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## God's Tests

By David Servant

### EIGHT

## God's Sovereignty and Our Authority

Let's look further into the concept of God's restraining power over the devil. This is a subject that has been greatly misunderstood in some circles of the Church. Until we see that God is sovereign, we will never grow to our full stature in Christ. If we think, for example, that God's hands are tied and that He no longer can do anything because He has given all His authority to the church, then we will fail to see His hand in our daily lives. His training process will go unnoticed by us.

Let's go back to the beginning, even before humanity was created. I don't think anyone would argue that God had all power and authority at that time. We know that, on at least one occasion, someone tried to usurp God's authority, but he was quickly dealt with—Jesus said he saw Satan “fall from heaven like lightning” (Luke 10:18).

Then God created the earth and placed Adam on it. He gave Adam certain authority, but we learn from the Bible that Adam's authority was limited. God told him, “fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Gen. 1:28). Adam received authority from God, but he obviously never received absolute sovereignty over the earth. He couldn't control the weather, for example. Essentially, God only gave Adam authority to rule over the fish, birds, and animals. He still had to answer to God. Adam was God's under-ruler, as plainly indicated by the fact that God judged him when he sinned. Adam couldn't rule over God and kick Him out of the garden.

The reason I make that point is because some erroneously think that when Adam sinned, somehow Satan was able to usurp the authority with which Adam originally was entrusted. (We'll examine the validity of that idea later on.) Some have even gone so far to say that God has no authority here, and therefore, He *can't do anything* on the earth unless we “give Him permission” by asking Him. Supposedly, they say, God's hands are completely tied because Adam gave his authority to Satan.

The Bible never states, however, that God gave Adam all authority or sovereignty over the earth. Therefore, *if* Satan did actually gain what Adam had, then Satan has never had all authority or sovereignty either. *If* Satan has Adam's authority, then, just as Adam was under God's authority, so too, Satan is under God's authority.

## An Old Question Answered

This should help us to better answer the age-old theological question: “If God knows what we need even before we ask Him, why does He require that we ask Him; why doesn’t He just give us what we need?”

To some non-sovereignists, the answer is, “Because when Adam fell, he gave his authority to Satan, and God has no authority to act on this earth unless someone on this earth asks Him to do so.” The non-sovereignist views God as dependent upon man.

One who is biblically balanced, however, has a different answer. He understands, as we learned previously, that the primary lesson God was trying to teach Israel during all their trials in the wilderness was that “man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Deut. 8:3). In other words, God was trying to teach His people to look to Him for everything, that He was their source, that they needed Him desperately. God is trying to teach us that same lesson.

Why does God require us to ask for that which He already knows we need? Simply because we need to learn what Israel learned—to look to God as our source for everything. Self-sufficiency is nothing but pride, and God hates pride.

Can you see the danger in the “God’s hands are tied, and unless we ask Him, He can do nothing” theology? It leaves us with the impression that God is dependent upon us, rather than with the understanding of what God is *actually* trying to teach us—that we are dependent upon Him. One view makes us proud, the other makes us humble.

## God’s Self-Limitation

It is true that God is somewhat limited, but only because He has limited Himself. For example, can God save a person—even if that person has no faith? No God *can’t*—or else He would violate His own Word.

Here then is the balance. Some have observed that God, in His sovereignty, has to some degree limited Himself by the faith of human beings. That concept, however, needs to be balanced with a biblical understanding of God’s sovereignty.

Unfortunately some have taken the concept of God’s self-limitation to an extreme, propagating the idea that poor God can no longer do anything unless someone uses his faith. God is supposedly helpless without us. Each time God does something apart from a response to faith, however, that theory is disproved.

The theory that God’s hands are tied from doing anything because of Adam’s fall is really an insult to the Lord. It is equivalent to saying that before God created humanity, He was too stupid to see what was going to happen, and so He got Himself into a big mess. The Bible, however, plainly teaches that God knew humanity would fall, and that He, in fact, planned for the redemption of humanity even before He created us (see Matt. 25:34; Acts 2:2-23; 4:27-28; 1 Cor. 2:7-8; Eph. 3:8-11; 2 Tim. 1:8-10; Rev. 13:8).

