

High Doctrine and Good Hope

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: John 6:37

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From John chapter six verse 37 I will read the text and then proceed with the introduction. In John 6:37 the Scripture says, "All." Now these folks had just let the Lord Jesus Christ know that they weren't impressed. They weren't impressed. He said, "You don't believe me. You don't believe me, but all that my Father giveth me shall come to me. All that my Father giveth me shall come to me."

There is no doctrine in the whole Word of God, not one that has generated more hatred, more hatred among religious people, now not especially people of the world, but church people. There is no doctrine in the Word of God that has generated more hatred among religious people than the truth of God's absolute sovereignty in all things.

Now let this be established and everyone will have to agree the fact that the Lord God reigneth is indisputable. Is that correct? The Lord God reigneth. That is indisputable. God reigns.

The Scripture says in Psalm 99, "The Lord reigneth. The Lord ruleth. Let the people tremble. The Lord sitteth between the cherubims. Let the earth be moved."

That is indisputable. God reigns.

Nebuchadnezzar said, "The Lord reigns in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and giveth it to whomsoever he will. None can stay his and or say unto him, 'What are you doing?'" None.

Isaiah said...and I wish you would turn to this Scripture, Isaiah 46. Listen to this. Isaiah 46, we will begin our reading with verse nine. And Isaiah wrote, remember, Isaiah chapter 46 verse nine, "Remember the former things of old. I am God. There is none else. I am God. There is none like me. I declare the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done saying, 'My counsel shall stand and will do all my pleasure.' Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country. Yeah, I have spoken it I will also bring it to pass. I purposed it. I will do it."

Is that true? That is an indisputable fact. The Lord God omnipotent reigneth. He reigns in heaven. He reigns on the earth. David said, "He doeth according to his will. He doeth as he pleases in heaven, earth, the seas and all deep places."

Now one other Scripture. I would like you to look at this, the book of Psalms, the book of Psalms chapter two. Now listen to this, Psalm chapter two. This is an indisputable fact that I am establishing. The Lord reigns. The Lord ruleth. "Why do the heathen rage?" Psalm two verse one. "Why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves. The rulers of the earth take counsel together against the Lord, against his anointed, the Lord Jesus, saying 'Let's break their bands asunder. We won't have this man reign over us. Let's cast away their cords from us.' He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have him in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath and vex them, trouble them, in his sore displeasure."

The Lord reigns. That is indisputable.

Who art thou to reply against God?

All right, secondly. I want, personally, speaking for myself, I want to be among those who know the living God as he is revealed in his Word. I want to know him. I want to be among those who willingly, willingly and humbly bow before his majesty. I want to buy. I don't mean at the judgment. I mean before the judgment. I want to believe him.

One of the hymn writers says, "God is the king of power unknown, firm are his decrees, firm is his throne. If he purposes, who shall dare oppose or ask him why or what he does?"

Now listen to this. Here is the third thing. God has a right. I want you to listen to this. Some man...one of the men in the study, Jim Eckels, prayed that I could preach the gospel tonight. This is the very foundation on which that gospel is gloriously displayed. God has the right to act as he will when he will and through whom he will because, number one, he is the Creator, Charlie. That gives him that right. He said, "Can I not do with my own what I will? I made it. It's mine. I will dispose of it as I please." Is that not true? He is the Creator. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

It rested with God whether to make a world or not make a world. Listen to the book of Colossians chapter one. Listen to what this says so clearly. Colossians chapter one beginning with verse 16, Colossians 1:16. It says, "For by him were all things made, created that are in heaven, earth, visible, invisible whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers all things were created by him and, Tom, for him, for him" Are you listening? God has the right to do what he will when he will with whom he will, Charlie, till he made it. It's his. Don't tell me what I can do with my own. It's mine. I want to burn it that's my business. I made it. It's mine.

Revelation 4:11, listen to this. Revelation chapter four, verse 11. "Thou art worthy, oh Lord. Thou art worthy to receive glory and honor and power, for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created." That's fact, Jerry. He made it. It's his business what he does with it. He has the right as the Creator to do what he will with his own.

"Hath not the potter power over the clay?" It rested with God to make the world or not make it. It rested with God to make man or not make him. It was according to his will to make one creature a worm and another an eagle. That's right.

Thinking about the other day. We went fishing up in...sure, we went fishing. We caught about 130 in five hours. They were pretty good size, too. We went out with some of those night crawlers, worms, worms. And one of the boys looked up and he said, "I saw an eagle right over there the other day." And I thought as I held that worm in my hand, a lot of difference between a worm and an eagle.

