

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

and the Madness of Politics



“Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!”

S T O C K T O N

**THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD
and the Madness of Politics 1.1**



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Cruci Dum Spiro Fido

Preface

As David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, he faced a crisis: the gates of the city were too small for His Majesty to enter. David stood up and shouted, “Lift up your heads, O Ye Gates!”

Likewise our view of Christ is too small, too tiny, too petite. Let us “lift up your heads” that we might have the capacity to receive the major message of Scripture, “the Lord reigns.”

A man does not start out his Christian life believing “the Lord reigns.”

He begins his pilgrim journey thinking he must do something to change the world . . . but as he matures, he realizes not only that he can’t change the world, that he struggles to change himself.

This work is a collection of my work on what God has taught me about His sovereignty.

May the Lord use it to add to your understanding on how “**the Lord pleases, he does . . . in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps;**” that history is **merely an outworking of will made before the foundation of the world.**

Dr. Brooky Stockton, ret. pastor / teacher



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Glorious Verses on the Sovereignty of God



“that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.” – Daniel 4:17

1. The Madness of Politics

“Most Christians salute the sovereignty of God but believe in the sovereignty of man.” — R. C. Sproul



Call me positive. The more you learn about the sovereignty of God the easier it becomes to smile at the news.

You know we are living in a culture of death when a population tolerates drag queens reading Bible stories to children, accepts queer marriage, permits lesbians to lead White House press conference, appoints transgenders to elected positions, turns a blind eye to thousands of illegals crossing the southern border every day, lies about the death effects of vaxxines, does nothing about Gun Grabbing Grisham (NM) banning open carry rights in New Mexico, accepts governments pushing the Russian Bear into a corner daring him to push a nuclear button, countenances politicians smiling at 100 and 200 Ukrainian men being killed in combat every day, suffers Congressmen promoting nuclear war, and puts up with government officials not knowing the difference between a boy and a girl.

Madness is in the air. Knees knock. Hands shake. A report came out in September 2023 saying California wants to ban grass; trains are carrying box cars of migrants the U.S.A.; death darts named “COMINATY” are sent to U.S. military bases; blue states permit theft and looting, and some bankers want to outlaw private property to save the planet. The looney left wants to ban all gasoline cars, lawnmowers, gas stoves, wood stoves, over the counter cough medicines, filtered drinking water, national citizenship, private wells, gardening without a license, firearms, gender separation, and more (RM News 9-20-2023).

It seems like the monkeys are running the zoo and that these primates want to create a circle of unhappiness.

“As I look at America today, I am not afraid to say that I am afraid.” — Bertram Gross, Friendly Fascism: The New Face of Power in America

“There’s absolutely no evidence to support the statement that [America is] the greatest country in the world. We’re 7th in literacy, 27th in math, 22nd in science, 49th in life expectancy, 178th in infant mortality, 3rd in median household income, number 4 in labor force and number 4 in exports. We lead the world in only three categories: number of incarcerated citizens per capita, number of adults who believe angels are real and defense spending, where we spend more than the next 26 countries combined, 25 of whom are allies...” (Rutherford, Hope).

It's like we're living in madness," said Danielle Gentile. But worse, madness has become a way of life around the world. Madness is normal; sanity is insane.

"There's something not right with our politics right now. It's become stranger, uglier, and increasingly disorienting."

It feels like an unmoored ship in the middle of a storm . . . like a bear running at full speed going around in circles gobbling up ant . . . like the insanity of Colonel Custer leading the charge while whipping a dead horse . . . like showing mercy to mosquitos.

Political discourse has become nothing but shouts and lies and threats. Political loyalties are about who you hate, not who you love. And all this ignorant bile is justified by making up nonsensical 'facts'. The crazier the belief, the more strongly it's held." — John Verdon, **White River Burning**

Where is God in the midst of all this craziness?

Furthermore, the manic Armenian media, on the left and right, send a clear message: "We've got to do something," anything: Vote, write, protest, shout, spit, scream, organize, shoot somebody, wear a mask and take a triple vaxxine.

The Armenian bent in politics is expressed by Ocala Starbanner:

"We are the ones who must stop the madness of America"

But, this international crisis is bigger than the voter, bigger than - Democrat / Republican Party, bigger than any single nation.

Who has peace ruling the heart these days? When the human heart can't find peace it either goes berserk or slithers into the sloth of despond.

Dave Rubin has the right perspective,

"When we fail to live a life outside politics, we become a slave to it."

During these days, we are in desperate need of divine perspective . . . but Jesus may be too much for us.

"Jesus is too much for us. The church's later treatment of the gospels is one long effort to rescue Jesus from 'extremism.'" —author Gary Wills, What Jesus Meant

Peace begins when we look at sovereignty of God to realize these matters are in his capable hands and that only He can provide a remedy for the madness. As the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, He uses His knowledge, power, and authority to govern every event so that all things, good and evil, conform to His Divine will.

The Holy Scripture assigns Sovereignty to the LORD God declaring Him to have supreme authority, control, and power over all things: over time, space, and matter; over heaven, earth, and hell; over animals on the land, fish in the sea, and birds in the air; over the living and the dying; over sickness and health; over wealth and poverty; over men and women; over all that has happened, is happening, and will happen in the future between the two eternities.

This work is a list of Bible verses on God's sovereignty with comments. Instead of shouting and screaming at the news, read these texts, consider them carefully as ultimate truth, and bring your soul to rest.

"For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: 'In returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength . . .'" – Isaiah 30:15

After reading an article titled, "10 Reasons why *this year* will be the Worst Year Ever", by Giacomo Arcaro, I have a message for these fear mongers:

"Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" – Psalm 76:10

Now you can smile at the news.

2. The Main Message of the Bible

The Lord God Reigns!



There are two types of people: those who believe man is in charge of his future, and Christian men who believe God controls the future.

The God news of the Bible is that the Lord God reigns!

The good news of the Bible is not "I got myself born" and "I can change the world," but that God is and that He is in charge of the universe.

God is sovereign in creation, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

When sin entered the history, men become confused about who is running the world. Great monarchs like Nimrod, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus the Great, Alexander the Great, the Caesars, Napoleon, and the Rothschild marshalled their forces to shape the world according to their own ambitions. All failed.

The last lesson Job learned from his painful ordeal is that “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.” - Job 42:2

The exodus taught the redeemed, “The LORD shall **reign** for ever and ever.” - Exodus 15:18

Psalms has a major message: “God reigneth over the heathen (nations).” - Psalm 47:8.

The Spirit commissioned Israel to say among the nations “the LORD reigneth” - Psalm 96:10.

The Old Testament gospel comes to us as, “the LORD reigneth” - Psalm 97:1, 99:1

When King David perceived the sovereignty of God and the establishment of His kingdom on earth, the Spirit wrote, “This concludes the prayers of David” (Psalm 72).

Isaiah’s proclaimed his gospel as, “**Thy God reigneth!**” - Isaiah 52:7

The fires of hope that ignited the remnant was the LORD shall reign over them in Mount Zion. - Micah 4:7

In the New Testament we learn that the major message of John the Baptist, Jesus, Philip, Paul, and Peter was “the kingdom of God”; that is, the rule of God had arrived in the Person and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and that history is moving toward its grand conclusion by the will and power of God.

The good news of the gospel declares a Christ that must reign till he puts all enemies under his feet. - 1 Corinthians 15:25

The Book of Revelation ends with this message:

"Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"

But, we are born blind to these things. Growing up we are attracted to the bright lights in Tensile Town with all its glittering gold and promises of fame and happiness. Not long into our journey, we learn we’ve been fed a lie and that life has got to be more than accumulating money and experiencing pleasure. Bob Marley was correct when he said, “Money can’t buy life.”

But, it is worse. When men don’t acknowledge the LORD God, governments “hate you and shall reign over you” - Leviticus 26:17

In believing the gospel, we are wonderfully changed . . . but not enough. We struggle in our own weak way to be better with paltry results.

Somewhere on this journey some depressed Presbyterian shares with us that God is sovereign and that He is in control of history. We hear it but don’t believe it . . . until we mature in Scripture and gain life experiences.

In the last lap of the race, we learned what was there all the time:

“For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!” “that no purpose of His can be thwarted!” Hallelujah!

3. Genesis 50:20

Goodness and Badness

“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.”



If you had power, what would it look like – the Grand Wizzard of the KKK or the elf driver of Santa’s Christmas sled?

God is greater than the kakistocracy¹ and empleomania² of men, and exercises veto power over the devious plans of throttlebottoms.³

In the matter of intense family politics, Joseph’s brothers hated him, abducted him, and sold him as a slave to a caravaner headed for Egypt.

In this instance, God used their treachery as integrity training for Joseph, exalted him as Vice Regent of Egypt, and used the Hebrew to not only save Jacob's family from famine, but the whole nation of Egypt from starvation.

“ . . . that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men.” – Daniel 4:17

4. Exodus 4:11

Gifts and Abilities

¹ Kakistocracy: A government by the worst of men.

² Empleomania: A mania for holding public office.

³ Throttlebottom: an innocuously inept and futile person in public office

"Then the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD (I Am)?"



Who can forge the lines, "Ding dong, the witch is dead."

Many of us wish the clock would strike 13 and bellow out the glorious news, "Ding dong, Satan is dead."

In Wizzard of Oz, Glinda tells Dorothy she had the power to go home all along.

Likewise, we God has given us the power to live free of the saurkrauts associated with the municiple corporation in Washington D.C.

Both good and bad rulers are set in place by the LORD, but for differeint purposes.

God selected Moses who had Egypt beat out of him, and made him the great mediator of law to Israel. Likewise, God selects deplorable rulers to shame proud nations (Romans 9:17).

When God called Moses to be his mouthpiece to Pharaoh, the 80 year old shepherd protested saying he was not articulate enough for the task. The LORD focused Moses on His unlimited power over the skills of men.

God makes people male or female. God gives men eloquence, hearing, and sight. Likewise, "I Am that I Am" makes men mute, deaf, and blind.

Men are neither champions nor victims of chance. The LORD gives people intelligence, beauty, and talent; and, it is He who makes people simple-minded, ordinary-looking, weak framed, and humble with talent.

While good gifts gladden the heart, none of us should murmur if lesser gifts fall into our lot. Perhaps God is more glorified in our weakness than in our strength. Moreover, if you had what you crave, what would you do with it?

Our Lord was the Prince of the kings of the earth, but he walked among men as a servant. David wandered around the mountains while Saul sat on a throne; Elijah groaned out prayers in a cave while Jezebel enjoyed pleasure in her palace; John the Baptist dressed in camel hair and foraged for locusts while Caiaphas wore the garment of a high priest enjoying the luxuries of Rome. God's greatest eat beans and rice alone at home while the pretenders eat ribeye steak with entrepreneurs at Caesar's Palace.

Those with great gifts have no basis for pride, and those with lowly gifts, have no basis for shame.

Let all praise God and give Him the glory. For it is the LORD Who has made me thus.

5. Deuteronomy 32:39

The Arbitrator of Life

“See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.”



“Behind every man now alive stand thirty ghosts, for that is the ratio by which the dead outnumber the living” wrote Arthur Clark in A Space Odyssey.

The living would do well to consider that the Lord is the Arbitrator of life and they are few hours away from being one of the ghosts.

“The first word in the sentence is the imperative “*See*.” And, we would do well to obey it!

In contrast to the idols of the day, the Spirit emphasizes the solitariness of the true God. While there are many pretenders, the LORD **is** the only self-existent, self-contained, self-satisfied God in need of naught. His creation adds nothing to him.

The adverb “no” in the second sentence stands in the emphatic position in Hebrew! What a rebuke to modern man that views all religions as equal . . . as good . . . as one of many roads to Heaven. Few, however, talk about many roads to hell. Oh, the folly of British omnism that disperses spiritual devotion to all religions.

The pronouns “I” “I” (*ani ani*) are in the emphatic position in this sentence. While He **is**, others are NOT! He **is** the Great **I Am**. He was, **IS**, and will be what his children need him to be.

“I am the arbiter of life and death, the dispenser of prosperity and adversity, and the author of national changes and revolutions, whether in the way of mercy or judgment.” – Benson

We are too quick to attribute death to the Devil and healing to nature. God kills and so can men. But, only the LORD can make men alive. He wounds (shattering bones - Numbers 24:8), and so can men, but only the LORD can heal broken hearts and broken bones. The Great “I Am” claims **exclusive agency** over death and life, injury and healing, sickness and health.

To his people, the Great “I Am” presents Himself to men as the Arbitrator of life and death; the Source of prosperity and adversity; the Wounder and Healer of men. But to his enemies, the Lord's hand becomes an invincible fortress from

which rebels cannot escape. There are no fugitives that can vanish from his omnipotent eye or His vice-grip on their future.

6. 1 Samuel 2:6-8

Life and Death, Triumph and Trouble

"The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and on them he has set the world."



The Arminian mind thinks their life is the sum total of their choices, but Hannah sees it otherwise.

"Hannah looks beyond the gift, and praises the Giver. She rejoiced in the salvation of the Lord, and in expectation of His coming, who is the whole salvation of his people." (Matthew-Henry)

Life and death, heaven and hell, riches and poverty, fame and obscurity come from the same sovereign LORD. Nothing in the affairs of men is left to chance.

Caring Providence administered by the God to whom Hannah prayed has universal appeal. *He is not far from any of us* (Acts 17:27). Because we know the sweets and the bitters of life belong to Him, believers can rely upon His wisdom, love, and power to guide them. He can change circumstances in a moment: "He lifts up the needy."

"pillars of the earth" acts as a metaphor for the stability of a flat earth. While circumstances change, the limited cosmos does not. What he creates, He sustains. He is the nuclear glue that holds every atom together. He holds up the stars, and holds us in the palm of His hand (Colossian 1:16-17).

Is there anything more foolish than to think that government officials can save the planet from climate change by taxing the population into poverty? Politics appears to be the only place where stupidity is not a handicap.

The trick is to get education out of politics and to get it into the heads of politicians.

7. 1 Chronicles 29:11-12

King of All

“Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. 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 honor 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.”



In King David’s state of the union address, he announces the completion of his plans to build the nation a temple for God and offers this prayer to the Lord.

He did not praise politicians or the genius of men.

He saw God as the source of His success and the strength of the nation. His vision was not a nation united around an all-powerful government, but a nation anchored to the Lord God Omnipotent.

Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: David attributes all that men admire to the Lord: greatness and fame, power and strength, glory and beauty, victory and supremacy, majesty and honor.

for all that is in the heaven and in the earth [is thine]; Because all things are made by Him, they belong to Him, He exercises exclusive rights over all things just as the creator of a thing has every right to do.

thine is the kingdom, O Lord; David attributes ownership and authority over all creatures to the Lord. He rules as the One and Only Sovereign.

and thou art exalted as head above all; Headship, authority, dominion, and the right to rule angels in heaven and men on earth belongs to God alone. The NT informs us that Christ is the Head of man, the Head of rulers, and the Head of the church (Colossians 1:25-18; 2:8-12; Revelation 1:5).

Both riches and honor 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: Wealth, fame, political power, and strength are given by God to the noble and ignoble, that in the end God may be glorified in His dispensation of justice and mercy throughout history.

Perhaps God is more glorified by our obedience to Him in times of poverty, defamation, and ill health than He would be if we were healthy and wealthy; and, that the glory of His justice on the rich and famous on the day of judgment will be more apparent to those who have been greatly grieved by their wickedness and blasphemies.

8. 1 Kings 22:34-35

Guiding Arrows

(ERV) "Then a soldier in the distance pulled back as far as he could on his bow and shot an arrow into the air. The arrow happened to hit the king of Israel in a small hole where his armor was fastened together. King Ahab said to his chariot driver, "I've been hit! Turn the chariot around and take me off the battlefield!" The armies continued to fight while King Ahab was propped up in his chariot. He was leaning against the sides of the chariot, looking out toward the Arameans. His blood ran down onto the floor of the chariot. Later in the evening, he died."

It has been said that half the accidents happen at home, the other half happen in Washington D.C.



Is there such a thing as "accidents?" Not according to this text.

The Spirit does not name the soldier or tell us where he was aiming. A random shot directed at the army, without aim, or a target, or any ambition of reaching Ahab, or any particular person; the arrow landed between the seams of the king's armor. An impossible shot even for Robin Hood!

God directs the weapons of men and approves of their effects. There is no armor, no shield, no solid steel bunker, and no "DUMB" that can protect a man from the arrows of His vengeance. Moreover, there is no weapon formed that can reach the Christian man unless its effect is approved of God.

All this effort by government officials to build DUMBs (Deep Underground Military Bases) to protect them from some global catastrophe stinks with extremism. Common sense is a deodorant, and politicians never use it.

9. 2 Chronicles 20:6

Power and Might

“And said, O LORD God of our fathers, *art* not thou God in heaven? and rulest *not* thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is *there not* power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?”



A madness whiffs through the air in listening to the “news.”

It appears politicians love lies, death, and war. History shows that war is better at abolishing nations, than nations abolishing war.

According to Scripture these madmen are restrained by the LORD God. Consequently, politicians are the most frustrated of all men because they can't seem to get their will done on earth.

When the Moabites and Ammonites marched their armies from the east sea to plunder Jerusalem, lips trembled and knees knocked.

Jehoshaphat proclaimed a fast and prayed. Without a standing military, he relied upon the omnipresence, authority, and sovereignty of the LORD God. Bowing his knee, the king entrusted the destiny of his people into infinite hands infused with unstoppable, unmovable, iron power.

Hastily organizing a volunteer army, he appointed the temple guards (Levites) as the special operations corps who formed the tip of the spear for Israel's armed forces.

“Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness,” – 20:20-21

As they marched to battle, the Levites led the army in singing chants and praises to the Lord – a roaring that must have sounded like a train coming down the track, whistling and chugging from the lungs of Hebrew soldiers.

Hearing the bellows of praise and the banging of drums, the songs of faith knocked the invaders dead.

“And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.” -20:22

And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped.” – 20:24

That we might learn the virtue of trusting God in a time of crisis, the Spirit informs us that not only did the Hebrew army arrive at a battle field of slain corpses, it took three days to gather the spoil and to carry back the wealth to Jerusalem.

