

Call to Obedience #403
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
www.schultze.org

Who Is in Control?

by Reimar Schultze

In times of difficulty, perplexity, tragedy or accident, many of us have heard it said, “God has everything under control,” or “God is going to work things out,” or “God is underneath it all.”

I know that these are well-meant words of comfort to the afflicted, but they often reflect an erroneous or shallow view of biblical theology. Tell those who had their tongues cut off, those who had their fingernails pulled out, those parents who saw their children decapitated or sexually abused, etc. that God is in control and you will see in their faces a picture of unmitigated unbelief. From the beginning of time to the end of time, **God has given man control over what is happening on the earth.**

God’s first words ever spoken to man were: *...Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth* (Genesis 1:28). These were God’s words before the fall of man into sin. They were reiterated after this precipitous fall by the words of the psalmist: *The heaven, even the heavens, are the LORD’S: but the earth hath he given to the children of men* (Psalm 115:16).

Whatever man does to the fish of the sea, the rivers and the soil, is the way it is going to be. If man clutters outer space with space junk, if man dies at fifty instead of seventy because he has abused his body, it is not God who is at fault; it is man. If God were controlling everything, thousands of species, now extinct, would still be alive.

It is the evil in the hearts of men, it is mismanagement on the side of man that has created havoc all over: environmentally, politically, socially and spiritually. Again, the one who has been given control over all this is man, who has eaten of the forbidden fruit and who is still eating forbidden fruits to satisfy his selfish pleasures. Do not expect any of your prayers to be answered if you eat any forbidden fruit. **The only cure for man to be delivered from the cancers of this life is holy living with holy praying**, such as is mentioned in the Chronicles: *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble*

themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land (2 Chronicles 7:14). Jesus also told us to pray: *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven* (Matthew 6:10). All that matters is His will. His will has to be prayed down.

The theology that “God is in control” is theological fatalism. It paints a picture of a cold-hearted God who is detached from the people He created for His glory. No, my friend, our God is a God *who so loved that He gave* and He will respond to prayer. The theology that God has everything under control gives birth to prayerless lives and prayerless churches.

Beloved, we have a God who is sensitive to all our needs and is ever seeking to bless us. Hence we have: *...Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him* (1 Corinthians 2:9). But again, the keys to these promises being fulfilled are in our hands if we are a holy people praying holy prayers and seeking nothing for ourselves, but all for the glory of our heavenly Father. And of course, this requires discipline: physical and spiritual discipline. Nothing is conquered by complacency, apathy or slothfulness. Discipline and obedience go hand-in-hand.

As the first event in human history is God giving the control of the happenings of this world over to man (Genesis 1:28), so the last fact of this age is man, through prayer, ushering in the end of this world praying: *...Even so, come, Lord Jesus* (Revelation 22:20). Jesus will come WHEN THE CHURCH HAS MADE HERSELF READY AND PRAYS FOR HIS COMING (Revelation 19:7). In the kingdom, the bridegroom comes at the invitation of the bride to take her to their marriage supper.

Therefore, you have the picture of man having been put in control from the first chapter to the last chapter of the Bible. Of course, this control is relative, finite, delegated and loaned. God remains the absolute monarch over the earth and His church through King Jesus. God continues to send the rain on the just and unjust alike, He continues to *...fly upon the wings of the wind* (Psalm 18:10), and He continually gives *...to the beast his food and to the young ravens which cry* (Psalm 147:9). Throughout, God maintains the prerogative to interfere or inject Himself into any circumstance of life, even without prayer. Yet, God seldom takes the control out of man’s hands. **He wants us to govern by commanding Him.** He says: *...Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me* (Isaiah 45:11) and He

also says: *...whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven* (Matthew 16:19). God wants everyone saved, but He will not act on it unless we engage Him in prayer: *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance...* (Psalm 2:8). Our part is asking and His part is the acting upon our requests. Yet, asking never makes any sense unless it is focused on the will of God.

So, if there is sickness, marital conflict, financial need, division or lukewarmness in the church, it is time for us take control by prayer, because: *...if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven* (Matthew 18:19). Isn't it marvelous that control over these things is in our hands? God wants the control there. That is what prayer is all about. Friend, if you pray much, you get much. If you pray little, you get little. James said: *...ye have not, because ye ask not* (James 4:2). And if you pray with two or three or more, you may receive even more. Can you see the importance of prayer meetings?

As Aaron and Hur prayed with Moses in the battle against the Amalekites (Exodus 17:8-12), you must pray with or for your pastor. Oh, how many admonitions are there in God's word that men ought always to pray? God sends the power if we ask Him. He sends the healing if we ask Him. He sends the conviction if we ask Him. He draws sinners if we ask Him. He sends the anointing if we ask Him. He protects us if we ask Him. He reveals His secrets to us if we ask Him. He heals broken hearts if we ask Him. He gives direction if we ask Him. He forgives us our sins and gives us our daily bread if we ask Him.

So, who is in control?

When you engage yourselves in this warfare of prayer, you come up against the devil (Ephesians 6:12), because when you pray, you bring in divine authority which threatens territory that the devil claims as his own. Indeed, prayerless men have abdicated their authority and therefore the devil has taken over. If you do not pray frequently, the devil has control over much or all of your life. Remember when the devil offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world, Jesus did not contest his claim over all these kingdoms. In fact, Jesus called him the *prince of the world* and Paul called him the *prince of the air*. Yet, you must not shutter nor fear the devil, for you on your knees have more power than he has. *...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much* (James 5:16). By these means you are more than a conqueror! By prayerlessness, you yield territory to the devil that is yours to claim; by praying, you keep it and enlarge it.

Dear ones, if God had everything under control, this would be an entirely different world. The church would be pure, spotless and without blemish. There would not be a weed in your garden nor would there be an unsanctified heart in the world. The world would be a paradise. If God had everything under control, Jesus would not have commanded us to pray: *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven* (Matthew 6:10). He would not have said: *...that men ought always to pray, and not to faint* (Luke 18:1).

Finally, look at Solomon's prayer in the temple court and be inspired by his confidence: *O LORD God of Israel... When the heaven is shut up and there is no rain... If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting, or mildew, locusts, or caterpillars; if their enemies besiege them... Then what prayer or what supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every one shall know his own sore and his own grief, and shall spread forth his hands in this house: Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways...* (2 Chronicles 6:14, 26-30).

"If you pray...; if you ask...; if you bind...; if you loose..." will all make sense once you realize that God has placed so much under your control. Give yourself to much prayer for by this, through Christ, you will become a force to change this troubled world and prepare the bride for the marriage feast of the Lamb.

Always remember, you are not helpless in the face of troubles, *but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds* (2 Corinthians 10:4).

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