Who made the difference? God did. It rested totally with him. It is by his decree that you are a female and he is a male. It is by God's decree. You are what you are because God made you what you are. It is by his decree to make one walk on the earth and another swim in the sea. It is by his own will and decree that one is born in Russia and one is born in China and you was born in the USA.

I am always so glad when that plane touches down in the United States. And your physical body, short, tall, fat, lean, your mental capacity, your temperament, your talents and your gifts are determined by almighty God. That's right.

"Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'"

If you want proof of that turn to 1 Samuel two. Don't tell me any of this is by chance. It is not by chance. It is by choice. God's choice. Somebody said, "Every believer ought to read Hannah's prayer at least once a week."

1 Samuel two verse one Hannah prayed and said, "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord. My horn is exalted in the Lord. My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies because I rejoice in thy salvation. There is none as holy as the Lord for there is none beside thee. Neither is there any rock like our God. Talk no more so exceedingly proudly. Let not arrogancy come out of your mouth, for the Lord is a God of knowledge and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken and they that stumble are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread and they that were hungry see so that the barren hath born seven and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. The Lord kills and the Lord makes alive. The Lord brings down to the grave and brings up. The Lord maketh poor. The Lord maketh rich. The Lord bringeth low. The Lord lifteth up."

Who does these things? God does. He is the Creator. The Lord is king. Who then shall dare to resist his will or distrust his character or murmur at his wise decrees or doubt his

steadfast promises? The Lord is king, child of the dust. The Judge of all this world is just. Holy and Righteous are all his ways. So let every creature sing his praise.

All right. Now listen to me. Those are the indisputable facts. [?] The Lord is an indisputable, absolute sovereign monarch who reigns over all his creation because he made it.

Secondly, God has the right to do—watch this, now—to do what he will when he will with whom he will not only because he is the Creator, of all things and it belongs to him by those rights of creation, but he has the right to do with you and me what he will because he is the Judge of this earth. He is the Judge. He is the Judge, not a judge, the Judge.

Now an illustration. This is highly important right here. Change your whole way of thinking if you see this. Here is what I am saying. The Constitution of the United States of America of which I am a citizen guarantees me freedom, the right to go where I please, live where I please, work where I please and do as I please so long as I don't offend or break the laws. Is that correct? That is correct. The Constitution guarantees me the right to live where I want to. I can live...if I want to move to Florida, Wisconsin, I can do it. I can go where I please as long as I don't break the law. But if I commit a murder or if I commit a robbery or if I commit treason I lose my freedom and I am brought under the law and I will be put in prison with other criminals and then the Judge is going to determine my future. My future is no longer in my hands. I forfeited my right. Is that correct? My future is in the hands of the man who sits on the bench. He has a book before him that lets him know the maximum he can give me. That's right.

All right. The law of God, the law of God is the law of the universe. And the law of God says, "Do this and live." That's all there is to it. Obey God, mind God, worship God, live perfectly before God, walk in holiness before God and you can bring before God the claim to freedom. That's right. You got the right.

But if you sin you are no longer free. You are now under the law and your case rests in the hands of the Judge. Is that right? You are not going to tell him where you are going to live, what you are going to do. That's right. No more. You could have if you had walked perfectly before God, if you hadn't been guilty of murdering his only begotten Son. That's what you did. You murdered God's Son. And you committed treason against the king. And you have lost your freedom. Every son of Adam has lost his freedom and he is now in the hands of the Judge. The trial is over. You are not on probation. God said, "The soul that sinneth will die. The soul that obeyeth shall live. What saith the law of Moses? Do this and live and be free. Go where you will. Go to heaven if you will." Once you break the law you are not free anymore. You are now under condemnation and you are now in the hands of a Judge who said, "I will by no means clear the guilty." Isn't that what he said? You are in the hands of a Judge who said over and over again, "The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die. The Judge of the earth shall do right."

He is not like these judges we got on our benches, coddle criminals, set free criminals, put them on the street after they ought to be in the electric chair. No, sir, this Judge will do right. His judgments are just. And the soul that sinneth, will surely as God is in heaven die. I guarantee you they are going to die. We are going to die.

What claim do you have on God? Just come on. Bring it forth. You have as much claim on God as that rapist and murderer has who is sitting there on death row. Do you know what kind of claim he has got? Nothing. And that is how much claim you have got in heavenly places. None. You forfeited it.