10. Job 12:10, 13-14

In His Hand

“In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind . . . With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding. Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening.” - Job



At the time of Job’s horrific suffering, he found himself in a debate with three Arminian minds that believed men had to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps and if they were suffering it was because of human failure.

Job dissented.

With his theology grounded on the sovereignty of God, Job claimed the Lord had disposition over the souls of mankind. And, this was his conflict. If God controls all, why is allowing me to suffer so.

Paul held to the belief, “in Him we live, move, and have our being.”

In his sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” Jonathan Edwards’ taught God holds sinners over the fires of Hell in the same way a mischievous boy holds a spider over a fire . . . that the miscreants are powerless to escape God's prisons.

In the course of life, men face two problems: (1) they don’t know what to do; and, (2) they know what to do, but don’t have the power to do it. But, God? He knows what to do (wisdom), and he has the power to do it (strength). He knows what works (“counsel”) and why it works (“understanding”). Though His infinite and unsearchable wisdom descends to the deepest sea and ascends to the highest stars, He is the fountain of all blessing and the river that delivers it at the feet of men.

What God ruins, no man can restore! Whether He breaks the Tower of Babel, Sodom, Thebes, or Tyre, who can rebuild it to its former glory?

The doors that God shuts, no man can open! Whether it be a government prison, the chains and fetters of sin, the Gates of Eden, the cycle of poverty, the unyielding grave, the doors of heaven or the doors of hell, who can open it? (Psalms 88:8; Psalms 142:7; John 11:43; Matthew 25:10-13; Genesis 3:23 Genesis 3:24; Luke 16:26).

11. Job 42:2

Irresistible Power

“I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.”



Job's Arminian friends believed “who *ever* perished, being innocent?” (4:7).

Job dueled with these miserable comforters with his argument cemented in the sovereignty of God . . . but in so doing he wrestled with why would a sovereign God treat Him so harshly?

He ended this wrestling match with God confessing, “I know can do all things.”

But, Job did **not** start his ordeal with the words, “I know that you can do all things.” He gained this knowledge in the last lap of his marathon.

God appointed Job's crushing trials not to punish him, but to test him; not to make him bitter, but to make him better; not to make him afraid, but to release him from fear; not to hurt the man, but to help him go deeper into the mysteries of God.

Job's trial tested him to expose his strengths and weaknesses; but these tests also brought him closer to the knowledge of God.

In his affliction, Job grew smaller, and the Lord grew bigger.

He never learned why he was suffering, nor did God teach him about His many attributes.

Rather, Job learned that God can do anything and everything; that none of His “thoughts” or purposes can be overpowered. Try as they may the powerbrokers

of this world cannot frustrate the will of God. But, He can and does frustrate the plans of men.

Job's losses and confusion teaches us that his suffering was not the result of his individual sin, but that his pain was appointed by God to perfect him. Nothing that happened to this saint was by accident. God controlled the thermostat in Job's furnace of affliction.

Like Job's friends we are too eager to praise God for triumphs and to blame others for their troubles . . . even to blame ourselves for our blunders. God proposes and God disposes. He creates the good we enjoy; and the bitters must be approved by Him.

12. Psalm 2:4-5

Frustrated Rulers

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."



Have you ever noticed the hubris and arrogance of politicians?

This text is the Lord's response to proud kings planning to revolt against God's authority.

All politicians boast they understand the questions of the day. The problem is that none of them have the answers.

After taking a vote to overthrow God's law-order, the Lord laughs at their grand scheme and puny power.

The term "laugh" means "to be amused," "play," or "sport;" i.e. God is not only amused at the boldness of world leaders, He mocks them to shame.

13. Psalm 10:16

For Ever and Ever



Have you ever asked yourself “Where is God when I need him?”

Psalm 10 is an acrostic psalm dealing with the hard truth that God hides himself. Every religion, including Christianity, must deal with the hiding of God. Where is God when I need Him?

That “The Lord is King forever and ever” is not where the psalmist started his journey.

In the beginning, he thought man-ruled and the solution to the political madness of his day was better governments . . . even a change in rulers. Thus, Psalm 10 shows us the growth of the man in his spiritual thinking.

The delight of the church is that God is with her; “Lo, I am with you even until the end of the age.” But, it is better than this. Each Christian has the Spirit of God living in his soul -1 Peter 3:15.

But, no one is so miserable as the child who feels like God has forsaken Him and that He is nowhere to be found.

God is supposed to be a “very present help in the time of trouble,” but often more scarce than drinking water in Death Valley. His presence is a great joy for the people of God, but nothing is more troubling than an eclipse of His presence.

The psalmist has a groan in his gut about wicked politicians: *“In arrogance the wicked hotly pursue the poor; let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised.” (10:2).*

It is much too simple to say that everything good comes from God and everything bad comes from man. The discerning recognizes evil presents itself *as a genial person feigning to be just.* Moreover, goodness from God often arrives in humble packages.

The wicked do not wear a sign on their chest that says, “I am wicked;” rather, they carry signs that read, “Feminists,” “Free love,” “Be a Democrat,” “Women's Rights,” “I LUV LGBT,” “No One is Illegal,” “Pro-Choice,” “Socialism Sign up Here,” “Support the Extinction of Old White Men,” etc.

The Psalmist wishes his antagonists would be exposed, humbled, and trapped in their own snare.

The psalmist progresses in his prayer from one of feeling forsaken to a feeling of confidence that God has heard his prayer; from feeling like his Commander was absent in the battle, to an understanding that God is a competent King actively saving His people from their enemies.

16 The LORD is king forever and ever; the nations perish from his land.

Let us remember that the LORD is King. He rules over all – over all rulers, presidents, parliaments, and bureaucracies. All heads of state are required to acknowledge His reign and surrender to His law-order. Where are the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Edomites? When the nations act in rebellion against His will, the heavy hand of God moves against them – *“the nations perish from his land.”*

Exodus 15:3-4 The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name. Pharaoh’s chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea.

Exodus 15:19 For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.

It was the gospel of "another king, Jesus" that turned the world upside down, and it is the preaching of this gospel that will turn the world right side up (Acts 17:6-7; Psalm 2, 97, 110).

14. Psalm 33:9-10

Foiled Again

“For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.”



This psalm begins with an imperative, “Be glad in the Lord.” But, gladness is in short supply. Most people seem to have the temperament of a horsefly.

But, this psalm provides spiritual reasons to be glad.

"He spake and it was done" refers to the works of God during the creation of heaven and earth. The Hebrew expresses it better: "He spoke, and it was." Things that are have no power to created themselves. No one got them self born.

“That is, its existence depended on his word; the universe sprang into being at his command; he had only to speak, and it arose in all its grandeur where before there was nothing” (Barnes).

The world we observe today is NOT the result of billions of years of evolutionary micro-changes, but the result of words spoken by the Creator during the six days of creation. Man did not begin by two rocks bumping hips. No one can determine to grow a third arm or have an eye in the back of their head.

"What a pity it is that this earth, which is so full of the proofs and instances of God's goodness, should be so empty of his praises" -Matthew Henry).

The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.

This text moves from God's work of creation, to his work of Providence; from his power over atoms and mindless things, to his power over rational, volitional creatures.

Though nations unite to enact their global agenda, but our Lord frustrates their plans and defeats them as He pleases.

His plans of judgment for the wicked and for the good of His people are irresistible. Unlike men, our Lord is never frustrated. He not only knows what to do, He has the power to do it.

It is a good thing politicians don't live up to their promises, otherwise, the country would be ruined.

15. Psalm 37:1-3

Mowed Down

Psalm 37:1-3, 28 Fret not thyself because of evildoers . . . For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.

Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.



For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

Righteous people are concerned about the runaway train of politics on a track of madness especially the audacity to decriminalize infanticide.

Alternative media personalities in a panic bark out commands to the public that they must do something about social problems . . . anything: listen, learn, vote, write, protest, jump up and down and scream, etc.

In fact, it is a mark of a good Christian to be burdened down by abortion, homosexuality, gun violence, sex change surgeries, and other degradations. But, this chapter tells us to STOP FRETTING ABOUT ABORTION . . . WARS . . . and GUN VIOLENCE.

Psalm 37:1 Fret not thyself (tit'har) because of evildoers (ra'im), neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

"Fret not thyself" is a reflexive verb which prohibits God's man from fueling his anger by stoking the fire with reports about what the *ra'im* are doing.

Believers know they should not fret, but they do. They fret because they do not rest very well on the bed of our Sovereign's promises; that is, they have not found the grounds on which to live a worry free, fret free life.

You can stop fretting by growing in the knowledge of God.

First, know that it is God's job to judge the wicked;

Our sovereign Lord separates the husks from the corn, the goats from the sheep, the tares from the wheat, and the wicked from among the righteous. We have a duty to remove the leaven from our own lives, but He has given us **NO duty or power** to remove malice and evil in society.

Second, know that God has promised to judge the wicked.

2 For the wicked shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. . . . 9 For evildoers shall be cut off . . . 14 The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow . . . 5 Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken. . . . 17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: . . . 20 But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD *shall be* as the fat of lambs: 28 . . . but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

Third, know that God is removing the wicked from society NOW!

28 For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.

The "seed" here refers to the babies, children, and families of the wicked – of fornicators, adulterers, and other classes of degenerates. And, the world doesn't need a second, third, fourth generation of paillards scurrying through the streets like garbage pail dogs reproducing more bas**d children.

Psalm 21:10 Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men.

Fourth, know that God uses the wicked to cut off the seed of the wicked.

--**Stop fretting about abortion.** God is using wicked abortion "doctors" to fulfill His promise to cut off the seed (babies, children, offspring) of the wicked -- promiscuous fornicators and adulterers in Hollywood, NYC, Chicago, London, Berlin, Paris, and the inner cities.

-Stop fretting about war and the casualties of war. God is using war to fulfill His promise to cut off the seed of the wicked.

-Stop fretting about gun violence in Chicago. God is using gun violence to fulfill His promise to cut off the seed of the wicked.

-Stop fretting about vaccine injuries and deaths. God is using the vax jabs to fulfill His promise to cut off the seed of the wicked.

-Stop fretting about child sex-change operations. God is using these monstrous procedures to sterilize the children of the wicked in order to fulfill His promise to cut off the seed of the wicked.

-Stop fretting about the elite's plan to reduce the world population by billions. God is using these wicked schemers to fulfill His promise to cut off the seed of the wicked.

Open your eyes and see. God is using the wicked to cut off the seed of the wicked.

Fret not!

Rest, soul, rest!

Note: Psalm 37:28 should not be used to label grieving parents who have lost children and to judge them as wicked. Psalm 37:28 is a general promise that should encourage us, but not empower us to sit as judges on specific persons and their trying circumstances and then to conclude they must be evil. God forbid!

16. Psalm 76:10

The Great Restrainer

"Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."



Which of us hasn't felt utterly exasperated after listening to the evening news?

The world is dangerously over populated with reporters that slant the news around their liberal philosophy, and politicians that act like a little puppy trying to follow four kids at the same time.

The depravity of politicians seems to have no boundaries. Psychopathic men and women hold offices of power in Western countries. We know there is a limit to intelligence, but there doesn't seem to be a limit to the madness of God's enemies.

"Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I'm not sure about the universe." (Albert Einstein)

"Power is okay, and stupidity is usually harmless. Power and stupidity together are dangerous". (Patrick Rothfuss, [The Name of the Wind](#))

"Never argue with stupid people, they will drag you down to their level and then beat you with experience." (Mark Twain)

Is there an anchor for the soul that can keep us together while lunatics captain the ship?

The conjunction "surely" announces the main lesson of the psalm — a detail about the sovereignty of God, that if grasped, can cause us to experience calm in the midst of political storms.

The phrase "*wrath of man*" refers to all the insane, imperial ambitions of politicians.

Not all psychopaths are behind bars. Maniacs are in power and hold key positions in the apparatus of government. Madmen run for office. Voting fails. Money talks. Justice breaks. The status quo in the hands of unaccountable bureaucrats makes ordinary citizens feel as helpless as ants to stop the elephant stampede of lunacy thundering across the land.

"*shall praise thee:*" Ellicott says, "Possibly we should render, 'and those who remain from their wrath shall celebrate a festival,' since the suggested emendation is the word used in that sense."

The Cambridge Bible adds, "All rebellion against God's will must in the end redound to God's glory: it serves to set His sovereignty in a clearer light" ([Exodus 9:16](#)).

The Pulpit Commentary considers man's wrath "shall give occasion for great deeds on God's part - deeds which will bring him praise and honour."

The word “*restrain*” in Hebrew means “to fasten one’s belt” or “to gird” with a sash (Exodus 12:11; 29:9). God restrains these nutcases. Like guard dogs, they are on a leash.

Benson: "thou shalt put it on as an ornament, which the girdle was; thou shalt adorn thyself with it as a conqueror adorns himself with the spoils of his enemies."

Barnes: "It is not that there was anything in the wrath itself, or in their plans or intentions, that was in itself "adapted" to honor God; but that it was overruled by him, so that he took "occasion" from it to display his own character."

Timothy, in his battle against heresiarches in Ephesus, faced "madmen" (*anoia*) like the sorcerers, Jannes and Jambres, Pharaoh's magicians. See 2 Timothy 3:9-10. In this passage Paul assures his son in the faith "they will make no further progress;" that is, there is a limit to what these lunatics can accomplish because God restrains them.

The great question for the godly is, “How much evil must these tyrants do before God shackles them?”

The great answer is, “just enough;” that is, these belligerents are not capable of carrying out all their wicked schemes against innocent people. God limits the plans of those intent on world dominion.

The term “remainder of wrath” refers to the frustrated devices of ambitious politicians—evil plans they cannot legislate — cannot mandate -- schemes and dreams they are precluded from executing while in office.

The trusting Christian is not in a panic because he knows that God has these devils on a chain. These criminals that appear to be unrestrained in their folly will be used for the glory and praise of God.

The problem with man is not something from without, but from within.

Jeremiah 17:9 "the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, who can know it?"

No man knows the depth of his own wickedness. No man is as evil as he can be because God restrains evil.

And in our story, the might of Sennacherib and his army fell as corpses in that ancient theater in order to demonstrate the crushing, bone-breaking power of the Lion of Judah.

The invasion of the Assyrians to Jerusalem and their stunning slaughter resulted in praise to the LORD; their retreat from Jerusalem demonstrated how God restrains the wrath of man.

The good news for Americans is that all politicians don't get elected.

*It is a good thing that elected politicians don't live up to their promises.
If they did the country would be ruined.*

17. Psalm 91

The Invisible Shield



This remarkable hymn has profound claims and extraordinary promises – promises that only a sovereign, all-power Potentate can fulfill -- promises that only Christ-lovers, cross-carriers, and covenant-keepers can feel and appreciate.

This psalm is not for light-weights, but heavy-weights in faith. No chaplain in the army could preach this psalm unless he stands on the rock of God's sovereignty.

War is the result of politics. Political warfare is the use of political force to compel an opponent to do one's will, based on hostile intent.

One should avoid looking at the psalm casually or linearly. A psalm quoted by our Lord, it deserves our deepest consideration, profound reflection, and sincere devotion.

David is credited with writing this Psalm; that is, it's inspired content was written by a man who experienced the horrors of the battlefield . . . but, it is relevant for every Christian as it expresses the work of salvation at work in the man who has filed his domicile in the kingdom of God.

The Old Veteran States His Confidence.

1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High (apodosis) shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty (protasis).

The old Veteran states the major lesson he learned in his fighting career: How to survive on the battlefield in deadly clashes against enemy troops.

This marvelous promise "abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (the apodosis) is conditioned upon whether one "*dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High*" (the protasis). It is not a promise to resident aliens visiting with a "green card" sleeping in the barracks with citizens of the kingdom.

This is no minor promise nor fluky condition.

The word "*dwelleth*" (*yashab*) refers to the Christian-soldier who pitches his tent under the shadow of the Almighty. Not for a short time during a bloody battle as spiritual life-insurance, but as his personal dwelling, his permanent residence, his homestead for life as a de jure kingdom citizen. Many soldiers like to take leave and visit Satan's Yum Yum palace, but this soldier separated himself from these pleasures in order to enjoy feeling the heartbeat of God under His wings in and off the battlefield.

The denomination "*Almighty*" comes from the Hebrew word "*El Shaddai*" (*shadday*). The term "*Shaddai*" is found in Genesis 17:1 -- a cognate title derived from a term referencing a man's muscular shoulder-chest -- an icon of strength and power.

The title "Most High" (*Elon or El-yone*) means "*highest*" or "*most high*" -- a reference to the Supreme Commander of the Universe. A man will receive many orders from de facto authorities during this pilgrimage on earth, but this man listened for the orders of the Supreme Commander of the Universe in and off the battlefield. That is, not only does this soldier submit to his Captain in battle, but he is under the authority of the LORD during peace time for the whole of life.

Because he is in God's kingdom and enjoys the life of the kingdom, he can afford to take risks. He has embraced death as part of God's will. If it be God's will for him to die as a hero on the front line of conflict, he knows that he has a permanent home with his Commander and Chief in Paradise.

The Young Soldier Hears and Answers:

2 I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.

Based on the precious promise in verse one, the instructed soldier makes a wholehearted commitment to the LORD God: "He is my refuge and my fortress" on the battlefield and off the battlefield; in war and in peacetime; in sickness and in health, in riches or in poverty . . .

Peter expressed it this way: "*Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts . . .*" (1 Peter 3:15).

The Old Veteran Pledges the LORD's Protection

3 Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

The experienced soldier brags about the LORD and shares his confidence to the new recruit that God will save this young marine from the fowler's snare (enemy traps).

The adjective "*noisome*" refers to the covetous "desire" and the "engulfing strategies" of the enemy to capture and kill him.

The "*fowler*" refers to muscular enemies, scammers, and scheming politicians that seek to enslave the man and to plunder his assets (Exodus 10:17).

