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Who's in Charge?

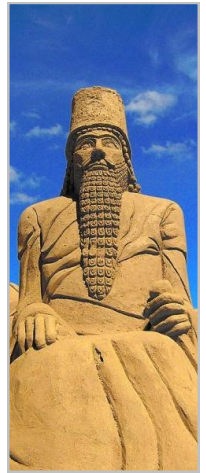
Since the time that Donald Trump was elected president not a day passes without someone questioning his ability to be in the Whitehouse. You can barely switch on the TV, tune into the radio or pick up a newspaper without hearing or seeing reasons to ridicule him. The criticisms stem not only from within the United States, but emanate from all over the world including our own land. Time and time again we are told he is not fit to be the leader of the Western world or to be the most powerful man on the planet. Yet, that is what he is. Some people are filled with anger at this fact. Others pour scorn on him. Fear at what he might do is however the most common emotion.



This brings us to a very important question – who do we think is really in charge of this world and all its affairs? Perhaps some think no-one is in control. Others may believe that this world is a place where power constantly changes hands. A few even subscribe to the theory that a small elite group of people are behind all the political scenes and they really “pull the strings.”

The Bible, on the other hand is very clear about where supreme power, infinite wisdom and sovereign purpose really lies. It is in the hands of the God of heaven and earth. According to the Scriptures God's sovereignty is universal. It covers all God's creatures and has no limits. It is also unchangeable. God can never cease to be sovereign nor can His sovereignty be given to anyone else. The Word of God is full of statements to this effect.

At one time the mightiest Emperor who had ever lived up to that point in human history was a man called Nebuchadnezzar. His armies were unbeaten, his power on earth beyond dispute and his 'Hanging Gardens of Babylon' one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. But, he was humiliated by God. His kingdom was taken from him and then given back by the power of God. At that point he spoke these words:



Nebuchadnezzar

“...I blessed the Most High and praised and honoured Him who lives forever, for His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are

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accounted as nothing, and He does according to His will amongst the host of heaven and amongst the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand or say to Him, 'What have you done?' Daniel 4:34-35.

Similarly, Psalm 115:3 records, ***"Our God is in the heavens; He does all that He pleases."*** And the prophet Isaiah wrote of God, ***"My council shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purposes,"*** Isaiah 46:10
Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, stated: ***"The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble."*** Proverbs 16:4

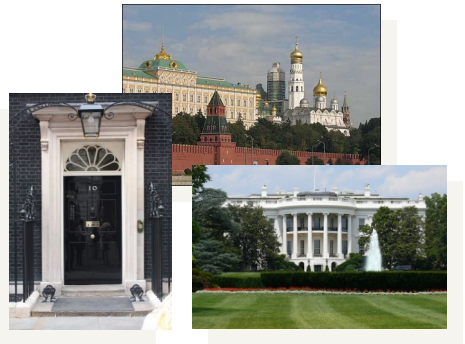
These are truly momentous statements. They point us to the reality that, while humans can be taken by surprise, God is never wrong-footed. He has no unexpected emergencies. Hilary Clinton and her supporters may have been shocked at Trump's victory. They may have been stunned into paralysis, but God was not. Likewise, God is not re-writing His plans for the future of Europe following the Brexit vote.



All things are subject to His control. All things are moving in accord with His eternal purposes. The apostle Paul noted this in Ephesians 1:11 when he said God works out all things, ***"according to the council of His will."*** More specifically, King David tells us: ***"For kingship belongs to the Lord and He rules over the nations."*** Psalm 22:28

Many believe that God, if He is there at all, is but a far distant Spectator taking no immediate hand in the affairs of this earth.

As far as this world is concerned man is the measure of all things. Now it is true that man has a will, but so has God. It is true that man is endowed with power, but God is all-powerful. Ultimately, man is the creature, God is the Creator. Endless ages before man first saw the light of day or there was a world for him to walk on the Mighty God existed. He made His plans and, being infinite in power, His purposes cannot be withstood or thwarted by the creatures of His own hands.



It is God who puts rulers on their thrones. He alone sets the span of their reigns and the expanse of their accomplishments. He establishes empires and determines the course of dynasties as it pleases Him. This being true, Christians can look to the future with confidence regardless of who sets foot in the Whitehouse, the Kremlin or 10 Downing Street.