So I say, secondly, first of all God has the right to do what he will with everybody here, everybody in this world, everything in this world, every bolt of lightning and floating cloud and drop of rain and snowflake and every creature, fowl and fish and whatever and ever son of Adam because he made it. He made it. It's his. And, secondly, he has got a right to do with you what he will because you are a criminal on death row who is a traitor, a murderer and a thief and a robber and a liar. And you tried to tear up God's kingdom and you have lost all your claims to freedom. You are in the hands of a judge who must do right.

Now then, God has a right to do...to put us away in condemnation. But...and what I have said so far is so. Whether this generation likes it or not it is so. But if the living God, if the sovereign, living God is pleased in his own counsel and purpose and will and good pleasure and in his love and mercy if he is pleased and if he wills and if he sees fit to pardon, to pardon and justify and set free a people out of our race—now watch it—consistent with his principles of justice, righteousness and truth, then he has got the right to do it, hasn't he if he wants to, if he wants to.

I say, if he can save a people, if he can pardon and justify and set free and redeem and deliver a people I say consistent with his justice, with his holiness and righteousness, he can do it if he will. He doesn't have to, but he can. God can do what he will. And he always does what's right. Do you know that? He always does what is right.

And this is what Paul addresses in Romans three. Will you turn over there a minute? This is...what I am talking about here is the very thing that Paul looked in the eye in Romans three and deals with. We forfeited any claim on God, heaven or salvation. We have forfeited any claim to freedom. But if God consistent with his judgment, consistent with his holiness, consistent with his holiness, consistent with his truth is pleased to have mercy upon somebody, then he can do it.

It says here in Romans 3:19, now this is what Paul addresses. "Now we know...We know this. This is so, that what things soever the law saith it saith to them who are under the law. That's you and me. We forfeited our claim. So let every mouth be stopped. There is no plea. There is no appeal. And all the world just become guilty, subject to the judgment of God. That is what it says in the margin of God, guilty before God, before who? Before God. He is the judge. Therefore, by the deeds of the law, the works of the

flesh there shall no flesh be justified in God's sight for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

"But, wait a minute, now the holiness of God," and I said it, Mike, it must be consistent with his holiness and consistent with his justice. "But now the righteousness of God without the law, without our obedience to the law, is manifested being witnessed by the law and the prophets. It is even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe. But there is no difference for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. But being freely justified or justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God hath set forth or foreordained to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare God's righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God and to declare, I say, at this time God's righteousness that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Will you hear me?

In Christ, through Christ's perfect life as a man, fulfilling God's holy law through Christ's death and atonement on that cross, almighty God according to his own will and purpose and good pleasure has made a way by which he can honor, satisfy and glorify all the claims of his inflexible justice and his inflexible holiness and yet bestow mercy on the guilty.

Now they let me go over there. I want you to observe three rights which belong to God, only to God, three rights and learn something about the living god. You know, Job said one time, "Lord, I have heard of you." And there is nobody here that hasn't heard of God and there is nobody that will hear this tape that hasn't heard of God. But whether or not we have heard of the living God depends upon the knowledge of the one who is telling about it. A man can't tell what he doesn't know.

So these are the rights of God, the God of the Bible, the living God. Number one, as Creator all sovereign rights belong to God. "Hath not the potter power over the clay?"

Number two, as the supreme one and only judge of the universe he has not only the right, but the requirement to punish the guilty. He must punish sin. He must. And he must put all evil where it will do no more harm. He must be God.

We...he has got to put evil out of the universe. I tell you we have...let me tell you. You have enough evil and I have enough evil in my heart to destroy that new heaven and new earth. Do you know that?

Barnard used to say, "God is not going to let you in heaven in the shape you are in. Why you would start a revolt in heaven. You would ruin it."

God's... See, "There is nothing there that worketh or maketh alive. It is God's kingdom wherein dwelleth righteousness." And you just...you don't have the equipment. You can't meet the requirements. I'm sorry. I can't either. No human being can. God has got to judge us like we are.

But, now wait a minute. Wait a minute. In his divine wisdom as the originator of the everlasting covenant as the founder of that covenant of mercy and grace, as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the giver, the merciful giver of his only begotten Son, as the fountain of ever grace, God has the right to show mercy in Christ to whom he will. Do you know that?

Now wait a minute. If we have a claim on God's gift, it is not a gift. Right? If we have a claim on God's gift, it is not a gift. If we have a claim on mercy it is not mercy. If we have one single claim on God's grace it's not grace. If any man by his works or by his merit deserves to be saved, then salvation is not by grace, it is by works.

Moses says, "Show me your glory, God."

He said, "I'll make all my goodness pass before you. I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious." That is his right. That is his right.

