



~ Thought For The Day ~

~gathering from the 4 winds~

"come just as you are"

Refresh, Restore, Rebuild = Healing

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Worship Music

[You Are I Am-Mercy Me](#)

[Don't Give Up On Me-Mercy Me](#)

[To Whom It May Concern-Mercy Me](#)

Prayer

Lord, I ask You to give me Your heart for brothers and sisters who are living in sin. Forgive me for the times I have been insensitive to the dangerous nature of sin. Help me to be passionate and fervent in prayer for them and to keep praying for them until their deliverance is complete and they are fully restored. Help me consider the way I would want others to pray for me if I were in the same situation. Let me always remember to love my neighbor, that I do not have to agree with them if they are sinning but I am to love them and pray for them. In Jesus' name. Amen....

Sparkling Gems from the Greek.

Video's / New Information/ Prayer Requests

Matthew 24:36 (AMP)

36 But of that [exact] day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

" How To Think About Sin"

Oswald Chambers

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1 And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do, 2 That the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon. 3 And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. 4 And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: 5 Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. 6 But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: 7 Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people: 8 And at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house? 9 And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil. 10 And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD, and the king's house, 11 (Now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees, and with gold, according to all his desire,) that then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. 12 And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they pleased him not. 13 And he said, What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Cabul unto this day. 14 And Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold. 15 And this is the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised; for to build the house of the LORD, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer. 16 For Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife. 17 And Solomon built Gezer, and Bethoron the nether, 18 And Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land, 19 And all the cities of store that Solomon had, and cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen, and that which Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion. 20 And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which were not of the children of Israel, 21 Their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bondservice unto this day. 22 But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen: but they were men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his captains, and rulers of his chariots, and his horsemen. 23 These were the chief of the officers that were over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, which bare rule over the people that wrought in the work. 24 But Pharaoh's daughter came up out of the city of David unto her house which Solomon had built for her: then did he build Millo. 25 And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto the LORD, and he burnt incense upon the altar that was before the LORD. So he finished the house. 26 And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Eziongeber, which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom. 27 And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. 28 And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to king Solomon.

First Kings chapter nine as we begin our study in the Word this evening.

At the beginning of Solomon's reign, the Lord appeared unto him while he was in Gibeon, there offering sacrifices unto God. And the Lord basically said to Solomon, "Ask me whatever you want."

So Solomon asked that the Lord would give him wisdom and understanding that he might govern over this glorious people of God. And God was pleased with the request that Solomon made. Because he didn't ask for riches, or the life of his enemies, or for fame, the Lord said, "Because you have asked that you might just have wisdom and understanding, I'm going to give you what you have asked. But I'm going to give you even more than that. I'm going to give you honor and fame and riches and all in abundance."

So as we get to the ninth chapter, we find the Lord appearing to Solomon the second time. Solomon has now completed the temple, which took him seven years to build and he has also completed his own palace, which took him thirteen years to build. So the twenty-year building project is over and the Lord now is appearing unto Solomon who has, of course, gained in fame and stature and notoriety through the world for his marvelous wisdom and the glories of the kingdom that he has established.

And so when he was finished the building,

The LORD came to him the second time, even as he appeared to him in Gibeon. And the LORD said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, which you have made before me: and I have hallowed this house, which you have built, to put my name there for ever; and my eyes and my heart shall be there perpetually (1Ki 9:2-3).

Now the Lord is referring to the prayer of dedication of Solomon that we studied last week in the eighth chapter. After he finished the temple, he prayed this glorious prayer of dedication as he asked the Lord to keep His eye upon this house continually. And if the people would get into trouble, if there would be plagues in the land, if there would be a war, if they were taken captives, whatever, then as the people would pray and seek the Lord in this house, that the Lord would hear and answer and meet their needs.

And so the Lord answers Solomon concerning the prayer of dedication and He acknowledges the fact that He has heard his prayer.

And the Lord said, If you will walk before me, as David your father walked, in the integrity of heart, and uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and you will keep my statutes and my judgments: Then I will establish the throne of your kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David your father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel (1Ki 9:4-5).

Again I would like to point out the fact that it is a conditional promise. "If thou will walk before me as David your father did, then I will establish your throne forever." It was a conditional promise of God, which they failed to keep the condition. Thus God was not obligated to keep the promise.

