

CHAPTER 10

What Can God Do?

1. The World We Live In

"In the beginning _____ the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). "All things were _____ by Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3). God created all things! He created the world we live in. Everything that was made was made by Him! He created the universe where we live (Nehemiah 9:6).

Not only did God create the universe, but He also sustains, upholds, maintains and keeps it going. We learn an amazing fact in Colossians 1:17 (the last part of the verse): "by Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) _____ consist ." The word "consist" means "stand together, hold together." All things are held together by the living God. Jesus Christ is the Glue that holds the universe together and that keeps every atom in its proper place. According to Hebrews 1:3, Jesus Christ is the One who is "upholding _____ by the Word of His power."

What can God do? He can create a universe, and He can maintain the universe which He has created. He not only created our world and all that is in it, but as the song says, "HE'S GOT THE WHOLE WORLD IN HIS HANDS!"

2. The World And Those Living In It

Suppose you were to get a job at MacDonald's or some other fast food restaurant. You would soon find that there is a person in authority over you who is called THE MANAGER. This person is in charge of the workers! He is in control of the people who work in the restaurant. He is also in charge of the food and how many hamburgers are made. He is in charge of the big details (such as firing a person) and also in charge of the little details such as seeing that someone cleans up the ice cream that fell on the floor. He is the manager over the entire restaurant.

God is the MANAGER of this universe! He is the One who is in charge of everything! He is the Person who is in control. He is in charge of when a person lives, where a person lives and how a person lives. He is the One who "worketh _____ after the counsel of His own will " (Ephesians 1:11) and who "hath done whatsoever He hath _____" (Psalm 115:3). He is the One who brings to pass that which He speaks and who does all that He purposes (Isaiah 46:10-11).

God governs and is over all that takes place. He manages the world and the people who live in it. He manages the movement of mice and men within the moments of time. He is in charge of the big details (the *men*), and He is in charge of the little details (the *mice*). Every movement (whether big or small) and every moment is under the direction and supervision of this GREAT MANAGER.

Men do not even know how big this universe is, but the MANAGER OF THE UNIVERSE knows its size, and He is able to count the number of the stars, and He even has a special name for each one (Psalm 147:4 and Isaiah 40:26).

God does a perfect job managing planet earth. He is in charge of the time a person rises to power and the time a person falls from power. Some people get into places of power by election, others by force, and others because they were born into a royal family. God is over all the affairs of

men, and He is the One who "removeth _____ and setteth up _____" (Daniel 2:21). Who rules in the kingdom of man (Daniel 4:17)?

_____ To whom does God give the kingdom and the right to rule? _____ Jesus once said to an earthly ruler, "Thou couldest have no _____ at all against me, except it were given thee from _____" (John 19:11). God is on the throne of this universe!

God governs and manages the little things as well as the big things. Not only does He know about and control the falling of a king, but He also knows about and controls the falling of a _____ (Matthew 10:29). Not only has God numbered the huge stars of the universe (Psalm 147:4), but what else has He numbered (Matthew 10:30)?

_____ God is totally involved in everything—in every event, every movement, and every moment of time.

As we think about God being the MANAGER of all things, we need to make a difference between what God wants (God's direct will as revealed in His Word) and what God allows (what God permits, even though it may be contrary to His revealed will). God *directs* men to do certain things as revealed in His Word. Men often fail to do as God has directed, and God *permits* them to disobey the directions. Here are some examples:

1. Adam's Fall

God made His will known.	God clearly revealed His will to Adam. He said, "Don't eat!" (Genesis 2:17).
God allowed Adam to disobey His will.	God permitted and allowed Adam to eat and fall into sin (Genesis 3:6). God did not stop him from eating. God allowed this tragedy in His overall plan, and God is even able to use the fall of man to bring glory to Himself. God can devise a plan of salvation whereby fallen men can be saved. In fact, God devised this plan of salvation even before Adam fell into sin. Adam's sin did not take God by surprise.

2. Man's Salvation

God makes His will known.	What is God's will for every person on the face of the earth (1Timothy 2:4)? _____
God allows men to disobey His will.	Even though God wants all men to be saved and has commanded them to be saved, does God still allow most men to reject Christ (Matthew 7:13-14)? _____ The same God who permitted men to crucify His Son is the One who today allows men to reject the Saviour. Is God taken by surprise by the unbelief of men? _____ In His overall plan, has God made a place for those who refuse to be saved (Revelation 20:15)? _____