The term "*pestilence*" refers to diseases, plagues, epidemics, infirmities, and battlefield tragedies. This soldier is not refusing medical assistance. Rather, he places his confidence in the sure promises of God rather than in the flaky promises of man.

Limitations: All the promises in this chorus belong to the *el-gibbor* (male soldier) who has made application to King Jesus for permanent domicile in the kingdom of God (shadow of his wings). These promises do not apply to nominal Christians or antinomians. They do not apply to women who put on the clothing of an *el-gibbor* (soldier). They belong to men (and women) who have surrendered their all-an-all to the Lord Jesus with a commitment to live under His law-order and his plan for men and for women. Rebels need not apply; that is, these promises are not relevant to the autonomous sheep committed to live life "his way" or "her way" (Isaiah 53:6).

4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy (big) shield and buckler (small shield).

The protection of Almighty God is compared to (a) a mother hen that shelters her chicks under her wings, and (b) to the soldier's shield and spear. The LORD is tough and tender; a gentle Savior for His helpless chicks, and an iron-fisted, Sherman tank to his enemies.

5 Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

Enemies attack during the day when one is awake, and at night when one is asleep.

The seasoned veteran shores up the promise in verse one with more assurances applicable to young soldiers headed toward the bloody battlefield.

The terrors of the day would include attacks of advancing armies you can see; and, the terrors of the night would include cold, savage, death-raids under the cover of darkness; threats from the enemy during a battle, and the propaganda of the enemies while at rest; overt and covert operations.

The soldier under the shadow of His wings fears neither the terrors of the day, nor the horrors of the night.

6 Nor for the pestilence (plagues) that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

If not facing enemies, the soldier has to deal with germ warfare, disease, contamination, and infection in the course of duty.

The term "*destruction that wasteth*" refers to "separation," a "cutting," or severing of arm and limb in the course of battle. Swords cut. A friend of God is not only protected, but he has superior weapons to employ against adversaries.

7 A thousand (Aleph = 1000) shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

Hand-to-hand combat is a life and death struggle. In war, men die. The old combat soldier assures the trusting trooper that the mortal dangers of battle shall not "come near thee." While he has to be in the conflict as duty requires, the promise contains special protection.

8 Only with thine eyes (*rak ayin*) shalt thou behold (*nabat*) and see (*ra'ah*) the reward of the wicked.

Assurances continue: without terror or danger to thyself, you shall see the "reward" of the wicked -- defeat, humiliation, wounding, dismemberment, and crushed bones of men opposing the armies of God.

"*Only with thine eyes*" (*rak ayin*) is in the emphatic position in this sentence. You shall see the wicked shattered, but that evil shall not touch the one sheltered under the Shadow of His wings. You will see others fall, but the danger shall not come near you.

The word "*reward*" (*shil'lumah*) refers "to acquittal" or "retribution."

There are two words used for perception: "*behold* (*nabat*) and *see* (*ra'ah*)." The adverb "Only" means "only, altogether, and surely;" it limits the verb. Some sins are judged now in time, and other sins are judged after death (1 Timothy 5:24). Look for it. Perceive it. Discern it.

9 Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; 10 There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

The old soldier reminds the young warrior that this promise and these assurances are not for every soldier, but ONLY for the GI who makes the LORD his permanent defense and refuge.

The term "*evil*" does not refer to sin or moral transgression, but to the complex troubles and distresses of war.

The soldier that makes the LORD his shield and buckler can expect to be delivered in a battle from death because God will manage all his earthly concerns. Those that know God are immortal until their work is done.

This passage does not deny life's paradoxes: A man may die young satisfied with life while the wicked man may not have enjoyed a single day of happiness in his long life.

This psalm does not say the Christian soldier will not have nights without sleep or days without hardship. The promise is for protection from destructive forces on the gridiron of conflict.

Angel in the clouds on blue sky

11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

This text is often used to address the subject of guardian angels, and rightly so. The soldier leaning on the everlasting arms can expect angels to come to his rescue (Acts 12).

Note: Satan quoted this verse "out of context" to Jesus when he challenged our Lord to jump off the pinnacle of the temple . . . but, Jesus put the promise in the proper context saying, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God;" that is, these promises are not for self-willed, presumptuous men. But, only for those soldiers that " *dwell in the secret place of the most high*" (91:1) making the "*Most High their habitation*" (1:9).

12 They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

"*in thy hands*" alludes to the tender care of a nurse carrying a baby in the palm of her hands.

"*dash thy foot*" against a stone refers to unseen, debilitating dangers due to the battle's terrain.

13 Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder (cobra): the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

The lion and cobra are icons depicting vicious, dangerous attackers with lion-like powers and poisons of rattlesnakes. Lions can tear people to pieces; and cobras strike with deadly toxins in their fangs. Yet, none of these pernicious creatures with all their claws and venom can touch the God-seeker until his work is done. With the power of God, he can tame the lion and defang the cobra.

As a way of application, let us remember the time the disciples came back from their mission stating enthusiastically, "*Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.*" Jesus replied, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you." (Luke 10:19)

The LORD Confirms the Old Veteran's Pledge of Protection

14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

We have another abrupt change in person. God speaks! God does not speak "*to him*" (the young soldier) but "*about him*."

"The first voice said of himself, '*I will trust*'; the second voice addresses that speaker, and says, '*Thou shalt not be afraid*'; the third voice speaks of him, and not to him, and says, '*Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him*" (MacLaren).

These promises are phenomenal and beyond ordinary understanding because they are other-worldly. Even God-fearing men need Divine certification of the remarkable promises to empower soldiers of the cross to separate themselves from the bombastic drums of doubts blasting from carnal theaters that men can see and hear; and, to confidently purchase a ticket to heaven's opera to hear the assurances of singing angels that only faith can appreciate.

The conjunction "*because*" supplies the foundation of this confidence; that is, he is protected because he knows my name. The word "*know*" (*yada*) does not mean "to be informed" or "to know about" or to "possess knowledge of." The term "*yada*" implies to know God personally, in an intimate way. It is not about what a man claims. He may claim to know God, but the real question is does God know the man and recognize him a member of His flock (John 10:27).

This psalm ends with Divine confirmation of the old veteran's promise that the soldier who dwells near God's chapel shall be delivered in war; that is, God notarizes the old soldier's wisdom and verifies it with His spoken Word.

15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him.

War is full of distress, but God assures the young soldier that in his personal emergency and cries for help that "*I will be with him in trouble*" to deliver him.

16 With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

The psalm ends with God's promise that the trusting soldier will not only survive, but thrive; that he will not only be supplied, but satisfied; and that he will not only have inspiration, but salvation; that the one who fears God can also enjoy Him; that the gospel not only promises eternal salvation from eternal enemies, but a measure of temporal salvation from earthly enemies.

18. Psalm 97

The Old Testament Gospel

“The Lord Reigns”

Before us is the gospel from an Old Testament (O.T.) perspective. What was the O.T. gospel and what is the language of proclamation? Since there is only one gospel, it behooves the Bible student to understand its O.T. presentment in order to expand one’s understanding of that glorious message.

The Gospel of God’s Reign

Psalm 97:1 The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.

Before us is the heart of the gospel: “*the Lord reigneth.*”



When is the last time you heard this announcement in the classroom or from the media? You are more likely to hear “we are in power” than God is in power. The human doctrines of “man’s choices” is more popular than the doctrine of God’s elections.

While we take great comfort in our Lord’s redemptive work, his core message was “*the kingdom of God has come unto you*” (Matthew 12:28); that is, the central message of Christ was the reign of God. God’s rule entered history in and through the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ to defeat man’s great enemies: Satan, sin, and death. The good news is that God is offering men peace with Himself on the grounds of Christ’s doing and dying for us.

Paul quoted a verse from Isaiah declaring the excellence of gospel proclamation: “*How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace*” (Romans 10:15). Paul’s quote is from Isaiah 52:7 which says, “*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings . . . that saith to Zion, ‘Thy God reigneth!’*”

The theme “the LORD reigneth” is the crux of the Old Testament gospel; and, the New Testament is simply the grand manifestation of the reign of God in action.

We do not always feel like God reigns. The humanist says, “It matters not . . . how charged with punishments the scroll, I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul” (Invictus).

Madmen come to power to steal property under color of law. Murderers and butchers are protected by legislative statutes. Rulers permit monopolies and bribes for high ranking officials. Government agencies oppress and bully the weak into submission. Disease and death visit every family. Jobs end. Stock markets plunge. Automobiles crash. Things seem out of control . . . and they

are depressing . . . unless, of course, we believe God reigns over all things in our lives.

Thus, the need of the hour is not more money, more organizations, and more self-esteem, but Christian men who proclaim the Lord reigns and that His dominions have entered history in and through His Son.

The good news is that God reigns over nations, over politics, over weather, over disease and tragedy, over health, and the nasty storms hovering over us . . . and for those who have repented of their rebellion against God's law order and surrender to His authority, His reign brings great joy and comfort.

One great cause of melancholy in our lives, is that we fail to take sufficient comfort from simple, but profound statements in Scripture. "The LORD reigneth" is the lightning bolt that lights up the cloudy skies during the cold, dark nights of our lives. The verbs "rejoice" and "be glad" are Hebrew jussives that enjoin all God's people to consider the dominions of our Lord and to join the triumphal procession taking place in Zion, the city of Almighty God, the general assembly of spiritual Israel. The people on vast continents as well as tribes on tiny islands (Pitcairn, Samoa), the great and the small, are urged to take comfort in the Sovereignty of Christ.

Notice that the locus of joy is outside of man and in the Lord's dominions. Joy is not connected to introspection, self-esteem, or inner exploration. It is not coupled with knowledge of self. It is not associated with profit in business or a large bank account. This psalm takes us outside of self, outside of our pride, outside of human choices, to the Sovereignty of the Lord God. Rejoice!

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

The Gospel of Righteousness

2 Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. 3 A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. 4 His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. 5 The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. 6 The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.

The reign of God is good news for those who have made their peace with God and surrendered to His law order, but it is not good news for rebels. In fact, it is rather disturbing for the self-willed, self-governed lawless man hell-bent on self-governance and asset accumulation.

The psalmist takes us back to Mt. Sinai. The clouds and darkness reminds us that the Lord is holy and unapproachable. There is a veiling of His splendor lest man be destroyed. Fire is an instrument of destruction stoked to consume the proud who refuse to acknowledge His supremacy. If the earth quakes and

mountains melt in His presence, how much more should pagans tremble before Sovereignty and Glory.

"The heavens declare his righteousness . . . His justice in punishing his enemies" - Gill.

Gospel Instructions to Idolaters

7 Confounded be (or be ashamed) all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods.

A better rendering of the original text is as follows: "Let all be ashamed who serve idols. Worship him all ye gods." The first statement or jussive serves as a command.

There are two jussives (commands) in this verse informing us of the response the Lord seeks from those outside His fold.

The first jussive is "*Be ashamed*" (*buwsh*).

If a person understands the Lord reigns and that his law is the supreme law, then shame for transgression is the proper response to gospel proclamation. The term "*serve*" (*abad*) implies a serf relationship to idols. An "*idol*" is source of law and values that one feels obligated to follow. The gospel announces the sinfulness of man and its effects by eating fruit from the poisonous tree. Man is not sick; he's a sinner that sins. Shame is the sense of failure and guilt one has because of disobedience to righteous Authority. The proper response to God's reign is fear, trembling, and a deep sense of shame that causes the naked spirit to reach for fig leaves.

The second jussive is the ONLY reasonable response to the reign of God which is "*worship*" (bow down).

The word "*worship*" is a rare form (Hithpael) and is difficult to translate because the verb is a reflexive action; i.e. the subject is ordered to act on himself. But, the psalmist is not asking men to worship themselves, but Him who reigns. Thus, the verb should be treated as follows: "Fall down! Bow your knee! Make yourself the object of the LORD's affection!" Cease your war against Him and surrender to His authority!

He is not calling for sacerdotal worship here but total surrender of the total man to Absolute Sovereignty. This is God's way of calling rebels to repent and to make peace with Him. Since the Lord reigns, the only reasonable, sensible response is acknowledgement of the rule of the Lord God and acceptance of his terms of peace.

Now if "be ashamed" and "bow down before Him" is the proper response, then the opposite action exposes of the plight of humanity.

All the problems we face as a society is because men have rebelled against God's law order . . . and are not even ashamed about their pride and immorality.

What is wrong with men that are not ashamed of their filthy words and cursing; of their fornications and adultery; of their scams and schemes and fraud? Further, the reason we need a government police force is because men have declared war against God's law order. Is not all the corruption in government a result of men who reject God's law order—men who do not execute the duties of their office under the eye of His Sovereignty?

Notice the terms "idols" and "gods." An idol is a fiction, a man-made thing or entity or corporation. The word "*serve*" (*abad*) is the word used of a slave who renders service to his masters. Think of it. People are absolutely in love with fictions and man-made things.

What's wrong with man? Men have time to work, watch sports, take their kids to soccer games, watch T.V., eat and sleep. But, they don't have time for God.

"Worship Him, all ye gods" could refer to "angels" as K & D suggest, or the term "gods" could refer to government officials such as judges and magistrates (Psalm 82:6). He calls "the gods" to bow down and worship, but the "gods" he is talking about is not "so-called" gods, but proud, arrogant man who sees himself as his own king. After all, Satan said to the first couple, "You shall be as gods;" that is, self-governed, autocratic people.

This text is God's way of telling humanistic man to repent of sin and to surrender to the authority of the living God. The New Testament equivalent of this text is "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me;" (Matthew 11:29) or, "If we confess with our mouth that Jesus is Lord" and believe in our heart that God raised him from the dead, we shall be saved (Romans 10:9); or, "God now command all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30).

8 Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O LORD. 9 For thou, LORD, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods.

The fact that the LORD reigns over all the earth and calls the pagans and infidels from every nation to repent and surrender to the LORD are sweet sounds in Zion. He is not just the God of Israel but of all men. He is not just the God of the hills but of the valleys, deserts, and seas. He knows the secret counsels of all the kings, foils their plans, and executes His will on the earth.

Zion is the community of the redeemed (the heavenly Jerusalem today), and they rejoice in God's reign and His attention to call the rebels to order. The redeemed have repented of their sins and made peace with God on His terms.

Because of their deep desire for others to find grace and forgiveness at the foot of the cross (judgments), there is joy for Christians in gospel proclamation.

"The faithful servants of God may well rejoice and be glad, because he is glorified; and whatever tends to his honour, is his people's pleasure." - Matthew Henry.

Gospel Instructions to Christians

10 Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked. 11 Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. 12 Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

Just as the LORD has instructions for the pagans (7-9), God has instructions for believers. Between the two commands He reminds His beloved of the benefit of living under His authority: preservation (eternal life), deliverance, light (increase light and perspective on truth), and gladness.

The first command: "hate evil."

The first command is **not** to "believe in yourself; or "to love your neighbor as yourself;" or, "be all you can be," or "reach your full potential;" *but TO HATE evil!* Toleration of evil is not Christian. Believers are called to hate fornication, adultery, homosexuality, theft, murder, covetousness, disrespect, and idolatry . . . and those who promote vice.

Evil is **not** floating through the air. It is in men!! It is **not** like the flu that comes on men for a short time and then leaves.

That believers are to love the sinner and hate sin is a modern Evangelical nicety that is anthropologically flawed, practically unattainable, and theologically preposterous. Perjurers lie because they are liars; fornicators fornicate because they are fornicators; burglars steal because they are thieves. The whole idea that a criminal did not mean to do what he did but is really a good man on the inside is absurd . . . but this is what the psychologists and the courts are arguing today.

While it is possible for a sinner to sin less, it is not anthropologically possible to be sinless. And, because it is not possible to amputate sin from the sinner, it is heresy to think that it is spiritually possible to separate sin from the sinner or for people to hate the sin and love the sinner. Oh, that it was that easy! While the Word can divide soul and spirit, it is not possible for men to separate sin from the sinner nor desirable to hate the sin and love the sinner. To call for an end of abortion without calling for the death penalty for abortionists is more Rousseauan than Christian. Rousseau would say, "I know the abortionists kill babies, but because they are trying to help women, they must be really good people."

Rousseau taught the world to judge him by his feelings, and not by his actions; that is, though he consorted with prostitutes, he felt he was really a good man with noble thoughts, honorable ambitions, and virtuous feelings. The belief that we should love the sinner and hate the sin is a product of Rousseauan "touchy-feely" anthropology that spreads the seeds of permissiveness and irresponsibility. That some crimes are hate crimes and others are love crimes, and that some criminals are good criminals and others are bad criminals is psychological non-sense. There is none good but God, said Jesus. But, there are many evil men who think they are good people (Mark 10:18).

America's youth are trained to be open minded and to tolerate evil. Moral laxity marks our age. Permissiveness perpetuates immorality. Hate is associated with bigotry and nasty dogmatism. Love of pleasure, love of self, and love of money wins awards. Politicians believe money is the answer to all of man's problems. In fact, in the minds of modern man, the lack of money is the root of all evil. Everything is a commercial issue. Nothing is a human nature problem.

We don't see the sinfulness of sin or the ugliness of ugly. We are deaf to hissing of the snake near the poisonous tree. We are more concerned about the "economy" and "health issues" than we are about evil at work in our own hearts. To hate evil is a positive command. It takes moral energy to hate evil. We are ordered by our Heavenly Father to break from the pack and to stoke the fires of hatred; i.e., to hate evil and evil men manufacturing evil. To shut down the "moonshine" industry, you must arrest the moonshiners. While modern humanists bifurcates man separating actions from feelings, and feelings from criminal acts, the Scripture does not sever the man from his actions. Evil is not out there in the environment. It is in the human heart. Man is seen a whole unit. Actions are evil because man's heart forges evil.

Matthew 12:34 You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

Rousseau taught that man was good and that evil was in the environment. Only a Rousseau could sleep with a prostitute then try to convince her of the path of virtue. He sent his bastard children off to boarding school, then wrote a book on how to raise children. Thus, severing the man from his actions and declaring the criminal virtuous has been a product of more than a little evil.

