**WHAT IF GOD TOOK CONTROL OF THE WORLD?**

One of the criticisms offered by atheists and sceptics against the existence of God revolves around the presence of evil in the world. They opine, *“How could a just and loving God allow such evil to prevail? In the face of such evil, we must conclude that either God is NOT just and loving – or He simply does NOT exist!”* Many have fallen prey to such “logic,” and have lost their faith. Hence, I think the question stated in the title of this article is worth pursuing.

I would begin by pointing out that God IS in charge – and always has been! “*The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all”* (Ps.103:19). The presence of evil in this world does not in any way prove that He is unjust, is not in charge, or does not exist. Such is a non-sequitur; logically, “it does not follow.” God, in His infinite wisdom and power, has chosen to run the world by giving mankind “free will” – humans have the ability to choose evil! As a consequence of that, many humans have chosen the path of evil – and they reap the consequences thereof. Thieves take property, Murders destroy life, adulterers destroy families, gossips destroy reputations, etc. In addition, when the first man chose the path of evil, God cursed this world (Gn.3:17-19; Rm.8:18-25). This explains the destruction wrought by storms, tornadoes, hurricanes, disease, death, etc. The only alternative to God choosing to allow “free will” is that God would choose to make us mere “robots,” doing only what has been “programmed in.” That might make for a perfect world, but it’s perfection would only exist because it was “imposed” by Divine decree. ***In such a world, this very discussion would not be possible!***

But now, let’s take this discussion to the next level. God, in His infinite wisdom and power, has also chosen to develop a people in this world who have freely chosen His way. His plan to develop such a people took many forms, as it was developed over many years. The historic record of such dealings (i.e. the Bible) serves not only as a chronicle of the development of this plan, but also as evidence of His existence! In its fullest form, these people are identified in Scripture as “the church.” *Simply put, “the church” are those people who have chosen of their own free wills to serve God.* They have been instructed and persuaded of the proper way to live their lives (cf. Mt.28:19-20). *As a result, the church is “a living demonstration” of a world where God has taken control!* Notice:

“To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;***to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known through the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,*** in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him” (Ep.3:8-12).

It should be noted that, in the above text, “the church” refers to the *universal* body *– i.e. those whom God knows to be faithful to Him* (cf. 2Tm.2:19). Local churches may have individuals who fall short of the ideal (cf. 1Cor.5:1ff). But when we look at the universal family of God (i.e. the faithful), we can see exactly how this world could be, if God was in control – for these are the very people who have willingly let God control them!

What would this world be like if everyone lived a moral life? Look at the church (Ep.5:1-11)! What would our homes look like if everyone in the family did their part? Look at the church (Ep.5:22-6:4)! What would our cities look like if everyone was a loyal citizen? Look at the church (Rm.13:1-7)! What would race relations be like if we could treat every human being like a family member? Look at the church (Ga.3:26-29 Ep.2:11-16)! Examples of this principle could be greatly multiplied, but you get the general idea.

Now, contrast what you see in the universal church, run by God, with the rest of the world, run by Satan. And once you have taken a good look, ask yourself, “Which way is better?” The answer is obvious!

--Lanny Smith