If any man, listen to me. If any man, woman, boy or girl, comes to God, this God of the Bible, sovereign Creator, Judge and Redeemer, if any man comes to God expecting to receive of him any favor because of any right, merit, claim, worth or work he comes to this God on a false foundation. And this God will not tolerate it for one moment, not this God. I am telling you the truth. You will come empty handed or don't come.

The hymn writer said, "Here I raise my Ebenezer hither by thy help I am come and I hope by God's good pleasure safely to arrive at home. Jesus sought me when a stranger wandering willingly from the fold of God and he, to restore me from danger interposed his own precious blood. Oh to grace how great debtor daily I am constrained to be. Lord, let thy goodness like a fetter bind my wandering heart to thee. I am prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love. Here is my heart. Take it. Seal it. Seal it for thy courts above."

Do you know that is so? God has the right as Creator to dispose of all that he has made as he wills. God has the right as Judge to deal with us in accordance with his holiness and justice. But as a sovereign Redeemer out of the good mercy of his own heart if he is pleased through the righteousness of his Son to save one here and one there then he has got the right to do it and to pass by the others. That's right.

Now some call this high doctrine on which they turn away in hate. Some call it heresy. But I call it high doctrine and good hope, good hope. In fact, that is where the hope is, not in you. It's in him. My hope is not in the fact that I won't change. I will. My hope is in that he won't change, he can't. My hope is not in the fact that I will keep loving him. My hope is in the fact that he will never stop loving me.

You are a fool to hope in anything else. I don't know about tomorrow, but I know who holds tomorrow and that is my hope. I call this high doctrine and sweet assurance. I call

it high doctrine and good news. But watch it. Sure it is high doctrine. It is as high as the throne of God.

But now wait a minute. It is from that throne that all blessings come so we better get some high doctrine hadn't we? If your doctrine doesn't reach to the throne you better get you some more doctrine.

Somebody said, "Don't preach that high doctrine."

Oh, yeah, yeah. I want to get up there where the throne is. That's what's wrong now, that they are not preaching any high doctrine, Cecil. They are preaching this low down stuff. God says, "You thought I was altogether such a one as you. You have reached up and tried to bring me down to your level and that won't work. You had better get those folks up here where I am and let them look around."

Sure it is high doctrine. It is as high as the throne of God, but it is from that throne that mercy comes. "Let us come boldly before the throne of grace that we may find mercy to help in the time of need."

Sure it is high doctrine. It is as high as the throne of God. But I tell you this. You are going to stand at that throne some day. It would be better to stand there this Wednesday night in August 1986 than to stand there then. Sure it's high. Sure it's high. Sure it's high doctrine. But I will tell you this. It is true. It has to be high to have anything to do with God because the Scripture says, "He is high and lifted up and his train fills the temple."

Now turn to our text, again in John six and I'll let you go. Here is some of that high doctrine. And the Lord Jesus said, "All that my Father giveth me shall come to me," in other words there are some folks out of our race that are going to be saved. And, secondly, do you know why they are going to be saved? Two reasons: The Father willed and they come to the Son.

That's right. The Father willed it and the Son performed it. And so this is true, too. Then if I come to Christ I must be one of the elect. That is the evidence that I am one of the elect because I came to Christ.

"We know we pass from death to life," John says, "Because we love the brethren."

All right. Look at the next line. "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out for any reason under any circumstances. If you come to me I will never cast you out."

Everybody who comes to Christ has one common character. They come to Christ. That is what we got in common. We came to Christ. They have one common goal. They come to Christ. Some walk and some run. Some take longer. Some come out of the gutter and come some out of the pulpit, but they all came to Christ. Come and go. That's right. They have one common need. They came for help. Where is sin bred? And they have one common result. He will never cast them out.

I read this today out of one of the old, old hymnals by Joseph Hart. It says, now listen to this. This is good. "What makes mistaken men afraid of sovereign grace to preach? The reason, if truth be said, is because they are so proud. Why so offensive in men's eyes does God's election seem? Because they think themselves so wise that they must have chosen him. Why is imputed righteousness a truth so little known? Because men think they all possess a righteousness of their own. Election, 'tis a word divine, the Lord, I plainly see, had not your choice preceded mine I would never have chosen me. So empty, bare, I come to thee for righteousness divine. Oh, Lord, may life and merit be by imputation mine? His counsel stands forever sure, immortal and divine and justice, mercy, truth and power unite in Christ to make it mine."

Isn't that good? High doctrine. What's so high about that? They mean by high, impossible to enter into. That is not at all, is it, not at all. It is given God the glory which is rightfully his.