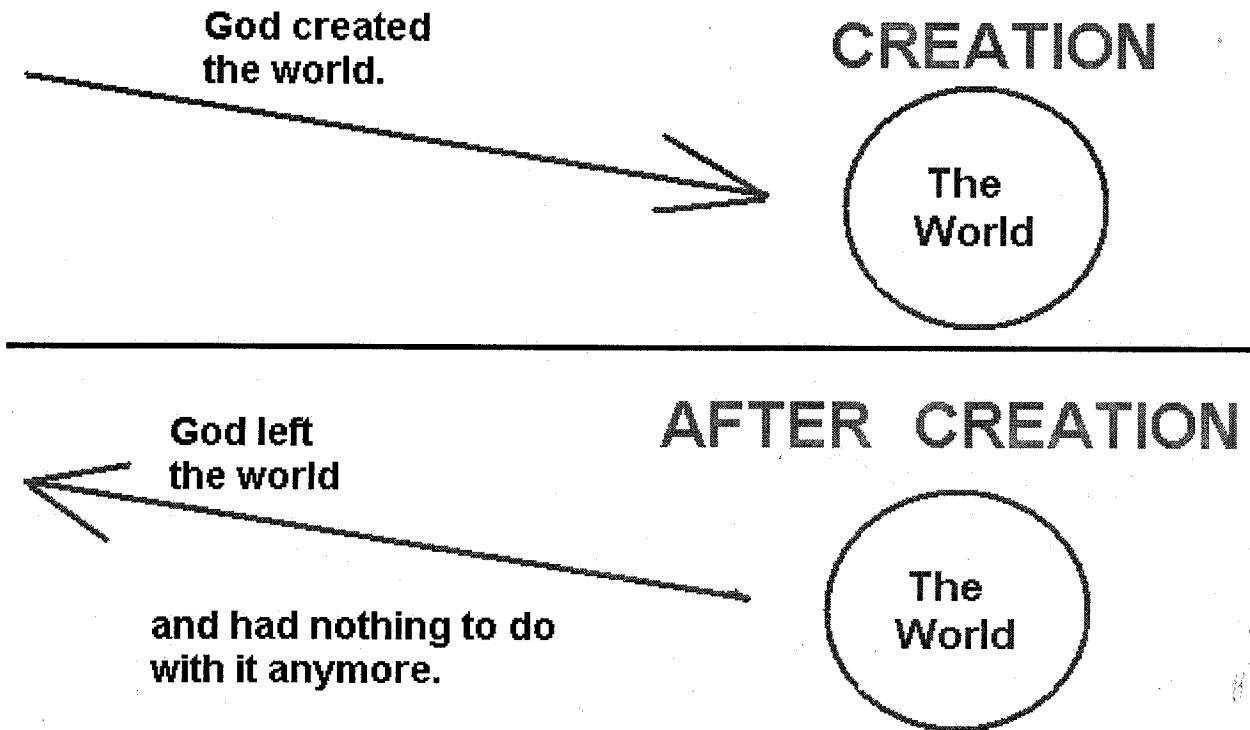


CHAPTER 4

THE MANAGER OF THE UNIVERSE

People sometimes have strange ideas about things. There are some people who believe that God created the universe, but then He left His creation and had nothing more to do with it:



Do you think that the Creator really did this? _____ This would be like a mother giving birth to a baby and then leaving the baby alone and having nothing more to do with it. Without the mother's care, would the baby be able to survive for very long? _____ Without God's care, do you think the world would be able to survive for very long? _____ Read Acts 17:28. Without God's care, how long would *you* survive?

God not only *made* the world but He also *maintains* and *manages* the world. He takes care of this world and the people who live in it. 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!"

