

The Earth is the Lord's

Introduction

The problem

This is a simple paper to correct some very serious errors that are currently accepted by many churchgoers. The only way these errors can gain any currency is because most Christians today are so very badly taught and will accept any nonsense that comes their way. The sorts of errors are these:

- When bad things happen in nature it is the devil that has done it.
- Man's sin resulted in the devil gaining total control of the earth; he usurped it from Adam, the custodian.
- The devil proved that he owned the world when he offered it to Jesus during his temptations.
- When Satan is called 'Prince of the power of the air' (Eph 2:2) or 'ruler of this world' (Jn 12:31), it is because he owns and controls the world.
- Hurricanes, earthquakes, volcano eruptions, tsunamis, famines, and floods that kill Christians (along with others) are the work of the devil.
- Demons rule my town. Bigger demons rule my county. Christians must specifically overcome these before any meaningful Gospel work can begin.
- Even bigger demons rule my country. Gathered churches under apostles and prophets are necessary to first defeat these.

God's sovereignty

Clearly, the answer to all these errors is that God is totally sovereign over all things – even 'bad' things. Nothing is outside of God's control as Lord.

Now I do not intend to discuss this here, having done so many times.¹ Needless to say, just the Scriptures: Isa 45:7; Lam 3:38; and Amos 3:6 prove this to be true.²

God's goodness

Another issue is God's goodness. People question how a good God could allow such evils, and then try to make excuses for him by denying that he does allow it. It's all the devil's fault.

Again I have explained this many times. God's goodness means that he only does that which is perfectly appropriate for any given situation; he cannot do anything wrong. Goodness, when applied to God, is the act of doing everything perfectly.

Now goodness does not mean niceness. God often does things that are perfectly appropriate, righteous and true but are considered by the world as 'bad'. The genocide of the Canaanites was good for the world, as was the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Hell will be a good thing for the universe. Our view of things is not God's.

¹ See for example my book, 'The Doctrines of Grace, a summary'.

² The relevant word in all these texts ['calamity', 'woe', NKJV] is properly translated as 'evil'.

The earth

The purpose of this paper is restricted to examining what Scripture says about the earth and who owns it and who controls it. It is not the devil; it is God.

Who owns the world?

God created the world

For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. **Exod 20:11**

Of old You laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens *are* the work of Your hands. **Ps 102:25**

Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? **Job 38:4**

The heavens *are* Yours, the earth also *is* Yours; the world and all its fullness, You have founded them. The north and the south, You have created them. **Ps 89:11-12**

To Him who by wisdom made the heavens [including earth's atmosphere]. **Ps 136:5**

Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! Praise Him, sun and moon! Praise Him, all you stars of light! Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for He commanded and they were created. He also established them forever and ever; He made a decree which shall not pass away. **Ps 148:2-6**

The God of Jacob ... who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them; who keeps truth forever. **Ps 146:5-6**

Thus says God the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it. **Isa 42:5**

Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and He who formed you from the womb: 'I *am* the LORD, who makes all *things*, who stretches out the heavens all alone, who spreads abroad the earth by Myself'. **Isa 44:24**

I have made the earth, and created man on it. I -- My hands -- stretched out the heavens, and all their host I have commanded. **Isa 45:12**

Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand has stretched out the heavens; *when* I call to them, they stand up together. **Isa 45:13**

For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens, who is God, who formed the earth and made it, who has established it, who did not create it in vain, who formed it to be inhabited: 'I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other'. **Isa 45:18**

And you forget the LORD your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth. **Isa 51:13**

Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You. **Jer 32:17**

The living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them. **Acts 14:15**

God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth. **Acts 17:24**

You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a

cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail. **Heb 1:10-12**

God owns the world

The earth *is* the LORD's. **Exod 9:29**

Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, *also* the earth with all that *is* in it. **Deut 10:14**

Yours, O LORD, *is* the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all *that is* in heaven and in earth *is Yours*; Yours *is* the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head over all. **1 Chron 29:11**

Who has preceded Me, that I should pay *him*? Everything under heaven is Mine. **Job 41:11**

The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein. For He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters. **Ps 24:1-2**

For every beast of the forest *is* mine, *and* the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field *are* mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world *is* mine, and all its fulness. **Ps 50:10-12**

The heavens *are* Yours, the earth also *is* Yours; the world and all its fullness, You have founded them. The north and the south, You have created them. **Ps 89:11-12**