The second command: *"rejoice in the Lord."*

Gladness is a benefit of the gospel (97:11), but in this verse the LORD commands His own to rejoice (97:12). Because we live in a negative world bombarded with gloomy news stories, it takes moral energy to "rejoice" and "be glad" Thus, the Lord commands his saints to add fuel to fires of gladness

by an act of the will. A singing saint is a powerful Christian. Maybe, for this reason, Satan tries so hard to keep the Christian defeated and depressed.

In conclusion, the O.T. gospel is not the offer of "fire insurance" against the flames of hell, but the proclamation of the reign of God. The need of the hour is not "feel good about yourself," but a bold declaration that "*The Lord rules over the affairs of men.*" Things are not out of control. Our God reigns! Because His kingdom is now, men should repent and bow the knee to his authority. Those who enter His dominions will find "preservation" and "deliverance." Likewise, those who have accepted the yoke have a duty to hate evil as well as to rejoice in His reign.

Source: Stockton, Old Testament Theology Lecture Notes, unpublished manuscript

Note: Psalm 99 is also an OT gospel similar in style to Psalm 97.

It declares "The Lord reigns" in verse one.

The first word (Exalt) in verse five is a Piel imperative. This word means "to lift up" and is translated "I lift up my hand to the Most High, Maker of Heaven and Earth" in Genesis 14:22. The idea is that of allegiance and devotion. Thus, the imperative is a gospel invasion term calling the reader to pledge allegiance to the Lord God . . . by oath; that is, to enter into a covenant with Him.

Like Psalm 97, Psalm 99:5 publishes the Jussive or gospel invitation -- to "worship" -- a Hithpael Jussive verb meaning "to cause yourself to bow down" to Him Who is on the throne (v. 5).

How does one get saved in Psalm 99? The answer is to understand "the Lord reigns" . . . to bow down and acknowledge His authority . . . to "lift up your hand" and to enter into a covenant / oath of allegiance to Him.

19. Psalm 103:19

Total Jurisdiction



"The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all."

Feel angry every time you read the news?

Do you think the world is out of control? That mankind is on the brink of destruction? That you must do something to stop the madness?

Not according to our text.

This psalm overflows with praise. Consider it a man's sermon to his own soul. "Bless the Lord, O my Soul."

Let all my thoughts, emotions, and skill be applied to expressing praises to my Sovereign Lord and Savior. Look intently at his benefits: forgiveness, healing, pardon, holiness, righteousness, and sanctification.

He reigns over the good and bad, life and death, my life and the life of my family, my nation and the nations of the world. Stop pouting. Sing, Soul, Sing.

Having partially celebrated the benefits of being under his authority, he moves to the wonder of His majesty and dominion. God's kingdom is not of this world nor does he appeal to man-made jurisdictions to approve his rule on earth.

The term "his throne in the heavens" expresses the eminence, glory, power, stability, and unchangeableness of God's kingdom (Benson). His kingdom rules over all animals, all creatures, all men, and all events. Bless the Lord, O my Soul!

His kingdom is based on His authority. Unlimited by time and space He reigns over all of nature, all men, all the time, in every place.

All governments, therefore, are order "to kiss the Son" (Psalm 2); to acknowledge His authority and to surrender to it.

20. Psalm 115:3

Without Limits

"Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases."



The secular mind thinks it can do anything it imagines. This believe is reinforced by fictional stories and CGI.

The only Person that can do as He pleases is the LORD God.

Unlike idols made of earthen clay that can only be in one place at one time, the LORD is in the heavens as well as on earth.

The Dogmatics of the psalmist informs us that Elohim is not limited by time, space, and matter. There is no limit to God's knowledge, presence, or power. He proposes; He disposes. He has never learned anything. He is the Source of all knowledge worth knowing.

"He who made all, rules all, and both by a word of power. He disposes all persons and things to his own glory." (Matthew-Henry).

His pleasure controls the destiny of all mankind. What he wills blossoms in the field of history. Nothing happens without His order and His approval.

His will cannot be frustrated, stonewalled, or defeated. God runs the universe! He is an irresistible Force, and when the Force meet an unmovable object, the unmovable object shatters into pieces.

Christ "upholds all things by the word of his power" (Hebrews 1:3)!

Just as a dime cannot stop a turbine diesel Pacific Union Coal DTEL running from Chicago to New Orleans, all the nickel and dime schemes of rebels, renegades, and revolutionaries cannot derail the locomotives pulling the boxcars of God's will from eternity through time.

21. Psalm 135:6

Unhindered

"Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps."



If we are honest, we get frustrate when the grocery bag breaks or a shoelace comes untied. In fact, ambitious men fight frustration all day long.

Unlike us, the Lord is never frustrated, never disappointed, and never agitated.

If He wills it, He has it.

His power and jurisdiction are universal. Unlike pagan deities which are confined by local customs, the Lord reigns unconfined over the skies, seas, land, and people.

The psalmist announces the supremacy of YHWH above all the gods of the nations. He makes plans, and carries them out. A moth can't stop a rolling semi nor can frail creatures among men hinder the purposes of God. There is not prime minister, parliamentarian, major, or judge that can demoralize God's will.

The LORD created and formed those powers of nature which operate in the heavens, the earth, and the waters *nunc pro tunc* -- powers which creatures are so quick to attribute to "Mother Nature" and the ostensible laws of science.

As the universal sovereign, the has a right to claim our praises.

"God is, and will be always, the same to his church, a gracious, faithful, wonder-working God. And his church is, and will be, the same to him, a thankful, praising people: thus his name endures for ever. He will return in ways of mercy to them, and will delight to do them good" – Matthew Henry.

22. Proverbs 16:1

Questions and Answers?

"The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord."



Who can fully understand man's "free will" and the intersection of God's sovereignty upon decision making? What a paradox!

That our thoughts are always our own is a huge fallacy (Matthew 16:23); that we are responsible to manage our thoughts is sensibility.

Evil thoughts remind us of our accountability to Him, while good thoughts cause us to rejoice in Him. Some thoughts are put in our minds by Satan (Matthew 16). We are, after all, in a spiritual battle for the mind. As soon as we wake up and turn on the radio, social engineers spin the news to program us into their image.

We are not sufficient in ourselves to plan our own life; our sufficiency is of God. We can plan, but plans will crumble unless God blesses those hopes.

Let us thank God for the good in our hearts, and depend on Him for the grace to be better, think better, and decide better. His commands not only demand we forsake disobedient thoughts, but provoke us to depend upon Him for the grace of willing obedience.

We do not deny that life involves choices, but good men consider His movements in the victories and defeats of their lives.

Success in life does not merely depend on our choices but upon the blessings of Almighty God. We are not the master of our fate nor the captain of our ship!

Under His hand, we rise and fall. Both our supplies and our sparsities are from Him.

Life is not a do-list. Situations demand decision. But, the righteous consult Him and lean upon His guidance, His provisions, His wisdom, and His power.

23. Proverbs 16:4

On Stage for His Glory

“The LORD hath made all *things* for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.”



Like God, man does things for himself. But, unlike man, God’s pleasures are not coated with selfish intentions.

That God's sovereignty extends over human suffering and that He creates the wicked for the day of doom is not easy to process.

It is much easier to believe God is the source of all good . . . and that Satan is the cause of all pain. But, it’s not that simple.

The “wicked” include men of power: judges, attorneys, bureaucrats, legislators, police, generals, and other government officials.

The LORD has made the wicked to showcase His sapphire justice in the day of judgment; that is, their mind-boggling dissolution and staggering downfall demonstrate the righteousness of His fire and thunder judgment. The apostle put it this way: *“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God”* (Romans 11:22).

Every dynamic story has a flat antagonist opposed to good will and a protagonist of noble character that seeks justice and liberty for all. In the exodus story Pharaoh appears on the stage of history as the stubborn rebel insistent on tightening the shackles of every Hebrew slave in Egypt, but the LORD appears as Israel's Champion ordering the tyrant, "Let my people go!"

God even hardened the heart of Pharaoh to increase his resistance to the authority of the LORD in order to showcase the power of His salvation and the muscle of His mighty judgment (Exodus 9:16):

“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.”

On this battlefield circumstances got worse before they got better:

"The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them." (Exodus 15:9).

But, on the "day of evil" this God of War littered Egypt with corpses (Exodus 12:30). And, this same Champion delivered His people from bondage by the blood of the Passover lamb and by power crossing the Red Sea) (Exodus 6:6; 15:3-6).

That He is supreme even in man's suffering ought to give us hope. He made us for his pleasure; i.e. you are made for him.

"You have made us for yourself [O Lord], and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."- St. Augustine.

Most men learn more in their pain than they do in their pleasure; more in their adversity than in their prosperity. The Superintendent of man's pain is also the Savior who causes good to come out of evil; triumph out of tragedy; and wisdom out of foolishness.

24. Proverbs 16:9

His Blessings

"The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps."



Why some men rise so high and others sink so low is one of life's great mysteries.

Good men are not always wealthy, and poor people are not necessarily evil.

The man referred to here is not the wicked, but the good man with a golden heart to please God and do what is right.

The junkyard devices of the wicked are an abomination to Him. He has no interest in prospering rebels except to heighten the intensity of their judgment.

The righteous man can plan to succeed in an enterprise, but only God can make add his blessing to the man's work. The industrious can develop a program, but God determines the outcome.

The Lord calls a man to be faithful, not to manipulate the results. Plan, pray, and push, but trust God for the harvest.

The Lord directs the successes and failures of a man's life. Sometimes it is better to fail, than to succeed. Men often learn more from their losses than their gains.

Beware of the fallacy of praising God for the sweets and cursing the Devil for the bitters. Even the ground is cursed "for thy sake." Let us give Him glory during all seasons of life.

25. Proverbs 16:33

Sovereignty and Chance

"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD."



Be honest! Who hasn't prayed, "Lord help me!" before buying a lottery ticket or placing a bet?

We all believe God controls chance, we just can't figure out how to make permanent friends with Lady Luck.

The practice of casting lots is mentioned seventy times in the Old Testament and seven times in the New Testament. In spite of the many references about casting lots, we know almost nothing about the process. It could be a reference to picking straws or sticks or choose staffs or even a game of rolling the dice. The modern equivalent would be a "flip of the coin" at a football game.

The sailors on Jonah's ship cast lots to determine which crew member was the object of God's wrath upon their craft (Jonah 1:7) . The soldiers cast lots to see who would take Jesus garments (Matthew 27:5). The eleven apostles cast lots to determine who would replace Judas (Acts 1:26).

The point of this proverb is that in games of chance, the Lord controls the outcome.

The New Testament does not encourage us to employ games of chance in determining His will for our lives. We have the complete Word of God which is sufficient to equip us unto every good work. But, if things do come down to the flip of the coin like determining how to break a tie a mayor's race, accept the outcome as from the Lord.

26. Proverbs 21:1

Water in His Hands

"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."



While kids love to play in the water kicking and splashing, scientist study its unique properties of solvency and cohesiveness. Is anything on earth easier to maneuver than water?

"Like rivers of water" is in the emphatic position in Hebrew stressing the simplicity of turning the heart of the king to do the bidding of Almighty God . . . for good or evil.

Many in the media treat political leaders as mini-gods with all kinds of divine powers. But, this text paints a different picture. All of the king's motives, thoughts, intentions, plans, schemes, deceptions, wishes, demands, lusts, cravings good or bad are compared to a river of wants controlled by the hands of the LORD; i.e. His hands acts like river banks controlling the flow of water – controlling the ambition of presidents, congressmen, and the mega-rich.

Kings are not gods. They are not omnipotent. They face limitations and resistance, and they are often the most angry, frustrated people on earth. They put their pants on one leg at a time. As a hand moves a glove, God controls rulers. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain" (Psalm 76:10).

The Pharaoh of the Exodus thought he was in charge, but God hardened his heart in order to showcase His power and authority over all Egypt ([Exodus 7:13](#); [9:16](#)). Ten times Pharaoh said, "No!", then the LORD broke the back of Egypt. Shattered, Pharaoh said, "Yes! Israel can go."

God hardened his heart, but Pharaoh consented to that thickening; that is, it is was his preferred posture as a man of power.

[Note: God does not harden the hearts of the willing . . . of the innocent . . . of the seeking . . . of His own struggling children. Perish the thought! "*A bruised reed He will not break.*"]

King Ahab did everything in a king's power to protect himself from the death sentence God pronounced upon him. But, the Lord used a lying spirit to entice Ahab into battle against the Syrians. Even though he took off his royal apparel and disguised himself as an ordinary soldier, he met his appointment with death by a random arrow that lodged between the seam in his armor piercing his rib cage (1 Kings 22:22, 34).

Resin, King of Syria:

"and all the people will know, Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria, who say in pride and in arrogance of heart: 'The bricks have fallen, but we will build with dressed stones; the sycamores have been cut down, but we will put cedars in their place.' But the LORD raises the adversaries of Rezin against him (Ephraim), and stirs up his enemies . . . So the LORD cut off from Israel head and tail, palm branch and reed in one day" (Isaiah 9:9-12, 14).

King of Babylon:

" behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the LORD, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants (Judah), and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation" (Jeremiah 25:9).

Pharaoh Hophra (Jeremiah 44:30 Ezekiel 39:6ff): Great kings think they are in control of their destiny. Herodotus says of King Pharaoh Hophra (589-570 BC) (Jeremiah 44:30), that he was so lifted up with pride, and so secure of his happy state, that he said there was no God who could deprive him of his kingdom. But the LORD compared him to a crocodile with fishhooks in its jaws and compared his generals and princes to fish swimming alongside a crocodile drawn out of the safety of the Nile to the killing fields of Cyrene (N. Africa) where they were fatally defeated by Amasis who then ruled Egypt from 570-526 BC. . [Note, the word *pharaoh* means "crocodile" in Arabic].

Governor Pilate expressed His humanistic perspective when he told Jesus, "Do you not know that I have power to crucify you, and have power to release you?"

Christ corrected Pilate's shriveled view of Providence saying, "You could have no power (authority) *at all over* me, except it were given you from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee has the greater sin." (John 19:10 Pilate and the Extraordinary Perceptions of Jesus)

Our Lord challenged Pilate by informing him that *this matter was out of his hands; that he did not have the power or principle to resist the mob as he thought he had.*

America:

"How the mighty have fallen! . . . Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him . . . How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? " (2 Samuel 1:19b; Psalm 2:12; Hebrews 2:3).

27. Ecclesiastes 7:14

Prosperity and Adversity

"In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him."



The context of this Scripture is the command, "*Consider the work of God*" in the previous verse.

Man has an insatiable interest in forecasting the future. Cultists invest much of their spiritual energy attempting to divine the future through the stars, but God alone knows and controls tomorrow. He even controls the Zodiac . . . but, but He is not a fortune teller.

"*Consider*" is a command. Humanity tends to think good things come from God, and bad things come from Satan; that the Lord is the source of good luck, and that the Devil is the source of bad luck.

This text sets the record straight: God controls today and tomorrow. He is the Cause of adversity and prosperity. Because both are from Him, both require a godly response. Both require acknowledgment of His Providence and obedience to His law-order.

"that man should find nothing after him" or better: " *after it;*" that is, after his present condition, whether it be prosperous or afflictive -- that no man might be able to foresee his future or what fate shall come after his present condition -- that he might live in a constant dependence upon the Lord, and not despair in trouble, nor be secure or presumptuous in prosperity (Benson).

28. Isaiah 40:23-24

The Non-Factors



"who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness."

Government is something run by the worst of people, and most of us would love to give them a slap in the hind quarters for their idiocy. But, we can't.

However, there is a God in heaven that has the power to dispense justice.

The "Who" refers to the LORD God Who created the heavens and earth *ex nihilo* (Is. 40:22; Gen. 1:1-2). He regards rulers (politicians and bureaucrats) as less than **nothing** -- zero, zilch, nada!

The Hebrew word "*nothing*" (*ayin*) is translated "barren" in Genesis 11:30.

He makes them as "emptiness" (*tohu = void* in Genesis 1:2); that is, they are nonessential, expendable little creatures in the accomplishment of His will upon the earth. What diet water is to a fat lady, politicians are to the Lord.

We think too much of politicians and credit them with too much power. Who remembers the names of the rulers of Italy, Germany, Norway, Austria, or Bolivia in the 1950s? Who remembers the Speaker of the House or the Senate Majority leader in 1890? Unless you have a triple Ph.D. in history, you don't remember the names of any of these miscreants. Likewise, Isaiah reminds us that God humbles the proud and "brings princes to nothing."

Isaiah 40:24 Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble.

*The Hebrew conjunction "*yea*" (*aph*) is mentioned three times as triple assurance to the ruin of tyrants.

The terms "not take root," "wither," and "stubble" present the same dreary destiny. Empires are born and buried. Kings live and die. Presidents are on center stage for a breath and then expire. Where are the great Pharaohs, the mighty emperors, and powerful Caesars today?

We are not seeing the birth of civilizations, but their extinction. The great monarchs spread their leaves like a mighty oak over a region of the earth and are then cut down like grass.

Consider Attila the Hun. His sudden death (heart attack?) **led to the collapse of the Hun Empire** (453 A.D.). According to Jordanes, Attila married a new wife, a young woman named Ildico, and celebrated with great feasting. In the morning, the guards broke into his room and found him dead in his bed, his bride weeping over him.

Three of his sons fought among themselves, and the army broke up into pieces depleting the strength of the army.

"they shall wither"

29. Isaiah 45:6-7

Light and Darkness

“That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting that *there is none besides Me. I am the LORD, and there is no other; I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.*”



The secular mind thinks there are many forces influencing politics . . . and there are. But, there is only One power that matters.

Because Israel lived in a pluralistic society, they had difficulty holding on to the absolute truth that there is only one, absolute God -- that their God was, is, and shall be the one and only God who created the heavens and the earth.

It wasn't until after the exile (586-536 B.C.) that Jews seized monotheism with an iron grasp. After the exile the Jews the most polytheistic people on earth became the most monotheistic people on earth. They vigorously held to the belief that there is only one, true, absolute God; that YHWH was this God. Refusing to yield to the pluralism of the nations, many gave their lives for what they believed during the Maccabean Period.