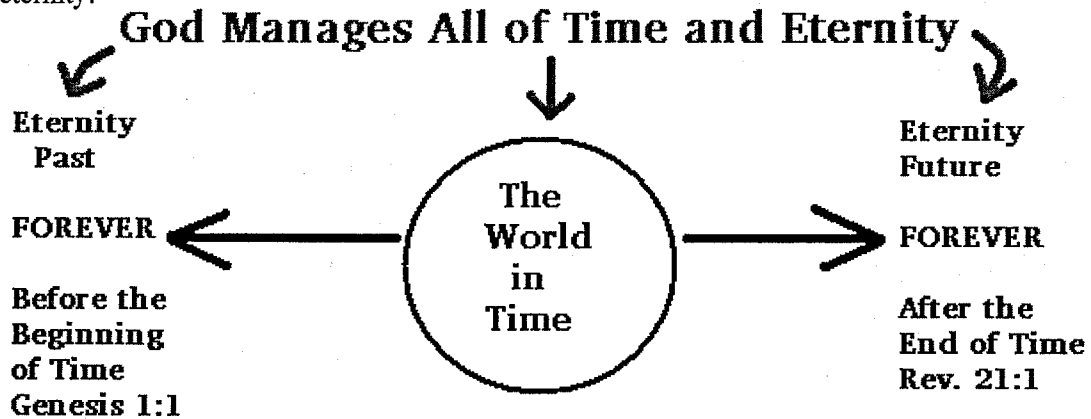
3. The Believer's Responsibility

<p>God makes His will known.</p>	<p>What is God's will for every believer (1 Thessalonians 5:18)? _____</p>
<p>God allows believers to disobey His will.</p>	<p>Even though God wants the believer to be thankful and has commanded us to be thankful, are there times when we still murmur and complain? _____ Does our unthankful attitude take God by surprise? _____ In His overall plan for the believer, has God made provision for our sin—even for the sin of being unthankful (1 John 1:9; 2:1)? _____</p>

May we be found doing God's direct will as revealed in His Word. When we fail to do as God has directed, we can be thankful that God knows all about our failure and that He is able to pick up the pieces and get us back on our feet in a way that will bring glory to His name!

3. Beyond This World

God inhabits E _____ (Isaiah 57:15). God was BEFORE TIME, and God is DURING TIME, and God shall be AFTER TIME! God is FROM E _____, and God is TO E _____ (Psalm 90:2). He is the God who manages eternity. Sometimes we forget that time is only a speck in the middle of eternity:



So it is true with my own life—God manages my life.

God was here **BEFORE I WAS BORN** (Jeremiah 1:5 and compare Job 38:4).

God is here **WHILE I LIVE** (Psalm 31:35).

God will be here **AFTER I DIE** (Hebrews 9:27).

The God of eternity surrounds me in time!

God has a long range view! God sees *beyond* my little life. God sees from eternity! God has a purpose for me which goes on forever. Death is not the end. We need to see *beyond* death with an eye on eternity. According to Psalm 90:10, the average life span is about _____ years (and a few people even live to 80 or beyond), but what is this in comparison to God's life (Psalm 90:2)?

We need to have an eye on eternity. Consider Romans 8:18. Suppose we could add up all of the suffering, pain, problems, disappointments, etc. of our entire life! Not just the problems of one week, but of an entire life (about 70 years worth). God tells us to take the sufferings of this life and compare it with the glory of eternity. Is there any comparison?

God manages the nations and kingdoms of the world. Nations come and go. The Babylonian Empire lasted for a while and then it was gone. The same was true for the great kingdoms of Greece and Rome. The United States is over 200 years old, and someday it shall be gone. God has a purpose in all of these things! God is after something. God has a plan that He is working out for His glory. The same is true for my little life.

4. The World of Me (My World)

What about my little world? What is my place and purpose in the middle of eternity? Where do I fit in?

The living God is the only One who can save a soul (Luke 19:10).

The living God is the only One who can give life (John 10:28).

The living God is the only One who can give full purpose and meaning to life. (John 10:10).

God's purpose for me involves three things:

1) MY BEING ("I am !")

God wants me to be what He created me to be!

2) MY BELONGING ("I belong !")

God wants me to belong to Himself!

3) MY BECOMING ("I am becoming something!")

God is after something. There is a real place and purpose for me. There is meaning to why I am here and where I am going and to what I am to become and what I am becoming.

Sometimes we look at life, and it doesn't make much sense. We look at old people, we watch them die, and then we ask "Is that all there is?" We have missed the meaning and purpose behind it all.

There is living and dying, killing and healing, weeping and laughing, war and peace, a time to be born and a time to die (see Ecclesiastes 3:1-8), but God has made everything beautiful in His _____ (Ecclesiastes 3:11). God is after something. In the middle of it all, God has a purpose, and God has put eternity in the heart of man! As I see the living and dying, crying and laughing, joy and sorrow, I need to remember that in the middle of all these things God has a purpose. The great MANAGER is working out His wonderful plan for this world and FOR ME!

5. Succeeding in the World

Only the living God can provide GRACE to meet my needs:

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of _____ that we may obtain mercy and find "_____ to _____ in time of _____" (Hebrews 4:16). God has GRACE—all the provisions and resources that are necessary to meet all needs. The world does not have what it takes to meet my deepest needs, but God does. All the money in the world will not meet my greatest needs (ask any millionaire!) but the living God will.