Now as I pointed out, the group known as British Israelites, those who tried to identify the Anglo-Saxon races as the ten lost tribes of Israel, they made a big point that God made a perpetual covenant with David that there would never cease one from his family sitting upon the throne. And it is their premise that the queen of England today is a direct descendant of David because God kept His promise. And that Jeremiah had slipped out of Israel at the time of the Babylonian captivity, took one of the princes to Egypt and then later went to England and established a colony there in England and that the Anglo-Saxon people are in reality a part of the ten lost tribes of Israel. And they have a lot of, you know, things that they go through to try to prove their points. But God's promise to Solomon was a conditional promise. The conditions, which of course, Solomon failed to keep.

The Lord said,

But if [here again, if] ye shall turn from following me, or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among the people: And at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss; and they'll say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house? And they shall answer, Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and they have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them this evil (1Ki 9:6-9).

So the conditional promise; "if you'll obey Me, if you'll follow Me, then there'll never cease one from your family sitting upon the throne. But if you or your children forsake Me, then Israel will be actually cut out of the land." So because they did forsake the Lord, they were cut out of the land. And God kept His word that He gave to Solomon.

Now I would like to just point out one thing at this point, and that is, a lot of times there come warnings from the Lord to us by various means. And quite often when God speaks, we think, "Oh, that's not necessary to talk to me about that, Lord, you know that's one area where I just don't have any problem." But let me suggest whenever God speaks to you about any area of your life, you listen carefully because God doesn't waste words. And if He talks to you about some issue in your life, you can be sure that's the issue where you're going to be facing problems down the road.

Now I'm sure that here is Solomon, he has just dedicated the temple, it's been a very moving experience. They'll had all kinds of sacrifices. Everybody is rejoicing and worshipping the Lord, praising Jehovah, and just, it's a glorious time of worship and exultation. And now the Lord comes and Solomon is there and has prayed. And now the Lord is speaking and the Lord says, "Solomon, if you will follow Me and all, then I will establish your throne. But if you forsake Me and you start to worship other gods," and I'm sure at this point Solomon is saying, "Oh, Lord, You don't need to tell me about that. Oh, Lord, how could I ever do that?" You know. And yet it is the very thing. And all the way through the Scriptures, it is interesting how that the Lord always seems to warn people in those areas where they are going to be tested and tried further down the road.

So pay attention when God speaks to you no matter how remote it may seem at that minute that you would ever be tempted or have problems at that area. No matter how confident you may be in that particular area, if God starts to talk to you about some particular area of your life, you be careful and listen. The Bible says, "Take heed when you think you stand lest you fall" (I Corinthians 10:12).

For you see, where I am confident, and I think, "Well, I've got that wired, I don't have to worry about this area," is an area where I'm prone to trust in myself. I'm prone to be self-reliant in those areas because I think, "Well, that's something that I really am strong in that area. Paul said, "when I am strong, then I am weak" and "I will glory in my weaknesses, that the power of God might be revealed in me" (2 Corinthians 12:9). So usually Satan will not trip us up in our weak points because in those points, we know that we have to depend upon the Lord. It's quite often a person falls in that area where he has great confidence. He feels very strong and very confident in this particular area. And that is the area where Satan so often trips us up. So listen when God talks to you no matter how it may seem unnecessary to you at the particular moment. The Lord knows what He's talking about.

Now it came to pass after the time that he had built all of the house and so forth, Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished him with all of the cedar trees and with gold, according to all of his desire. And so Solomon gave to him twenty cities of the area of the upper Galilee and around the Sea of Galilee. He gave to as just sort of a gift twenty cities in that beautiful area of the Galilee, in the upper Galilee.

And Hiram came and looked at the cities; and he was displeased with them (1Ki 9:12).

Now I don't understand why, it's such a beautiful area, and yet Hiram was displeased with the cities that Solomon gave him.

He says, What are these cities that you have given to me, my brother? And he called them Cabul (1Ki 9:13).

Or displeasing, "Cabul". It's not pleasing.

So Hiram sent to the king sixty talents of gold. And this is the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised; to build the house of the LORD, and his own house, the wall of Jerusalem, he built the cities of Hazor, Millo, Megiddo, Gezer (1Ki 9:14-15).

For his father-in-law actually to give him a present. Sent his troops up, captured Gezer and then gave it to Solomon as a present.

And it tells of the cities that Solomon established and built. The cities to store all of his goods, the horses, the chariots, and all. Remember he had forty thousand horses.

And so he made slaves of all of the remnant of the people who lived in the land before the children of Israel came in. But of the Israelites, he did not make slaves. And so Solomon then built the Pharaoh's daughter a special city. She evidently didn't care too much for Jerusalem so he built a city for her, the city of Millo.

