

God's Perfect Control in the Events of Life

by Erlo Stegen

God's perfect control in the events of life is demonstrated through the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, fulfilling prophecy and demonstrating God's love and sovereignty.

Duration: 1:13:54

Topics: "Sovereignty Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the indescribable and eternal gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. He urges listeners to recognize the immense value of this gift and to prioritize their relationship with Jesus above worldly desires. The preacher also highlights the importance of living in accordance with this exalted position as children of God, rather than succumbing to immorality and sin. He concludes by reminding listeners of the significance of Christmas as a celebration of God's great love for humanity, demonstrated through the gift of His Son. The sermon references various Bible verses to support these teachings.

Transcript

Let's read our text for today, from the Gospel according to Luke chapter 2. Verse 1, In those days, Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone went to his own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea to Bethlehem, the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him, and was expecting a child. When they were there, the time came for the baby to be born.

And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. We'll end reading there. Shall we bow our heads once again? We pray, Lord, that you will now work through this word which has been read amongst us.

May we receive heavenly mysteries from you. And may this service and this message not be in vain. But may it bring forth much fruit.

Amen. This is a great celebration and feast. Now, by that we do not proclaim that he was born on the 25th of December, but that is when we celebrate the birth of Christ our Lord.

Many celebrate Christmas. Some use a Christmas tree. Some give gifts.

Giving one another gifts. Now, some people think that Christmas is a time to get drunk and to do all sorts of abominable things. Now, some people think that the Christmas season is a time when they can go and stand in the middle of the road and block the traffic and stop the cars doing that while they are drunk.

And so many accidents happen. You ask them, why are you doing it? They say, well, it's Christmas. Some use it as a time for spring cleaning when they clean their yard and everything because of Christmas.

But it is a great day, a day greater and different to any other day. When God the Father gave us a gift greater than any other. Because of the great love with which he has loved us.

He gave us his only begotten son. The one whom he dearly loved. There was no one whom he loved greater than his own son.

And he was willing to give us his son. Gifts that we give to one another, they come to an end. They perish.

They don't last. But the gift which God gives us does not perish. It is everlasting.

It doesn't come to an end. It does not wither. This is the celebration of our Father in heaven.

Where he demonstrates his great love for you. So the coming and the birth of the Son of God is the beginning of all things. If it wasn't for that, we wouldn't have this.

We wouldn't have Good Friday. We wouldn't have the day when we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. Easter Monday or Sunday.

We wouldn't have even where we celebrate Pentecost. All of that wouldn't be there if Jesus hadn't been born. The last time I saw him was in 2009.

He was born in 2009. We wouldn't be writing our dates as we do, that it's the year 2009 if Jesus hadn't been born. Because that means it's 2009 years since the coming of the Lord Jesus into this world.

Now some people say, well Jesus never lived. Those people, what can you say about them? Their minds are absent because they'll be condemned to hell just by the fact that they wrote the date where they said so many years since the coming of Jesus into this world. Things were revolutionized and changed by the coming of the Lord Jesus into this world.

Has your life been changed yet? So I say the coming of the Lord Jesus to this world was the beginning of all things. It was the beginning of our salvation. Jesus descending from heaven, being born into this world of sin.

Coming to a people that are corrupt and depraved. And his flesh became like that of us. But his blood was not like that of our blood.

His blood is divine. And he came to be born for you and me. I don't know what his coming means to you.

But it should mean more than anything else in your life. That God became flesh. The God of heaven and earth, our creator, that his flesh became like our flesh.

And in Hebrews 2 verse 11 it says that he is not ashamed to be called our brother. Now we wouldn't be so audacious that we would call him our brother and be flippant in that manner. But he is not ashamed according to God's word to call us his brothers.

For he is from God. And if we are born again from God and we are sanctified, then he is not ashamed to call us his brothers. He is not ashamed to call us his brothers.

He is not ashamed to call us his brothers. Now that is amazing. One cannot fathom it.

There are no words to describe and to declare that. And our minds cannot grasp that. That God whose eyes are like flames of fire and his face radiates like the sun in its brilliance.

That he is not ashamed to call us his brothers. More than the sun in its brightness. And he is not ashamed to call you his brother.

And to call us his brothers. Such a high and exalted position that is indescribable. And yet you trample it underfoot.