Likewise, members of the New Israel of God, cling tenaciously to the fact there is only one God.

Again, the solitariness of God comes into focus: "In the Beginning God"

“Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one.” – 1 Corinthians 8:4

“That they may know that You alone, whose name is the Lord, Are the Most High over all the earth.” – Psalm 83:18

“Sh'ma Yisrael Adonai Elohaynu Adonai Echad. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One” (Deuteronomy 6:4).

The Hebrew word for “one” is *echad*. The Latin word for “one” is “*solus*” which means *alone*.

The Greek word for “one” is *monos*. The English word “*monk*” comes from the Greek word “*monos*.”

Who is this one God? The rabbis reverently refer to His name as “*Ha Shem*” or “the Name.”

Ha Shem, "the Name" (YHWH) means, "I am that I am." An articulate black preacher might shout Ha Shem means, "I am what I am; I am what I was; I am what I will be: I was, I is, and I shall be what you need me to be in your difficult circumstances."

Ha Shem refers to God's covenant name YHWH which is called the tetragrammaton (the four letters).

YHWH is a present active verb meaning "*the Existent One*" or "*He is*" in contrast to those gods that do not exist.

In this context evil is opposed to peace and prosperity; that is, God is **not** claiming to be the source of "sin," but He does claim to be the Source of adversity, difficulty, and calamity.

"Church father Hippolytus of Rome (170 – 235 AD) rendered it this way: ' . . . the word of Isaiah, I, the Lord, make peace, and create evil; meaning by that, I maintain peace, and permit war.'" (J. H. MacMahon (translator) "*On Psalm LXXVII*" in *The Refutation of All Heresies by Hippolytus, Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1868, p429*).

To amplify the solitariness of God, the LORD claims to be the Source of light and darkness, even *good* and evil. But, this claim raises a theological anomaly.

Q: If God admits to creating evil, is He not to blame for all the evil in the world?

A: God forbid!

The question is sufficiently answered if we interpret this phrase as an idiom implying that evil or calamity exists by the permissive will of God; that *the term "evil" addresses misfortune and NOT SIN*; that evil is not a sovereign person or force nor is evil supreme; that the LORD is sovereign creating-permitting the pleasures of life as well as the hardships during the course of life.

Evil as a principle of sin is not in the atmosphere, nor does it blow through the air like wind. It is in men. But *evil as unwelcome adversity, difficulty, and misfortune* is from God. Selah.

This text does not support an Eastern dualism between good and evil (sin).

Rather, it promotes the truth that **not only** does God permit evil (calamity) to exist; He restrains it by the same will. The LORD God is supreme. His omnipotence and wisdom reign over the comforts men enjoy as well as disappointments men seek to avoid.

Do you want the will of God in your life? What if his will is for you to be poor and not rich, common and not great, weak and not strong?

"What is highly esteemed among men, is an abomination to God" (Luke 16:15).

If you are strong, thank him for his grace to you; if you are weak, remember His strength is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, give thanks for his grace to you (2 Corinthians 12:8-10; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).

30. Isaiah 46:9-10

Solitariness, Omniscience, and Omnipotence

"Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'"



Did you hear about the man who said girls treat him like God. He said, "They mostly forget I exist until they need my help?"

The one and only command in this text is to "Remember the former things." Why is it such a pleasure to forget God? How can men find Him in "the land of forgetfulness?" (Psalm 88:12).

"The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there" – L.P. Hartley.

Remember that remembering is a duty of man – "Remember . . . for I am God." If we fail to remember "the former things," we are doomed to repeat the sins of history.

Thus, the first step toward backsliding begins with forgetfulness.

The command "Remember the former things" includes remembering God's goodness to the nation . . . His promises and their fulfillment . . . His counsel and explicit will.

Twice the voice from Heaven says, "*I am God*." In mentioning Him the first Hebrew predicate is "El," the mighty and strong one.

The second mention of "God" is the Hebrew word "Elohim" – the plural form of "El," the true object of worship (Ellicott).

Isaiah wants men to remember the nature of God: the solitariness of God; the omniscience of God; and, the omnipotence of God.

Opposing idolatry and the belief that government is god, the Spirit calls upon his people to remember their history (the miracles and their passage out of Egypt) and the uniqueness of their God -- a remedy for the "double minded" man who thinks we live in a multi-universe with multiple gods and multiple law-orders. *Nothing is more apostate than the notion that man is at liberty to choose his own god, his own religion, and his own law-order.*

The triune God declares his solitary existence. "*Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one.*"

He is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). He does not change, evolve, or degenerate. He is above all, below none, and available to many. We need everything, but He needs nothing. We are constantly learning, but He has never learned anything because He is the Source of all knowledge. We need to obey him, but our obedience adds naught to him. Our plans stumble, his counsel stands. His purpose is the unmovable object that cannot be jarred by the force and fury of men.

We are always learning, but He has never learned anything: "*Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear*" (Is. 65:24).

He declares the end from the beginning and things present from ages past. Out of the former He declared the future. No doubt the text is referring to Cyrus whom God called by name before he arrived in history to free his people from the jaws of Babylon (Isaiah 41:2). He names the Persian Messiah before he was born. Who can fathom such knowledge?

Let us remember Him who declares the end from the beginning lest we become elected to high office in the land of forgetfulness.

31. Isaiah 52:1-7

"Thy God reigneth"

"Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean . . . How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isaiah 52:7).



How do you rejuvenate an exhausted, defeated people? Isaiah did it by reminding them of the sovereignty of the Lord God.

The call to “awake” is a double imperative to Zion who is portrayed as a castaway in rags and ruin. Isaiah calls the remnant in Babylon to shed their prisoner’s tattered clothing . . . to come out of the chains of slavery bolted on them by Egypt, the Assyrians, and the Chaldeans . . . and, to clothe themselves with “beautiful garments;” i.e. to shake off their stupor, to hold their heads up with dignity and honor; to stop acting like they are dust under a chariot wheel.

The speaker is the LORD whose name is mentioned nine times in this chapter. No man on earth today has permission to preface a statement with “Thus saith the LORD.” The expression “Thus saith the LORD” is the enacting clause of the LORD God. It notifies men of the Source of authority – an expression that validates and verifies the revelation.

Notice word duplications in Isaiah 52. When God wants to verify or emphasize something he repeats the locution:

- Awake, awake; Put on, put on (52:1)
- Jerusalem, holy city (52:1)
- Shake, arise, sit, loose thyself (52:2)
- Sold, redeemed (52:3)
- Egypt, Assyrian; went down, sojourn (52:4)
- LORD, LORD (52:5)
- Know, know (52:6)
- Publish peace, publish salvation (52:7)
- Voice, voice; together and eye to eye (52:8)
- Joy and sing; comforted and redeemed; Jerusalem, Jerusalem (52:9).
- Eyes of the nations, the earth shall see (52:10)
- Depart, depart; go ye, go ye (52:11)
- Not go, nor go (52:12)

The Lord doesn’t want any of his people dressed in rags and chains to some government. Be free. Get away from casual, dress like a king. Serve the King in the beauty of holiness.

Isaiah has a message for his discouraged nation, “Thy God reigneth!” The message was not intended for Babylon, but for Israel . . . for the remnant . . . for the true Israel of God.

The word “reigns” (%l:im' = *malak*) means “to rule.” As a noun the term means “king,”; and, as a verb it means to reign as a king.

The possessive adjective “your” must have instilled hope in the remnant. The one, absolute, true God is portrayed as the Existent One in contrast to all the

false gods that don't exist. "Your God" or "Israel's God" is the one and only true God of the Universe. What assurance: Our God reigns, hallelujah!

Those that grasp the sovereignty of God and hoof it among the people to proclaim the reign of the LORD God are compared to the movements of the beautiful feet of a graceful antelope.

That God reigns is the major message of Isaiah . . . of the Bible . . . and, it ought to be the gospel of every Christian preacher. During periods of languor, the church needs the same message, "Your God reigns."

He reigns now . . . in America . . . England . . . South America . . . Africa . . . Australia . . . Europe . . . Russia . . . and the far east. Know it. Believe it. Rest in it. Study it. Preach it.

Tired? Remember the main lesson of this passage:

"Thy God reigneth!"

32. Isaiah 54:16-17

The Destroyer

"Behold, I have created the smith (blacksmith) that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument (weapons) for his work; and I have created the waster (destroyer) to destroy." – Isaiah 54:16



We live in a world where government wants to take away guns to stop the shooting, but at the same time arm doctors with needles to shoot people with deadly vaxxines. Something is terribly wrong.

We ask, "Where is God in this mess?"

As the death-cult progresses and we experience the terrors of those who want to cut the world's population in half, it is important to remember the following Scripture:

First, God creates destroyers.

The smith is the blacksmith or craftsman with skills to create weapons of war: swords, battle axes, and hammers.

The "waster" or "destroyer" refers to ancient kings like Tiglath-Pileser, Sargon, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, and Cyrus who used their armies to conquer and control the nations.

In modern times the destroyers may be the federal government, the IRS, the CIA, the FBI, the CDC, the AMA, the NSA, the DOD, the DEA, and other three letter agencies. Looking through the rear view mirror “destroyers” could imply natural disasters: tornados, floods, drought, and train wrecks. Nothing happens without His permission.

The "I" in this passage refers to the LORD God who creates the craftsman who fashions weapons and the destroyer who uses them -- armies of soldiers who wield the sword to kill and maim.

As we face nations governed by psychopaths hell bent on injecting every man woman and child with the Covid blood-clot jab, let us remember "None can do a hurt that God does not allow" (Pulpit Commentary).

Let us recast this verse in light of the Covid- vax plandemic perspective: Isaiah 54:16 “Behold, I have created the medical engineer that manufactures serums, syringes, and needles; and I have created medical practitioners to injure and kill many.

Second, God protects the righteous.

“No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.” – Isaiah 54:17

The "*thee*" or "*you*" in this passage refers to the remnant of Israel, the surviving exiles, or the restored Israel re-fashioned by the severity of the Babylonian deportation.

The term "*weapon*" refers to the instruments of war.

The word "*tongue*" is a metaphor for legal-accusers with criminal accusations against God's people.

This is a promise of protection for the exiles; i.e., the Lord did not appoint a destroyer to decimate them nor did he subject the remnant to accusation and courtroom prosecutions.

The security of the restored Israel did not rest in the wisdom or prowess of the remnant, but in their righteousness and faith. Because the remnant was right with God, He protected them from the destroyers and military killers.

The lesson for us is clear. All kinds of destroyers are created by God, but God will protect the righteous from the wasters, destroyers, jabbers, killers, Pollyanna doctors, mass murderers, and federal prosecutors.

Stand strong in the Lord, and say "No!" to the destroyers (Proverbs 1:10)!

“My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not!”

33. Jeremiah 27:5-6

Gifts of Power

“I have made the earth, the man and the beast that *are* upon the ground, by my great power and by my outstretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemed meet unto me. And now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon . . .”



Men in power seem to have an insatiable appetite to stay in power at any cost.

Jehoiakim and the kings around him were so obsessed with preserving power they were deaf to the war drums pounding around them.

In order to knock some sense into these kings, God ordered Jeremiah to make “bonds and yokes” and send them to neighboring kings as a visual illustration of the coming defeat and enslavement.

The word “kings” includes rulers, governors, senators, government officials, prime ministers, and other heads of state.

This text contains the dramatic command of God ordering Jeremiah to make icons of bondage and to send them to Tyre, Edom, Moab, Zidon, and Judah (Zedekiah) with the message of Jeremiah 27:5 dramatizing the Babylonian invasion into these countries. All these territories would be conquered, the people decimated, and given to Babylon.

The lesson is clear: Man, animals, plants and the soil in which they grow are created by the power and wisdom of God. He establishes the nations, their boundaries, and limitations.

By His right and His authority He disposes of the earth and its golden riches. He appoints kings and removes kings. The peoples are merely tenants of the land and enjoy lease rights under the disposition of His grace.

The territories of nations, their natural resources, and boundaries are assets that can be given and taken away in a moment of time by His order. Fear God and surrender to Babylon is the message of the prophet to the people.

The conquest of Babylon and the subsequent defeat of the nations is proof claim that the Lord is God; proof that He gives nations power to conquer another.

34. Lamentations 3:37–39

The Source of the Good and the Bad

“Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come? Why should a living man complain, a man, about the punishment of his sins?”



Struggling to believe God?

Consider the sovereignty of God as the Spirit lays down a new foundation of faith – the fulfillment of His promises.

The "Who" refers to political pundits prone to act as prognosticators regarding future events.

Sometimes they get it right -- **not** because they have the extraordinary gifts of a seer, but because the Lord orchestrated the event.

Media personalities have an idolatrous interest in controlling the future and do so regularly by making predictions about the future.

Arrogant heads of state may boast of their power to impact political events, but only the living God has the authority and the power to order future events and to bring it to pass; that is, He does what He pleases.

Men are prone to attribute good things as from God, and bad thing to the Devil. But, this text corrects the matter. He is the Source of "good and bad," positives and negatives, ups and downs. The evil which the Lord permits is under the control of this loving purpose. While God is never the source of moral evil, He is the Source of natural and political disasters.

He creates good that we might enjoy Him and praise Him; He creates negative things like the Babylonian Captivity that we might seek Him and trust Him. Man needs to be weaned from self-dependence and to grow in God dependence.

The Lord makes men the instruments of his vengeance when he sees fit, so he can restrain their cruelty whenever he pleases (Benson).

God does not desire our misfortunes. But equally true is it that they do not happen without his express permission (Pulpit Commentary).

"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things." - Isaiah 45:7

"Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?" - Amos 3:6.

"Why should a living man complain, a man, about the punishment of his sins?"

Benson says, "No calamity or trouble befalls us, but what is the due reward of our sins; and is designed as a chastisement for them."

The NT equivalent of Benson's premise is Hebrews 12: 6, "*For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*"

In a Christian mind governed by His Word, all trials proceed from grace not to punish us (believers), but to purify and perfect us as sons. If we view his affliction as discipline from the loving hand of the Father, it will prevent us from murmuring and complaining against the providence of God.

35. Daniel 2:20-22

Knowing and Doing

"Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what *is* in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.



News anchors are in a tither about world events. Every evening these Arminian minds tell us the world is out of control, and that we've got to do something: vote, protest, riot, scream and holler. Something! Anything!

God gave Daniel the interpretation of the king's perplexing dream. The dream revealed political powers are governed by the wisdom and power of God; that He changes the times and the seasons, summer and winter, rains and droughts, rulers and regimes. Wisdom and knowledge, light and understanding are gifts of Providence.

The Source and fountain of all knowledge, He knows secret things, deep things, and hidden things obscured by darkness. Because God is light, He reveals knowledge to men. Moreover, He knows all things and has never learned anything. Golden Babylonian conquests, silver Persians rulers and their stringent law-order, the bronze Hellenization of the known world, and the iron-clay Pax Romana left their marks in history at the pleasure of the God of Israel.

Jerry Brides adds this insight:

“In a sermon entitled “God’s Providence,” C. H. Spurgeon said, “Napoleon once heard it said, that man proposes and God disposes. ‘Ah,’ said Napoleon, ‘but I propose and dispose too.’ How do you think he proposed and disposed? He proposed to go and take Russia; he proposed to make all Europe his. He proposed to destroy that power, and how did he come back again? How had he disposed it? He came back solitary and alone, his mighty army perished and wasted, having well-nigh eaten and devoured one another through hunger. Man proposes and God disposes.”

36. Daniel 4:35

No Back Talking Allowed

"All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"



Ever been taken the class, “Cattle Grazing 101”? God enrolled King Nebuchadnezzar in this course and it took him seven years to learn verse 35 in order to pass the course.

"All inhabitants" refers to the nations on earth and international politics as the coveted crown-jewel of power among men.

The Global Wealth Report (2023) reported the total wealth of mankind to be about 454.4 trillion dollars.

Who is not impressed by the great Cities of London, Paris, New York, Moscow, and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, Tokyo Japan, and Singapore? But on God's scale, he counts these impressive cities as nothing -- as dust on the plate of the fulcrum (Isaiah 40:15).

This text informs us that the Lord commands the hosts (armies) of heaven. Here the heavens are viewed as a massive army standing ready to obey the Creator's order. The Creator commands and his creation obeys. But, will his creatures do the same?

Something is desperately wrong with the "inhabitants of the earth." Evil surrounds us. It is in us. Men are in rebellion against the Creator. The answer is not a superman seeking "truth, justice, and a better tomorrow," but the Great I

Am. Therefore, we “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” and pray, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

Q: This conflict between heaven and earth raises the question, “Who is in control: “the inhabitants of the earth” or the LORD God?”

We are led to believe that rich, powerful men are in control of day-to-day politics, but King Nebuchadnezzar answers the question: He “does according to his will among the ‘inhabitants of the earth;” that is, history is under the supremacy and control of Almighty God. Thus, the man who thinks he can oppose God is like the little Russian boy who thought he could stop a 17,838 horsepower, Novocherkassk 4E5K locomotive by putting a copper nickel on the RR track.

The lesson is clear: Those approving of his will are powerless to establish His will on earth. The kingdom grows in secret while men sleep (Mark 4:26-29); and those opposed to His will are powerless to prevent it. Wise men, therefore, would do well to surrender to his law-order now for “none can stay (smite) upon his hand.” Back talking is not allowed.

37. Daniel 5:21

You’re Not in Charge

“And he was driven from the sons of men; and his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling was with the wild asses: they fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven; till he knew that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.” - Daniel 5:2.



My sister has a granddaughter that tends to boss everyone around. One day grandma grabbed her little cheeks and said, “Betsy . . . not in charge!”

Nebuchadnezzar learned this the hard way: “Nebuchadnezzar not in charge!”

God's sovereignty encompasses all the leaders of government, no matter how righteous or evil, competent or foolish.

When King Nebuchadnezzar’s heart swelled with pride like a hot-air balloon, God punctured his blimp.