We must have a biblically-balanced understanding of the subject of God’s sovereignty and how it relates to our God-given authority over Satan. Unless God was and is sovereign over the devil, how could He ever have *given* us authority over the devil in our own lives?

Some claim that Jesus could only give people authority over Satan after His resurrection—when He “got back what Adam lost.” Jesus, however, gave His disciples authority over Satan and demons *before* His resurrection:

And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons....And He said to them...“Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and *over all the power of the enemy*, and nothing shall injure you” (Luke 9:1; 10:18-19, emphasis added).

Quite obviously, Jesus was sovereign over Satan before the fall, after the fall, before the cross, and after the cross. God has shared some of His authority with the church, and the church should be exercising its God-given authority over Satan. Even if the church fails to exercise its authority, however, God will continue to exercise the portion of His authority which He has not given to the church. You can count on that!

### **God's Sovereignty Over Human Government**

Let's consider a few scriptures that will give us some insight into the subject of God's sovereignty over the earth. First, we'll deal with the area of human government. Some have erroneously thought that the devil has control over every earthly government and that God has no influence whatsoever, but that is entirely untrue.

The first two scriptures we will examine are prime examples from the book of Acts. The setting for the first scripture occurs shortly after Peter and John had been tried and threatened by the Sanhedrin. They returned to the other believers, and along with the entire church prayed,

“For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do *whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur*”(Acts 4:27-28, emphasis added).

Surely the disciples didn't believe that God inspired Herod, Pilate, and the Jews to play their particular parts in the events that led to the crucifixion of Jesus. They could, however, see that God *permitted* each one to do what he did in order to fulfill God's preordained plan for the sacrifice of Christ. Jesus Himself acknowledged this fact when He was questioned by Pilate. When Pilate asked Him, “Do you not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?” Jesus replied, “You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above...” (John 19:10-11). Pilate was governor only because God had sovereignly permitted him to be governor.

The apostle Paul, in his sermon on Mars Hill in Athens, endorsed God's sovereignty over human governments when he said: “And He [God] made from one, every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, *having determined their appointed times, and the boundaries of their habitation*, that they should seek God” (Acts 17:26-27, emphasis added). God predetermined the histories of the nations at least to some degree.

In the Old Testament, the prophet Daniel said of God, “It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings” (Dan 2:21).

Daniel later informed Nebuchadnezzar, proud king of Babylon, that he would lose his mind until he recognized “that the Most High is *ruler over the realm of mankind*, and bestows it on whomever He wishes” (Dan. 4:25, emphasis added).

Clearly, God's sovereign hand plays a part in the rise and fall of earthly rulers and kings. Notice Daniel said that *God* was “ruler over the realm of mankind,” not Satan.

### **Further Proof**

In Acts 12:20-23, we find Herod delivering an address to the people of Tyre and Sidon. His enthusiastic audience continually cried out during his speech, “The voice of a god and not of a man!” What happened next? “And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died” (Acts 12:23). Thus ended Herod's reign, and I don't think anyone would say that it was the devil who killed him because the Bible plainly stated it was an angel of the Lord. Another king had fallen at the decree of God.

Without apology, Paul declared in Romans 13:1-2, “Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority *except from God, and those which*

*exist are established by God.* Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God” (Rom. 13:1-2, emphasis added). From studying other scriptures we know that there is a valid place for civil disobedience, but my main point here is that no government on the earth exists apart from God’s permission. In fact, Paul goes further than that and says that every government is “*established by God.*” That means even evil governments. It is abundantly clear from numerous scriptures that God sometimes uses corrupt and evil leaders as a means of His discipline or judgment upon deserving people. If you’ve ever read the Old Testament you know that.

Am I saying that God motivates evil rulers to be evil? Certainly not. It is Satan who motivates evil rulers. On the other hand, God permits evil rulers to arise, and He will use them to fulfill His divine purposes. God used evil Pharaoh, evil Herod, and evil Pilate to fulfill His divine plans, and the Bible is replete with further proofs of this same truth. God is using evil rulers even today.

