

God's Judgments

By Action or By Permission



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Well, I hope you've all had a pleasant week under the circumstances. It's all about information management at the moment, isn't it. Managing the information that's coming into us? I'm hearing very interesting things going on in different parts of the world. You've seen all the floods that are happening in different countries. There was a tremendous hail shower in Spain. I just had all this. Oh, terrible, what was happening there? And did you hear about the scorpions in Egypt? They had big floods in Egypt and it swept all the scorpions out of the desert and 500 people were bitten by scorpions. Oh wow. And at least three people died.

Audience *The plagues are back.*

That's what they are saying the plagues. So interesting things are going on. We had terrible floods in British Columbia. They were very, very big and we're having some floods here in Australia or it's brewing. We're in for an interesting summer. So interesting things going on from that perspective, and we won't mention the other ominous blackness that's descending on us. We'll leave that alone.

Audience *Things are happening in Israel too.*

And today we would rest. Yes, in Israel. We want to rest in the bosom of the Father and have a sense of His peace. I could feel it last night, just that sense of peace. And that is, as Adam was saying to me this morning, that is the secret place at the Most High, isn't it. The bosom of the Father where Christ dwells? That's the secret place in the bosom of the Father. So we have the opportunity to be there. And it's wonderful to be together again. It was nice on Wednesday night when we did our first live stream and just everyone

coming back on all the family joining in. It was really it was really a great blessing. So shall we kneel together and then we'll get into our subject?

Father, we thank you for the blessedness of the Sabbath. Thank you for the rest that you offer us. Thank you Lord Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath that you are breathing upon us today saying receive ye the Holy Spirit. We need your Spirit, Lord Jesus, because we are tested, we are tempted. We are sometimes weary, sometimes upset, sometimes angry at things that happen in our lives. And we trust that you will give us full and complete victory over ourselves and that we will shine like the stars of the morning and we shall testify to the goodness of our God. Please be with us as we present this important subject this morning and I thank you in Jesus name. Amen.

So I've entitled this presentation *By Action or By Permission*, and I'm indebted to Danny Brown for the research. He has an article. It is on Maranatha Media about *Plain statements, Are they really plain?* And I was reading through some of that material and I thought, I'm going to present on this. So let's bring up the screen. And I want to just look at some texts to begin with. And we've covered some of these things. Do you have people when we talk about the character of our Father, do you have people that say to you, I take the Bible as it reads. I've had people say that to you.

Audience *I've said that myself, haven't I.*

And it's I suppose it's I take the Bible as it reads rather than I take the Bible as it reads. There's a bit of an emphasis that is placed there. So if we take the Bible as it reads, as many people interpret it, if we read Numbers Chapter 13, what conclusions do we draw? Let's have a look at this text. "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them.'" (Numbers 21:3-2) So reading this text, what do you deduce from this?

Audience *Commission to find a man to go spy?*

Whose idea was it?

Audience *Moses.*

Does that say that there? That text would suggest to you taking the Bible as it reads, that it was God's idea to spy out the land.

Audience *If you only take one verse, yes.*

This is the point, isn't it? You take one verse or a few verses, then you don't have the full picture. But you're reading from Numbers 13, you have to get all the way across to Deuteronomy and we get a little bit more to the story.

This is Moses speaking, "Look, the Lord your God has set the land before you go up and possess it. As the Lord God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged. And every one of you came near to me and said," So after Moses says, don't be afraid or discouraged, Israel came to him and said, "Let us send men before us, and let them search out the land for us, and bring back word to us of the way in which we should go up." (Deuteronomy 1: 21-24)

Audience *In other words, we don't believe you.*

So reading this verse, whose idea was it to go up? It was the people of Israel in fear and discouragement. So we have to be careful how we read the Bible. And this is where we ask the question when we come back to this text, when God spoke these words, did He speak them by His own action or by permission? This is the question. By His own action, or, well, OK, this is what you want to do.

