

IS GOD STILL IN CONTROL?

Note to the speaker:

Help the audience to see that while Jehovah allows us freedom to demonstrate where we stand on the issue of his right to rule, he nevertheless remains very much in control of matters affecting the earth. Build appreciation for Jehovah's way of ruling in order to stimulate desire to seek him and to follow his direction

WHY GOD SHOULD BE IN CONTROL (3 min.)

Have you thought seriously about the significance of Genesis 1:1?

From what did 'God create the heavens and the earth'? (Isa 40:26; *g99* 6/22 6-7; *ct* 89-91; *it-1* 526)

God has the right to exercise control over what he has brought into existence (Ps 36:9; Re 4:11; *bh* 125)

His control works for the good of his creation (Ge 1:31; 2:8, 9, 15; Ps 19:7-11; Mic 6:8)

JEHOVAH EXERCISES CONTROL IN A LOVING WAY (4 min.)

The first humans derived pleasure from every aspect of life

They had no lengthy code of laws to fulfill; God's requirements were simple and easy to abide by (1Ti 1:8-11; *bh* 48; *it-2* 160)

Adam and Eve did not feel that God was constantly supervising or controlling their every action

Jehovah did require that Adam and Eve acknowledge his right to determine good and bad (Ge 2:16, 17; *w03* 1/1 4; *bh* 61)

They had the capacity for such obedience

Obedience did not mean being deprived of anything beneficial

Jehovah's rulership is based on love (*it-2* 275)

He showed his love by making man in His image, with the capacity for love, and by revealing himself to man (Ge 1:26-28)

HOW GOD'S RIGHT TO BE IN CONTROL WAS CHALLENGED (5 min.)

Satan challenged Jehovah's *right* to be in control (*bh* 109)

He insinuated that Jehovah had lied to Adam (Ge 3:1-5; Re 12:9)

By his actions Satan refused to accept Jehovah's rulership

He urged others to follow his rebellion

The Devil also questioned God's *way* of controlling matters

He implied that God withheld benefits from His creatures (*it-2* 963)

Asserted that man could rule himself successfully without God

It would take time to settle the issues raised by Satan (*bh* 110-13)

Satan has been allowed to develop his "world," or "system of things," of which he is the ruler (*bh* 31-2) (2Co 4:4)

"The earth and that which fills it" still belong to Jehovah (Ps 24:1)

During this time, Jehovah has not stepped in to correct every problem (*bh* 112)

One of Satan's ploys is to promote the idea that Jehovah has lost control

Yet, Jehovah has demonstrated his supremacy in earth's affairs

JEHOVAH HAS ALWAYS MAINTAINED HIS POSITION AS SOVEREIGN (12 min.)

Although earth had become a focus of rebellion, Jehovah did not relinquish his dominion over it (Ps 103:19)

During the pre-Flood period, God demonstrated willingness to guide those who sought him, such as Abel, Enoch, and Noah

The Flood was evidence of God's ability to enforce his will

Jehovah's dealings with Abraham and the nation of Israel proved that His sovereignty over earth was still in effect (Ps 105:6-15; *it-2* 161-2)

He exhibited his control by maneuvering Assyria and Babylon to act in fulfillment of his word (Isa 10:5-7; Eze 21:18-23)

When he finally removed his defenses from around his people, it was an expression of his righteous judgment as Sovereign (Jer 35:17)

Though allowing the nation to go into exile, God's power worked to guarantee the fulfillment of prophecy concerning Jesus (Ps 89:3, 4, 35-37; *it-2* 663)

During that time, Jehovah repeatedly demonstrated his ability to protect and preserve individuals who looked to him as their Sovereign (Da 3:13-29; 6:12-27)

Thus, for thousands of years, nothing has ever been allowed to interfere with the perfect outworking of Jehovah's purpose

THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM CHAMPIONS JEHOVAH'S RIGHT TO RULE (9 min.)

Jehovah's kingly power over his creation was demonstrated in many ways by his royal Representative

Jesus exercised control over the weather, plants, animals, humans, and spirit creatures (Mt 8:26-32; 9:35; 17:27; 21:19)

This proved that his authority came from the Sovereign (Mt 9:2-8)

Although Jesus' arrest, trials, and execution made it appear that Jehovah had lost control over the situation, in reality these events marked a powerful fulfillment of God's prophecies (Lu 24:19-27, 44; Joh 19:10, 11; *it-2* 169)

God's long-foretold Kingdom in the hands of Christ Jesus is the instrument Jehovah will use to champion his right to rule (Da 2:44, 45)

The Kingdom will reverse all suffering caused by human rule

When the Messianic Kingdom has accomplished its work, it will be handed back to Jehovah (1Co 15:21-28; *bh* 112)

Yet, its accomplishments will endure forever

Jehovah will soon bring an end to all wickedness and will remove Satan's world (Ps 37:9-11; 2Th 1:6-9; 1Jo 2:17; *bh* 94)

DEMONSTRATE YOUR LOVE FOR JEHOVAH'S WAY OF RULING (12 min.)

We are involved in the issue of sovereignty (Job 2:3-5; *cl* 124; *it-1* 1210)

Jehovah wants us to serve him willingly, out of love (De 10:12-21; 30:6, 15-20; Isa 1:18-20; *bh* 113-14)

He gives each of us freedom to demonstrate that we prefer his sovereignty and that we allow him to govern our lives

Recognize the authority given to Jesus, and submit to it (*be* 276)

Christ has a legitimate right to our obedience (Ge 49:10; Mt 28:18)

No one else has been granted that right (Jer 10:23; Ac 4:12)

This affects our everyday activities, decisions, and goals

Our obedience to Christ's commands shows that we appreciate and respect Jehovah's sovereignty (*wt* 58-9)

When we do what is right, Jehovah's heart rejoices (Pr 27:11; *w03* 4/15 14-15)

Jehovah blesses those who love his sovereignty (*w94* 11/1 7)

In summary, we have seen that Jehovah has the right to control what is happening on this earth and to direct our personal lives

He exercises such prerogative in love

Because of the first rebellion, Jehovah has allowed Satan and humans to be independent of His rule

However, he has not relinquished his right to control matters

He has exercised that right in harmony with his purpose

By means of the Messianic Kingdom, God will soon reestablish full control of human affairs

Eventually, all those living will acknowledge Jehovah's right to rule (Ps 83:17, 18; Eze 38:23)

(Additional source material can be found in *Insight*, Vol. 2, pp. 159-70, 1008-12, and *Bible Teach*, pp. 8-17, 27-36, 106-14)

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need be read or commented on. See *Ministry School*, pp. 52-4)