

## Trying to understand God. By Pastor Bill Hekman

As we look around us today we notice that some people are saved and protected by God and others suffer and are killed. How is God functioning? Is it possible to understand God?

As we read 1 Chronicles 29:10-20 we see that **King David's is praying and praising God** for His greatness and power, His glory and majesty, His splendor and wealth, His honor and government. God is the source of everything and His power is unlimited. So David and the whole nation praised God, worshipped Him and brought great sacrifices to God. They sacrificed 1000 bulls, 1000 rams, and 1000 male lambs. David also donated some fantastic gifts for the building of the temple, which was to be built by his son Solomon. In 1 Chronicles 29 there is a mention of his personal donations:

Verse 4, 100 tons of pure gold

Verse 4, 240 tons of refined silver

The leaders under David gave another 360 tons of gold, 345 tons of silver, 610 tons of bronze and 3450 tons of iron. They realized that God was supreme. He was in charge and He was the source of everything. No sacrifice was too great for almighty God.

**You may recall Nebuchadnezzar, the great King of Babylon.** One day he was boasting and said "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty powers and for the glory of my majesty?" While he was still boasting about his might there came a voice from heaven, as recorder in Daniel 4:31, ***"This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar; your royal authority has been taken from you. You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven years will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes."***

Verse 33: "Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from the people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird."

Verse 34, 35: "At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raise my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as He pleases with the power of heaven and the powers of the earth. No one can hold back His hand or say to Him; 'what have you done?'"

Verse 37, "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all His ways are just. And those who walk in pride He is able to humble."

In Psalm 22:28 King David acknowledges "for dominion belongs to the Lord and He rules over the nations." God sets up kingdoms and overthrows empires and governments. God is in complete control of the universe. He is the "king of Kings and the lord of Lords." Such is the God of the Bible.

We all agree that God has purposed the Salvation of all mankind, that God the Son died with the express intention of saving the whole human race and that God the Holy Spirit is now seeking to win the world to Christ. Yet it is very apparent that most people are dying in their sin and passing into a hopeless eternity. **Do you think that God is disappointed or that God the Son is dissatisfied or that God the Holy Spirit is defeated?** Some argue that God is “trying His best to” to save all mankind but that the majority of men will not let Him save them. This seems to imply that the will of God the Creator is impotent and that the will of the creature made by God is omnipotent.

**To throw the blame**, as many do, upon the devil, does not remove the difficulty, for if Satan is defeating the purpose of God, then Satan is almighty and God is no longer the supreme Being. **To say that man is the sole determiner** of his own destiny, and that he has the power to checkmate his Maker is really to strip God of the attribute of Omnipotence.

The power of the God of the Bible is absolute, irresistible and infinite. When we say that God is sovereign and in charge, we affirm His right to govern the universe just as He pleases. He is the Potter and we are the clay. He can do what he wants to do. God is under no rule or law outside His own will and nature. **God is a law unto Himself!** He is under no obligation to give account of His doings to any one! **His power is exercised as He wills, when He wills and where He wills.** This fact is evidenced on every page of the Bible.

**For a long season the power of God appears to be dormant.** For 430 years the Israelites lived in Egypt and suffered as slaves. Suddenly God power is evidenced with great might. Pharaoh dared to hinder the Israelites from leaving the land of Egypt. What happened? God exercised His power and the people were delivered. Pharaoh and his armies all drowned as they were chasing God’s people. Then for 40 years the people were drifting in the desert. Suddenly there is a mighty display again of God’s power! The city of Jericho was hindering God’s will. What happened? The people did not have to shoot one arrow or throw one spear. God stretched forth His mighty hand and the walls fell down flat. But this miracle was never repeated! No other city fell after the same manner. Every other city had to be captured by the sword!

God put forth His power and David was delivered from Goliath the giant. The mouths of lions were closed and Daniel escaped unhurt. The 3 Hebrew young men were thrown into the burning fiery furnace and came out unharmed and unscorched. Yet others had trials of cruel mockings and beatings, imprisonment, they were stoned, sawn to pieces, killed with the sword, destitute, afflicted and tormented, as described in Hebrews 11. Why? Why did God allow Stephen to be stoned to death and then deliver Peter from prison? Why does God allow the believers in North Korea to suffer so greatly? Why does God allow the Christians in America and Europe to prosper? Why the killing and sufferings of believers in Ambon and Poso, Indonesia? Why the persecutions in Vietnam and China? Why the imprisonment of believers In Saudi Arabia for worshipping in their own home? Why, why, why? So many questions!

Why Did God allow **Methuselah** to outlive all his contemporaries? Why did God give to **Samson** a physical strength which no other human has ever possessed? Why did God give such power to men like Nero, Hitler, Stalin and Mau Tse Tong? The answer to all these question is, Because God is sovereign, and being sovereign He does as He pleases. Who are we to question God.

God is also sovereign in the exercise of His mercy, for mercy is directed by the will of Him who shows mercy. Mercy is not a right to which we are entitled. Mercy is an attribute of God by which He forgives those who are miserable and condemned because of sin. Actually sinners and transgressors deserve punishment and not mercy. So we cannot speak of people deserving mercy.

There is one final illustration. During one of the feasts of the Jews the Lord Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He came to the Pool of Bethesda, where lay a great number of disabled people, blind, lame, paralyzed waiting for the stirring of the water. The first one who entered the water when it was stirred would be healed. Among this great number there was a certain man who had been crippled for 38 years. What happened? When Jesus saw him lie and knew that he had been there for a long time he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" The man answered, "**Sir, I have no man to help me into the pool when the water is stirred; while I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.**" Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. Why was this man singled out from all the others? Here was a case of the sovereign exercise of Divine mercy, for it was just as easy for Christ to heal every one as this one certain man. But He did not! He healed one particular sufferer and for some reason known only to Him, He did not do the same for all the others.

In God's sovereignty you and I also have the opportunity to hear the Gospel and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and experience His mercy and forgiveness. "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved – you and your household." Acts 16:31.

Also in God's sovereignty we are given the opportunity to be a witness for Christ and share the wonderful Gospel of Salvation with our friends and neighbors here in Indonesia. May the Lord use us all for His glory and honor.