The LORD reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad! **Psalms 97:1**

The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble! **Ps 99:1**

The earth *is* the LORD's, and all its fullness. **1 Cor 10:26**

The earth *is* the LORD's, and all its fullness. **1 Cor 10:28**

Jesus was the instrument of creation and the world is for him.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. **Jn 1:1-3**

For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. **Col 1:16**

[God] has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds. **Heb 1:2**

You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created. **Rev 4:11**

God has dominion over all the earth

The kingdom *is* the LORD's, and He rules over the nations. **Ps 22:28**

For the LORD Most High *is* awesome; *He is* a great King over all the earth. **Ps 47:2**

God *is* the King of all the earth. **Ps 47:7**

For the LORD *is* the great God, and the great King above all gods. In His hand *are* the deep places of the earth; the heights of the hills *are* His also. The sea *is* His, for He made it; and His hands formed the dry *land*. **Ps 95:3-5**

The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all. **Ps 103:19**

I blessed the Most High and praised and honoured Him who lives forever: for His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom *is* from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and *among* the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him, 'What have You done?' **Dan 4:34-35**

'I *am* a great King', says the LORD of hosts, 'And My name *is to be* feared among the nations'. **Mal 1:14**

Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth'. **Matt 28:18**

Which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church. **Eph 1:20-22**

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father. **Phil 2:9-11**

Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him. **1 Pt 3:21-22**

All the climactic and geological processes on the earth are under God's sovereign control

Rain, hail, snow, thunder, lightning

The LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. **Exod 9:23**

And it happened, as they fled before Israel *and* were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the LORD cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. *There were* more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword. **Jos 10:11**

'I will call to the LORD, and He will send thunder and rain, that you may perceive and see that your wickedness *is* great, which you have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking a king for yourselves'. So Samuel called to the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day; and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel. **1 Sam 12:17-18**

The LORD thundered from heaven, and the Most High uttered His voice. He sent out arrows and scattered them; lightning bolts, and He vanquished them. **2 Sam 22:14-15**

Behold, God *is* great, and we do not know *Him*; nor can the number of His years *be* discovered. For He draws up drops of water, which distil as rain from the mist, which the clouds drop down *and* pour abundantly on man. Indeed, can *anyone* understand the spreading of clouds, the thunder from His canopy? **Job 36:26-29**

Hear attentively the thunder of His voice, and the rumbling *that* comes from His mouth. He sends it forth under the whole heaven, His lightning to the ends of the earth. After it a voice roars; He thunders with His majestic voice, ... For He says to the snow, 'Fall *on* the earth'; likewise to the gentle rain and the heavy rain of His strength. **Job 37:2-6**

Whatever the LORD pleases He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deep places. He causes the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; He makes lightning for the rain; He brings the wind out of His treasuries. **Ps 135:6-7**

Who covers the heavens with clouds, who prepares rain for the earth, who makes grass to grow on the mountains. **Ps 147:8**

He sends out His command *to the* earth; His word runs very swiftly. He gives snow like wool; He scatters the frost like ashes; He casts out His hail like morsels; who can stand before His cold? He sends out His word and melts them; He causes His wind to blow, *and* the waters flow. **Ps 147:15-18**

Fire and hail, snow and clouds; stormy wind, fulfilling His word. **Ps 148:8**

Wind, storms, hurricanes, typhoons

The LORD brought an east wind on the land all that day and all that night. ... the LORD turned a very strong west wind. **Exod 10:13, 19**

For He commands and raises the stormy wind, which lifts up the waves of the sea. ... He calms the storm, so that its waves are still. **Ps 107:25-29**

He has made the earth by His power, He has established the world by His wisdom, and has stretched out the heavens at His discretion. When He utters His voice, *there is* a multitude of waters in the heavens: and He causes the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth. He makes lightning for the rain, He brings the wind out of His treasuries. **Jer 10:12-13**

He has made the earth by His power; He has established the world by His wisdom, and stretched out the heaven by His understanding. When He utters *His* voice -- *There is* a multitude of waters in the heavens: "He causes the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth; He makes lightnings for the rain; He brings the wind out of His treasuries. **Jer 51:15-16**

For behold, He who forms mountains, and creates the wind. **Amos 4:13**

You will be punished by the LORD of hosts with thunder and earthquake and great noise, *with* storm and tempest and the flame of devouring fire. **Isa 29:6**

Earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis

The mountains gushed before the LORD. **Jud 5:5**

Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations of heaven quaked and were shaken, because He was angry. Smoke went up from His nostrils, and devouring fire from His mouth; coals were kindled by it. **2 Sam 22:8-9**

He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap. **Ps 33:7**

He causes His wind to blow, *and* the waters flow. **Ps 147:18**

You will be punished by the LORD of hosts with thunder and earthquake and great noise, *with* storm and tempest and the flame of devouring fire. **Isa 29:6**

For in My jealousy *and* in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: 'Surely in that day there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel, so that the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the

beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who *are* on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground'. **Ezek 38:19-20**

The mountains quake before Him, the hills melt. **Nahum 1:5**

And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven. **Matt 28:2**

Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. **Acts 16:26**

Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw *it* to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. **Rev 8:5**

Flood, drought, famine, frost, ice

The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish. And your heavens which *are* over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you *shall be* iron. The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed. **Deut 28:22-24**

Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, '*It is* because of Saul and *his* bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites'. 2 Sam 21:1

So Gad came to David and told him; and he said to him, 'Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land? Or shall you flee three months before your enemies, while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days plague in your land? Now consider and see what answer I should take back to Him who sent me'. **2 Sam 24:13**

And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, '*As* the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word'. **1 Kg 17:1**

For the LORD has called for a famine, and furthermore, it will come upon the land for seven years. **2 Kg 8:1**

If He withholds the waters, they dry up; *if* He sends them out, they overwhelm the earth. **Job 12:15**

For He looks to the ends of the earth, *and* sees under the whole heavens, to establish a weight for the wind, and apportion the waters by measure. When He made a law for the rain, and a path for the thunderbolt. **Job 28:24-26**

By the breath of God ice is given, and the broad waters are frozen. Also with moisture He saturates the thick clouds; He scatters His bright clouds. And they swirl about, being turned by His guidance, that they may do whatever He commands them on the face of the whole earth. **Job 37:10-12**

From whose womb comes the ice? And the frost of heaven, who gives it birth? The waters harden like stone, and the surface of the deep is frozen. **Job 38:29-30**

The voice of the LORD *is* over the waters; the God of glory thunders; the LORD *is* over many waters. **Ps 29:3**

You broke open the fountain and the flood; you dried up mighty rivers. **Ps 74:15**

Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'I will cause a stormy wind to break forth in My fury; and there shall be a flooding rain in My anger, and great hailstones in fury to consume *it*'. **Ezek 13:13**

He calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out on the face of the earth; The LORD *is* His name. He rains ruin upon the strong, so that fury comes upon the fortress. **Amos 5:8-9**

For I called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all the labour of *your* hands. **Hag 1:11**

[God] did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of eight people*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly. **2 Pt 2:5**

God gives parts of the world to men to rule according to his wisdom and eternal plan

On the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: 'To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates'. **Gen 15:18**

When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples. **Deut 32:8**

Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? *It is* He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants *are* like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. He brings the princes to nothing; He makes the judges of the earth useless. Scarcely shall they be planted, scarcely shall they be sown, scarcely shall their stock take root in the earth, When He will also blow on them, and they will wither, and the whirlwind will take them away like stubble. **Isa 40:21-24**

'I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways; He [Cyrus] shall build My city and let My exiles go free, not for price nor reward', Says the LORD of hosts. Thus says the LORD: 'The labour of Egypt and merchandise of Cush and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over to you, and they shall be yours; they shall walk behind you, they shall come over in chains; and they shall bow down to you. They will make supplication to you, *saying*, 'Surely God *is* in you, And *there is* no other; *There is* no other God'. **Isa 45:13-14**

I have made the earth, the man and the beast that *are* on the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and have given it to whom it seemed proper to Me. And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant; and the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him. So all nations shall serve him and his son and his son's son, until the time of his land comes; and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them. **Jer 27:5-7**

The Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses. **Dan 4:25**

Both these kings' hearts *shall be* bent on evil, and they shall speak lies at the same table; but it shall not prosper, for the end *will still be* at the appointed time. **Dan 11:27**

And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings. **Acts 17:26**

The power of the devil

Summary

The devil is a created being, a fallen angel created to serve the Lord. The idea that he has equivalent power to God is folly.

The devil was always restricted by the will of God, even during Old Covenant times (Job 1:12, 2:6).