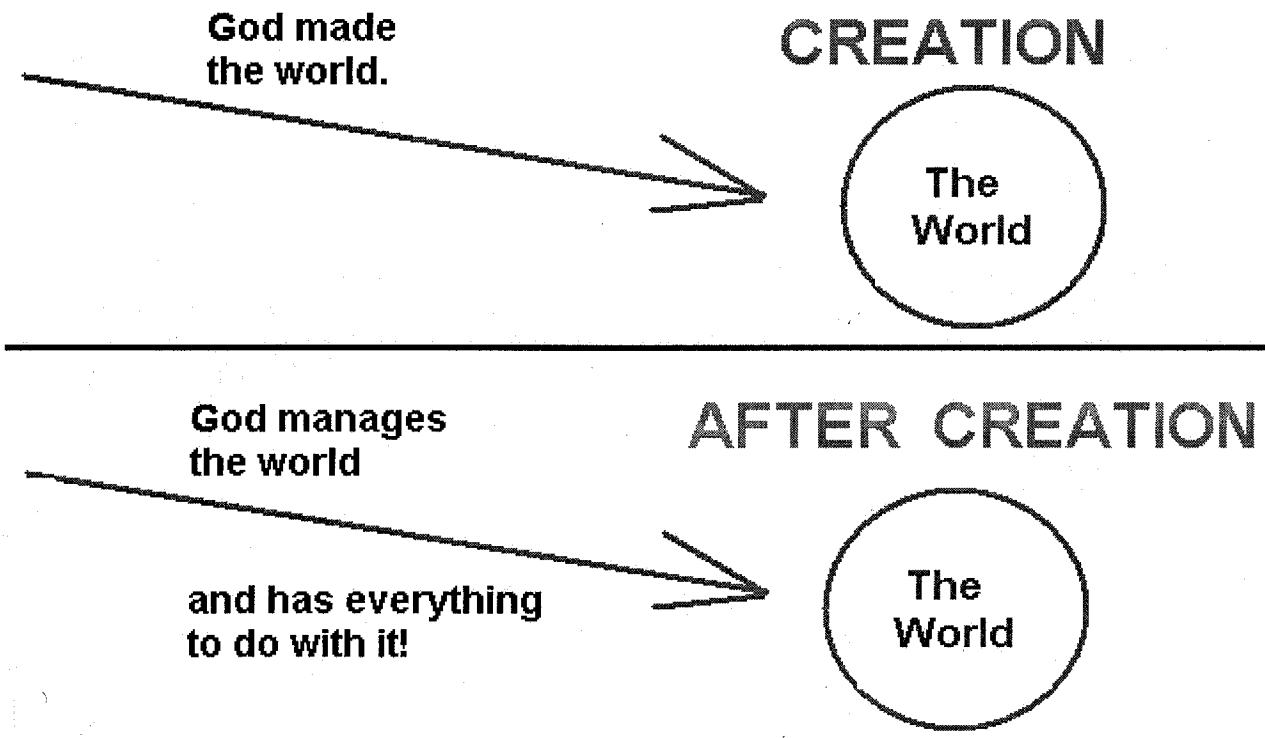
What is a Manager?

Suppose you were to visit a fast food restaurant where hamburgers and chicken sandwiches and other food items are sold. You would find many people working at the restaurant, but there would be one person who would be in charge of everything. This person is called the **manager**. The manager directs the people who work in the restaurant. He tells them what to do and he makes sure they do what he tells them to do. He is also in charge of the food and how many hamburgers are made. He must make sure that everything runs smoothly and well and that the customers are satisfied. He is in charge of the big details such as firing a person or seeing that the money gets to the bank. He is also in charge of the little details such as seeing that someone

cleans up the drink that was spilled on the floor. He is the manager over the entire restaurant.

A baseball team also has a **manager**. This is the man who is in charge of all the players and who tells them what to do and where to play. He is the one who makes the important decisions such as when to put in a new pitcher or when to put in a pinch hitter. The manager runs the team.

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 not a distant God who is far away and has nothing to do with our world. He is a God who has *everything* to do with our world. God is deeply involved with everything that takes place in our world and in each of our lives.



"Whatsoever the LORD _____, that did He in heaven and in earth" (Psalm 135:6)

God is on the Throne!

