

Who Is in Control?

What about the storms, sickness, death, heartbreak, and sorrow?

RADIO MESSAGE BY DWIGHT PORTER, D.D.

We are living in the days predicted in the Bible. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come" (II Timothy 3:1). The following verses describe these days, and they fit the very ones in which we are living. One major cause for consternation in our day is that we know not the God Who is in absolute control of all things (sovereignty). "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich, he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory; for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's and he hath set the world upon them" (I Samuel 2:6-8).

"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 above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all" (I Chronicles 29:11,12). We declare God's sovereignty each time we recite the Lord's Prayer: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" (Matthew 6:13).

A correct biblical perspective is absolutely vital to understand what God is doing in these last days. Many people operate on the premise that any bad happening is produced by the devil and all good comes from God. Friend, He controls *all* things, whether it be good or bad.

God Controls All Things

"But our God is in the heavens; He has done whatsoever He has pleased" (Psalm 115:3). He accomplishes all He plans and purposes to do. "Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure: calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executes My counsel from a far country; yea, I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it" (Isaiah 46:9-11).

"And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and He does according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say to Him, What do you?" (Daniel 4:35). How arrogant man becomes when he questions God's actions. Why such action on his part? We are to resign to the accomplishment of His purpose. Who is finite man to question the actions of an infinite God? "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgments, and His ways past finding out" (Romans 11:33). Does God control all things except life, death, tragedies,

storms, and natural disasters? "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who works all things after the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:11). That verse sounds like Romans 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose." When a sinner has been chosen to be in God's family, he is not only called out of sin but also accepts a resignation to the plan and purpose of God for his life from that moment on. The greatest privilege mortal man possesses is to accomplish His purpose. Many supposed Christians are satisfied with getting into heaven, while living for themselves down upon this sin-cursed earth.

Does God Control Storms?

If in control of all things, then, automatically, storms are included. "God is jealous, and the Lord revenges; the Lord revenges, and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and He reserves wrath for his enemies. . . . The Lord has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. He rebukes the sea, and makes it dry and dries up all the rivers. . . . The mountains quake at Him and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at His presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? And who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by Him" (Nahum 1:2-6). Wind causes tremendous destruction. Who controls it? The Bible says the clouds are God's chariots. "For I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places. He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth; He makes lightnings for the rain: He brings the wind out of His treasures. Who smote the firstborn of Egypt, both man and beast" (Psalm 135:5-8).

"The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders; the Lord is upon many waters" (Psalm 29:3). In these next verses are listed some of the accomplishments of His voice. He breaks the cedars, divides the flames of fire, and shakes the wilderness: "The Lord sits upon the flood, yea, the Lord sits King for ever" (Psalm 29: 10). The word "flood" is the same Hebrew word in Genesis 6. Here was the greatest natural disaster and calamity the world has or will ever know. It will not be repeated. It destroyed all mankind except eight people in the ark. Who brought that destruction? Was it God? Yes! His action was based upon His evaluation and evident condition of the people He was to destroy. (Genesis 6:5-7)

This is the same explanation for the storms of our day. Why does God show His destructive power to mankind? It is man's sin that brings such power in judgment. Genesis 3:17 says, "And to Adam He said, Because you have hearkened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree, of which I

commanded you saying, you shall not eat of it; cursed is the ground for your sake; in sorrow shall you eat of it all the days of your life." The curse of death included this earth. Of course it still belongs to God, but his curse is upon it and remains to this day because of man's sin. He can do with it whatever pleases Him. It is man's rebellion against God that generates judgment and the wrath of God. By the way, what does it take for God to get our attention? To my shock and dismay, little prayer was requested by the people involved in Andrew, Katrina, and Rita.

Personal Experience

We lived in Miami for 34 years and had about 12 hurricanes pass over us, with Andrew being the worst, whose eye was about 70 miles away. We moved to Sebastian realizing that never had a hurricane come direct from the ocean. We lived here about 12 years when the first one came. I prayed for it to turn into the ocean; it passed right over the top of our house. And if that was not bad enough, another came over us within a month. The result was devastation. Twice, I prayed for it to turn into the ocean; twice, God said NO. (Paul prayed three times and was turned down.) When all around us most possessions were placed by the road for pickup, we did not have major personal destruction. Who determined where those storms are going to go? *It is mother nature*, many say. No such creature exists and cannot be found in the Bible. It is Father God Who determines everything that happens beyond our control.

Our Reaction

God's purpose was loud and clear in the ten plagues He placed upon Egypt: "That they may know that I am God." Sometimes calamities come as direct judgment of God. We are fully aware that it rains on the just as well as the unjust. For the Christian, Romans 8:28 is still in affect, that all things work together for the good. Our worldly friends are watching our Christian testimony in the midst of such happenings, so it becomes an opportunity to demonstrate the grace of God. Job lost all his possessions, including his children. What was his reaction: "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (Job 1:22). God's reaction to Job's faithfulness? He gave Job twice the possessions he had before. (Job 42: 10-17) Remember, the devil had to get permission before he could touch him. Today, we do not battle with the devil; he is a defeated and conquered foe. (I John 5: 18) Be sure to request my free booklet, "GIVE NO PLACE TO THE DEVIL."

We experientially learn things through suffering and sorrow that otherwise we would never know. One of the most valuable learning processes in the midst of affliction is comfort from the God of comfort. No affliction, no comfort. "Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. . . and the God of all comfort; Who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (II Corinthians 1:2-4). Why resist, resent, bemoan, and question when God brings necessary events into our lives to better equip us for a

ministry to others?

Another purpose of God for calamities is to remove us from the beggarly elements of this world. We Christians do not love this world. This course of action gives us assurance of heaven and reveals those headed for hell. (I John 2: 15, 16) Upon losing our possessions, we have a different perspective for mere things. Our priorities are changed and altered. The devastation of storms and earthquakes reveal our real compassion. All of us marvel at the sacrificial assistance given by the people of the USA for those around the world, including our own country. What good are our possessions when those around us have lost all theirs? Here is a biblical example of such action: "that there should be a great dearth (famine) throughout all the world; which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren which dwelled in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul" (Acts 11 :28,30). Such sharing indicates the sincerity of our love. (II Corinthians 8:8)

Some Questions for You

Do you have accusations against God when He demonstrates His power and authority? Do you notice how few see God's hand in storms? Are you going to argue with God Who wants to remind us of Who is in control of all things? Will you learn or allow circumstances to add to your bitterness and frustration? Will you stop talking about mother nature and instead talk of God Almighty Who rules the universe He spoke into existence? Will you bend your knee before this sovereign God, repenting of your sin and trusting in the provision of his Son, Jesus Christ, Who died on the cross to meet the righteous demands of His holy Heavenly Father? Will you serve the One Who died for you? Follow his clear directions given to you in His Word, the Bible? Will you move under His absolute authority?

God reveals His power either in blessing or judgment. His authority and power are demonstrated to this sin-cursed world. Are you ready for it? I hope after this message from the Bible you will have less questions as to what God is doing.

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