

DOES MAN OR GOD CONTROL HISTORY?

by Robert Schmid

The question “Does Man or God control History?” is the type of question which usually results in very lengthy discussions, at the least, or in outright disagreement and arguing if continued for too long.

There need not be any controversy if approached from a Biblical standpoint, for *God is not the author of confusion.*

First, let us consider the relationship between history and man, and then the relationship between history and God.

Is man capable to control, determine and influence history? The answer is a definite YES. Let us consider why.

When God created man He said: *“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth”* (Gen. 1-26).

This establishes without a doubt that man has dominion over all the earth and consequently its history. What tools did God give man to control history? God gave man “free will” and “dominion over,” for it is “free will” and “dominion over,” that is a part of the image of God, and it is “free will” and “dominion over” which sets man apart from the rest of creation.

Now in order to control and direct this fantastic gift of “free will” and “dominion over” in the right direction, requires perfect character. This, man obviously does not possess.

The question could be asked at this point: Why didn’t God create man with perfect character? The answer has to be based on the assumption that perfect character can not be created, rather than is the end product of a process of time and development.

If God could have created man, instantly, into perfect human beings with perfect character, he assuredly would have done so. I can not believe that a God of infinite love and mercy would have subjected man to the awful consequences of a free will, with all its temptations, sins and sufferings – if this could have been avoided.

The perfect and obvious parallel is a human birth. You were not born instantly after your father begot you, but you required time to grow until you were born a complete human being. So it is with a spiritual birth. After your spiritual father begot you into the body of Christ, the church, you require time to grow and develop until you are born again, born spiritually with perfect character. The popular concept of being “born again” after receiving Christ or His Holy Spirit, while on this earth, is traditional in origin and is not biblical.

One could insist that God could have surely created sinless creatures if He wanted to, and in fact He has – horses, cows, dogs, cats, frogs, snakes, insects, birds, fish are all sinless creatures.

So, man, through his free will has complete power and choice to control history and his destiny.

Contrary to popular belief, Adam and Eve were not created perfect. To be sure they were created perfect physically and without sin, but with the capacity and potential for sin, i.e., they lacked spiritual perfection.

The question we have to ask at this point is: Was God surprised and sorrowful when Adam and Eve sinned? Again, let us go to the Bible for an answer. Eph. 1:4-5 in the Living Bible reads: *“Long ago, even before He made the world, God chose us to be His very own, through what Christ would do for us (dying for our sins); He decided then to make us holy in His eyes, without a single fault (or sin) ...”*. The Weymouth Translation reads: *“He chose us as His own in Christ before the creation of the world, that we might be holy and without blemish in His presence.”*

II Tim. 1:9 tells us that *“God, who has saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”* The Apostle Peter revealed that: *“Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained (as man’s Redeemer) before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you...”* (I Pet. 18-20).

All of the above scriptures prove that God knew, before the creation of the world, that man would indeed sin and therefore need a Savior. God was therefore NOT taken by surprise when man through the tool of his free will transgressed against Him.

So, the answer to the question does God control history is obviously YES, He does.

This, of course, leaves us with a YES answer to both sides of the original question. The answer and explanation lies obviously in the fact that although man has complete dominion and control, through His free will, over everything man can conceive in relation to each other on this earth, God has pre-willed and pre-determined that very fact, its shortcomings, its solution and its ultimate outcome. In other words, **God is above His creation of man’s free will and we can say with Job; “I know that thou canst do all things, and that no purpose of thine can be thwarted.”**

In summary, man was created, in the image of God, with free will and dominion over God’s creation, and **man** (kind) thereby **controls history**. God does not VIOLATE His own creation of “free will” and “dominion over,” that He gave to man. However, God retained the prerogative to INFLUENCE man’s free will through the power of His Holy Spirit, through people and through circumstances, and **God** thereby **controls history** and its ultimate outcome.

His-story, that is the story of Jesus Christ, was determined before the foundation of the world. Your and my story was (also) determined before the foundation of the world. **God’s purpose, from the beginning, was for you and me to choose life, and to become His children, but He gives us the choice and the opportunity, to do so voluntarily.** Praise be to God.