Audience *Giving the people what they want.*

Giving them what they want. Allowing them what they want. This is an important distinction as we're reading many of the stories in the Old Testament and in the New Testament.

Is it by God's action, His personal action that these things occur or is it by His permission? And how would we tell the difference between those two

options? Once you can solve that question, you'll be able to read the Bible as a new book, and it will be very different from the way you've read it before.

Audience *Something else stands out to me. That it was fear and discouragement that made them want to do that. Yes. And therefore they worship fear rather than God. Yes. Very timely advice, isn't it?*

Are there giants in the land today? There are, aren't they, they are here? And if I'm hearing the word correctly, for Christmas we're all going to be getting a smallpox pandemic. If I'm hearing correctly from the giants in the land. But we'll see. We'll see.

Alright. Who chose the King, King of Israel? First Samuel 10:24. Have you read this verse? "And Samuel said to all the people, 'Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen, that there is no one like him among the people?' So all the people shouted and said, 'Long live the king'." So in this verse, who chose the king? God did. But if we go a few verses earlier, this is just a few verses earlier. "Then Samuel called the people together to the Lord at Mizpah, and said to the children of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel: I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of all the kingdoms and from those who oppressed you. But you have today rejected your God, who Himself saved you from all your adversities and your tribulations; and you have said to Him, No, set a king over us!' 'Now therefore, present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes and by your clans.'" (1 Samuel 10:17-19)

So with this context, Israel chose themselves a king and in choosing a king that had actually rejected God. So God gave permission to Israel to choose themselves a king. So when it says God chose this king for you, He did it by permission, not by His own action. And once we understand this principle in scripture,

Audience *They wanted it to be like everybody else.*

That we may be like the other nations. Make us a king, that we may be like the other nations.

Audience *And so that king could lead them into war as well.*

Yes, fight our battles for us. We'll pay our taxes and you go and fight the war please and deal with it? So who moved David to number Israel? We read Second Samuel 24:1, "And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, 'Go, number Israel and Judah'." So if you read this verse who moved over to number Israel. The Lord did because He was angry. He said, go and number Israel. And after he numbered Israel, what happened? So God tells David to number Israel. He numbers Israel and then he gets punished for doing what God said. You know, people take the Bible, they say, literally as it reads, as you read this. So we have to ask the question, is it by permission or is it by God's action? These are the questions that we're asking.

So we come to First Chronicles 21. Now Chronicles was written by Ezra. It was written quite some time later. Can you imagine when people were reading Chronicles, do you think they could have said to Ezra, "your spiritual in the word of God?" Well, what did he write? This is what he wrote in First Chronicles 21:1-3, "Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel." Who gave Ezra permission to write that.

Audience *Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

Exactly. The spirit of God moved Ezra to write these words to interpret what was going on so we can have understanding of the full picture of what is going on. Which means that you have to read all of the Bible to fit all of the pieces together. If you read bits of the Bible, you're going to have a bitsy religion. So it was Satan that tempted David to do this, and we would say therefore our reading of First Samuel is, well, let's have a look at some commentary. This is the SDA Bible commentary. "In this verse under consideration, we have another instance in which God is said to do that which he does not prevent." (SDA BC vol.2, p710; on 2 Sam 24:1) It's even in the Bible commentary. He is said to do that which He does not prevent. And that's very interesting, as we will find and discover a little bit later on.

The Hebrew language has idioms and forms that allow for this. It's different to English, but the Hebrew language is the perfect language to convey the

mirror because if it's permission or action, you're the one that decides who God is based on your understanding of His character. You're the one. You're the one that decides whether it's God doing it by action, or whether it's God doing it by permission, which makes the Bible an infinitely wise book in the way that it is written.

Audience *And it's amazing how He allows us to think wrongly of Him. Like we would do that and we would make sure that people think the right thing of us.*

He not only allows us, but that's exactly correct, Lorelle, He allows us. And more than that, He fosters is a process by which our wrong thinking is abounding so we can see it. So we become more aware of it. And we wouldn't do that, would we? I want people to think good of me, I don't want people to think bad of me. Whereas God allows process to take place where He, I wouldn't use the word encourage, but He sets things in process to bring out of us, our wrong thinking, what's inside of us?