God is the supreme Ruler of the Universe. He is the M_____ H_____ God (Genesis 14:18-19). There is no one higher or greater than God! Is He higher and greater than all other gods (Psalm 95:3; 96:4)? _____ All of the other gods are nothing but I _____ (Psalm 96:5). These are gods that people have thought of in their own minds and made with their own hands. How many true Gods are there (Isaiah 44:6,8)? _____ This one and only God rules **over all**: "The LORD hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth _____" (Psalm 103:19). Does the President of the United States rule over all? _____ Does the most powerful man on earth rule over all? _____

Man is on the Throne by Permission

Often you need to get your parents' permission to do certain things. Did you know that rulers and kings and presidents need God's permission to sit on the throne and be in power? They may not realize it, but they are in power **only** because God has allowed them to be.

Jesus once said to an earthly ruler, "Thou couldest have no _____ at all against me, except it were given thee from _____" (John 19:11). Rulers can have no power unless God gives them power. If God gives them power, do you think God can also take away their power? _____ The Bible says that God is the One who "removeth _____ and setteth up _____" (Daniel 2:21). Who rules in the kingdom of men (Daniel 4:17)? _____ God is on the throne of this universe!

God Manages Big Things and Little Things

God governs and manages the little things as well as the big things. Which event would seem bigger to you—if the President were to drop dead or if a bird were to drop dead?

_____ Not only does God know about and control the falling of a king or president, but God also knows about and controls the falling of a _____ (Matthew 10:29). Which is bigger and more important to you – a huge star or one hair on a person's head? _____

God has numbered all of the huge stars of the universe (see Psalm 147:4); what else has He numbered (Matthew 10:30)? _____ God is totally involved in everything, whether small or great.

God is also totally involved with *you*. Every day you sit down and rise up, and you do this many times. Probably you do not think very much about it. Is God involved with your sitting down and rising up (Psalm 139:2)? _____ In what other ways is God involved with you? (Psalm 139:1-4)? _____

God Manages the Good Angels

God is over all of the good angels. The Bible says, "And let all the _____ of God _____ Him" (Hebrews 1:6). The good angels worship and serve God, and they carry out His will. Do the angels tell God what to do? _____ Does God tell the angels what to do? _____

God Manages the Bad Angels

The bad angels are also called **demons** or **unclean spirits**. Read Mark 5:8-13. Was Jesus in control of these unclean spirits or were they in control of Him?

_____ Did they tell Jesus what to do or did Jesus tell them what to do? _____ They needed Jesus' permission for everything they did!

The leader of the bad angels is Satan, the devil. Read Job chapter 1. Did Satan need permission from the Lord to do what he did? _____ What was Satan not allowed to do (Job 1:11-12)? _____

_____ Read Job chapter 2. Did Satan need God's permission to do what he did? _____ What was Satan *not* allowed to do? Was Satan allowed to kill Job (Job 2:6)? _____ Even though Satan is called "the Prince (Ruler) of this _____" (John 16:11), God is the Ruler of Satan. Satan cannot do one thing without

God's permission! Satan is only a creature, created by God (a fallen, sinful creature). He is God's puppet and God holds all the strings!

God Manages the Good Acts of Men

We are not saved *by* good works (Ephesians 2:8-9) but we are saved *unto* good works (Ephesians 2:10). Good works should follow salvation. Good works are for saved people, not for unsaved people. Unsaved people might try to do good works, but this will not help them to be saved. What is the only work that Jesus told unsaved people to do (John 6:28-29)?

Every saved person is **God's workmanship**, "created in Christ Jesus unto _____ which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). Even today (if we are saved) God has good works already *planned* and *prepared* for us! God knows exactly how He wants to use us and where He wants to use us and when He wants to use us. We need to make sure that we keep our hearts right with Him so that He can work in and through us.

God Manages the Evil Acts of Men

It is easy to see how good works can be part of God's plan, but how can the evil acts of men be part of God's plan? Can God use what is bad to bring about what is good? Does God really rule over evil men?

