

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY By Ben M. Bogard

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"The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth" (Rev. 19:6).

I. This text is a prophecy of the final glorious triumph of the Lord. The final success of our cause, and the final triumph of God over evil is the optimistic note in the Bible. Appearances are discouraging. The devil is supreme in the affections of the people now, but the devil will one day be bound and the Lord's reign will be undisputed.

The Lord is coming to take the world for Himself. Matthew 25:31: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats."

II. There is a sense in which the Lord is sovereign now. All the powers of evil operate by His permission, and all earthly rulers rule by His permission. When He has wrought His purpose with them they shall cease. Just why God permits evil and evil doers is beyond our comprehension, but He has set the limit for all evil forces. Thus far they can go and no further. Matthew 8:28-29: "There met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"

Earthly kings rule by God's permission. Proverbs 8:15-16: "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." God has decreed civil government, and this means that some must be in authority. Those who hold positions of power should recognize God and if they fail to do so, their downfall is certain. When Herod forgot God and arrogated to himself divine power he was stricken by the angel of God and was eaten of worms. (Acts 12:21-23). The greater the height the worse the fall. So with Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar. (Dan. 4th and 5th chapters.) These devils recognized the Lord and His power over them and they realized that their time was short, and that they must be cast into torment. Even the devils were subject to the Lord. Why does not God kill the devils? Such a question is prying into the hidden mysteries of the Lord. When they shall have served God's providential purpose they will be cast down into Hell. Those who serve the devil are serving only a temporary ruler whose reign must cease and his kingdom come to ruin. The pleasures of sin are but for a season, and the season will be wonderfully short. Those who serve God may suffer some inconvenience for a time, but their prosperity will be eternal.

III. The Lord is the Sovereign of His people. He is our BISHOP. We acknowledge no other ruler in spiritual affairs. We owe allegiance to God first. Acts 5:29: "We ought to obey God rather than man." These words of Peter clearly declare our attitude. Some people obey their wives or their husbands or their parents or their children, in order to have united families. A true child of God would rather die than to betray his Lord in any such manner. It is related in Menzel's History of Germany, that a priest came to the king (Theodorich) and in order to please him proposed to adopt the religion of the king. The king ordered the priest to be beheaded, because if "he was a traitor to the King of kings, he would be a traitor to Theodorich." If all such traitors were put to death now we should need more undertakers to bury the dead. The man who shapes his creed to suit the company he is in is a traitor to God.

IV. We are taught to pray for the triumph of the Lord's Kingdom. In the Lord's model prayer we are taught to say, "Thy Kingdom come." This does not mean for us to ask that the kingdom come into

existence, but it means that we want the kingdom to come in triumph. It is already in existence, but will triumph when the Lord descends from Heaven with a shout. "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly" (Baptist and Commoner, September 20, 1922).

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