So, evil spirit from the Lord. I think this is another one that we're fairly familiar with. "But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." (1 Samuel 16:14) And again, in the Bible Commentary says, "The Scriptures sometimes represent God as doing that which He does not specifically prevent." (SDA BC vol.2, p531; on 1 Sam 16:14) Which we are saying is by permission rather than by action, God's personal action. God didn't send an evil spirit on Saul, but he allowed Saul to be tested or tempted by evil spirits because Saul placed himself outside of the protection of God.

Who cursed David? This is what David says when Shimei curses him. "And the king [David] said...let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, 'Curse David'. Who shall then say, 'Wherefore hast thou done so?'" (2 Samuel 16:10) The books of Samuel are very interesting, aren't they, in the way they attribute everything to God as His action? David is saying God told him to curse me. But we read in the book of James, "But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." Don't we know that. "With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceed blessing

and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so." (James 3:8-13) But if we read this verse in Samuel as God saying curse David and God in other terms is blessing, does blessing and cursing proceed out of the mouth of God, and then He tells us not to bless and curse out of the same mouth when He is doing it. That doesn't make any sense. So God allowed Shimei to curse David, and therefore this action is by permission rather than by God's personal action.

So this is what Adam Clark says. This is the lower part here. Adam Clark says this. "No man can suppose that ever God bade one man to curse another, much less that he commanded such a wretch as Shimei to curse such a man as David; but this is a peculiarity of the Hebrew language," that's what I was saying before, "which does not always distinguish between permission and commandment." Doesn't distinguish, it has that ambiguity in it. "Often the Scripture attributes to God what He only permits to be done; or what in the course of His providence He does not hinder, David, however, considers all of this as being permitted of God for his chastisement and humiliation." (Adam Clarke Commentary on 2 Samuel 16:10-11)

And this fits in with the principle of Romans 5:20. Moreover, the law entered that sin might abound. That were sin abounded, grace did much more abound. David perceives this principle, God is allowing this to happen, therefore, it is, as we say in other places, the ministration of death. God allows the ministration of death. It's part of God's process to bring out of us that which is evil, that we may confess it and forsake it and seek forgiveness for our sins.

So Danny found this quote, I thought it was excellent. It's speaking on this subject. This brings us to the crux of this issue of how do we discern between God acting and God giving permission. "When God is said to harden men's hearts to deliver them up to a reprobate mind," as it says in Romans Chapter 1, "to send them strong delusions," as it says in Thessalonians, is there a strong delusion being sent to the world today? Yes, absolutely. And it's increasing and growing. "That they should believe that God is acting unrighteously - meaning He is acting against His character." How do you know when God is acting against His character? You have to know His character in order to know when He's acting, apparently, against His

character and this is how you can tell whether God is acting by action or by permission. You have to know His character. That's the key. If you don't know His character, you can't read the Bible.

Audience *But if you have an action that's supposedly against your character, isn't that then becomes part of your whole picture of your character?*

Well, this is where, is it did God allow this to happen or did God cause this to happen?

Audience *Yeah, if He caused it then it's part of His character.*

Yes, it's part of His character. This is what many people say that God caused it and because of the ambiguity in the text of the Old Testament what this does is it reveals our character. It's brilliant the way the Bible is written. It reveals our character as we go on. "It is infinitely far from being meant of an efficacious impulse in God Almighty. **That all those verbs, to harden, to blind, to deliver up, to send delusions, to deceive, and the like, are by an ordinary Hebraism only permissive in signification, though active in sound, is placed without all controversy.**" (Thomas Pierce, I, p23-24 edition of 1658 quoted in Jackson, The Providence of God, p401) This is a very important statement. OK. By permission, rather than though it sounds active on God's part, it's by permission.