The miracle in this text is not that Nebuchadnezzar was made to act like an animal and then came to his senses, but the marvelous restraint God placed on his lusty, ambitious cabinet. What a wonder some enterprising officer didn't kill the man in his state of weakness and vulnerability.

To Nebuchadnezzar's credit, he humbled himself and acknowledged the sovereignty of God in the affairs of state.

It took seven years of cattle grazing to undue his pride and to humble the man, but God's grazing management plan worked.

His arrogant, chin-up son, Belshazzar congested with pride. "God numbered his kingdom, and finished it" (5:26).

38. Zechariah 4:6

God Has What You Need

"This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts."



An angelic messenger made this statement to Zechariah before the second blast of energy to re-engage temple construction in 420 BC during the reconstruction period (535-516 B.C.) and before the completion of the second temple in 516 BC.

The Lord employed Haggai and Zechariah to motivate His discouraged remnant to complete the Herculean task of temple construction. The LORD used Zechariah to show the nation that Joshua, the ecclesiastical leader, and Zerubbabel, the civil leader, would be infused with authority to rebuild the temple; that is, they were the two olive trees that God used to fuel the candlestick, the iconic symbol of the glory of the temple in Jerusalem.

Because modern man is intoxicated with Armenianism and the doctrines of "free will," self-determinism, "Yes, we can," and "life is a matter of choices," this verse stands out like a rose on a thorn bush.

The Lord of Hosts (armies) informs Zechariah the temple would indeed be completed, but not by the wisdom, fortitude, and power of man, but by the power and assets of God's Spirit at work among the people.

Nowhere does Scripture teach that men are the captains of their souls or the masters of their fate.

Romans 9:16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

This text does not deny man's will, but it does reinforce the first cause by Him Who makes it "willing in the day of his power;" - Psalm 110:3. Yes, men must make decisions, but the wise consider His movements and His purpose at the time of decision.

God's work grows by His power. If Zechariah were alive today, he would say, "not by money, not by silver and gold, not by programs, and not by passionate personalities in politics but by my Spirit saith the Lord of Hosts."

39. Matthew 10:29–31

His Eye is on the Sparrow

"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows."



Do you have fears about the future? Most of us do.

How valuable are you?

Jesus builds upon the Father's omniscience and omnipresence to relieve fears.

Sparrows were the smallest offering presented in worship, and a "penny" was the smallest coin in Hebrew currency -- a tenth part of a drachma.

Jesus claimed the Father knows every detail regarding His small creatures. He attends the funeral of every tiny sparrow, humming bird, and dove; and, he counts the hairs on our head every day.

Christ reasons from the lesser to the greater. If the Father loves these common little creatures and knows all about them, how much more does he love you and me? He not only knows the intricacies of His little creatures, He numbers every heart beat and breath that we take. No wonder David said, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me."

40. Matthew 28:19-10

100% Authority

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even unto the end of the world. Amen.*”



Need power?

Christians need power, but more importantly they need authority to conduct their work on earth.

Known as the “Great Commission,” this text spawned the missionary movements of the church. Because Christ has been given authority, Christians have authority to go anywhere in the world to preach the gospel; that is, the work of the gospel is performed under the absolute, sovereign authority of the risen Christ.

The verb “is given” is an aorist implying that God the Father bestowed “all authority” upon Christ prior to Him issuing this commission. He has jurisdiction over all men and all nations.

The adjective “all” implies total, complete, absolute jurisdiction over all men and all governments. Having this authority, our Lord issues His commission for Christians to proclaim the gospel of His kingdom to all men within the four corners of the earth. Moreover, Jesus envisioned that whole nations would believe the gospel and surrender to His authority.

As long as Christians conduct their ministry with reason and integrity no government, city council, or police force has any *de jure* authority to regulate, control, manage, supervise, ban, prohibit, sanction, or legislate rules for the gospel ministry of the church.

“Free speech zones” are null and void under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Understanding this, the Founding Father prohibited federal and state governments from controlling the establishment of religion (the Christian gospel).

Amendment I

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech,

or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

41. John 19:10-11

Limited Authority

“Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power (authority) to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power (authority) *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.”



Think that you are in control? Think again.

Our Lord possessed a rare knowledge of men; that is, He did not consider men to be better than they actually are.

He knew Pilate and understood that he was not as good or as powerful as Pilate thought himself to be. He understood this man was made of tensile, and that he that would yield to the pressures of the mob.

He knew the madness of the apostate Jewish rulers, and that they were not going to let go of their grisly plans to crucify Him.

Pilate mistakenly thought he was in control of the riot in Jerusalem and miscalculated the malignant jealousy at work in the hearts of Jewish leaders.

Our Lord corrected the Roman governor by informing him that *this matter was out of his hands; that he did not have the power or principle to resist the mob as he thought he had.*

Moreover, Jesus knew that it was the will of the Father for him to go to the cross and that the political tensions in the air worked to fulfill God's purpose "from the foundation of the world."

42. Acts 4: 24-28

Cogs in the Wheel

“Lord, thou *art* God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is . . . The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth (“in this city”) against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”

Facing political pit bulls in opposition to your ministry?



Before us are the great doctrines of creation, sovereignty, foreknowledge, and prophetic fulfillment.

Following their release from custody, the disciples seem driven by a strange power. Knowing they had been trapped by government agents furious about the message of Christ rising from the dead, they realized their arrest was a product of the hostility predicted in Psalm 2.

Lifting up their voices in prayer, they acknowledge (1) the sovereignty of God in His creation; (2) that the “roaring” of the rulers against their preaching was really an expression of their animus against the LORD; (3) that Christ Is truly God’s “anointed” Messiah; and, (4) that the actors on stage in the theater of Jerusalem were God’s instruments to fulfill God’s redemptive plan of redemption forged in the mind of God before the foundation of the world.

What a shock to learn that Herod, Pilate, and the Jewish hostiles pounding the gavel for Christ’s crucifixion were merely marionettes in the hand of the Eternal Puppet Master. These animated governors thought they were ridding the earth of Christ; today, because they were used to fulfill the Messianic promises, His name is revered in every country of the world openly and secretly.

43. Acts 17:23-25

Beware of False Theologies

“For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions (*sebasma*), I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you” (17:23).

“God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;” (17:24-25).



Seeing the idols, his heart moved and his mouth popped open.

Paul introduces the Athenians to Biblical Theology. The Athenians lived in a multi-universe thinking their gods were finite like men. They made their own gods and put them in man-made temples.

“Seeing that he is Lord” is better translated, “He being Lord.”

There is a strong contrast between the masculine noun *“Theos”* (God) in verse 25 with the neuter, plural noun *“sebasma”* translated “devotions” or “objects of worship” in verse 23.

Notice the two negations in this text – *“dwelleth **not** in temples . . .”* and *“not worshipped with human hands . . .”* As a corrective, Paul taught that the true God created “heaven and earth;” that He is an infinite Being who does **not** dwell in temples made by men (17:24); that He has no need of temples seeing He created heaven and earth; that is, He is bigger than anything man can build.

“human hands” is a metaphor for sculpturing physical idols.

The true God is everywhere and nowhere; that is, He is **not** confined to a particular temple or place; that is, there is **no** place on earth a man can find God, but where ever a man finds himself, God can be found.

“this truth places the sacredness of Christian churches on a ground entirely different from that which influenced the minds of Jew or Greek in regard to their respective temples.” – Ellicott.

Further, while God created the heavens and the earth, He is not part of His creation. He is separate from matter. One difference between Hinduism and Christianity is that Hinduism could not separate God from creation; i.e. to kill a cow is to kill a part of God. A Biblical man knows that when he smacks a rock with a sledgehammer, he is not hitting God.

The Athenians saw their hand-made gods as demanding deities with insatiable appetites, but Paul set them straight. The true God is not a taker but a Giver. While we seem to need everything; He needs nothing.

Ellicott records the following Latin Epicurean statement:

“Ipsa suis pollens opibus, nihil indiga nostri, Nec bene promeritis capitur, nec tangitur ira.”

[“Strong in itself, it needeth nought of ours, Is neither won by gifts, nor moved by wrath.”]

Lucret. ii. 649-50.

The Lord is not bettered by our worship, but we are made better by worshipping Him. God is not enhanced by church buildings, but the saints are enhanced by meeting together in churches. In the Christian mind, God does not dwell in temples, but when Christians gather together they become a temple of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:20-22). Today, God dwells in the hearts of Christian men, not in church-sanctuaries.

44. Acts 17:26-27

No Trespassing

“And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:”



A Jewish racist? Not Paul the apostle.

If the previous verse records Paul's theology, this verse records Paul's view on anthropology and the history of mankind.

No doubt the Athenians saw themselves as superior to the Barbarians and slaves in the Greek / Roman Empire.

In Paul's view, humanity is not the result of some big explosion, a biological accident, millenniums of supposed evolutionary development, or the goodness and ingenuity of the collective. Paul's view of history follows the Genesis account. The history of mankind began with a single man; that is, men have more in common than they have differences! Since one God created all races from one man, then all men have value; and, since all have the same Creator, all men ought to seek Him.

"Blood" refers to races and nations.

"allotted periods" refers to the rise and fall of empires.

"boundaries of their dwelling places" refers to national borders produced by mountainous terrain or bodies of water. God creates boundaries as no trespassing signs.

Difference in cultures is caused by the separation of nations due to natural boundaries, soil and climate. No nation or race should see itself as the *crème de*

la crème or as victims of circumstance. This isolation has one purpose, "that all people groups might seek answers to life's great questions in God and not man!

Boundaries exist to protect the sovereignty of nations; and to prevent the spread of national corruption to the ends of the earth. Separation prevents nations from uniting around the ambitions of a Nimrod; from the spread of pluralism and multiculturalism.

The world tells us we need more government and better government, but in Paul's thinking, man's problems are spiritual -- not political, not financial, and not racial.

"he be not far from every one of us:" The Greeks needed many gods to explain the anomalies of life. But, Paul taught that God is the center of everything and the circumference of nothing. While He is everywhere for God-seekers, He is nowhere for the skeptic.

45. Romans 8:28

Good out of Calamity

"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."



Ever find yourself asking the questions, "Why do bad things happen to good people?"

The background of this text is the announcement that the Spirit prays for the infirmities of man and provides consolation to those feeling oppressed.

While the world seems like its ripping apart, we learn that God is weaving all things together for good to those called to enter the kingdom.

First, Paul informs the readers that believers have knowledge — "we have known and continue to know that (perfect tense) . . ."

Second, "we know" that good can come out of catastrophes; that God can turn tragedies into triumph; losses into gains; weaknesses into strengths; sadness into joy; disappointments into endowments; and, "the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs of water" (Isaiah 41:18 - NIV).

Third, "we know" that God is at work (present tense) in all circumstances doing good where rulers planned evil.

Fourth, “we know” that the promise brightens the future for those who love God. In no way can we comfort the lawless and promise them, “Everything will turn out all right.” This treasured promise belongs exclusively to God’s people.

Not everything that happens to us is good, but this verse assures us that God is working in the nowtime causing good to come out of every trouble.

Soul, believest thou this?

46. Romans 9:14-28

The Sovereignty of God in Salvation

“He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”



Do you like bones? Sink your teeth into this text.

Our text deals with the subject of the sovereignty of God. Few doctrines are more despised by the natural man than the truth that God is sovereign and exercises vigorous and efficacious control over man.

Further, as R.C. Sproul points out, while Christians profess to believe in the sovereignty of God, they really believe in human choices and the sovereignty of man. “It’s their choice,” they say. Therefore, it behooves us to look at this text and attempt to grasp its meaning and implications.

The background of this passage is germane to Paul’s intense desire to see his own people come to salvation in Christ. Most of his brethren believed that their genetic relationship to Abraham was sufficient to make a claim on God and found no need to embrace Christ and His work at Calvary.

Paul explained that **not** all Israelites were true Israelites; that is, **not** all of Abraham’s descendants “*in the flesh*” could be considered genuine children of Abraham in spirit.

Paul provides two example of his sovereignty: Ishmael (9:9), and Esau (9:10-13). That is, Ishmael and Esau were both descendants of Abraham, but the Patriarchal blessings fell to Isaac not Ishmael, and then to Jacob and not Esau.

The dreaded implication of this fact demonstrated that not all men claiming to have a genetic relationship to Abraham are going to enter the kingdom of God;

that not all physical sons of Abraham are children of God; that is, one's family heritage does not secure salvation.

First Question: Is God fair and just?

Romans 9:14-18 What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! 15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." 16 So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." 18 So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

The Objector

Having stated that not all physical descendants of Abraham are de jure children of God, and having provided two illustrations of election in Isaac and Jacob, **Paul anticipates an objection** and answers it with a question, "*Is there any injustice on God's part?*"

First Question: Is God unjust in choosing some for salvation, but not others?

Paul's answer:

His First Example: God was not unjust in sparing (granting a pardon to) some of the Israelites from judgment after they worshipped the golden calf.

He answers his own question with a verse from the golden calf (*eggel hazahav*) story in Exodus 32 wherein Aaron caved into the pressure of the rebels to make an idol for the nation. The golden calf was the result of Aaron's malleability to the will of the idolaters. Sound too familiar? So egregious was this transgression that Moses grinded the abominable image into powder, threw it in the stream, and made the people to drink it.

Next, Moses summoned volunteers to strap on their swords and to go through the camp to hack and stack the rebels. About 3,000 of the idolaters were executed. All were traitors. All were guilty. Three thousand were killed and the rest survived.

The dead were objects of wrath; the living were objects of mercy.

So, was God unjust in sparing the rest of the congregation from the sword? Paul's answer is "No!"

The LORD, by right of creation and by right of redemption, exercised total authority over the refugees from Egypt. He was not unjust in condemning some rebels to death, nor was he unfair in sparing others. It's called "compassion," and "mercy."

From this first answer we learn an important lesson: Paul draws a spiritual truth from the pardon issued to the surviving Israelites: Salvation does not depend on the will of man or on the efforts of men. Salvation is grounded solely in the mercy of God. He loves because of Who He is, a God of love, and not because of some virtue in our heart.

Salvation is of God and not of man! All sinners deserve to die. None can save themselves from a judgment decreed. A pardon is available, but the pardon does not reside in the will of man or his effort to secure grace. It starts and ends with an offer of mercy from the LORD God.

"Jesus came to save His people from their sins!" He did **not** come to help them save themselves. Selah! (Matthew 1:21)

From this first answer we learn an important lesson that the Lord was not unjust in hardening the heart of Pharaoh.

The text says, "I raised thee up" to this position of power and influence (Exodus 19:16). It does **not** say, "I created thee to condemn thee."

There are about 15 or more verses referring to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. About half of them inform us God hardened Pharaoh's heart; the other half instructs us that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. Paul asserts that as God was not unjust in hardening the heart of Pharaoh, nor was He jaundiced in hardening some of the Israelites against the gospel of Christ.

All Israelites are sinners. All deserve judgment. God is not unjust for enlightening some for salvation nor is He unjust for blinding others to that same knowledge -- to blind people who want to be blind to the gospel and to live without the knowledge of God in darkness.

Pharaoh's hardening: The whole idea that God would harden any man's heart repulses the twisted logic of natural man. The text, however, informs us that God was the Prime Mover in the hardening—a thickening that resulted in the mighty display of power and deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

The idea here is that God agitated Pharaoh and stirred him to reject Moses' petition to free the slaves so that God's glory might be put on full display to the whole world.

Much has been written on this subject. But, let it be noted that Pharaoh consented to God's hardening his heart; that is, it was the choice he was most naturally inclined to make.

Take note: God did not harden a good man's heart in search of truth, but He hardened Pharaoh's -- an evil man's heart in love with power.

God does **not** harden the hearts of good men . . . of weak men struggling with sin who want to know Him!

If God hardens the heart of sinful men, it is because they want it that way; and, if God softens some hearts to hear and receive the gospel message, is God unjust? Paul's answer is "No, may it never be." He loves men not because men are lovable, but because He is a God of love. Selah!

The LORD has never hardened the heart of an innocent man . . . of a pure, reasonable, honest, decent person that wants to be right with Him. It is not in His character to do so . . . "a bruised reed He will not break" (Isaiah 42:3).

He gives grace to those who seek it . . . wisdom to those who ask Him for it . . . salvation to the one pursuing it by faith. But, the sad fact of history is that there are none "*that seeketh after God*" for "there is none that doeth good. No not one." If a man seeks Him, it is because God placed that desire into his heart. Blessed be the Name of the Lord (Romans 3:10-13: Job 1:20-22).

Second Question: Is man responsible?

Romans 9:19-24 You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" **20** But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" **21** Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use and another for dishonorable use? **22** What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, **23** in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory- **24** even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? **25** As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call my people."

Looking at the structure of the apostle's argument:

First, Paul asks, "Why does God find fault" or "Is man responsible?"

He then deliberates two points: (1) the issue of credentials to ask such a question (9:20a), and (2) the issue of creation which contain the rights of the Creator over His creation (9:20b-21).

Next, the apostle discusses two possible pre-destinations (9:22-14): (1) vessels prepared for destruction (9:22), and (2) vessels prepared for glory (9:23-24).

In asking this question, "Why does He find fault?" Paul discerns a spirit of pride. "Who O man, do you think you are?" A "why" question demands accountability, and God is accountable to no man! It's really the wrong question. Like a good lawyer, Paul answers a question with a question, "Who are you. O man, to answer back to God?"

Man calling the Judge to account for His decisions? What arrogance! Just who do you think you are to question the all-knowing, all good, all wise, all

powerful Creator to hold Himself accountable to the likes of little ol' you -- a man of dust? What are your credentials to ask such questions? Even a man with a sack full of PhDs doesn't have the acumen to judge the Father. He is accountable to no man especially Dr. Know-it-Alls at the University of Big Heads.

Second, the apostle directs us to the creative rights of God. The author and creator of a thing has all rights over his invention, does he not?

Will the molded say to the molder, "Why have you made me thus?"

The question is a proud question because it presumes the created object is equal to the creator.

As Creator of all things, He has rights over that which He makes.