Some years ago, I ministered in a pastors’ seminar in Nicaragua. At that time, the South American nation was experiencing civil war as the U.S.-backed contras were trying to overthrow the Marxist Sandanista government. I remember asking a pastor who had lived in Nicaragua all his life if he would rather live under the former government, or under the Sandanista government. He expressed that under the former government, the economy had been doing well and times were much better. When I questioned him about the present situation, I learned that inflation was running at an incredible 22,000 percent, and hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans had fled their homeland to look for a better life elsewhere.

Then this Nicaraguan pastor made an incredible statement. He said he would rather live under the Sandanista government because, in his words, “Before the Sandanistas, nobody was coming to the Lord. Since the Sandanistas have come into power, everything has gotten worse, but now many people have opened their hearts to the Lord and the churches are growing!”

You can see that God can use even ungodly leaders to bring people to repentance. Isn’t that essentially the story of the history of the nation of Israel? A cursory reading of the book of Judges makes that clear.

Isn’t God a God of love? Yes He is, and if He sees that a nation is heading for hell, He may allow temporal troubles in order to get people’s attention so they will wake up to their need for God, repent, and seek Him.

God may permit small calamities in hopes that sinful people will escape eternal destruction. That is love! God is also a God of judgment (as when Herod was eaten by worms and when Pharaoh’s army was drowned in the Red Sea). When God’s mercy is repeatedly spurned, eventually His judgment comes. Down through the ages, God has brought judgment by means of evil kings and leaders to numerous nations who have spurned His mercy—including Israel.

Read what God Himself said through Jeremiah concerning how He personally deals with nations:

“At one moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to uproot, to pull down, or to destroy it. If that nation which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent concerning the calamity I planned to bring on it. Or at another moment I might speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom to build up or to plant it, if it does evil in My sight by not obeying My voice, then I will think better of the good with which I had promised to bless it” (Jer. 18:7-10).

You can see that when someone argues against the sovereignty of God, He is arguing against God Himself, because God believes it.

We need a balanced understanding of what God is permitting and accomplishing and what Satan is doing. We must have a balanced understanding of God’s love *and* His holiness. The Bible says that God is love but it also says He is a consuming fire (see 1

John 4:8; Heb. 12:29). Paul wrote, “Behold then the kindness and *severity* of God” (Rom 11:22, emphasis added).

Because God is sovereignly in control of human governments, does that mean we should just sit back and assume that whatever happens in our government is God’s ordained will? No, in both Old and New Testaments, we are admonished to pray for our leaders (see Jer. 29:7; 1 Tim. 2:1-4). Once again, this teaches us to look to God for everything—even for good government. God will do things in our government because we ask Him. That’s why we should be praying for our leaders. In addition, we can ask for God’s mercy upon our ungodly nation, and God will give everyone more time to repent. Our prayers can forestall His judgment.

### **God’s Sovereignty and Natural Disasters**

What about natural disasters? Are they the work of God or the devil?

Before the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, I traveled into Romania for a ten day ministry-trip. In studying about that country in preparation for my trip, I came across a statement concerning Romania in the popular prayer guide, *Operation World*, by Patrick Johnstone. He stated: “The rate of conversions has noticeably increased since the severe earthquake in 1977.”

Now think about that. Romanians had become more receptive to the gospel since an earthquake. Was it God or the devil who caused that earthquake?

At one time I would have said that it was undoubtedly the work of Satan, and God had no sovereign part in it at all. What gave Satan the right to cause an earthquake? I had the answer: Because Adam gave Satan his authority as god of this world.

That, however, doesn’t answer nearly as many questions as it raises. If it was the exclusive work of Satan because he has authority over the earth, then why doesn’t Satan cause earthquakes all over the world, in every city? Why doesn’t he kill us all by earthquakes? If it was the exclusive work of Satan (apart from God’s sovereignty), why wouldn’t Satan target cities full of people who are serving the Lord rather than cities full of people who are atheists? (If you answer that last question with, “Because God won’t permit Satan to send earthquakes to cities where people are serving the Lord,” then you’ve just admitted to believing in God’s restraining power over Satan.)