And what is another reason why it sounds active on God's part? This is a text that we need to remind ourselves of. Let's have a look at Psalms. I don't have this on the screen. Psalms 62:11. Because there's a number of layers here. This is the text that I was introduced to this by A.T. Jones in my reading of A.T. Jones. "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongs to God".

Audience *That "belongs" is a supplied word.*

It's a supplied word. Power unto God. God is the source of all power. God is the source of everything that happens. And we've talked about this in *Calvary at Egypt*, when the rod is released from Moses' hand that it becomes serpent like. But it's still the rod that was in God's hand. And that all the

plagues in Egypt were done by the power of God, weren't they? Under whose hand?

Audience *Under Moses hand.*

Under Moses hand. And who was the one doing it?

Audience *Satan.*

Satan was doing it, but it was God's power that was being used. God was bankrolling the whole exercise with His own power and in order to bankroll that whole process, His Son had to be crucified. That's why he says that Christ was crucified in Egypt. Just a bit of a, you've seen that Revelation 11. Let's have a look at this.

Audience *It's interesting that next verse too before we move on.*

Along with mercy. That interesting isn't it.

Audience *Yes, and "belong" is introduced as well.*

"O Lord, belongeth mercy." So only mercy comes from Him, doesn't come from Satan, does it? He doesn't show any mercy whatsoever.

Let's have a look at Revelation. We just want to. And again, this is all in the book Calvary at Egypt. Revelation Chapter 11. And it says, there it is talking of the two witnesses and then verse seven and then verse eight, "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." How was Christ crucified in Sodom? How was he crucified in Egypt spiritually? In the death of those people during the fire that fell from heaven and from the plagues that fell on Egypt, Christ was crucified because He loves all of His children, and to see His children destroyed is torture for him.

Audience *It's interesting, too, because it's implying that even Christ's crucifixion is attributed to the Lord. So the Lord did it, the Lord did it by permission.*

Did it by permission but He did it. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. Why did it please the Lord to bruise him?

Audience *That there may be many sons and daughters.*

To bring many sons and daughters? Yes. To cause our offense to abound that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. It pleased the Lord. So God's power and I've said this before. The Roman soldier that was nailing Christ to the cross, who was causing that Roman soldier's heart to beat? God. Who put power into his arm? God. Who controlled the mind of the Roman soldier? Satan. Do we see the pattern? God's power under Satan's control.

Audience *And just going back to even Pilate. You know, Pilate told Christ He had power.*

He had power. Yes, thank you. Power to deliver or power to crucify.

Audience *Yes, and he showed no mercy.*

And he showed no mercy. So he was acting under Satan's control. And what drove him to make that decision? Fear of the people. Wanting popularity, fear of the people. It is through fear that Satan controls. Are we seeing that today? We are aren't we?

I was reading, I can't remember there's a passage. Well, on Wednesday night, I presented this Great Controversy 591, through fear Satan extracts homage from the human race. If you live in fear and you are controlled by your fears, you are giving homage to Satan. It's pretty scary, isn't it? We cannot be moved to make actions based on fear. If we do so, it is giving homage to Satan. So we've digressed a little bit there. Important digressions. That's a good text, Craig. I have power to save thee, I have power to crucify thee and Satan was the one that gave him his seat and his authority.

But God was the one. Oh we'll look at Revelation 13. Who was it? Revelation 13:5. "And there was given under him a mouth speaking great

things" it says in verse five. How was it given to him who gave it to him, who gave this to him? God did. God gave him this power, all these things, this is really important.

Audience *That text about Pilate saying he has power to crucify and to release. "Jesus answered and said, Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above."*

That explains it, doesn't it.

Audience *"Therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."*

So God by permission allowed Jesus to be handed over to the Roman soldiers, and therefore it pleased the Lord to bruise him because God did not prevent the process that Satan had determined, and therefore Satan's plans were revealed.

