

WHAT GOD CAN DO AND WHAT HE WILL DO

Text: Isaiah 59:1-2

INTRO: Too often folks approach the subjects of what God can do & what He will do as if they were always one & the same. A popular song of several years ago stated, "It is no secret what God can do. What He's done for others, He'll do for you." But it ain't necessarily so.

We who are persuaded that in our day God is active only within the framework of His own natural laws, are accused of limiting God's power. When we insist that one must believe & obey the gospel, we are accused of not believing God has the power to save the disobedient.

Such accusations are unfounded. They are false. God's power is not in question. His will is what is under consideration. It is not a matter of what God could do. It is a matter of what He has promised to do.

I. THE BIBLE RECOGNIZES GOD AS ALMIGHTY, ALL POWERFUL AND ALL WISE.

A. God to Abraham: And when Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to Abram & said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me & be blameless. (Gen 17:1).

B. Moses prayed: O Lord God, do not destroy Your people & Your inheritance, which You have redeemed thru Your greatness, whom You have brot out of Egypt with a mighty hand... Yet they are Your people & Your inheritance, whom You brot out by Your mighty power & by Your outstretched arm. (Deut 9:26, 29).

C. The psalmist sang: Great is our Lord & mighty in power. His understanding is infinite. (Psalm 147:5).

II. BUT THE FACT IS, GOD DOES NOT DO EVERYTHING HE COULD DO.

A. He could have turned stones into Jews, Matt. 3:9.

1. But He promised to turn Gentiles into descendents of Abraham.

I was sought by those who did not ask for Me; I was found by those who did not seek Me. I said, "Here I am, here I am to a nation that was not called by my name. (Isa 65:1). Rom 10:20.

I will say to those who were not My people, "You are My people;" & they shall say, "You are my God" (Hos 2:23) Rom 9:25

2. And what He promised, He did. Gal 3:26-29, For you are all sons of God thru faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

B. Jesus could have turned stones into bread, MT 4:2-4--but it was not God's will, & He did not do it.

C. Jesus could have avoided Calvary but He desired rather to do God's will & fulfill God's word.

Matt 26:52-54, But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, & He will provide Me with more than 12 legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?"

D. Thus, neither the Father nor the Son did all that their infinite power would have allowed them to do--but they did according to the will expressed in the word of God.

III. GOD DOESN'T DO EVERYTHING HE HAS THE POWER TO DO--BUT HE DOES EVERYTHING HE HAS PROMISED TO DO.

A. Noah & the flood, Gen. 6:13-18.

1. God could have lifted Noah & his family above the water without an ark.

2. He could have enabled them to live under water.

3. He could have floated them above the flood on a raft made of lead.

4. But He did what He said He would.

B. The bronze serpent. Num. 21:5-9.

1. God could have told Moses to skin a cat & sew it to the door of the tabernacle.

2. He could have saved Israel 1,000 different ways—but He did what He said He would do.

C. Likewise today, God could save men from sin without requiring faith on their part—but He has said:

If you do not believe that I am [He] you will die in your sins. (John 8:24). See also vs. 21.

D. God could justify men by faith only. He has that power. But He has clearly said He will not do so.

You see then that a man is justified by works, & not by faith only. (James 2:24).

E. God could save sinners without N.T. baptism as He did in O.T. times. From Adam & Eve to the thief on the cross, God dealt with me according to the instructions He had given them.

1. He could save us as He did Noah.
2. He could have commanded us to look upon a bronze serpent to be saved. If He had done so, we would be extremely foolish to argue with Him about it.

3. But he has promised to save us when we believe & obey His will as revealed in the N.T.
MK 16:15-16; Acts 2:36-38

F. God could insure the Christian a life free from trouble, free from all problems & difficulties--but He has not promised to do so. To the contrary, He has revealed that difficulties are good for us & that while we are in the flesh we shall continue to experience them.

James 1:2-3, My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

Psa. 119:71, It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes.

John 16:33, These things I have spoken to you that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.

G. Some day, God will fulfill His promises re the 2nd coming of Jesus, the resurrection of the dead & final judgment.

1. Some ask how can Christ's coming be visible all over the world. I don't know, but I believe God can handle it.

2. How can God raise dead bodies after they have been absorbed into the earth, fertilized plants, been eaten by animals, etc. Again, I will leave the details & mechanics with God. But be assured that not only is He **able** to do what He has promised, but that He **will** do.