What does the Bible say? Scripture records several incidents when God caused earthquakes because He was judging wicked people. Isaiah warned Jerusalem’s enemies: “From the Lord of hosts you will be punished with thunder and *earthquake* and loud noise” (Isaiah 29:6, emphasis added). During the rebellion of Korah recorded in Numbers 16, the earth opened up and swallowed an entire group of sinful people. In the book of Revelation, at least five different earthquakes are attributed to God’s judgment. In fact, the last one will be the greatest earthquake the world has ever seen (see Rev. 16:18-20).

God is a God of judgment as well as a God of love. In fact, because God is love, He *must* also be a God of judgment, simply because love is fair and just. God must react when sinful, selfish acts are committed, or else He is not loving at all.

Would the God of judgment who incarcerates people in hell for eternity never judge evil people on earth by means of an earthquake or some other natural disaster? I find that hard to believe, especially when the Bible is full of scriptures that plainly state God sometimes sends judgment through war, famine, and pestilence (e.g. Jer. 14:1-12; 27:8).

Those who deny God’s use of natural calamities have developed an unbalanced view of God. In an attempt to bring the church into a more balanced view of God’s love, some have consequently caused people to misunderstand God’s judgment.

Does Satan cause all earthquakes? The earth quaked when God came down on Mt. Sinai (see Ps. 68:7-8). Surely that wasn’t the work of the devil. There was an earthquake when Jesus cried out from the cross, “It is finished!” (Matt. 27:51). Was that the work of Satan? An earthquake also occurred when Jesus was resurrected (see Matt. 28:2). Did Satan cause that one? I don’t think so.

What about the earthquake in the Philippian jail where Paul and Silas were imprisoned? No one was killed, everyone was released, and a few were saved as a result. Looks like the hand of God to me. (See Acts 16:22-34; Also see 1 Sam. 14:15, Is. 5:25, Jer. 10:10, and Acts 4:31, for a few other examples of earthquakes which God caused.)

If we have an unbalanced understanding of God's sovereignty and think God can do nothing on the earth because the church has all authority, where does that lead us? To believe that every earthquake and natural disaster is from Satan—when the Bible clearly states they are not.

### **What Jesus Had to Say on the Subject**

Along these same lines, Jesus mentioned two contemporary tragedies in one of His sermons recorded in Luke's Gospel:

Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to him about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And He answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than the other Galileans, because they suffered this fate? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? I tell you, no, but, unless you repent, you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:1-5).

Notice that Jesus did not, after citing those two tragedies, say, "Now those things were the work of the devil because God is a God of love." Rather, Jesus used those two tragedies to remind the survivors that they were no better than the ones who perished, and unless they repented, they would suffer a similar fate. At present they were being warned of God's judgment. For the time being they were getting by on God's mercy.

About forty years later, however, judgment did come upon the Jews and Jerusalem in the form of a holocaust by Roman armies in 70 A.D. That event was clearly a result of God's sovereign judgment upon them (according to Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24).

I'm not saying that God inspired Pilate to murder those Galileans or that the falling of the tower of Siloam was an act of God. Pilate acted on his own volition, and perhaps human error was to blame for the tower's collapse. But God obviously *permitted* both tragedies. Additionally, no one can argue that those who perished weren't deserving of death, or else he must argue against Jesus.

Furthermore, I'm not saying that every tragedy is permitted by God because He is judging wicked people. I am saying that we are unbalanced when we believe that no tragedy ever occurs because of God's judgment.

How many modern preachers, if they had lived during Jesus' time, would have commented differently than Jesus did concerning those two above-mentioned tragedies? How many would have preached, "That was the work of the devil, because God is love"? Many would have, because I've heard them say similar words as they explain modern tragedies to their followers.

I recently read about a preacher who ministered to some "angry and confused" hurricane victims who "blamed God for the devastation." This particular preacher told his confused and angry audience that it was Satan, not God, who caused the hurricane. As a result, some "expressed a desire to learn more about the *true* nature of God."