Audience *On other occasions when the people were trying to stone Jesus or throw him over the cliff, and God did interposed.*

God did interpose, didn't He because at the time it was not His will. He did not allow. Thank you. He did not give permission and he walked through them. I thought about this in the last couple of weeks, thinking if your time has not come to die, it's not time. And if the time has come to die, better to die than to lose your soul. So some of us are going to be walking through crowds of angry people very soon, passing by, passing through, giving our message and leaving mysteriously, do you believe it?

Audience *Some may not and we need to be aware of that as well like John the Baptist.*

Yes and for John the Baptist, blink and he'll see the face of Jesus. Instant. Beautiful, isn't it? God's mercy, gracious.

So here this is a very important statement about how we read the scripture. It is by determining whether He is acting against His character as to whether

He is giving permission for something to take place or whether He is doing it directly Himself. This is a vital principle to reading the Bible.

So this is something that Ruben had spoken about recently. This text in Mark Chapter three. "So they watched him closely, whether He would heal; him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him." How sad to come to that position in your life where someone wants to heal someone and you're going to accuse them. Do we see that going on today? Naturopathic doctors being accused of quackery because they're trying to heal people and save them? Or any doctor trying to save people?

"And He said to the man who had the withered hand, 'Step forward.' Then He said to them," this is interesting, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil". Now in this context, what is it to do good? To heal. And what is it to do evil? Nothing. To save life or to kill. Action, healing. Permission, not healing. This is what's so important about this. So when Jesus is setting this up to do good is to heal or protect, to do evil is to do nothing and to allow.

Do you think this helps us with certain passages in the Bible? I'm thinking of Isaiah Chapter 45. It says. Where's the one where it says? Is it 45 where it says I create evil. I thought it was in Chapter 45. There's a text in Isaiah, someone will look it up, that says I create evil. How does God create evil? By action or by permission?

Audience Permission.

Permission. This is important. Why does God allow evil to come to fruition?

Audience To show us what we are. Show us the mirror.

Show us the mirror. Thank you. Thank you. Yes, thank you, Bronwyn. Verse seven. "I form the light and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil".

Audience When he wrote that, a good article about this what I've been saying for a long time. In the Hebrew there that has two meanings and that to create and also cut down.

Yes, it says that in the Hebrew to cut down. And I had first embraced that idea that he forms the light and he cuts down the darkness. But in the light of the gospel before He cuts down the darkness, He actually makes the darkness darker through a process of permission. Romans 5:20 is what explains this. It causes sin to abound. And so on the day one of creation there was darkness. God allowed the darkness to manifest itself by permission, didn't he? And then he created the light.

Audience *He let the darkness be there.*

He let the darkness be there and to do nothing is to do evil and therefore God creates the evil by allowing it to be. But we have to understand the process by how He allows us to be.

Audience *But He also created lightness to rule the darkness.*

Yes, the moon, didn't He. The moon to rule the darkness and the stars. Yes, the moon and the stars, which is important.

Audience *And we need the darkness. Not that we need it but if we didn't have darkness it wouldn't shine like it does.*

There we go. This is causing sin to abound so that when the light shines, it becomes clearer to us. These are all very important principles.

Audience *There's a statement, I think it's in Great Controversy that she says it's in the darkest hour that those who stand for truth shine the brightest.*

The darkest hour.

Audience *The contrast is there.*

We have a contrast and I was saying to someone this week that when I did that presentation on Moses and it dawned on me that Moses, when he said to kill the little baby boys and to save the little girls alive, that he had acted just like Pharaoh. This was the meekest man that ever lived as, and to look at Moses, whom I consider to be someone much better than myself, and maybe

that's an illusion. But God did great things through Moses, and yet within Moses's character, we still see the attributes of Pharaoh which are all of us. When I realized that it just brought home to me, there is none righteous, no, not one. There is no one who does good. There is no one who seeks after God. And in that realization to then be able to throw myself at the feet of Jesus and say into your hands, I commit my spirit and to believe that I will be saved regardless of all of that, that is eternal life.

Audience *Because He is merciful.*

Because He is ever merciful. Thank you. Verse 12, from God belongs mercy. He will never despise you.

Audience *But were there to be good in any then there is occasion for mercy.*

Exactly.