After the cross he was cast permanently out of heaven (Rev 12:9), earmarked for destruction in the Lake of Fire (i.e. hell; Rev 20:10) and placed into bondage until the time of the end when he is to be released for a little while (Rev 20:1-3).

In every circumstance, Satan is held in check by God. He is not running rampant fulfilling his every desire. Furthermore, as an angel, he is very limited. He is not omnipresent, omniscient, or omnipotent. He relies upon his demons to gather intelligence and his power is limited to tempting men to sin.

As a spirit, he is immaterial (as are his demons) and not able to perform physical actions or interact in the material world (contrary to Hollywood movies). He is restricted to deceiving men to perform his will, which he does with great skill, learned over centuries.

Does the devil rule nations?

No he does not!

First, see earlier texts regarding God owning the world. Then note:

Ask of Me [God], and I will give *You* [the Son] the nations *for* Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth *for* Your possession. **Ps 2:8**

God rules in Jacob to the ends of the earth. **Ps 59:13**

Say among the nations, 'The LORD reigns'. **Ps 96:10**

The LORD reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad! **Ps 97:1**

The LORD reigns; let the peoples tremble! He dwells *between* the cherubim; let the earth be moved! **Ps 99:1**

Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! **Rev 19:6**

Objections

Verses that seem to question the thesis of this paper

The heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the LORD's; but the earth He has given to the children of men. **Ps 115:16**

Firstly, this does not mention the devil or demons.

Secondly, what is being said here regards dwelling places. God abides in heaven but the earth has been given as a habitation for men. It has nothing to do with ownership. When you live in a rented property it can be said to be your home but it is owned by a landlord.

The creation narrative in Genesis clearly shows that man was given the earth as a stewardship to God. Man was given delegated authority to have dominion on behalf of God. The ownership never changed hands.

What is the meaning of ‘prince of the power of the air’ (Eph 2:2) or ‘ruler of this world’ (Jn 12:31)?

The devil has no rights over the earth; he is not the ruler of the earth. This has been established.

The devil’s control is through the power of sin; the devil controls people through temptation and deceit. By using temptation, he is able to control people and thus control nations by controlling leaders. The more a nation sins, the easier it is for Satan to control the populace.

Thus nations pursue wicked courses and the rulers of nations are almost all wicked people under the sway of Satan. Thus the world follows a wicked course according to Satan’s strategy, but this is not ownership of the earth. It is manipulation of the sinful people on it.

The world system is under the control of Satan who rules sinners through sin. He has no rights over the earth as a possession.

What about the angelic forces in Daniel?

This refers to:

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. **Dan 10:13**

Then he said, ‘Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come’. **Dan 10:20**

The thesis of Charismatic theologians is that the situation in Daniel teaches us that heavenly battles control what happens on earth and specifically that certain powerful demons control certain nations.

From this they infer that Christians and whole churches need to defeat demons in towns and cities and even countries before any work can be done. Ephesians 6 is often drawn into this argument. Whole strategies, doctrines and methodologies derive from this, all of them nonsense and many idolatrous and sacramentalist.³

In concise terms we can say this:

- We are not told enough about heavenly battles between angels to understand what happened then or what is going on today.
- This is an Old Covenant scenario, which changed at the cross when Satan was cast down and his hordes triumphed over by Jesus. ‘Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it’, (Col 2:15).
- The situation in Daniel’s time does not prevail now under the New Covenant. Believers now have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside them and have constant communication with God directly. They do not need angels, or any other mediator, at all.

³ Too many to list: e.g. blowing a ram’s horn to effect revival in a town; waving swords around in a meeting to drive away demons; marching around the room in a meeting or screaming loudly to drive away demons. Spiritual Mapping, to identify demonically controlled areas in a given town.

- Believers today are not under the Mosaic Law and not constrained in the way that Daniel was (needing angelic encouragement). They are in Christ.
- Believers can resist the devil and make him flee, let alone his subservient demons; ‘resist the devil and he will flee from you’, (Jm 4:7).
- The means used by Charismatics include many forms of occult behaviour and practices; which is wicked.

Conclusion

Christians have got to start being far more cognisant of God’s word than they are; then they will not fall for the many lies of modern heretics.

God owns and controls the world. God is sovereign. There is no other ruler.

The devil does not own the world, nor has he usurped power over it. He is completely limited by the will of God in everything he does. Rather than achieving his desires, even during times of great evil, he is really only furthering God’s eternal purpose.

God has dominion over all; Jesus reigns as His Son.

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