And three times in a year (1Ki 9:25).

That would be the great feast days.

Solomon offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar which he built before the LORD. And Solomon made [developed] a navy [and he sort of based the navy down] in the area of Elath (1Ki 9:25-26).

And the navy would head on down to Africa where they would collect gold and bring it back and Solomon made gold as just everything around Israel. It became just the golden capital of the world.

Silver, it says, was as common as rock. He didn't really put much value into silver. He really had a thing for gold and so he gathered gold from all over and brought it into the land. (Through The Bible Series C-2000; Chuck Smith; 1979-1986; Commentaries Through The Bible)



"Knowledge Of The Holy" AW Tozer

CHAPTER 21; The Holiness of God

Glory be to God on high. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, for Thy great glory. Lord, I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me which I knew not. I heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee and I abhor myself in dust and ashes. O Lord, I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.

But while I was musing the fire burned. Lord, I must speak of Thee, lest by my silence I offend against the generation of Thy children. Behold, Thou has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the mighty. O Lord, forsake me not. Let me show forth Thy strength unto this generation and Thy power to everyone that is to come. Raise up prophets and seers in Thy Church who shall magnify Thy glory and through Thine almighty Spirit restore to Thy people the knowledge of the holy. Amen.

The moral shock suffered by us through our mighty break with the high will of heaven has left us all with a permanent trauma affecting every part of our nature. There is disease both in ourselves and in our environment.

The sudden realization of his personal depravity came like a stroke from heaven upon the trembling heart of Isaiah at the moment when he had his revolutionary vision of the holiness of God. His pain-filled cry, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts," expresses the feeling of every man who has discovered himself under his disguises and has been confronted with an inward sight of the holy whiteness that is God. Such an experience cannot but be emotionally violent.

Until we have seen ourselves as God see us, we are not likely to be much disturbed over conditions around us as long as they do not get so far out of hand as to threaten our comfortable way of life. We have learned to live with unholiness and have come to look upon it as the natural and expected thing. We are not disappointed that we do not find all truth in our teachers of faith, fulness in our politicians or complete honesty in our merchants or full trustworthiness in our friends. That we may continue to exist we make such laws as are necessary to protect us from our fellow men and let it go at that.

Neither the writer nor the reader of these words is qualified to appreciate the holiness of God. Quite literally a new channel must be cut through the desert of our minds to allow the sweet waters of truth that will heal our great sickness to flow in. We cannot grasp the true meaning of the divine holiness by thinking of someone or something very pure and then raising the concept to the highest degree we are capable of.

God's holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely bettered. We know nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible and unattainable. The natural man is blind to it. He may fear God's power and admire His wisdom, but His holiness he cannot even imagine.

Only the Spirit of the Holy One can impart to the human spirit the knowledge of the holy. Yet as electric power flows only through a conductor, so the Spirit flows through truth and must find some measure of truth in the mind before He can illuminate the heart. Faith wakes at the voice of truth but responds to no other sound. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Theological knowledge is the medium through which the Spirit flows into the human heart, yet there must be humble penitence in the heart before truth can produce faith. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of truth. It is possible to have some truth in the mind without having the Spirit in the heart, but it is never possible to have the Spirit apart from truth.

In his penetrating study of the holy, Rudolf Otto makes a strong case for the presence in the human mind of something he names the "numinous," by which, apparently, he means a sense that there is in the world a vague, incomprehensible Something, the Mysterium Tremendum, the awesome Mystery, surrounding and enfolding the universe. This is an It, an awful Thing, and can never be intellectually

conceived, only sensed and felt in the depths of the human spirit. It remains as a permanent religious instinct, a feeling for that unnamed, undiscoverable Presence that "runs quicksilverlike through creation's veins" and sometimes stuns the mind by confronting it with a supernatural, suprarational manifestation of itself. The man thus confronted is brought down and overwhelmed and can only tremble and be silent.

This nonrational dread, this feeling for the uncreated Mystery in the world, is back of all religion. The pure religion of the Bible, no less than the basest animism of the naked tribesman, exists only because this basic instinct is present in human nature. Of course, the difference between the religion of an Isaiah or a Paul and that of the animist is that one has truth and the other has not; he has only the "numinous" instinct. He feels after an unknown God, but an Isaiah and a Paul have found the true God through His own self-disclosure in the inspired Scriptures.