Christians can be assured that God works in the affairs of this earth for their benefit. Romans 8:28 emphatically declares: ***"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose."*** Paul then goes on to say: ***"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be***

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able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom 8: 38-39

The supreme demonstration of God's love towards mankind and the greatest evidence there could ever be of His intervention in human affairs was of course His plan to redeem us from our sins by the perfect life and death of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross. This event too was planned by God in His sovereign power from before time began. Ephesians 1:4-5 explains this truth clearly: ***"even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will."*** God was not taken by surprise by the turn of events in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve sinned. He did not have to remedy an unforeseen calamity. Instead He already had salvation planned to perfection and He controlled the affairs of this world to enable His plan to be fulfilled.

Some people may find what is written here too incredible to believe. Once again God's Word responds to such unbelief: ***"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."*** Isaiah 55:8-9.

How different is the God of the Bible from the God the western world of today would have us believe in. I invite you to search the Scriptures and see if the things written of in this short article are not so.

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of His glory with great joy, to the only God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority before all time and now and forever. Amen." Jude 24-25

The Meaning of Easter

Jesus Christ is a friend indeed
For all those who are in need.
No greater love than this was shown
That a man lay down His life for His own.

God's plan and purpose, all fulfilled
This is what our God Had willed.
He led a life so humble here
A span of three and thirty year.

Betrayed and denied by two of His own
The others deserted Him, to stand alone.
A hurried trial and beaten then
On the cross He died for sinful men.

'Crucify! Crucify!' the people did shout
Barabbas the prisoner Pilate let out.
Christ's hands and feet were nailed to the
tree
After hours He died for you and for me.

The powers that be nailed Him to a tree
So that His life would no longer be.
Not a word did he utter nor did He moan
this was to redeem a people; for His own.

'It is finished' was his cry
Some of those around Him asked, 'why?'
Only He the son of God, our sins could pay
Surely no innocent man deserved to die this
way.

A crown of thorns was placed upon His head
But on the third day He arose victorious from
the dead.

He now is ascended to His home up above
Worthy to wear the crown 'King of Love.'

By David McCombe

Food for thought

There always seems to be a constant need to go to the shops to buy more bread and milk.



No matter how much of it is bought, in just a few days the fridge will be empty and there will be nothing to pour on the cereal or to make the sandwiches with. If the food does somehow manage to last that long, then it unfortunately still becomes inedible, as the milk turns sour and the bread goes mouldy. They never last as long as we would like.

If someone were able to produce a type of bread that did not go mouldy or stale, and was just as good to eat one day or one hundred days after we bought it, then they would be millionaires from the discovery. Our need of bread today is extremely important in our society, and it's a food we definitely miss whenever we run out of it.

In the first Century AD, when Jesus was alive, bread was even more important to the general public, being a staple food of the people of Israel.



In John Chapter 6, Jesus preached to a crowd of over 5000 people. They became hungry and wanted food, so Jesus performed a miracle, turning five loaves of bread and two

fish into enough food to satisfy everyone there.

The people were not content, and they sought out Jesus the very next day and persistently asked Him to make more bread, so that they could get another feed, and be amused by his miracles. To be blunt, they wanted nothing more from Jesus than food and a show.

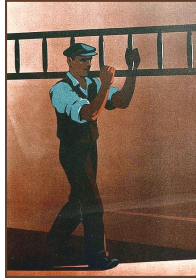
But Jesus had come for a much greater purpose, for He told them, "Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you... I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

Whenever we eat and drink it is not long until we will hunger and thirst again, but Jesus didn't come to earth to fix our physical issues, he came to fix a much greater spiritual issue—our sin, which keeps us separated from God. It is an issue that we cannot fix by ourselves. We need someone else to come and save us. Just like the Israelites who were hungry and relied on Jesus to give them physical bread, the Bible tells us that we are spiritually dead, and rely on Jesus to give us the bread of life to revive us. Jesus explained to the Israelites how this was to happen, "Everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life." We receive the bread of life by asking Jesus to remove the punishment of our sins that is due, and make us pure in His sight. This removes the separation from God that we otherwise cannot fix by ourselves, allowing us to enjoy eternal life with Him. Some of the Israelites listening to Jesus were content just to look at the physical level of Jesus' power, and ignored His spiritual importance. They received their food and entertainment, but completely missed the true importance of His mission on earth. Others believed His message and trusted in Him, gaining their salvation, and beginning a relationship with Him that would last for eternity.