You get drunk. You get involved in immorality. You can even steal.

And you become a child of Satan and you despise that exalted position to which you have been called. Read about his life. How he went about healing the sick.

Raising the dead. Making the lame to walk. And he calls us his brother.

But if you are ashamed of him, he will also be ashamed of you. And there should be a hell for people like you that despise the rejected Lord Jesus. There is only one place fit for you and that is hell.

What kind of people should we be? Such a high and exalted position that is indescribable. And yet you trample it underfoot. You get drunk.

You get involved in immorality. And you become a child of Satan and you despise that exalted position to which you have been called. You should burn in hell forever if you reject such great grace where Jesus came to raise us up out of our sin.

Out of that miry clay of sin. To plant our feet on a firm rock. To cleanse and sanctify us where he calls us his brother.

It should be the easiest thing in this world for us to deny ourselves of everything. I've got a question. Do you remind yourself of that every day? That Jesus calls you his brother.

Are you mindful of that? But will he still call you his brother? If you sleep with a prostitute. If you get involved in drugs and things like that. I doubt it whether he'll call you his brother.

He'll vomit you out. He'll spit you out of his mouth. Do you remember that he calls you his brother? Or do you love sin? Do you love worldliness? Where that looks attractive to you.

You're attracted to this world. You need to wake up. You need to repent.

You child of hell. He makes men holy. He sanctifies us.

And then he's not ashamed to call us his brothers. That ought to cause a fire to burn in the heart of each and every one. Whether you're colored.

Whether you're black, white, Indian. No matter which race. It should warm our hearts.

But if that is not the case. Then you're a liar. You're a hypocrite.

And you take after Satan your father. Who's a liar. He's ashamed to call you his brother in front of the heavenly angels, the heavenly host, and his Father in Heaven.

That ought to cause you to rejoice. To jump like a calf released from the stall. To dance for joy.

To say, there is no one with such a great privilege as I have. but why is it that we make the faith to be so cheap if we don't do it with our words we do it with our lives with our deeds there is irritability there is getting angry and your lust of the flesh where do they come from not from your father in heaven don't they come from this world Oh Gabriel and Michael the archangels in heaven when they look down do they say there are our brothers the brother not our brothers the brother of our master of our Lord of our God anything else everything else in comparison should be like done and it should be a small thing to you to deny all and to forsake all even your father mother brother sister your own wife and even your own life Paul says I'm a Hebrew of the Hebrews and I'm the most eminent amongst them but because of Jesus Christ I consider all that as done Jesus was great to him the most important more than anyone else tell me is Jesus important to you to such an extent that you say I cannot disappoint him I cannot turn my back on him he that calls me his brother Oh Johanna um postoli palala paepae Pellini would you beg our new tando all along Gaga see this means on which isn't about to another uncle uncle John the Apostle wrote in his letter behold what great love God has lavished on us that we are called the sons and the children of God who may intend to be silent that should be called a fun and I'm gonna look at college I call us a mover there's nothing more sad than that that a person turns his back upon the faith like God's wife don't demand so we will turn these three like demons who loved the world oh my god do good he lend or turn as a way I need you to turn get he lend or turn as a way it told you uncle uncle is a good only tell you seen this easy give a moon to also be a guy or in course he will go to wait Jesus was born the son was born to bring us salvation and that we might be called his brothers I said II I don't call him a child a son has been given to us not like other children he's the Son of God the Christ he came to bring salvation to us all and when we receive him then he was holy and we were sanctified he isn't ashamed to call us his brothers I cause a gal and oh I say gaggy it's unfathomable and indescribable McFarland would he loan a low I don't know she sent his way I don't know who to go and had to pen to his ology and each one should be a flame in their hearts as if they got converted just yesterday and God who loved us so much gave us this great gift which does not perish, it is eternal, it does not wither, eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. It should be that because of that everyone young and old would cast himself at Jesus' feet and say all the rest is worthless, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the world, all of that is nothing in comparison to this great treasure which God gives me.

Or has that still got an attraction to you? Are you still tempted by that? When I ask you the question, who are you in reality? I get the impression that you're the child of Christ. So let us remember them that Christmas is not for getting drunk or being immoral but it's for remembering that God became man to save us, to sanctify us, that we might become members of his family that he would call us his brothers. That even if you had all the gold and silver of this world, but that it would be an easy thing for you to throw that aside for his sake.