The feeling for mystery, even for the Great Mystery, is basic in human nature and indispensable to religious faith, but it is not enough. Because of it men may whisper, "That awful Thing," but they do not cry, "Mine Holy One!" In the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures God carries forward His self-revelation and gives it personality and moral content. This awful Presence is shown to be not a Thing but a moral Being with all the warm qualities of genuine personality. More than this, He is the absolute quintessence of moral excellence, infinitely perfect in righteousness, purity, rectitude, and incomprehensible holiness. And in all this He is uncreated, self-sufficient and beyond the power of human thought to conceive or human speech to utter.

Through the self-revelation of God in the Scriptures and the illumination of the Holy Spirit the Christian gains everything and loses nothing. To his idea of God there are added the twin concepts of personality and moral character, but there remains the original sense of wonder and fear in the presence of the world-filling Mystery. Today his heart may leap up with the happy cry, "Abba Father, my Lord and my God!" Tomorrow he may kneel with the delighted trembling to admire and adore the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity.

Holy is the way God is. To be holy He does not conform to a standard. He is that standard. He is absolutely holy with an infinite, incomprehensible fullness of purity that is incapable of being other than it is. Because He is holy, His attributes are holy; that is, whatever we think of as belonging to God must be thought of as holy. God is holy and He has made holiness the moral condition necessary to the health of His universe. Sin's temporary presence in the world only accents this. Whatever is holy is healthy; evil is a moral sickness that must end ultimately in death. The formation of the language itself suggests this, the English word holy deriving from the Anglo-Saxon halig, hal, meaning, "well, whole."

Since God's first concern for His universe is its moral health, that is, its holiness, whatever is contrary to this is necessarily under His eternal displeasure. To preserve His creation God must destroy whatever would destroy it. When He arises to put down iniquity and save the world from irreparable moral collapse, He is said to be angry. Every wrathful judgment in the history of the world has been a holy act of preservation. The holiness of God, the wrath of God, and the health of the creation are inseparably united. God's wrath is His utter intolerance of whatever degrades and destroys. He hates iniquity as a mother hates the polio that take the life of her child.

God is holy with an absolute holiness that knows no degrees, and this He cannot impart to His creatures. But there is a relative and contingent holiness which He shares with angels and seraphim in heaven and with redeemed men on earth as their preparation for heaven. This holiness God can and does impart to His children. He shares it with them by imputation and by impartation, and because He has made it available to them through the blood of the Lamb, He requires it of them. To Israel first and later to His Church God spoke, saying, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." He did not say "Be ye as holy as I am holy," for that would be to demand of us absolute holiness, something that belongs to God alone.

Before the uncreated fire of God's holiness angels veil their faces. Yea, the heavens are not clean, and the stars are not pure in His sight. No honest man can say "I am holy," but neither is any honest man willing to ignore the solemn words of the inspired writer, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

Caught in this dilemma, what are we Christians to do? We must like Moses cover ourselves with faith and humility while we steal a quick look at the God whom no man can see and live. The broken and the contrite heart He will not despise. We must hide our unholiness in the wounds of Christ as Moses hid himself in the cleft of the rock while the glory of God passed by. We must take refuge from God in God. Above all we must believe that God sees us perfect in His Son while He disciplines and chastens and purges us that we may be partakers of His holiness.

By faith and obedience, by constant meditation on the holiness of God, by loving righteousness and hating iniquity, by a growing acquaintance with the Spirit of holiness, we can acclimate ourselves to the fellowship of the saints on earth and prepare our-selves for the eternal companionship of God and the saints above. Thus, as they say when humble believers meet, we will have a heaven to go to heaven in.

How dread are Thine eternal years,

O everlasting Lord!

By prostrate spirits day and night

Incessantly adored!

How beautiful, how beautiful

The sight of Thee must be,
 Thine endless wisdom, boundless power,
 And awful purity!
 Oh how I fear Thee, living God!
 With deepest, tenderest fears,
 And worship Thee with trembling hope,
 And penitential tears.

Frederick W. Faber



CHAPTER 22; The Sovereignty of God

Who wouldst not fear Thee, O Lord God of Hosts, most high and most terrible? For Thou art Lord alone. Thou has made heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth and all things that are therein, and in Thy hand is the soul of every living thing, Thou sittest king upon the flood; yea, Thou sittest king forever. Thou art a great king over all the earth. Thou art clothed with strength; honor and majesty are before Thee. Amen.