Audience *And there is none.*

Yeah. So the question is, why do we all keep defending ourselves when people attack us? What am I defending? Adrian, what are you doing? Like, are you suggesting that if something good inside of you, are you trying to present, you have merit of some sort or you feel unjustly treated by someone.

Audience *This is what the evil one does to us. He comes in and speaks to us.*

Yes, it's my own thoughts about my life that scares me the most.

Audience *Agree with your adversary quickly.*

Yes. Like Luther said, yes, Satan, it is true what you say and many other things that thou knowest not.

Audience *Yes.*

But I am much worse, much worse than the things that you've tempted me with. So although all temptations come from Satan. So this is all part of righteousness by faith, this process. So, "But they kept silent. And when He looked around at them with anger". That's an interesting statement, isn't it? What is the anger defined as? "Being grieved by the hardness of their hearts." What type of anger is that?

Audience *Sadness. Sorrow.*

It's a sorrow. It's a sadness. That's His anger. As we've said in the Hebrew, the *aph*, the rapid breathing in the nose from deep anguish. "He said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other. Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy him." This is humanity. And when we look at those Pharisees and we say, Oh, thank God, I'm not like one of them.

Audience *There are several things underneath it. It's not necessary bringing out, as they're believed also that if you had this karma, or if you could put it that way, that you were deserving of punishment. You shouldn't be relieved of it.*

Shouldn't be stopping what God has put on him.

Audience *It was sick.*

It's like a caste system, isn't it? God has put it on them by His own action rather than by permission. Different understanding. By action or permission. Interesting verse, "He cast on them the fierceness of His anger, wrath, indignation and trouble, by sending angels of destruction among them." (Psalms 78:49) This is talking about the plagues in Egypt. Did God send angels of destruction? We've looked at this verse before. The word "sending" can also be translated, releasing, to release. We're fairly familiar. So we look at to release or send. I've got that there. You determine what it is. Did God send the angels to destroy?

And we look at Exodus 12:23, "For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses." Do we actually believe that as God is walking through the streets of Egypt that with the one hand, He's holding a sword and then when it comes to where He sees the blood, He gets His other hand and then He's holding Himself like this. Is that how you understand God in this verse?

Audience *It's schizophrenia.*

Yes, yes, I have been accused of calling God schizophrenic in the past.

Audience *But that would be like two personalities in God warring against each other.*

Yes, yes. Someone who believed that God kills and that I accused God of being schizophrenic for doing this. If the shoe fits. I don't believe God does this, but Revelation tells us, "I will not allow the destroyer to come into your house." Who is the destroyer?

Audience *Satan.*

"They had a king over them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon (that is, Destroyer)." (Revelation 9:11) How did God strike the Egyptians? Through permission. He let them have the master that they had chosen. This is what we see in these verses.

The flood. "So the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the Earth." (Genesis 6:7) So when we hear the word destroy, we know that it's connected to the destroyer. When God acts against His character, He is acting by permission, not by His personal action. And once we understand this principle, it becomes very easy. "I will destroy man whom I've created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and the birds of the air, for I'm sorry that I have made them." I'm grieved.

And we read in Job, we get more details. See there's more details to the story. "Will you keep the old way which wicked men have trod, who were cut down before their time, whose foundations were swept away by a flood? They said to God, 'Depart from us! What can the Almighty do to them?' Yet He filled their houses with good things; but the counsel of the wicked is far from me." (Job 22:15-18) So when God said I will destroy them, what had they said to him already? Go away. And God honoured their demand. And this was by permission. He allowed Satan then to do his actions or to do his things, or as we have presented the sinfulness of man had got to such a state that the Earth vomited out its inhabitants because we know that Satan himself feared for his life. I call it the mad scientist situation. Satan is tinkering with the human beings. He's playing with them and he's seeing what the Earth will do when he causes them to sin. And then the whole thing blew up in his face, freaked him out, knocked him to the ground, he had blown himself up. He thought he was going to die by what he'd done. So God destroyed the Earth in a flood by permission.

