

God Is Government

Isaiah 33:22

“For the LORD is our judge, the
LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD
is our king; he will save us.”



THE SOVEREIGNTY OF MANKIND

PART TEN

We have looked at God’s Sovereignty in Parts 1-9 acts of God. We will turn our attention to God’s Sovereignty through prophecy mixed with the will of mankind in looking through Ezekiel and Jeremiah. We will see God’s purposes, and we will see both human obedience and rebellion. Ezekiel gives us a glimpse of the sovereignty of God at work along with (or despite) the sovereignty of man.



In our own day, we have seen Israel become a country again. Every year, more children of Israel return from the distant parts of the earth to the land given perpetually to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Prophets consistently tell us that God would do this – that He would gather the children of Israel from all the places they had been flung across the world. Consider what God promised through Ezekiel:

“17 Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel. 18 And they shall come thither, and they shall take away all the detestable things thereof and all the abominations thereof from thence. 19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: 20 That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.”

- Ezekiel 11:17-20

God says He will raise up the people of Israel and give them His Spirit and make them spiritually alive with tender hearts. The sentiment is repeated in Ezekiel 36, and then exemplified in chapter 37 in Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of dry bones. God takes the dead, dry bones of the people of Israel, stands them up, puts flesh on them, and gives them His Spirit.

On one hand, a skeleton has no will, no power, no ability to give itself life. God's power is clearly at work to revitalize dry bones. On the other hand, there is human volition at work in the salvation of each individual. Remember, God implores the people to turn from their sins:

“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

- Ezekiel 33:11

Peter understood this. Peter, who walked with Jesus Christ for three years and experienced the first powerful filling of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Peter knew God's heart toward fallen humanity. He declared that God does not want anyone to perish:

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

- 2 Peter 3:9

What is more, God judges each person individually punishing those who rebel without partiality, and forgiving those who repent without partiality. Paul understood this just as well as Ezekiel:

“23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.”

- Colossians 3:23-25

“20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. 21 But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.”

- Ezekiel 18:20-21

Right now we see the people of Israel returning to the Holy Land. The land is open to them, and it is a fruitful place under the hands of the descendants of Israel. They are flourishing, despite enemies on all sides (within and without), since 1948. Yet, the nation (people not the state) as a whole has not acknowledged Jesus as Messiah. We know a day is coming when the people of Israel will understand who Jesus is (The Great Tribulation), when understanding will blaze through their midst.

The two sides of the coin are seen clearly in Jeremiah as well, the part of God and the part of each person:

“6 For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. 7 And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.”

- Jeremiah 24:6-7

“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”

- Jeremiah 29:13

Let us be sensitive to this strange interplay between the sovereignty of God and the sovereignty of man. Man has the opportunity to screw up and he has the opportunity to screw up permanently. God will do incredible things to try to get man to avoid a destiny that is beyond our articulating, and yet God does not violate the sovereignty he has given us. They say that no one will be in Hell for their sins. They will be in Hell for rejecting the provision God has made for their sins. That is heavy stuff!