It's too bad Jesus didn't know about "God's true nature" when He warned His confused audience of their need to repent or perish! Had that modern-day preacher studied his Bible, he would have told his confused and angry audience something more like, "You self-righteous people think you deserve better treatment, but God declares you are sinners, and He, whom Jesus said is 'Lord of heaven and earth,' is warning you that He is a holy and wrathful God. God loves you so much He sent Jesus to die for you so

you could escape His *eternal* wrath. He is now calling you to repent and receive forgiveness of your sins through the sacrificial death of the Son of God. If you don't, you will one day experience not just a sampling, but a full dose of God's eternal wrath in hell. So repent of your wickedness, believe in Him, and He will forgive you of all your sins and receive you as His very own children."

If we are honest with what the Scriptures say, any person who is not obeying God is worthy of God's judgment. In the two tragic examples that Jesus mentioned, it is clear that the ones who died got what they deserved, and the ones who survived *didn't* get what they deserved—they were mercifully being given more time to repent. No unsaved person has any promise of being shown any more mercy than he has already been granted, and the fact that he has lived as long as he has is a testimony to God's great mercy.

In the next few chapters, we will look more closely at the subject of God's judgment.

Incidentally, in the wake of the terrible earthquake in former Soviet Armenia in late 1988, a wonderful revival was reported. Some villages, which formerly had no true Christian witness, now have thriving congregations. As of this writing (1993), that revival continues. As in Romania, there is now a greater receptivity to God in Armenia after an earthquake.

Did you know that the ruthless massacre of demonstrating Chinese students in Tiananmen Square (June 4, 1989) proved to be the catalyst in an unprecedented revival among Chinese students? It has been reported that soon after, thousands openly turned to Christ. The reason? The traditional view that man is basically good, embraced by Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Maoism, was no longer believable to those who witnessed the barbarous slaughter of their peers. If man is basically evil, as the Bible says he is, then he needs a Redeemer, just as the Bible also says. Praise God that so many Chinese students are discovering the Redeemer whom God sent to die for our sins.

Again, I'm not in any way implying that God inspired the Chinese government to order the slaughter of the students in Tiananmen Square, but God did permit it. God used something evil and turned it around for good.

### **Manmade Suffering**

Quite obviously, much of the suffering in the world today is manmade. For example, much of India's extreme poverty can be blamed on Hinduism. Because the Hindus believe in reincarnation, it is considered immoral to kill any animals, and consequently, rats eat tons of grain annually that could feed multitudes of hungry people. If India would embrace Christianity, fewer of their people would starve because they could eat the cows, chickens, and goats that God intended for them to eat. In addition, the rodents could be exterminated, making more grain available to the people.

Many famines in the world today are a result of political strife, misuse of land, or warped economic systems. Disobedience to God's laws always brings suffering. Perhaps these situations could be better referred to as God's passive judgment rather than His active judgment.

### **When Tragedy Happens to Christians**

What about Christians who experience tragedies? The answer to that question is not quite as simple, and, unfortunately, the truth has been clouded by some unscriptural teachings.

To answer that question, we must first determine what kinds of tragedies we are talking about and what kind of Christian is experiencing a tragedy. If we are talking about a Christian who is in disobedience, then we are talking about a Christian who, unless he repents during the time he is being shown mercy, is in danger of experiencing God's discipline. Paul referred to those Christians in his first letter to the Corinthians, stating

that some of them were sick—and some had even died—because of God’s discipline or judgment.<sup>1</sup> If you are a disobedient believer, I encourage you to repent.

If we are talking about tragedy striking an obedient believer, then we need to classify certain kinds of tragedies. Many obedient believers have suffered persecution for their faith to the point of torture and martyrdom. That is certainly a tragedy from a human standpoint, but it is not one from which we are promised deliverance. (The Bible, in fact, promises us that we will be persecuted; see 2 Tim. 3:12.) Church tradition states that every one of the apostles died for his faith. Although the apostle John may be an exception, he was still exiled and severely persecuted.

Millions of Christians have been martyred, and many more have suffered severe persecution. There are times when God has miraculously delivered His people, but many times He has not. That is determined by the sovereign will of God. We will further examine the subject of the persecutions of Christians in a later chapter.