But what do you seek? You seek to get a job, to earn a big salary, earn a lot of money. You want to have education and degrees and position and all of that means more to you than the one who has called you and who wants to call you his brother. And this month we will remember his coming into this world.

So let us briefly look at the circumstances into which Jesus was born. He was born during the time of Caesar Augustus. He was the first and according to many the greatest Roman Emperor.

He was like a king of kings and even worshipped as God. The Roman Emperors or the Caesars were worshipped as God. And Caesar Augustus was the first Caesar who ruled over the whole known world of that time.

He was Caesar Augustus. He was a heathen, knowing nothing about the faith. Knowing nothing about the Bible.

Knowing nothing about salvation. He was a raw heathen. Considering himself as God, where everybody had to pay homage to him, all the nations, all the other kings, Nobody could contradict his word.

His was the first and the last word. Ruling from Rome which was the capital city of the world. It was a great and glorious city with no city that could compare to it.

Remember where Satan took the Lord Jesus and he showed him the glory and the glitter of this world and he said if you would bow down to me I would give you all of that. Rome was part of that which he showed Jesus. And Rome lived a life in total contradiction to God and his will and his word.

And the palace of the emperor was called the golden palace. It glittered with gold and there was no other palace that could be likened unto that one. And one day this king, this emperor went into his office.

Seated on his throne, on his seat with his desk there, I don't know if it was clad in gold or not. And he took some paper scrolls and he signed. And he made a law which was the first of its kind.

In history of all mankind the Bible says it was the very first. And he signed this decree that everybody had to be counted. And he sent it out to all the nations.

Each one had to return to his town of birth and there had to be counted. For various reasons. He wanted to know how many people there were in his empire.

He wanted to know how many eligible young men there would be for his army. Even though the Jews didn't serve in his army. But he had tens and tens of thousands of soldiers in his army from all the different nations.

He wanted a full census to be done. Also to know what the income was of the businessmen. How many heads of cattle did the farmers have.

And all of that wasn't just that he would know about it. He wanted by that to extract some taxes from them. And anyone who did not obey that law would be decapitated.

Would be executed. No one in the world had any authority or any way to go against that law. And so he signed that decree into law.

That he wanted each and everyone to go to their town of birth to be counted there. And for that reason Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem. And they went to Gadavid.

Because he was of the royal line even though he was so poor. God removed that kingship from Israel. And later on even no stone of the temple remained on another.

Even the birth registers and the genealogies. That kept a record of who gave birth to who. All of that was destroyed.

But all that they could retain was that which they had remembered. That which belonged to the world. Was utterly destroyed.

And burned. It all turned to ashes. Woe to you.

You who reject that which God had given you. You would lose all of that and your generations after you as well. And so Caesar Augustus placed his royal seal on that document.

Which was sent out to all the furthest corners of the world. That everybody had to go back to their hometown. And to be numbered there.

And that would be the first census. Worldwide census. Joseph was from the town of Nazareth and he was there.

So was Mary who was betrothed to get married to him. Mary was with child without having known a man. And when Joseph took her as his wife.

He never had any marital relations with her. Until after she gave birth to her first son. Until after she gave birth to her first son.

And that is the way in which Joseph honoured the one who was to be born of her. That even though he was with her. And you would be called husband and wife.

But he didn't touch her. And the time came. For her to give birth.

And here this heathen emperor. Signed this decree into law that everyone had to go to their hometown to be counted. Not as a prophet.

Having no knowledge whatsoever. Of the bible. And the prophets.

And the promises of God. And the prophecies. And the promise of God.

And here was this law now. That they had to go there to Bethlehem. But Mary was about to give birth.

but there was nothing they could do about it. He had to take Mary and that to travel a distance which would probably take them about 25 hours to get there. Caesar Augustus had spoken, make or break they had to obey.

Now some women if they were with child they so sensitive they can almost not even get up from their bed. They can't go to work and so I've got so many things that they can't do. But here was Mary she was with child about to give birth and she had to travel all that distance.

There were no taxis at that time mind you. She had to either walk on foot or go on donkey. And so Joseph spoke to Mary.