Audience *You notice that people do the same thing. The young, our youth and the things they do, a lot of them, they do to themselves. Though it's just a supposedly fun experiment. All manner of things.*

Yes. Trying things. Yes. It says in First Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." It doesn't say that of God. It doesn't say He's walking through the streets seeking whom He may devour. And if we take like in the plague instance, is God walking through the streets seeking whom He may devour? No, He's not doing that.

So we come back to this statement. I just want to read this again to you. "When God is said to harden men's hearts, to deliver them up to a reprobate mind, to send them strong delusions, that they should believe that God is acting unrighteously - meaning He is acting against His character." (Thomas Pierce, I, p23-324 edition of 1658 as quoted in Jackson, The Providence of God, p401) That brings us to the question, how do we know what God's character is? And that brings us to what we've been studying.

"Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been so long with you and yet you have not known Me, Philip. He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, Show us the Father?'" (John 14:8-9) How long had Philip lived? Not long, 25, 35 years, 40 at the max. But probably a bit younger than Jesus, so probably in his 20s, hadn't lived very long, but He's saying to him, you have seen the Father in seeing me. So it has to be a period. And he wouldn't have seen Jesus in the first 20 years of his life. The three years of ministry. And this is why He says in John 17:4, "I have glorified You on the earth [and God's glory is His character]. I finished the work which You have given Me to do." And John 17:6, two verses later, "I have manifested Your name [which means character] to the men whom You have given Me out of the world." These men were given to Jesus when they were chosen. God. Jesus prayed to His Father and the Father showed Him who were the men who could follow Him. And from that point forward over a three year period, three and a half year period, Jesus showed them the character of the Father. And so it's by the character of Jesus on earth that we know the Father's character. And that is how we can tell in the Old Testament and other parts of the New Testament, when God is acting by permission or by action. Everything balances on the character of Jesus revealed in the New Testament. This is a beautiful way to read the Bible.

And it's astounding to see how many people are fighting against this, who refuse to come into this ark of safety, into this beautiful place that we can know God's character. This is the gospel. This is the gospel which will go to every nation, kingdom, tongue and people. Everyone will be invited to embrace and to realize that we've been reading the scriptures incorrectly. That all the passages that we have read is God's action are actually God's permission, that He has allowed man to do these things.

So action or permission, how can we tell. When God's dealings with men are in harmony with the character of Jesus, then God is taking action. When God's dealings with men are not in harmony with the character of Jesus, then God is giving permission.

That's the summary of all these things, and that's the end of our presentation. I hope that was a blessing and an encouragement. I would

encourage you to read *Christ Mission to the World*. Many, many statements talking about Jesus being the one. This is how we tell the difference. The character of Jesus, the beautiful character of Jesus, how wonderful. Alright.

And I just find this simplify things so much. So I'm very thankful to Danny, who had found those key quotes to help us pull this together. And I've expressed it in otherwise in the book *Agape* and I think I've said in the past, when God acts like us, then it is us that is being reflected back to ourselves. When God acts like Jesus, that it's God revealing His character. But this is good, action of omission, and this is going to be a good tool for us, and I pray that it'll be a blessing to you. Shall we kneel and close with pray.

Father in heaven, just thank you that you are opening our eyes to understand the scriptures, to see such beautiful light, to see how you act Father and how blind we have been and to be have to be able to listen to this information and to comprehend it and to understand it is such a privilege. I pray that everyone that listens to this presentation realizes how privileged they are to hear these words and to know this truth. For those that are in the valley of decision, I pray as they wrestle how else to explain these stories in the Old Testament, where God is telling David to number Israel and then punishes him for it? Do you take the Bible as it reads? Do you take these actions? It makes no sense unless it is by permission. We have to be able to explain these things. And Father, we pray for the character of Jesus to be revealed in our lives without violence, wholly harmless, undefiled and we trust that you will complete this work in us. We are completely helpless except for your mercy, which never fails and we thank you in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you, everyone.