GOD HAS THE GRACE THAT I NEED...

For Problems – He is the great Problem-Solver (1 Cor. 10:13).

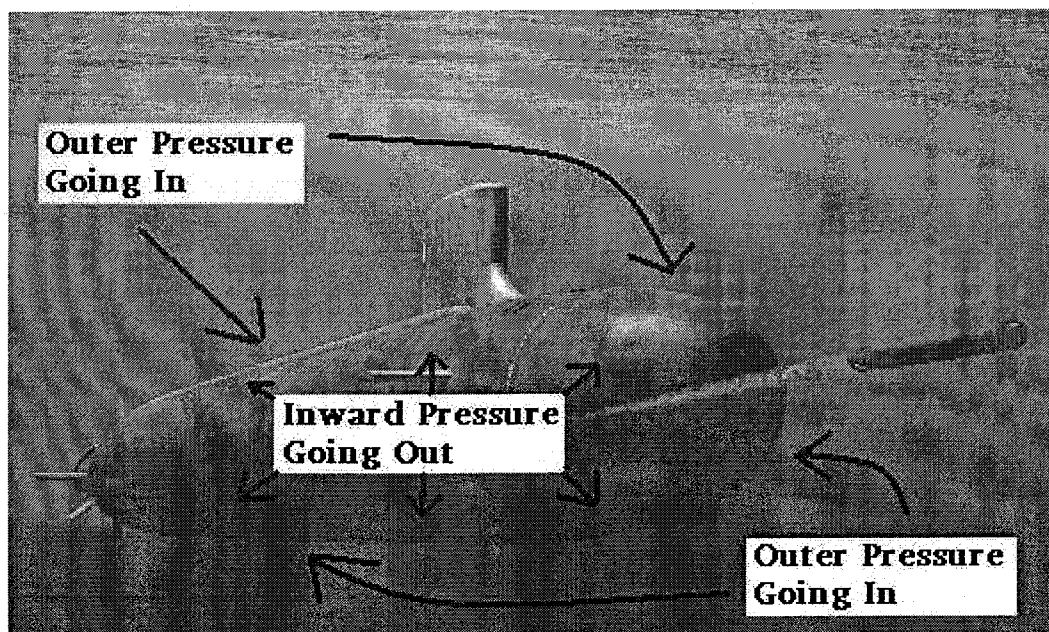
For Pain – God gives power to *cope* with pain (to handle the pain and fight successfully against it) no matter how difficult this fight might be.

God gives power to *contain* the pain. Pain often causes us to lose our perspective (we fail to see pain as we should). God has a purpose in allowing pain, and God has a message He wants to teach us through pain. We need to be careful that we do not lose the message of pain. For example, if I have a toothache, I need to contain the pain and realize that it is only one tooth that is hurting. Not all my teeth hurt, and certainly my arms and legs do not hurt. I need to contain the pain and keep it where it belongs so that I see it correctly and learn from it and deal with it properly.

God gives power to *capture* the message of pain. God wants me to capture pain and learn from it. God sent the pain for a reason, and I need to take advantage of this opportunity to learn. What did Paul learn through his painful experience in 2 Corinthians 12:5-10?

For Pressures – Pressures come from without (think of difficulties and trials and problems that you might be facing even now).

Think of a diver or a submarine going into deep water. The deeper down the man or the boat goes, the greater is the outward pressure. There must be enough inward pressure going the other way, or else there could be serious problems:



God is able to strengthen the inside of a believer so that the outside pressures do not crush him or cause him to explode! The Bible says, "we are troubled (pressured) on every side, yet not distressed" (2 Corinthians 4:8). This verse means that we are like a balloon that is squeezed on every side, yet God does not allow the balloon to burst! The outer pressures are from *Sin, Satan* and the world *system*. The inner pressures are the strength that the Lord God gives to His believers! God cannot be pressured or pushed around. Neither can the believer be pressured or pushed around as long as he is trusting in God's presence.

GOD HAS GIVEN GRACE...

- To Enlighten Me** –to help me to perceive and understand
- To Encourage Me** –to help me to make progress and go forward
- To Enable Me** –to give me the power to cope with problems, pain and pressures
- To Enlarge Me** –to give me bigger shoulders for bigger jobs and to give me greater privilege and responsibility (and a greater involvement in what God is doing) – 2 Corinthians 6:11.
- To Make Me Endure** –God wants me to endure and persist so that I am able to hang in there and keep on keeping on! I am to stay in there and not give up through thick or thin, hard or easy. I am to grow in the Lord and *keep on growing*.

FINALLY I MUST...

Find my place in God's wonderful plan.

Fit into time and find that God's grace is enough.

Fulfill my little part in light of eternity.

Finish the task that God has for me (2 Timothy 4:7) even as the Lord Jesus perfectly fit into God's plan and fulfilled His will, and at the end He cried out, "IT IS _____" (John 19:30).