

Who is really in charge? By Pastor Bill Hekman

Who is regulating affairs on this globe today – God or the Devil?

We read in 1 Chronicles 29:11,

“Yours O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours O Lord, is the kingdom; You are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor comes from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. Now our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.”

Most people will generally agree that God reigns supreme in heaven but very few people concede that He is also reigning supremely here on earth nowadays.

Everything here on earth is supposed to be ordered according to impersonal and abstract Laws of Nature. Some think that God is somewhere in the background and has no immediate concern in regulating the works of His own creation.

Yet others believe that it is man alone who determines his fortunes and decides his future and destiny. Still others believe that Satan is to be blamed for much of the evil, which is in the world today thus denying their own responsibility for what proceeds from their own evil hearts.

Jesus said in Mark 7:20,

“What comes out of a man is what makes him unclean. For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man unclean.”

It is very popular to blame somebody else for our own sins and mistakes. Adam blamed Eve for his sin, Eve blamed the serpent and today many people blame the devil for all their wickedness. People blame an evil spirit in their heart for their sin. “The spirit of lying in me is causing me to lie”. “The spirit of adultery is causing me to be unfaithful to my wife”.

So who is really in charge, - God or the devil? We look around us. Confusion, chaos and injustice confront us on every side! Here in Indonesia we see great injustice in Ambon and Poso. Thousands of police and soldiers are unwilling to take firm action against bandits and so called ‘holy war fighters’ who freely move around carrying automatic weapons, attacking and slaughtering Christians for no apparent reason. As it is written in **2 Timothy 3: 12**, *“while evil men and imposters will go from bad to worse”*. We look around and the trouble is going from bad to worse!

Somebody in our beautiful community of Lippo Karawaci came up with a brilliant idea that it is advantageous to build a mosque next door to a Christian University ‘Pelita Harapan’, meaning Light of Hope. We all know the mosque is not only a place of worship but also a center for fiery speeches stirring up the ‘faithful’ to attack Christians, their houses, their churches and their schools. In May, 1998 over 1200 major stores and shopping centers were robbed and burned down and the places untouched by the mobs had written the words ‘Muslim’ and ‘Prebumi’ (meaning ethnic Indonesian) on their shops.

Today everything appears to be out of joint. Nations are in revolt, civilization is a demonstrated failure. We have also discovered that democracy is very unsafe for the world. Unrest, discontent, corruption and lawlessness are seen everywhere. People live in apprehension of what is coming on the world. None can say how soon a great war will be set in motion in the Middle East. Do these things look as though God has full control?

After 20 centuries of Gospel preaching Jesus Christ is still “despised and rejected of men”. The majority of the great churches in Europe are being emptied rather than filled. Even many Christians are bewildered and confused and their faith is being severely tested and tried. And what about God? Does He see and hear? Is He impotent or indifferent? Some even say that conditions are ‘beyond God’s control!’ Who is regulating affairs on earth today – God or the Devil?

Some people even feel that the Devil has gained the upper hand and that God is to be pitied rather than worshipped! They say that God is sad and disappointed. Does not everything seem to show that the Devil has far more to do with the affairs of earth than God has?

My friends, it all depends on whether we are walking by faith or walking by sight. Are our thoughts concerning this world and God based on what we see? If so, we must hang our head in shame. In reality we walk very little by faith. **‘Walking by faith’ means that our thoughts are formed, our actions regulated and our lives molded by the Holy Scriptures**, because the Bible says that *“Faith comes from hearing the Message and the message is heard through the Word of Christ.”* Romans 10:17. It is from the Word of God alone that we can learn what is God’s relation to this world. The Word of God predicted exactly what we see and hear today. The prophecy of Jude is in course of fulfillment. We need to pay special attention to verse 8, *“In the very same way, these dreamers pollute their own bodies, reject authority and slander celestial beings.”* Yes, they slander almighty God, King of kings and Lord of lords. This is the age of irreverence against God and against authority. The result is that self-will is rapidly engulfing the earth like some gigantic tidal wave. There is a disappearance of parental authority followed by all kinds of evil and lawlessness. It is now against the law to teach about God and pray in the schools in America. It is against the law in Indonesia to conduct worship services in the schools.

Who is in control of the world today?

Jude 14 reminds us, ***”See the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of His holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”*** Some day these ‘unholy’ war fighters will stand before almighty God and give account of their evil deeds. Then there will be no army to take their sides. They will face God’s justice and His judgment.

In the Scriptures no room is left for uncertainty. They affirm, again and again, that God is on the throne of the universe; that He is directing all things after the counsel of His own will. God is ruling and reigning over all the works of His hands. The Bible affirms that God is almighty and that His will is irreversible. He is absolute sovereign in every realm of all His vast dominion. Only two alternatives are possible: God must either rule or be ruled; accomplish His own will or be derailed by His creatures.

The Bible says in Daniel 11:32, ***“The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits.”*** Without a doubt a world-crisis is upon us and everywhere people are alarmed. But God is not! **It is important to know our God!** He is never taken by surprise. God is never confronted by an unexpected emergency. He is the one who ***“works all things after the counsel of His own will”***, Ephesians 1:11. The world may be panic-stricken, but the word to the believer is **“Fear not”**. All things are subject to His immediate control. All things are moving according to His eternal purpose and ***“all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose.”***

As we turn to the Word we discover a fundamental principle, which must be applied to every problem and every situation. Instead of beginning with man and his world and working back to God, we must begin with God and work down to man. The first words in the Bible ***“In the beginning God”***. Because God is holy His anger burns against sin. Because God is righteous His judgments fall upon those who rebel against Him. Because God is faithful all the promises in His word will be fulfilled. Because God is omnipotent (all-powerful) none can successfully resist Him. Because God is omniscient, no problem can master Him or confuse Him. God is in charge. He has a plan that cannot be changed. God plainly declares to all of us ***“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither your ways My ways says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts.”***

Isaiah 55:8-9. What does God’s Word say?

“But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.”

Don’t loose faith but build yourselves up in your most holy faith!

One more advise from Jude 22, ***“Be merciful to those who doubt; snatch others from the fire and save them.”*** We must share the Gospel with people and introduce them to the Lord Jesus Christ who alone can save people from the flames of hellfire. So in the midst of all confusion, chaos and fear all around us we must share the Good News that Jesus saves! God is in control of the world and He also desires to control our lives. So submit to His control today and pray, ***“I surrender all, all to Jesus I surrender.”***