Another kind of tragedy that obedient believers have suffered are long-term sicknesses and diseases. To die of cancer is certainly a tragedy. We have promises in Scripture, however, concerning sickness and disease, and God has promised to heal us if we will obey and believe. I don’t have the space to make a lengthy argument for my controversial claim here, but if you want to study this subject further, I encourage you to read a book I’ve written titled, *The Case for Divine Healing*. Jesus never turned away anyone who came to Him for healing, and one tenth of all that was written about Him in the four Gospels concerns His healing ministry.

It is clear from Scripture that sickness is in a special class all by itself when it comes to suffering. For example, James wrote:

Is anyone among you *suffering*? Let him pray....Is anyone among you *sick*? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick (Jas. 5:13-14, emphasis added).

James clearly differentiated between general suffering and suffering sickness. It is unfortunate that some teachers have taken scriptures that apply only to Christians suffering persecution and have erroneously tried to apply them to Christians suffering sickness. Sickness is something that we have a promise for; persecution is a different case.

What about calamities, wars, and natural disasters, as far as the obedient believer is concerned? Certain scriptures encourage us to believe that no calamity, war, or natural disaster that is permitted because of God’s judgment will fall upon an obedient believer. For example, when Jerusalem was destroyed and hundreds of thousands perished during the Roman holocaust of 70 A.D., there was not one obedient believer in the city because Jesus had pre-warned them so they could escape (see Luke 21:20-24). Furthermore, Noah and his family were saved during the great flood, and all the children of Israel were protected in the land of Goshen when God sent the plagues upon Egypt.

The Bible provides other encouraging examples of God’s pre-warning believers of coming calamities in order that they might avoid them. For example, in Acts chapter 11, we have record of a prophecy given by Agabus warning of a soon-coming famine, which took place during the reign of Claudius. Consequently, the brethren in Antioch (where Agabus delivered his prophecy) sent a contribution “for the relief of the brethren living in Judea” (Acts 11:29).

When Paul was on a ship that was transporting him to Rome, God tried to warn the captain of the ship through Paul that they would lose their ship and lives in a great storm,

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<sup>1</sup> I use the word “discipline” as meaning “less severe” and the word “judgment” to mean “more severe,” although the Bible really doesn’t make that distinction in 1 Cor. 11:27-32.

but the sailors didn't listen. As a result, they suffered the consequences—although God did mercifully protect the lives of everyone on board (see Acts 27:9-26).

Let me give you an example of God's protection in my own life. When I was a young Christian many years ago, I had a habit of picking up almost every hitchhiker along the road so I could practice sharing the gospel with a captive audience. One day, however, when I was driving on an interstate highway through a certain city, I heard what seemed to be an audible voice say to me: "Man with a beard—don't pick him up." Within a half a minute, I drove around a bend, and there underneath an underpass was a man with his thumb out, and he had a beard. I've always wondered what would have happened if I had picked him up. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would "show us things to come" (John 16:13).

Demos Shakarian, founder of the Full Gospel Businessmen International, tells in his biography of how God warned his Armenian grandfather and fellow Christians of a coming holocaust in Armenia by means of an illiterate "boy-prophet." Many of the Pentecostal Christians fled the country, and in 1914, one and a half million Armenians died at the hand of the Turks.<sup>2</sup> No obedient Christian suffered in that tragedy.

If we will be obedient and remain sensitive to God's guidance, we too can expect to be warned concerning future calamities. God loves His children.

I'm sure I have not answered every question that you might have. As I confessed in the introduction to this book, I certainly don't have all the answers, but I want to give you as many as I've found in the Scriptures. Understanding everything on the subject of God's sovereignty is beyond our finite comprehension.

Primarily, I want you to see that God is still at work in the earth. His hands are not tied as some have erroneously thought. In addition, I want you to have a balanced understanding of God's love and His holy judgment, His sovereignty, His restraining power over Satan, Satan's limited authority, and your authority over Satan. I hope I have succeeded. If not, keep reading; there's more to come.

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<sup>2</sup> See *The Happiest People on Earth*, pp. 20-22.