He said Mary we have this problem we've got to travel all the way there to Bethlehem. There's no other way. There's no way out of that.

And remember that you either walk on foot or travel by donkey. I don't know what Mary answered whether she said yes indeed Joseph really that's unfortunate and there's no one who will suffer like I will. But Caesar Augustus has spoken and we've got to do it.

Maybe the child will even be born on the way. Not in a hospital or not there where you have midwives available. And Joseph said there's no other way we've got to go.

And so off they went. I don't know how many days they traveled and Mary was heavy with child. Until they arrived there.

I remember when they got there there was no room for them in the end. There was no place for him anywhere. The only space they could get was there in the stable.

So in that Bethlehem became like Rome. Having nothing to do with a child that was to be born. Because they should have opened their best hotel and the best room in that hotel and said here is place for the King of Kings to be born.

But no they said let him be born there in the stable in the cattle dung. I don't know for how many hours they had just arrived to be there in Bethlehem and then Mary gave birth to a son. Whether it was even a number of days I don't know the time.

But when and while they were there Mary gave birth to a son. They went there to be in control. God was in control even of Caesar Augustus.

God had all the reins of the world in his hands. And even Caesar couldn't move his finger without God telling him to do so. You don't need to be a believer in order for God to reign and rule over you.

No God rules over each and every one. Whether it be a donkey that kicks. No matter whom you might be.

And if God would remove his hand from you, your lips would turn to dust. Now here was Caesar Augustus with a thought coming to him that there had to be a worldwide census. And what his main motive was we don't know.

But what we do know is it was God who inspired him to do that. For Jesus had to be born in Nazareth. And so he was going to be born in Nazareth.

But Micah had prophesied many hundreds of years before that that you Bethlehem are not the least amongst the cities of Judah. For in you will be born the one who is everlasting. Whose beginning is from from everlasting to everlasting.

And almost, a mistake almost happened that Jesus was born there in Nazareth. Joseph and Mary were short-sighted in that. They could only see close by.

They couldn't see that which was further away. What a tragedy that would have been if Jesus would have been born in Nazareth. This book would be a book of lies.

A book of lies. And God in heaven said my children are so blindsighted I'm going to move the emperor of the whole world and get him to work to bring about the fulfillment of God's Word. We may say Joseph should have known.

Mary should have known. Did no angel appear to them to tell them he's got to be born in Bethlehem. But now he's born in Nazareth.

And God undertook moving the biggest heathen, the hardest sinner, the one who calls himself a God and brings him into communication with a child, the son that's going to be born. And he had a part in it. And he sighed that baby has got to be born in Bethlehem.

He didn't put it in those words. But that was the crux of the matter. And so God said because of his son who had to be born in Bethlehem, he said to Caesar, now you get up, get dressed, go to your office, go to work, sign that document into law that there has to be a worldwide census so that my son will be born in Bethlehem and not in Nazareth.

Just at the right time. At the right time. Not before.

Not after. But he was on time. Just in time.

God planned it that there should be an emperor Augustus in Rome. God knew what he was doing, putting that heathen into power. He knew he needs that man, that godless man, that heathen to bring about the fulfillment of his word.

God is great and awesome. And so is the son who causes everyone to be stirred. From the smallest to the greatest.

Everything is in his hands. Not one of your heath will fall to the ground without him. And without him, we can do nothing.

Nothing. Nothing. You won't even be able to lift your foot from the ground if he does not allow that.

And when you pass from this world, then you will not even be able to chase a fly from your nose. It will sit there and even lay its eggs there and they'll hatch and you won't be able to do anything about it. Those that will be the maggots that will eat you.

And you can't do anything to it. Your body with the beautiful hair style, makeup, with all your beauty, if he takes his hand from you, will go down the drain. Some people think they are great.

And you look at them and said, my, what a fool you are. Some think they're beautiful. And you can say, what a fool that girl is.

In Germany, there was a young girl and she was pestered, self-conscious, thinking she's like the best of the princesses. So beautiful. And she went to a man of God and said, is it a sin that I'm so beautiful? Is it a sin that I look so good, so beautiful? He said, no, it's not a sin.

It's just a mistake. She said, well, he said, it's not a sin. It's just some mistake.

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net