gave birth to a son' (Luke chapter one). Just like Abraham and Sarah, Zachariah and Elisabeth waited many years for their sons and we will see why they had to wait.

In the scriptures we read something extremely remarkable. From Adam to Noah were ten generations; Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah (Genesis 5:3 to 29). From Noah to Abraham were ten generations; Noah's son Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah, Eber (the father of the Hebrews who later became the Jews), Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah, Abram (Genesis 11:11 to 27). 'All the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; from David to the Babylonian exile – fourteen generations, then from the exile to the Messiah – fourteen generations' (Matthew 1:17). By this we can see that the Lord controlled the marriages and the births of sixty-two generations to bring about Jesus birth. How incredible is that? It means God would have planned each and every marriage and birth from Adam to Noah to Abraham to David to Jesus, over a few thousand years to make Jesus' birth happen at exactly the right time for mankind, and with exactly the right lineage. Joseph was from the tribe of Judah – the Kingly tribe, Mary was from the tribe of Levi – the priestly tribe and Jesus is our King and Priest. That is an amazing thought. That is why God did not allow Sarah to give birth to Isaac until the appointed day. That is also why Elizabeth had to wait years for the birth of John the Baptist – so he could herald the coming of our Messiah. If these facts are not enough to convince people that God is really in full control of His creation, then nothing will.

In essence; we have the security of knowing full well the Lord God, creator of everything, controls everything, and He keeps everything on earth and in the whole universe, in His absolute, total and complete order. Nothing is done or happens without God knowing about it and giving His permission. He controls His creation absolutely and completely and in every way. He even controls how far waves can come up onto a beach. 'Thus far shall you come and no further; and here shall your waves be stayed' (Job 38:11). The Lord controls the storms. 'Jesus arose and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush now. Be still." And the wind ceased and there was a great calm' (Mark 4:39). Now if He controls all the things we have read about in this sermon, including at times, even our will and desire, then we have the safety of knowing he is in control of adverse circumstances too. Thank God for the powerful and mighty arm of the Lord. Thank God He is on our side. We have written this to show you one major thing: whatever troubles you are having or whatever blessings you are enjoying, God knows and is in control.

The Lord is also in control of our problems. Why do Christians have so many troubles? To purify us by fire that's why. Sinners can not enter into His glory so we need to be purged and cleansed of sin and God disciplines whom He loves. Let's see the scriptures that back that up. 'Take your share of the hardship and suffering as a good soldier of Messiah Jesus' (2 Timothy 2:3). 'Beloved, do not be amazed and bewildered at the fiery trial which is taking place to test your faith, as though something strange were befalling you' (1 Peter 4:12). 'Jesus gave Himself on our behalf that He might cleanse us from all iniquity and purify for Himself a people' (Titus 2:14). 'Though now for a little while, you may be distressed by trials, so that the genuineness of your faith may be tested, which is more precious than gold which is purified by fire' (1 Peter 1:6 & 7). God punishes, scourges, disciplines, corrects, trains and chastises us. Is this fun? No, it is grievous and painful but the scriptures tell us God does it to bring righteousness (Hebrews 12:5 to 12).

God is in total control. Sometimes terrible things happen to believers, but nothing happens without God allowing it or even doing it - but always for a reason. 'Remember that all things (not some things but all things) work together for good, for those who love God and are called according to His will and purpose. And we are being moulded into His likeness, so we are being justified, acquitted, made righteous and glorified' (Romans 8:28 & 30). In other words, you are being made fit for the Kingdom of God (Colossians 1:12). 'Behold I have refined you but not as silver. I have tried you in the furnace of affliction' (Isaiah 48:10). Why? This scripture sums it up. 'Because you are precious in My sight and honoured and because I love you. Fear not for I am with you' (Isaiah 43:4). God cleanses us and purifies us and unfortunately that is sometimes terribly painful but don't be afraid, because God is in control. He will never leave you nor forsake you (Hebrews 13:5) and we must trust Him in our sorrow as much as in our joyful times.

Amen and God bless you.

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