The Potter-Clay illustration is really a *reduction ad absurdum* argument because Paul traces the implication of the question to its logical conclusion. In creating the clay pot, the Potter retains all rights over the vessel; and, the vessel has no qualifications or authority to question the Potter's purpose. Likewise, the fact of election is wrapped in God's creative purpose for His creatures and the creature has no authority to question the Creator!

Next, the apostle asks a "What if . . . question" designed to probe the audiences' understanding of reality.

We are finite beings with limited a knowledge of God. Paul, therefore, seeks to enlarge metaphysical possibilities and to expand the thinking of his readers.

Could it be, asks the apostle, that God created some vessels for wrath and others for glory? Wrath is a virtue of Almighty God. Could the Potter create a vessel to expose and testify to the virtue of His wrath and patience?

(1) Doesn't the presence of evil men in our time demonstrate the patience of God? In the end, they will be used as cannon fodder to authenticate His wrath.

(2) On the other hand, there are vessels prepared for glory, "even us" says the apostle (24). What can God's mercy and compassion produce?

Look at the Christian community made up of believing Jews and Gentiles. God has taken vile, shameless, despicable sinners hell-bent on exploiting every vice, convicted them of their sin, and saved them by the work of His Son.

Look at the marvelous transformation of sinners—a testament to the grace and goodness of God. Is God unjust for preparing luscious culinary dishes to be enjoyed by men of faith in the banquet we call the kingdom of God? "May it never be," declared Paul (14).

(3) Finally, notice with me the two verbs for "*prepared*" in verses 22-23. There are two different words.

22 *What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath **prepared** for destruction, 23 in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has **prepared** beforehand for glory*

The first verb is in the passive voice and the latter in the active voice. The vessels of wrath are being prepared (passive voice) for destruction; God, on the other hand, prepared (active voice) certain vessels for glory. The active voice informs us that the subject of the verb is doing the action. The passive voice informs us that the subject is the object of action and that the subject voluntarily receives the motion of the verb.

Thus, the use of the active voice in reference to the vessels of mercy inform us that God is the active Savior, the One doing the saving; and the passive voice informs us that the subject is being acted upon, the vessels of wrath, and that they appear to be willfully receiving their appointment.

There is a story of an atheist who dared God to strike him dead in five minutes. The audience nervously waited. At the end of five minutes, he said, "You see, there is no God." After the talk, two coeds were talking wherein one asked the other what he thought about the speaker's proof there is no God. The other said, "No, he didn't prove there was no God. He just proved even an arrogant bast**d like him can't exhaust the patience of God in five minutes."

In conclusion, the apostle exalts the sovereignty of God in salvation. He is not unjust for saving some and not saving others. Salvation is of God, not man. If you are a Christian, your heart should be exploding with profound thankfulness; if you are not a believer, I would think your heart should be filled with fear. You are, after all, responsible for your own soul.

47. Romans 16:20

Satan on a Leash

"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."



Why does Paul refer to a God of peace, and not a God of war?

Ever seen Guido Reni's glorious painting, "The Archangel Michael Defeating Satan" 1635? Notice the facial expression of the angel. A masterpiece!

God is sovereign over Satan . . . over evil . . . over ghouls; and, He is active in the world now quelling his power. Evil men and their plans are being frustrated and defeated in nowtime.

Paul's astounding confidence is grounded on Genesis 3:15 where the apostle sees Satan as a crushed snake.

"Crushed" is a future indicative verb. "Satan" is the direct object." "*under your feet is the indirect object*" -- a reference to the ones receiving the benefit of the verb action on the direct object.

Satan is identified as the source of the conflicts in the Roman church -- our earthly foe. He is a real adversary and not one to be trifled with, but he is a legally defeated foe by the power of the cross.

It is the "soon" that grates against our impatient souls. "Soon" does not mean 2,000 years. More conquests are expected. His defeat comes in stages: at the cross, in various seasons of life, and at the end of history. The Crusher is the God of peace -- who in relation to Satan is both an irresistible Force and an immovable Object.

"A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing; our helper he, amid the flood." - Luther

"Be subject therefore unto God; but resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

"There are three other Scriptural sayings which may have been floating in the Apostle's mind when he penned this triumphant assurance. 'Thou shalt bruise his head'; the great first Evangel-we are to be endowed with Christ's power; 'The lion and the adder thou shalt trample under foot'- all the strength that was given to ancient saints is ours; 'Behold! I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy'-the charter of the seventy is the perennial gift to the Church." - MacClaren

Here "*the God of patience and consolation*" (15:3) and "*the God of hope*" (15:13) is called the "God of peace" (16:20).

*Romans 15:5 Now **the God of patience and consolation** grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:*

*Romans 15:13 Now **the God of hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*

*Hebrew 13:20-21 Now **the God of peace**, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do*

his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Hebrew 13:20)

"Two antagonists are at hand-grips in every one of us. On the one hand, the 'God of peace,' on the other, 'Satan.' If you believe in the personality of the One, do not part with the belief in the personality of the other. If you believe that a divine power and Spirit is ready to help and strengthen you, do not think so lightly of the enemies that are arrayed against you as to falter in the belief that there is a great personal Power, rooted in evil, who is warring against each of us. Ah, brethren! we live far too much on the surface, and we neither go down deep enough to the dark source of the Evil, nor rise high enough to the radiant Fountain of the Good. It is a shallow life that strikes that antagonism of God and Satan out of itself. And though the belief in a personal tempter has got to be very unfashionable nowadays, I am going to venture to say that you may measure accurately the vitality and depth of a man's religion by the emphasis with which he grasps the thought of that great antagonism. There is a star of light, and there is a star of darkness; and they revolve, as it were, round one centre." (MacClaren)

"Under your feet":

"Notice, 'the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet.' Yes, it is God that bruises, but He uses our feet to do it. It is God from whom the power comes, but the power works through us, and we are neither merely the field, nor merely the prize, of the conflict between these two, but we ourselves have to put all our pith into the task of keeping down the flat, speckled head that has the poison gland in it. 'The God of peace'-blessed be His Name-'shall bruise Satan under your feet,' but it will need the tension of your muscles, and the downward force of your heel, if the wriggling reptile is to be kept under" (MacClaren).

The God of Peace crushes the work of Satan, and it is the man of peace that triumphs over His deputies at work through governmental institutions.

" . . . in quietness and trust is your strength . . ." – Isaiah 30:15

48. Ephesians 1:11

Sovereignty and Predestination

"In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will."



This text shows us the golden colors of God's sovereignty shining upon us to illuminate the wonders of salvation to us so that we may believe and enter His kingdom.

Calvinist believes in the effectual calling which is "the action of the Holy Spirit in producing conviction of sin and bestowing the gift of faith in Christ"

While the gospel goes out to many, it is only effectual for a few.

"*In him*" is a dative expressing that of personal interest. In this case, the purpose of election is for the advantage and benefit of Christ. All Christian belong to God for the joy of the Son.

The "*we*" refers to the Ephesians or to all true believers.

The word "*predestination*" is formed from a root word and a prefix (*pro* and *oridzo*). The root word "*oridzo*" means "to decide" or "to make a decision." The prefix "*pro*" means "before" or "beforehand." Sometime in eternity past, the Lord chose some men and women to obtain an inheritance in the kingdom of God. We did not choose Him, He chose us.

Every Christian can say, "I possess Christ," but as he grows in the knowledge of Scripture he learns that "God first possessed Him." We love the Savior, but as we grow, we learn that He first loved us! We boast of having Christ in our heart, but as we mature we learn that we were in his heart and that He hath chose "us in him before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4). Oh, the wonder of it all!

The verb "*have obtained an inheritance*" and the participle "having been predestinated" are both aorist tenses expressing a fact and a passive indicating the action of predestination is an act of the God upon the subject ("we").

The word "*inheritance*" (*kleroo*) is part of the verb . It root means "*to cast lots*." In the grand purpose of history, the Father "cast lots" sort of speak and chose some people to experience his love and salvation. This destiny is not haphazard or by "flipping a coin" but something germane to the will of God.

The phrase "*who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*" informs us that God works in our lives to conform us to the counsel of his own will; that is, in his grace He supplies the power for us to respond in faith.. The word "*working*" (*en'ergountas*) could be translated "in working" which implies that not only does God command us to believe, He gives us the ability to believe. No man can frustrate His will. His calling becomes the "effectual calling" because

He Who calls us to salvation works in us to give us the capacity to respond to the gospel . What He wills, He performs. He removes all obstacles so we can enter His kingdom freely.

Life involves choices, but we must consider His movements in the victories and defeats of our lives. Parents, friends, troubles, successes, failures, and sickness are merely tools He uses to achieve *the purpose of His will*.

49. Colossians 1:16-17

Creator and Sustainer

"For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."



Paul brazenly uses terms only associated with the LORD God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and assigns them to Christ.

Either the Christian Apostle is exaggerating, or Christ is greater than any of us can conceive -- that God walked among us in the person of Christ displaying His powers drawing men to Himself must be considered the greatest event in history.

He is greater than the invention of fire, greater than the invention of the wheel, greater than the Roman conquest of the world, greater than the invention of the printing press, greater than the invention of the clock, greater than the inventions cars, trains, and airplane. "For by him all things were created."

The inspired Apostle attributes the creation of heaven and earth to the power of the Lord Jesus. When you read "In the beginning God," think of Christ; and, when you think of Christ, know that He is the Creator-God. All thing were created by Him, through Him, and for Him.

In case there is any doubt about his phenomenal claim, he addresses things specifically: heaven, earth, things seen, and things not seen. If you see it, He created it; if you don't see it, he created that also. Look up, He created it; look down, He created it. He not only created the Sun, Moon, and Stars --things visible, He created orders of angels and the unseen world of Seraphic "thrones" and "dominions."

Some Greek philosophers claimed that angels created the world, but Paul sets the record straight. Christ created the world and whatever part angels had in assembling this planet, Christ created them . . . orders them . . . and holds them accountable to His scepter.

Not only is the Lord Christ the Creator of all things, He sustains all that He created. He completed creating the heavens and the earth in six days, and He presently preserves what we see, visible and invisible.

He is the cosmic glue that holds protons and electrons together in every atom. Though the atom is 99.999% space, these subatomic energy fields contain a universe of electrical energy controlled by the power of the Son. Christ is sovereign over creation . . . and, sovereign over the new creation. Not only does He hold the material and spiritual world together, He holds us together.

At times it feels like madmen in the fickle world of politics are tearing humanity apart, but He holds the nations in the hollow of His hand and moves history toward its climax -- the kingdom of God on earth.

50. 1 Timothy 6:12-15

The King of kings and Lord of lords

“Fight the good fight of faith . . . keep this commandment until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ; which in his times he shall shew, *who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;*”



How can a simple minister of the gospel fight the good fight at the gates of hell when he is alone fighting devils in the heat of conflict?

The answer is by remembering our Commander and Chief.

Our Lord wears three crowns.

History moves toward its climatic epiphany when the glory of His majestic reign will be revealed to the cosmos.

There is only one Ruler, one King, and one Lord. Christ reigns supreme over three institutions. He is the Head of man / the family, and the Head of the Church, the Head of all civil power. Government rulers are putty in His hands. Who can prevent the establishment of His purpose?

The question, of course, is not whether Jesus is Lord, but whether proud hearts and shriveled souls will recognize Him as such. The gospel that turned the world upside down taught another king, King Jesus (Acts 17:6-7).

The sovereignty of God ought to be a great comfort to us. We are way too quick to praise God for our successes and blame ourselves for our failures . . . or blame others for their debacles; way too prone to attribute wealth to the blessing of God, and poverty to the activities of men; way too inclined to attribute the gains of man to his choices and the losses of a man to his weaknesses; way too human in assigning riches to the favor of God and deficits to Satan: " . . . **in the day of adversity consider: God also hath set the one as well as the other.**"

God *is* sovereign.

When tragedy strikes and fears attack our peace, we can take comfort in knowing that no detail has escaped our ever-present, all-knowing, all-seeing, sovereign God. The One in control promises that "for those who love God all things work together for good," (Romans 8:28).

51. Hebrews 4:3

The Finished Project

"For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world."



Men are not trained to rest. They are trained to work, to speak, and to fight.

But, a Christian's strength is not in his warrior mindset, but in resting in the work of Christ at the cross.

The grounds of rest is two-fold: "believed" and "we enter."

Men see history as out of control going around in circles, but the Lord's work of redemption in Christ and His calling of believers unto salvation were finished before the foundation of the world because these things are bound up in the eternal purpose of God.

Paul warns men not to imitate the guilt of those excluded from His rest, but to enter into this rest by faith. The rest does not come to those who die, but to those who believe. Let us believe . . . and rest . . . and experience its power.

He did not plan our salvation after the fall or in time when we put our trust in Christ, nor after our grandmother prayed for us, but before He laid the foundation of the world.

All the events and pressures that led you to accept Christ as your Savior were merely the outworking of His plan before Genesis 1:1.

Moreover, we can't change the world nor reverse the fate of nations. But, we can rest in the finished work of Christ . . . be at peace . . . and experience its power. Therefore, let us rest.

52. Revelation 1:5-6

Who Rules the Rulers?

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”



How big is your Christ? Most of us have a pitiful, shriveled up view of Him.

Here the Spirit seeks to enlarge our tiny minds so we can take in the glorified Christ.

When King David brought the ark to Jerusalem with a parade of priests and Levites, he faced a crisis. The gates were too small for His Majesty, therefore, he penned the famous words, “Lift up your heads, O Ye Gates.” (Psalm 24).

Likewise, we need to lift up our gates . . . to enlarge the portals, doors, and hatches of our minds so we receive His Majesty.

John informs us his letter is from “*Jesus Christ.*”

Three more appellations enforce the authority of the letter: (1) As a faithful witness, he not only speaks the truth, but will cast the first stone in judgement (Deuteronomy 17:7);

(2) “*As begotten of the dead,*” refers to Christ's triumph over the grave by virtue of His death, burial, and resurrection. As victor over death, he is able to solve our fundamental problem of death. He is the first in a whole harvest to come.

“first begotten from the dead” means that He represents a new humanity of resurrected souls in a harvest to come; and,

(3) “*prince of the kings of the earth*” (archon) describe his authority over civil magistrates, parliaments, and heads of state.

As wonderful as these truths are to the soul, we want to concentrate on what the title “*prince of the kings of earth*” implies.

America’s problems are not economic; they are spiritual; that is, they are rooted in a deficient understanding of Christ as King, and the apotheosis of the State as some kind of god that has no accountability to the Lord Jesus Christ.

When problems arise politicians do not seek to align themselves under the authority of King Jesus, rather they seek solutions through more programs, more taxation, and more regulations. The American politician thinks that if there a problem, throw \$\$ at it.

As Prince

John states that Jesus Christ is “*the prince of the kings of the earth.*” The use of the definite article points out the identity of Christ in regard to the kings of the earth: He is their “prince.” He is not a prince among other princes, but **the One and Only Prince of the nations.**

The Greek word translated “*prince*” (*archon*) refers to one who is a ruler, lord, commander, or a chief governor. He is the Archon by virtue of his resurrection from the dead. The word *archon* indicates one who has authority to govern others. The root *arch* comes from a family of Greek words, of which *archon* is a part. It refers to that which has primacy, priority, and authority whether in time or rank. The word “prince” or “ruler” is, therefore, an excellent translation.

The English word “*prince*” comes from the Latin term *princeps* which means *first* or *chief*, and the primary sense of “*prince*” is that of a *monarch* or *king* or *governor*. Jesus Christ is the *princeps* of the kings and rulers of the earth.

As King

John uses the term “*prince*” (archon) which can be translated “chief,” “ruler,” “king,” or “Supreme Ruler.” The term “*prince*” in Latin is *princeps* which can be translated *chief*, *leader*, *head*, *main*, *sovereign*, *greatest authority*, *inspirer*, *director*, *head*, *emperor*, *king*, *foremost*, *main*.

He is not one among many . . . for there is only one **Lawgiver** (James 4:12) and one **Mediator** between God and men (1 Timothy 2:5).

Jesus is **the Ruler** of the kings of the earth, the Potentate, the Chief Justice of Heaven's Supreme Court, the Chief Legislator, the Commander and Chief of Heaven's armies: For the LORD (Jesus) is our **judge**; the LORD (Jesus) is our **lawgiver**; the LORD (Jesus) is our **king**; he will save us" (Isaiah 33:22).

The critical message of Revelation is the Sovereignty of Jesus! His reign is not something in the future, but a *present reality to believe and enjoy now*. Neither Satan, nor men, nor chance govern the affairs of men.

Jesus is the Referee over all the events of history. *If we miss this truth, we miss the main message of the book.* And, it is our duty to proclaim the sovereignty of Christ and challenge civil rulers to acknowledge His authority and surrender to His law-order.

(Note: There is satanic resistance to this truth. In America, the doctrines of "separation of church and state," and "religion and politics don't mix" are enough to silence most Christians in political debate. The way to overcome this is to confront their hypocrisy. They say one thing and practice another.

Every man is religious, and every law represents someone's religious values. The secularists use the doctrine of separation of *church and state* to bar Christians from asserting the authority of Christ so they can force their religious values (like same-sex marriage) down the throats of Americans. We must challenge their hypocrisy and not permit them to hide behind the doctrine of separation of church and state while they force their secular religious values upon the minds of men.

Of Kings of the earth

The genitival phrase, "***of the kings of the earth,***" defines His jurisdiction, the kind of power and authority He has. He is the Ruler of rulers; the Princes of princes; the Governor of governors! And, in the language of Revelation 19:16, He is the "King of kings!"

"*of the kings*" of the earth is translated "*regum*" in Latin which is a plural for *rex* (king).

The term "*king*" signifies those who stand first in governing authority within a country, those who are the highest ranking magistrate in their particular nation.

The words "*of the earth*" informs us the rulers of the world have a duty to acknowledge His authority and seek to align their administration under His authority. The kings under His rule are each and every chief magistrate in the world! And, if every chief magistrate is under His authority, then all lesser magistrates are also under His authority. He claims absolute, global, universal jurisdiction over every civil ruler (Psalm 97:1). And, He is more unyielding than an anvil.

