

## BIBLE STUDY NOTE

# DOES GOD MICRO-MANAGE CHRISTIANS?

Over the years I have noticed a tendency to absorb a teaching of the evangelicals/pentecostals into the Church of God - fatalism - base broadly on Calvinist ideas. That is a belief that we as Christians (and the corporate Church) sort of live a pre-ordained life that God completely controls. Inevitable and unavoidable events happen to you throughout your life as God controls almost everything that occurs to you (or the Church) in a pre-planned way.

'Just let go and let God take control' they say. Yet HWA and the old WCG taught that was not the case - even in regard to The Work HWA taught that it 'goes forward on our knees' and that the efforts to do The Work (and our spiritual development) is 90% perspiration and 10% inspiration. God does not do everything for us nor does He want to - He prefers you to develop character and make wise decisions in this world by utilising His resources (the spirit, bible, prayer, fellowship etc, etc)

God knows about us and our needs, but does not plan every little detail for us. We used Eccl 9:11b as a proof for this - that God does not micro-manage our lives (just as He does not micro manage the Church or Israel). There is a macro oversight to permit us to live 'normal lives' and to develop character based on how we live it given normal circumstances, upbringing, genetics, health, Him testing us and Satan tempting us.

We all know that he tries or tests us: >But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold." (Job 23:10, ESV) Or that Satan can be permitted to wreak havoc through situations or his agents. This could go on for years without relief.

In the July 1956 Coworker Letter Herbert W Armstrong wrote of the car accident that involved the death of Dick Armstrong a few days later:

>We can see the hand of GOD in this in many ways! Had God allowed Satan to strike at myself, or Garner Ted Armstrong, it might have stopped the broadcast, because we do all the broadcasting. On the other hand, though some of you Co-Workers scattered over the country may not know it, Dick Armstrong somehow has had more LOVE and COMPASSION for those he ministers to than any of our ministers, including myself. As a natural result, there is none among us MORE LOVED by more people. Satan thought he could strike a master blow by striking at Dick Armstrong. He is director of all the overseas work around the world. If God let my life be taken, it would have to be either Dick or Garner Ted who would step into my shoes in the general direction of this whole work of God.

Satan wanted to strike at JOB. God allowed it, but said: "Behold, he is in thine hand, but save his life." Satan could go no farther than God allowed. God allowed him to go as far as possible SHORT OF DEATH. God allowed the same in this

accident with Dick. Satan can go no farther than God allows. This has been a terrible shock to those who have heard it. Even though I have been up here, away from Pasadena, some have come to me to tell me how it has shaken them up, and brought them to a reconsecration and full dedication of their lives to GOD and this work of Jesus Christ!

God DOES NOT PROMISE TO PROTECT US FROM ANY TROUBLES OR ACCIDENTS HAPPENING! He does promise to deliver us OUT of them, after they happen! "MANY are the afflictions of the righteous: but the ETERNAL delivereth him out of them all." "The angel of the ETERNAL encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them" (Psalm 34:19,7). Notice. the angel does not ALWAYS prevent the accident from happening -- though I fully believe he USUALLY does. But he "delivereth them" -- if or when they get into it!

These things do not come as punishment. Job's friends kept arguing that his affliction came as punishment for his sins. Job flatly denied this. God said Job's friends were wrong and Job was right. The Apostle Paul was afflicted, and allowed to suffer physical violence up to the very point of death. Notice Acts 14:19. READ IT! God allowed Satan to use human enemies to STONE PAUL, until his heart actually stopped beating long enough for his enemies to decide he was dead, and go away. GOD WAS NOT PUNISHING PAUL, for he had committed no sin to bring it on. He was in God's service at the time, the same as my son Dick was. Paul came as near death as Dick -- but God kept him alive and RESTORED HIM WHOLE, FOR GOD'S WORK!

Paul was not in an automobile wreck -- they didn't have automobiles then -- but PAUL WAS IN A WRECK! He said "Thrice was I beaten with rods, once I was stoned, THRICE I SUFFERED SHIP-WRECK!" This was all WHILE in God's service proclaiming the SAME GOSPEL Dick was, when Dick was allowed to get into a wreck.<

Unfortunately Dick Armstrong died a few days later.

Now, the scriptures say:

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jer 29:11)

"For it is God which WORKETH IN you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil 2:13)

"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." (Eph 1:11)

"Man's goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?" (Proverbs 20:24)

"But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand." (Isaiah 64:8)

"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5)

From the above I get the impression that by we being joined to God through the holy spirit God helps and guides our spiritual development, He does not micro-manage us - in other words God does not plan and plot every twist and turn of our lives. He does not arrange every step we take.

Also, I came across the following on a website which I concur with and which the old WCG taught:

**>Ecclesiastes: Time and chance**

Posted on September 29, 2009 by Tim Archer

Do you believe in chance? Accidents? Coincidence? Luck? I've heard Christians dismiss each of those concepts at one time or another, trying to sound spiritual as they correct someone else's speech.

"Luckily, I found it."

"Christians don't believe in luck!"

The writer of Ecclesiastes believed in chance/fortune/destiny/... however you choose to translate it. Fact is, a lot of our versions avoid translating these terms, although most translate Ecclesiastes 9:11 something as follows:

"I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favor to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all." (Ecclesiastes 9:11)

Reading through Ecclesiastes, we can see that the writer believes that some things just happen. They happen to the wise and the foolish, the good and the bad, the strong and the weak.

God hasn't chosen to move us around like pawns, plotting out every movement along the way. There is room for time and chance to play a part in our lives. Does that mean God isn't in control? No, it doesn't. It means that he has chosen to give men free will, to allow his universe to act within certain guidelines.

Sometimes after an accident, people say, "God was with them and they weren't hurt." Does that mean that if they had been hurt that God wasn't with them? We know that's not true, yet our way of speaking can lead to heartache for many. In this world, time and chance play a part in our lives. That's one of the messages of Ecclesiastes.<

So not all that happens to us is God for-ordained. Most events in our little fleshly lives is just human events. God can intervene if He so wishes; or Satan may attack us; or we might bring tribulations upon ourselves by making wrong decisions. Or others might. The bottom line is this: God does not micro-manage us.

Sometimes we can stand back and not go through or around obstacles because we think that the obstacle is God's will. We don't know until it is tested. HWA hammered through obstacles until he won. He just used the various trials to build the Work and character).

Some would like us to be passive little school boys (and misused Scriptures to this end) who must helplessly rely on God for every little thing, rather than He being your Father who broadly guides and oversees us, assisting us through our little lives.

There is little worse than micro-management.