God's sovereignty is the attribute by which He rules His entire creation, and to be sovereign God must be all-knowing, all-powerful, and absolutely free. The reasons are these:

Were there even one datum of knowledge, however small, un-known to God, His rule would break down at that point. To be Lord over all the creation, He must possess all knowledge. And were God lacking one infinitesimal modicum of power, that lack would end His reign and undo His kingdom; that one stray atom of power would belong to someone else and God would be a limited ruler and hence not sovereign.

Furthermore, His sovereignty requires that He be absolutely free, which means simply that He must be free to do whatever He wills to do anywhere at any time to carry out His eternal purpose in every single detail without interference. Were He less than free He must be less than sovereign.

To grasp the idea of unqualified freedom requires a vigorous effort of the mind. We are not psychologically conditioned to understand freedom except in its imperfect forms. Our concepts of it have been shaped in a world where no absolute freedom exists. Here each natural object is dependent upon many other objects, and that dependence limits its freedom.

Wordsworth at the beginning of his "Prelude" rejoiced that he had escaped the city where he had long been pent up and was "now free, free as a bird to settle where I will." But to be free a bird is not to be free at all. The naturalist knows that the supposedly free bird actually lives its entire life in a cage made of fears, hungers, and instincts; it is limited by weather conditions, varying air pressures, the local food supply, predatory beasts, and that strangest of all bonds, the irresistible compulsion to stay within the small plot of land and air assigned it by birdland comity. The freest bird is, along with every other created thing, held in constant check by a net of necessity. Only God is free.

God is said to be absolutely free because no one and no thing can hinder Him or compel Him or stop Him. He is able to do as He pleases always, everywhere, forever. To be thus free means also that He must possess universal authority. That He has unlimited power we know from the Scriptures and may deduce from certain other of His attributes. But what about His authority?

Even to discuss the authority of Almighty God seems a bit meaningless, and to question it would be absurd. Can we imagine the Lord God of Hosts having to request permission of anyone or to apply for anything to a higher body? To whom would God go for permission? Who is higher than the Highest? Who is mightier than the Almighty? Whose position antedates that of the Eternal? At whose throne would God kneel? Where is the greater one to whom He must appeal? "Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God."

The sovereignty of God is a fact well established in the Scriptures and declared aloud by the logic of truth. But admittedly it raises certain problems which have not to this time been satisfactorily solved: These are mainly two. The first is the presence in the creation of those things which God cannot approve, such as evil, pain, and death. If God is sovereign He could have prevented their coming into existence. Why did He not do so?

The Zend-Avesta, sacred book of Zoroastrianism, loftiest of the great non-Biblical religions, got around this difficulty neatly enough by postulating a theological dualism. There were two Gods, Ormazd and Ahriman, and these between them created the world. The good Ormazd made all good things and the evil Ahriman made the rest. It was quite simple. Ormazd had no sovereignty to worry about, and apparently did not mind sharing his prerogatives with another.

For the Christian this explanation will not do, for it flatly contradicts the truth taught so emphatically throughout the whole Bible, that there is one God and that He alone created the heaven and the earth and all the things that are therein. God's attributes are such as to make impossible the existence of another God. The Christian admits that he does not have the final answer to the riddle of permitted evil. But he knows what that answer is not. And he knows that the Zend-Avesta does not have it either.

While a complete explanation of the origin of sin eludes us, there are a few things we do know. In His sovereign wisdom God has permitted evil to exist in carefully restricted areas of His creation, a kind of fugitive outlaw whose activities are temporary and limited in scope. In doing this God has acted according to His infinite wisdom and goodness. More than that no one knows at present; and more than that no one needs to know. The name of God is sufficient guarantee of the perfection of His works.

Another real problem created by the doctrine of the divine sovereignty has to do with the will of man. If God rules His universe by His sovereign decrees, how is it possible for man to exercise free choice? And if he can not exercise freedom of choice, how can he be held responsible for his conduct? Is he not a mere puppet whose actions are determined by a behind-the-scenes God who pulls the strings as it pleases Him?

The attempt to answer these questions has divided the Christian church neatly into two camps which have borne the names of two distinguished theologians, Jacobus Arminius and John Calvin. Most Christians are content to get into one camp or the other and deny either sovereignty to God or free will to man. It appears possible, however, to reconcile these two positions without doing violence to either, although the effort that follows may prove deficient to partisans of one camp or the other.