In Genesis chapter 37 we learn about the terrible sin of Joseph's brothers. What are some of the things they did to him?

Let's see what Joseph said about their sin years later: "Ye thought _____ against me; but _____ meant it for _____" (Genesis 50:20). They meant it for evil but God meant it for good. God is so great that He was able to take the evil act of Joseph's brothers and turn it into a great blessing. The very brother that they wanted to kill ended up being the one God used to save their lives! Because of Joseph they did not perish in the great famine!

God is so great that He was able to take the worst crime ever committed by men and turn it into the greatest blessing ever known by men:

The Greatest Crime:

**MURDERING
GOD'S SON**

Acts 2:23

Acts 4:27-29



The Greatest Blessing:

SALVATION

Acts 4:12

John 3:16



Wicked men put Him on the cross but God used the cross to bring salvation to the world. They meant it for evil (these sinners tried to destroy Christ) but God meant it for good (Christ died to save sinners)!

God Works Behind the Scenes

In a play there are people on the stage, but there are other people who cannot be seen because they are working "behind the scenes." Much that God does is done "behind the scenes" and cannot be seen directly.

Read Esther 6:1-3. Mordecai the Jew was going to be put to death (Esther 5:14), but because of what happened in Esther 6:1-3 Mordecai's life was saved and the entire Jewish nation was saved from destruction. Why did these things happen this way? Was Mordecai a lucky man? Someone might say, "It just so happened that the king could not sleep on this important night. It just so happened that the king asked for the book of the chronicles to be read. It just so happened that out of all the hundreds of events recorded in these records, Mordecai's act of heroism was accidentally read. What a lucky man!" Who do you think was really responsible for this happy turn of events, **LUCK** or the **LORD**? _____ God was working quietly behind the scenes!

God is working behind the scenes today also. Even though we do not read about God in the newspaper headlines and we do not hear about God on the radio or television news reports, God is very much at work in this world.

God Manages the Elements and the Forces of Nature

There is no such thing as "**Mother Nature**," but there is a great God who rules over all of nature. The Heavenly Father is in charge of nature, not Mother Nature!

Who controls the weather? Weathermen try to predict what the weather will be, but do they control it? _____ Can they stop a hurricane from coming? _____ Can they stop a tornado? _____ God controls all of these things: "Fire, and hail; _____ and vapour; stormy _____ **fulfilling His Word**" (Psalm 148:8). Read Mark 4:39-41. Why were the disciples so amazed? Because "even the _____ and the _____ obey Him" (Mark 4:41)! Next time there is a gusty storm, try telling the wind to be still and see what happens!

Everything's Going God's Way

There used to be a popular song which said, "I've got a beautiful feeling everything's going my way." The believer is able to say, "I've got such blessed assurance **everything's going God's way!**" God is managing this world very well. In fact, God has made no mistakes!

People have wrong ideas about God. Some people think of God as being all worried about this world and all its problems. They think that God looks down from heaven at the headlines in the newspapers all over the world and says, "This is terrible! Things are not going the way I want them to go!"

The Bible puts an end to such wrong thinking. In Psalm 115:3 we read these words: "But our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath _____." God is the One who is in charge, and He does what He pleases. He always does what is right (Genesis

18:25). "He hath done all things W _____" (Mark 7:37).

God's Personal Involvement

God is involved with this world and God is involved with *you*. How involved are you with God? God cares about this world, about the sparrows, about the hairs on your head, and most of all He cares about *you*. How much do you care about God? Do you care enough about God to read His Word? to talk to Him in prayer? to thank Him throughout the day for the way He manages everything?

"This is my Father's world, O let me never forget That though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is the Ruler yet!" --Maltbie Babcock

Has God started a good work in you (Philippians 1:6)? ____ Is God going to finish that work which He has begun (Philippians 1:6)? ____ Do you have a part to play? Are you supposed to do anything (see Philippians 2:12)? ____ Does God have a part? Is God right there to help you? What is God doing **in you** (Philippians 2:13)?

IN THE LONG RUN