Village People.

The Wee Man

"Where's Willie Harn goin' wi' the leather?"
Or in Queen's English: Where's Willie Harron going with the ladder? The question was asked as Willie marched up 'the back road' or the Claudy road. He was easily the smallest man in the village at four foot something.



The largest mas was Rev. Canon Samuel Chadwick, who was at least 6½ feet, and of course resided in the rectory at the top of the brae; on the said Claudy road. Canon Chadwick had an Austin 12, which he drove, more or less, from the back seat.

The answer to the question was provided by the local wag who was on the scene:

"Ah! Sure he's goin up tae cut Chadwick's hair"

Yes, Dunamanagh like most towns and villages, had and has its fair share of characters.

The Comedian

There was the straight faced comedian, who when in hospital, tried a joke as the consultant was doing his rounds with a group of student doctors. When the learned doctor tapped his right knee to test his reflexes, up went the left knee in mid-air; smirks all round from student-doctors.

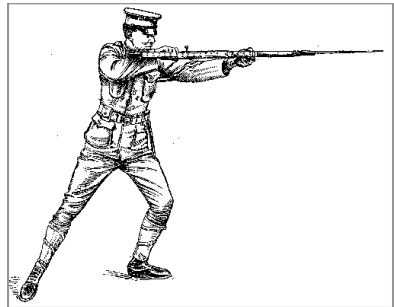


The Bouncing Breadman

Then there was the Brewsters breadman who would demonstrate the 'Monkey Dance', i.e. rooting all round the shop on his hunkers, non-stop.

The Warrior

This was the World War One veteran who loved to demonstrate the bayonet-charge with a brush shaft. A bag of meal was the unlucky German stabbed to the accompaniment of blood-curdling yells.

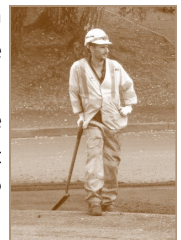


Knights of the Road

First the farmer, who came frae the toon 'well-oiled', every Saturday night on his wee Fergie, at approximately 9:00 p.m. and drove a charmed four miles to his lonely farm. Never once caught by the constable on his bike.



Then the road repair man who was subject of a riddle posed by a local wit. Question: What goes up the road and down the road but never touches the road? Answer: Yer man's shovel.



Village People.

Lastly the farmer who came late in life to driving. On one occasion, when turning right into his long lane, he was surprised to hear a bang and see another car implanted onto his right wing. When accused of giving no signal his indignant reply was, "Sure everybody knows I aye turn in here"

The Greatest Person

Yes indeed; a variety of characters and personalities made like us all, in the likeness of the Great Person who created us all. We find them fascinating and lovable. We hold them in our memories with fondness and a smile. Each one unique and priceless.

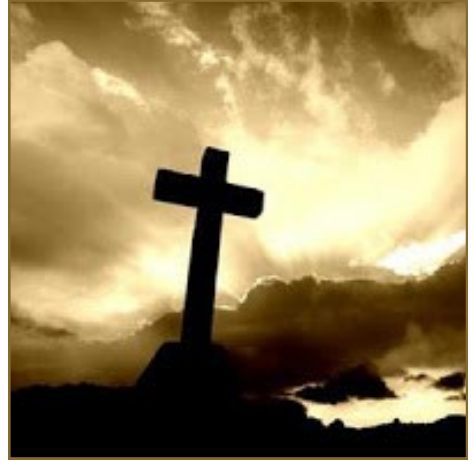
And that is God's opinion too, for we read these precious words: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life". We look kindly at the faults and eccentricities of our neighbours, because we ourselves are by no means perfect. God however sees us as we are; riddled with sin and guilty by His perfect standard. But He does not leave us to face the music alone. He has poured out His love in the person of His Son, the perfect character.

