

V.O.C. July 2017
Rev. W. denHollander

July 23, 2017: God in His Government

Dear Listeners,

So far this month I have taken you along on a journey through God's *creation* so you would see Him in His handiworks. We have seen Him as the *Almighty* God, who created all things visible and invisible, and who in Jesus Christ is God the Father. Yes, for those who love Him and who believe in Him, and in Jesus Christ His Son and our Saviour, He is *their* God and *their* Father. I also showed you God's *Almighty and ever-present power* by which He upholds His creation, continues His work of recreation, and works out His plan and will with this world, namely God in His *Providence*. He has revealed that to us as well for our confidence and trust in Him, for our comfort and for the strengthening of our faith! Then today we will continue to see that God *governs* all things in order to work out His plan of salvation.

So, dear listeners, we continue to confess that God *governs* all things here on earth. It simply cannot be otherwise. God is the one who gives all things, the earth with all its produce. He gives life, even to the Antichrist when he comes. He gives him power, an impressive appearance, a sharp mind, and a deep insight in order to design his evil plans. Not even *his* activities can happen outside of God and His will. Even the evil one needs permission from God to act. We know that from the book of Job. Satan first had to ask God whether he was allowed to make Job suffer. Thus God gave permission to make Job suffer, yet *Job* received power also to make *him* stand firm in faith! God allows sickness, death, poverty, and hunger to enter Job's life, or the lives of others. It would be foolish to say, "O but God could not help it!" Then God would have ended up outside His own world! Then He would be made into a powerless God.

God does not sin. God does not have anything in common with sin. Yet, He does *use* it; He does *govern* it! He had His high and wise purposes with it. It is God who gives life, who gives breath to men. And when the arm of the murderer raises itself to kill someone, it is the power from God, which he uses in that arm. However, the wrong use of that power is the responsibility of the murderer. Even *that* act, however, is not happening outside of God's will and purpose. As long as we remember *this*, that *nothing* escapes God's attention in this world, *nothing* happens outside of *God's power*! He is present in all things! We may not be able to figure it out. We may not be able to comprehend His will. As long as we continue to believe that nothing on earth is a surprise to God. It's not just so that He knows all things beforehand; He also *provides* in all things!

The young church at Jerusalem confessed this already. When they were in great distress and persecuted, they knew one thing very well: "Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you appointed. They did what *your power and will* had decided beforehand should happen [Acts 4:27]." That's putting it quite strongly. Even persecution and distress are not separated from God's hand! Only what His hand had

decided could take place, could be done by Jews, by Pilate. Even if it would mean a certain death for some of them, even then it happened to fulfil the plan of God!

Now, dear listener, how can this knowledge be *comfort* to you? God governed Pilate and Herod, but was that comfort for them? Of course not! God governs all things and rules over all nations. "From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live," we read in Acts 17:26. That in itself is no comfort yet. We should not think of God's providence, therefore, as God's government of the lives of *believers* only. He governs *all*! Amos stresses this point to Israel too, "Are not you Israelites the same to me as the Cushites?" declares the LORD. Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt, the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir [9:7]?" God's *government as such* is not comforting. We can't really say that Judas was comforted by the fact that God was in control also when he betrayed the Lord Jesus. No, dear listeners, after we have seen that God's power is present indeed in everything and everywhere, we must now see *why* and *how* and *when* this knowledge can be a *comfort* to you!

God's providence gives great comfort when we *add* to the fact that God governs all things *the belief* that He also, as we have seen last week, governs them in such a way that all things come to you not by chance but by His *fatherly* hand. God is Almighty God and Creator, we have seen; God is Creator and *Father* too. Hence the crux of the matter is: do you know Him *as such*, as *your Father*! Then we do not only see in all things the hand of God, but then you will see that hand as *His fatherly hand*! It is that way of looking at misery and evil in life, in this world, which changes the picture! The *facts* may remain the *same*: whether the one believes in God as Father and the other not, in an earthquake or in a war both lives are in danger.

The *facts* may seem exactly the *same*, dear listener, for the one who believes and for the other who does not want to love, serve, and believe God. *Yet*, and *yet*, everything changes when you see in His hand the *Father*. Then we know that in the midst of God's *governing* this world, He keeps His *eyes* on His children! He looks upon His loved ones with compassion. When under His government, sickness breaks you down, your strength is broken, it is as *Father* that he does so. You may not understand this, and you may have to reassure yourself and reaffirm your confidence in Him as your Father, but that's how it is! God is behind it for *you* as *your Father*! When His children stray away from Him also, then He does not leave them alone either; then He does not allow them peace of mind. Be thankful that He doesn't! He wants to save them; that's all His purpose. He could also chastise those children whom He loves, says the epistle to the Hebrews. Again, then you might not understand such chastisement at that time of your suffering pain, yet He is in it as your Father who loves and draws you back!

As a *Father* God governs your life, dear listener, when *you believe in Him*, trust Him, and *surrender yourself* to His *fatherly* hand. He will govern you according to what each child needs for his *salvation*! That's why our lives follow such different patterns and show such differing paths. Sometimes He leads us over beautiful paths, while at other times the going is rough and the valleys are deep; yet, He leads as *Father* always! We have to believe this! We cannot explain everything, neither do we have to. Joseph could

not explain his situation at the time when he was in prison. Later on, however, much later, when everything had happened long ago, then he understood! Then he said, "It was necessary for me to go there in order that I may help my father's house." That applies in a more striking manner even in the history of God's redemption through Jesus Christ! There was nothing the devil desired more than the failure of God's plan of salvation in Christ. He did what he could to accomplish that. It even seemed as if he was successful, when the Jews together with the Romans managed to get Him on the cross. Then Christ *died* on Golgotha, yet then exactly *in that way* God's plan succeeded! He made *atonement* for our sins and He *conquered* death and Satan! Through God the Father! But that, dear listener, I would like to show and explain further next week, when you hopefully will tune in at this time and channel again! Till then, and thank you for listening!