He is **not** announcing Jesus' authority over the church here, though he has authority over the church. John is **not** stating that Jesus is "his King," or "my king," or the "king" of the church, though He is. He is the King of kings.

The persons responsible to subject themselves to Prince Jesus, are kings, civil rulers, subordinates, and officers of the State, whether in the legislative, judicial, or executive branches of government. Of such, Jesus Christ is Prince — *archon*, ruler, lord, chief, the first in power, authority, and dominion.

Therefore, the statement that Jesus Christ is "the prince of the kings of the earth" is a powerful *political* title. It defines the authority of Christ in reference to political rulers and the sphere of civil government. It designates Christ as the Supreme Ruler over all magistrates in all the nations of the earth.

The Scripture gives to Jesus Christ the title of "*head*" in reference to His absolute authority over the church (Ephesians 1:19-21). But, this is **not** the declaration in this text. The church is **not** subject to the kings of the earth nor do the kings have jurisdiction over the church. The church has its ministry (subject matter jurisdiction) of gospel proclamation under Christ as Head of the Church; and, the government has its ministry (subject matter jurisdiction) of justice under Christ as Prince of the kings of the earth.

Jesus is over all civil rulers, and all civil rulers, even those in China and the Congo, are expected to order their affairs under His authority. The church can admonish kings, but it **cannot** command kings. **Jesus commands kings!** Other texts in Holy Writ utilize the title of "Lord" to communicate that He reigns over all men and aspects of life (individuals, family, church). But, this is **not** what John intended to communicate here.

He wants the original readers to understand that Jesus has authority over the State; that He is the Ruler over all civil institutions and the persons who govern them; that officers of the State are under duty to surrender to His authority and to conduct their administrations of justice under His command.

The issue, of course, is not whether Jesus is the King of kings, but will the heads of state acknowledge Him as such . . . and, herein lays the problem.

Statesmen see themselves as sovereign . . . as institutions with a secular purpose rather than under a religious duty to submit to King Jesus. As the church accepts Christ as Head of the church, all civil rulers are expected to honor the Lord Jesus Christ as Head of State in their civil administrations. And, here is the rub. Churches acknowledge the Headship of Christ, but civil magistrates do **not** and will **not** acknowledge Christ as Prince of the rulers of the kings of the earth. They are in rebellion against the LORD and His anointed as Psalm 2 so accurately describes.

The New Testament title of “*prince*” for Jesus Christ is announced in the messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. They state that Christ will be a King who will rule the kings of the earth and govern the nations: Psalm 2:1-12; Psalm 22:28; Psalm 89:27; Psalm 110:1-7; Isaiah 2:4; Isaiah 9:6-7; 33:22; Jeremiah 10:7; Daniel 7:13-14.

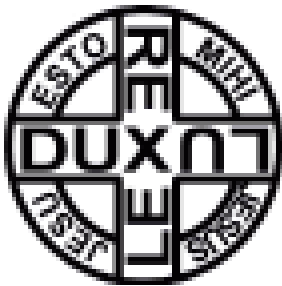
The New Testament also makes it clear that Jesus was installed as King of the nations at His ascension to the right hand of God: Matthew 2:2; Matthew 21:5; Matthew 27:11; John 17:2; John 19:18-20; John 19:15; Acts 2:30-36; Acts 4:12; Acts 17: 1-7; 1 Timothy 6:15.

John’s words do **not** suggest that at some future time Jesus will become the “prince of the kings of the earth,” **but that He is to be recognized as such NOW!**

From the beginning the church has preached “**that there is another king (Rex), one Jesus**” (Acts 17:7); that is, **there is a King who is greater than Caesar**. This is the gospel that *turned the world upside down*. If the church wants to do so again, it must preach Christ as King now and call civil rulers to repent and submit to Him (Acts 17:6-7).

The goal of history is the defeat of His enemies (1 Corinthians 15:24-26); that is, that all men would acknowledge Christ as Lord of the family, Lord of the church, and King of the nations. It is the duty of all nations to confess Christ as their Ruler and King.

But, the issue is not whether He is King of kings, but will men accept and confess Him as such.



The gospel that turned the world upside down and conquered Western Civilization did not proclaim government as god, or Caesar as king, or the Roman City State as the hope of the world.

There is no law without a king, and King Jesus has His law. The West seeks to practice the rule of law v. the king is law; however, there is no law without a *rex* (See Exodus 20:1-3).

Because there’s only one King and one the law, we must work under the law that comes from King Jesus. In this sense, Christians believe in THE KING IS LAW or *Rex Lex!!* Once man recognizes One King, then we can work toward Lex Rex. Selah.

DUX LUX REX LEX Cross. The rough English translation is “*my King, my Leader (Commander), my Light, and my Law*” in reference, of course, to Jesus Christ. Word order makes little difference in Latin.

Rex, Lex, Lux, Dux is Latin meaning "My King, My Law, My Light, and my Commander." Jesus is Rex (King), Lex (Law), Lux (light), and Dux (Leader or Commander).

The gospel that turned the world upside down taught "another Rex, King Jesus."

The Apostolic Declaration that launched the gospel from Jerusalem into the Mediterranean world acted on a commission sealed by the Lord's signet ring procured by His ascension to heaven's throne:

"We ought to obey God rather than men" - Acts 5:29

He made us kings and priests

The blessing of being a saint is mentioned. Saints are chosen, cherished, cleansed, and crowned.

- As loved ones, saints are the objects of Divine affection and favor. Christians are loved **not** because they are lovable, but because it is God's nature to love.
- As cleansed ones, saints are washed and purified from sin by virtue of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
- As crowned ones, saints are citizens of His kingdom (a kingdom: *basileian*, singular) by virtue of their association with Christ who sits at the right hand of the Father. The term "*basilean*" is translated "kings" in some versions, but the better translation is "a kingdom" with the idea of rule contained therein—not ruled, but reigning triumphant over all enemies (Barnes, 1975); not slaves, but sovereigns sharing in the reign of the Sovereign (1 Corinthians 7:23).
- As chosen ones, saints are anointed as priests, to represent men to God. In Israel's temple there were four courts: The court of the Gentile, the court of women, the court of the Jew, and the court of the priests. The Israelites were not allowed to go into the court of priests. Due to the gospel, however, all Christians are appointed to perform the duties of a priest excelling in their influence upon history for good. The church does **not** have a priesthood. The church is a priesthood: As a *holy priesthood* Christians offer up praises to God; as a *royal priesthood* they proclaim His glories to men (1 Peter 2:5-11).

He "*made us kings and priests*" is a reference from Exodus 19:6. This is the first of many references whereby John applies images of Israel to the church:

"The regal and sacerdotal dignities are the two highest that can possibly exist among men; and these two are here mentioned to show the glorious prerogatives of the children of God" (Clarke, 1831).

The church is a kingdom of royal priests. Thus, the church are a people belonging to Christ, the true Israel of God. John perceives the church as sharing regal authority over the nations – not under the authority of governments, but under authority of Him who has authority over the kings of the earth (2:26; 3:21; 5:10; 20:6).

John attributes glory to Christ for his accomplishments. Glory is fitting for Him who stooped so low, even to the death of the cross, to raise us so high as to be called priests of God. John's benediction includes increased "dominion" (*kratos* = strength) or political power. Only an all wise, all loving, all powerful, humble Savior is worthy of increased dominion.

Enough of this nonsense that Christians must always obey the government! Christians ought to be calling their government to always obey the living, sovereign Christ!

53. Revelation 19:6

Sovereignty Today and Forever

"Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"



The gospel of the Old Testament is "*The Lord reigns*" (psalm 97:1; 99:1). This gospel is proclaimed here; i.e. the gospel of the New Testament is "the Lord reigns."

The word "*allelujah*" means "praise to Yah."

Using the glorious title "*the Lord God Omnipotent*" spotlights the sovereignty and supremacy and the muscularity of God.

As John the revelator saw the climax of history, he realized afresh the glories of salvation and its consummation were the outworking of the plan of the omnipotent God from the foundation of the world.

Why do we worry and fret madness of kings and the policies of psychopaths? He has the power to finish what He promised.

Yes, the madness of politics grates on the believer. We wish for something better. But, in this conflict, we must remind ourselves that history is moving toward the kingdom of God (Isaiah 2, 11) and nothing is going to deter that plan. Even now things are going according to His plan.

"Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"

Addendum



“For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Alleluia!”

54. Synod of Dort: Calvinism v. Armenianism



Since the Arminians wanted the Dutch Reformed Church to adopt these articles for their standard of faith, they were demanding that the Scripture must be interpreted to teach the following:

- (a) That man is never so corrupted by sin that he cannot believe the gospel when it is placed before him; that
- (b) man is never so controlled by God that he cannot reject the gospel;
- (c) God's election of men is prompted by his knowledge that men will believe the gospel based on their own willing accord (this is ratification, not election);
- (d) Christ did not die exclusively for the elect but for all men in order to create a possibility for all men to be saved;
- (e) it is the duty of believers to keep themselves in the state of grace by keeping up their faith or they will be lost.

The church, therefore, called for a national senate to discuss the Remonstrance of which forty-six ministers had signed. They met in November 1618 which was called the Senate of Dort. It consisted of eighty-four members and eighteen secular commissioners.

Out of the 84 scholars, 58 were Dutch, the others were foreigners from England and Europe. They conducted 154 sessions and concluded in May 9th, 1619. The first official business was the taking of the oath:

"I promise before God, in whom I believe, and whom I worship, as being present in this place, and as being the Searcher of all hearts, that during the course of the proceedings of this Synod, which will examine and decide not only the five points and all the differences resulting from them but also any other doctrine, I will use no human writing, but only the word of God, which is an infallible rule of faith. And during all these discussions, I will only aim at the glory of God, the peace of the Church, and especially the preservation of the purity of doctrine. So help me, my Savior, Jesus Christ! I beseech him to assist me by his Holy Spirit!" (Klooster 57) (Spindleworks.com).

The goal was to examine the Five Points the Arminians had presented and only the Scripture could be used as authority.

Simon Episcopus, a student of Arminius, wanted to speak. The Arminians chose officers, intending to present themselves as a kind of counter-synod. They would deal with Synod as a party in the controversy, after which the Government, with the advice of the foreign delegates, would give its verdict.

Their main line of defense would be to attack the Contra-Remonstrants as blasphemous fanatics, concentrating on the supralapsarian[1] ideas of Gomarus.

But, Episcopus wanted to begin with a refutation of the doctrines of Calvin in hope of prejudicing the entire assembly. But, the assembly demanded Episcopus give Scriptural support in favor of their opinions. The Arminians refused.

The Arminians refused to answer questions, refused to submit studies, refused to use Scripture, refused to submit copies of their positions, and then denied authority of the synod. The synod then asked them to submit their objections to the Belgian Confession in writing. They refused. Even when asked if the Remonstrance of 1610, they all remained silent.

On January 14, they refused to submit to the authority of the Synod and remained silent.

The leader of the Synod arose and spoke and said the foreign delegates of this assembly are of the opinion that you are unworthy to appear before this synod. With an exhortation reflecting on the gentleness of the assembly and the stubbornness of the Arminians, the assembly let the Arminians go.

The foreign delegates are now of the opinion that you are unworthy to appear before Synod. You have refused to acknowledge it as your lawful judge and regarded it as an opposing party: you have tried in everything to have your own way; you have despised the decision of Synod and of the political commissioners; you refused to answer questions; you declared the credentials to be invalid. Synod has treated you with gentleness, but you have been lying from beginning to end, as one of the foreign theologians remarked. With this eulogy we will let you go. God will keep his word and he will bless the Synod. In order that we will not be delayed any longer, you will be sent out. Depart: Go! (Faber et al. 35) (spindleworks.com).

The chairs and tables of the Arminians were put away.

The Synod now began to examine their opinions from available writings, concentrating on the Five Articles of the Remonstrance of 1610. The reading of the various judgments of the eighteen committees concerning these Five Articles took place from March 7 to 21 and from March 25 to April 16. The Canons were formulated in ninety-three separate articles. These were signed by all the delegates on April 23, 1619, and solemnly promulgated in the Great Church on May 6 before a large congregation. Three days later, after six months of deliberation, the foreign divines departed, leaving the Dutch members to convene for another twenty-six sessions to deal with further national matters (Spindleworks.com)[2].

The Synod then took the five points, studied them, and then refuted them with the Word of God. This is how they came up with the five points, TULIP . . . and this was developed long after Calvin was dead.

Summarily, Calvinism is known by an acronym: T.U.L.I.P.

- Total Depravity (also known as Total Inability and Original Sin)
- Unconditional Election
- Limited Atonement (also known as Particular Atonement)
- Irresistible Grace
- Perseverance of the Saints (also known as Once Saved Always Saved)

DeWitt is adamant in his judgment of Arminius and his successors:

Arminius and his successors were oath breakers; and to avoid the consequences of this offence, they in effect withdrew themselves from the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts, while claiming to continue as faithful members of the Church, and placed themselves under the protection of the secular power, (p. 10). He goes on to say that a man is rarely honest enough to withdraw himself, if his views become incompatible with the confessions of the church, but instead attempts, "by means of a strange line of casuistical reasoning," to convert the church to his own understanding of the truth (DeWitt). (The Doctrines of Grace and the Canons of Dordrecht, p. 28).

It is the same today. Instead of seeking the truth, people want you to adopt their views regardless if they represent Scripture or not. In 1619, if you were an Arminian, you were a heretic. In our day, if you are a Calvinist, you are heretic. Arminianism is now the standard doctrine taught in the church and in government schools.

Spurgeon once said,

It is often said that the doctrines we believe have a tendency to lead us to sin. I have heard it asserted most positively, that those high doctrines which we love, and which we find in the Scriptures, are licentious ones. I do not know who will have the hardihood to make that assertion, when they consider that the holiest of men have been believers in them. I ask the man who dares to say that Calvinism is a licentious religion, what he thinks of the character of Augustine, or Calvin, or Whitefield, who in successive ages were the great exponents of the system of grace; or what will he say of the Puritans, whose works are full of them? Had a man been an Arminian in those days, he would have been accounted the vilest heretic breathing, but now we are looked upon as the heretics, and they as the orthodox. (<http://www.spurgeon.org/calvinis.htm>).

A trite observation: "The Calvinists emphasize the Sovereignty of God and Arminians emphasize the Freewill of man." Hogwash! Calvinists teach the responsibility of man also. The difference is not one of emphasis, but one of content. Either God saves man or man saves himself. Either salvation is by God or salvation is by man! When an Arminian teaches on justification it ends up being salvation by works.

The gospel is Calvinism. We can't preach the gospel unless we preach Calvinism because Calvinism is the gospel! Unless we preach the sinfulness of man and the glorious grace of God to send his Son to die for sinners, we aren't preaching the gospel. Spurgeon declared,

I do not believe we can preach the gospel, if we do not preach justification by faith, without works; nor unless we preach the sovereignty of God in His dispensation of grace; nor unless we exalt the electing, unchangeable, eternal, immutable, conquering love of Jehovah; nor do I think we can preach the gospel, unless we base it upon the special and particular redemption of His elect and chosen people which Christ wrought out upon the cross; nor can I comprehend a gospel which lets saints fall away after they are called, and suffers the children of God to be burned in the fires of damnation after having once believed in Jesus. Such a gospel I abhor.

"If ever it should come to pass,
That sheep of Christ might fall away,
My fickle, feeble soul, alas!
Would fall a thousand times a day."

If one dear saint of God had perished, so might all; if one of the covenant ones be lost, so may all be; and then there is no gospel promise true, but the Bible is a lie, and there is nothing in it worth my acceptance. I will be an infidel at once when I can believe that a saint of God can ever fall finally. If God hath loved me once, then He will love me forever.

Arminianism is another gospel of Christ, but it is a heresy because it is subtle, plausible, and popular.

[1] There was a difference of opinion between the infra-lapsarian and the supra-lapsarian members of Synod. The point at issue was the question: "Who is the object of election?" The Arminians taught the believer was, making faith the ground for election. All members of Synod rejected this. Infralapsarians, many of them foreign theologians, regarded fallen man as the object of God's election or reprobation.

[2] The Synod of Dort has been labelled the "persecuting Synod." It is quite true that two hundred Remonstrant ministers were deposed from their office. Of

these, a total of eighty were banished, nearly seventy agreed to be silenced and refrain from their ministry, and forty, upon conforming to the decisions of Synod, were restored to their office. It is also true that the political leaders of the Remonstrants were arrested. Van Oldenbarnevelt, declared guilty of treason, was beheaded on May 14, 1619. This prompted the grim joke from Diodati, the delegate from Geneva, that "the Canons of Dort had shot off the Advocate's head" (Dewar 115). But, the error of those who advocated and practised what would now be considered persecution was a general error of the age.

55. The Sign of Authority

1 Corinthians 11:1-16



Christ is not only the "prince of the kings of the earth," he is head of the church and the head of every individual man.

The sign of that authority is that men remove their hats in prayer, and women veil themselves in prayer. When a man removes his hat, he does so as a matter of respect for his Lord; when a woman veils herself, she declares that she is under God's law-order and that she recognizes God's authority structure.

The Apostle Paul informed Timothy that the Scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16) and this passage is no exception.

We believe in the principle of Sola Scriptura; and, therefore, the Biblical practice of headcoverings.

Further, we confess Sola Gloria, and therefore, assert that that the instructions on this subject in 1 Corinthians 11 suitably glorifies Christ and humbles man.

The topic of 1 Corinthians 11 is **headship** [11:1-2], **headcovering** [11:3-16], and **head remembering** [11:17ff].

Three heads are mentioned: the headship of God, the headship of Christ, and the headship of man / husband.

Because the woman recognizes her subordinate role in the world and wants to please God, she veils herself as a symbol of her submission to the authority of the man who is obligated to protect her. The wearing of a veil is a sign the

woman recognizes and honors God's law-order; that she understands the curse on women and is committed to resist it (Genesis 3:16; Proverbs 21:9, 19).

For more on this subject, see Stockton's, "The Case for Headcoverings" at <https://nikeinsights.famguardian.org/publications/>.



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