Keeping Accounts

Years ago the shops had a unique accounting system. The bills which they owed their suppliers were put on a wire hook and hung from a nail on a roof beam, until paid for in full.



Paul tells us that Christ has done the opposite.



He has taken the bills on which our sins are recorder and nailed them to His cross, thus cancelling the written accusations which are against us. He has paid our debts. However, there are two problems which keep us from benefiting from Christ's sacrifice.

Firstly we find it difficult to admit our guilt.

Secondly, we are too proud to accept the pardon. We spurn His work and offer our own poor efforts and sin-stained 'virtues' instead.

The Great Choice

Is God, "who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all", pleased with us? My friend He is angry! How dare you throw His love and His mercy back in His face! You will surely pay in full.

C.S. Lewis says: 'There are two kinds of people in the end: Those who say to God, "Thy will be done" and those to whom God says, "Thy will be done," All that are in Hell choose Hell.'

What is your choice?

My Testimony.

I grew up in a Christian home and I always remember going to Sunday school and church, Good News Club and Youth Fellowship. You could say I wasn't overly enthusiastic, but often I went because my parents went and it was almost a habit.

When I was about 7 or 8 I really began to understand all that I was being taught and I knew my need of Christ in my life, but still I never really took my salvation seriously. I went through all the motions, went to church, prayed, read my Bible and I thought this was enough to make me a Christian. A lot of the time I thought I was a Christian I never truly believed in Christ for eternal life.

It was around the time of my 13th birthday I realised all these things were not enough. My mum was ironing and I was talking to her, and I think I was meant to be helping, but anyone that knows me well enough will know I'll talk more than help! We were talking and got onto the topic of Christ and being a Christian. She asked me a question I don't think anyone had asked me before: she asked me if I was saved? I replied that I didn't really know. I always thought I was, but I never really felt that I had a close personal relationship with Christ. The more I thought about it the more I realised that I had no real assurance of my salvation.

So my mum got out her Bible and read to me Romans 10:9 which reads: "...because; if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" and it was only

then I realised I had to have faith in Him and believe in Christ alone for my salvation. Before that point I never believed that Jesus was Lord, I never believed wholeheartedly that my salvation was due to what He had done in dying on the Cross for my sins. As the verse says, I had to believe in my heart and that's what I was missing. I knew of Him but I didn't know Him. I knew my need of Christ. I knew that I had to repent of my sins. I knew I had to let Him into my life. However, I never took all this seriously until that point.

It was then that I believed wholeheartedly in Christ and trusted in Him alone for my salvation! It was then I came to know the Lord as my personal Saviour. Once I became a Christian my life wasn't perfect, but it is so much better for knowing Christ! I've been living for Him ever since.

By Emily Bresland.

Acts 16:31

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...



Exams!

Coming up to this time of year a lot of students face exams which may (or may not) be a big deal for those sitting them. While GCSEs, A-levels and so on are important, they aren't the be all and end all. The sun will rise the following morning and life will go on, but it's still important to do what you can.

I wanted to share some verses from the Bible that I hope will help those doing exams this summer:



Firstly, the Bible says that work is good! Many of us dread work and look forward to when we get time off, but work seems more attractive when we know God meant us to work! In Genesis 2:15 we read: *"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it."*

God meant for us to have work to do, and our work should bring Him glory. This brings me to another verse, 1 Corinthians 10:31 *"So whatever you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."* We can honour God in our revision and in our day to day work in lots of ways, like being a joyful worker, not complaining about our workload. Students can glorify God by showing their gratitude for their education, which so many people in the world are deprived of.

Finally I want to share a verse about worrying. Most students will worry to some degree about their tests and exams, but in the Bible we read *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all human understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

CHURCH ACTIVITIES

Sunday	Morning Worship. (Lord's Supper)	11:00 a.m.-12:00. 12:00-12:30 p.m.
Sunday	Evening Service.	6:30-7:30 p.m.
Tuesday	Bible Study & Prayer Meeting.	8:00-9:30 p.m.
Saturday	Youth Fellowship.(see website)	7:30-9:00 p.m.
3rd Thursday of the month,	Ladies' Bible study.	8:00-9:30 p.m.

For further information on the Church please visit our website:

www.dunamanaghbaptist.org