Here is my view: God sovereignly decreed that man should be free to exercise moral choice, and man from the beginning has fulfilled that decree by making his choice between good and evil. When he chooses to do evil, he does not thereby countervail the sovereign will of God but fulfills it, inasmuch as the eternal decree decided not which choice the man should make but that he should be free to make it. If in His absolute freedom God has willed to give man limited freedom, who is there to stay His hand or say, "What doest thou?" Man's will is free because God is sovereign. A God less than sovereign could not bestow moral freedom upon His creatures. He would be afraid to do so.

Perhaps a homely illustration might help us to understand. An ocean liner leaves New York bound for Liverpool. Its destination has been determined by proper authorities. Nothing can change it. This is at least a faint picture of sovereignty.

On board the liner are several scores of passengers. These are not in chains, neither are their activities determined for them by decree. They are completely free to move about as they will. They eat, sleep, play, lounge about on the deck, read, talk, altogether as they please; but all the while the great liner is carrying them steadily onward toward a predetermined port.

Both freedom and sovereignty are present here and they do not contradict each other. So it is, I believe, with man's freedom and the sovereignty of God. The mighty liner of God's sovereign design keeps its steady course over the sea of history. God moves undisturbed and unhindered toward the fulfilment of those eternal purposes which He purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began. We do not know all that is included in those purposes, but enough has been disclosed to furnish us with a broad outline of things to come and to give us good hope and firm assurance of future well-being.

We know that God will fulfil every promise made to the prophets; we know that sinners will some day be cleansed out of the earth; we know that a ransomed company will enter into the joy of God and that the righteous will shine forth in the kingdom of their Father; we know that God's perfections will yet receive universal acclamation, that all created intelligences will own Jesus Christ Lord to the glory of God the Father, that the present imperfect order will be done away, and a new heaven and a new earth be established forever.

Toward all this God is moving with infinite wisdom and perfect precision of action. No one can dissuade Him from His purposes; nothing turn Him aside from His plans. Since He is omniscient, there can be no unforeseen circumstances, no accidents. As He is sovereign, there can be no countermanded orders, no breakdown in authority; and as He is omnipotent, there can be no want of power to achieve His chosen ends. God is sufficient unto Himself for all these things.

In the meanwhile things are not as smooth as this quick outline might suggest. The mystery of iniquity doth already work. Within the broad field of God's sovereign, permissive will the deadly conflict of good with evil continues with increasing fury. God will yet have His way in the whirlwind and the storm, but the storm and the whirlwind are here, and as responsible beings we must make our choice in the present moral situation.

Certain things have been decreed by the free determination of God, and one of these is the law of choice and consequences. God has decreed that all who willingly commit themselves to His Son Jesus Christ in the obedience of faith shall receive eternal life and become sons of God. He has also decreed that all who love darkness and continue in rebellion against the high authority of heaven shall remain in a state of spiritual alienation and suffer eternal death at last.

Reducing the whole matter to individual terms, we arrive at some vital and highly personal conclusions. In the moral conflict now raging around us whoever is on God's side is on the winning side and can not lose; whoever is on the other side is on the losing side and can not win. Here there is no chance, no gamble. There is freedom to choose which side we shall be on but no freedom to negotiate the results of the choice once it is made. By the mercy of God we may repent a wrong choice and alter the consequences by making a new and right choice. Beyond that we can not go.

The whole matter of moral choice centers around Jesus Christ. Christ stated it plainly: "He that is not with me is against me," and "No

man cometh unto the Father, but by me." The gospel message embodies three distinct elements: an announcement, a command, and a call. It announces the good news of redemption accomplished in mercy; it commands all men everywhere to repent and it calls all men to surrender to the terms of grace by believing on Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

We must all choose whether we will obey the gospel or turn away in unbelief and reject its authority. Our choice is our own, but the consequences of the choice have already been determined by the sovereign will of God, and from this there is no appeal.

The Lord descended from above,
And bowed the heavens most high,
And underneath His feet He cast
The darkness of the sky.

On cherubim and seraphim
Full royally He rode,
And on the wings of mighty winds
Came flying all abroad.

He sat serene upon the floods,
Their fury to restrain;
And He, as sovereign Lord and King,
For evermore shall reign.
Psalm paraphrase,

by Thomas Sternhold

(Amplified Bible; Joyce Meyers; 2006; Faith Words; Scripture; Commentaries; pages 514-517)

Chapel Flock ♦ PO Box 161102 ♦ Wichita, KS ♦ 67216 ♦ (316) 243-1438

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