

# God's Box

One of the subjects that invariably comes up when the judgement of God upon individuals or nations is discussed, is why the LORD God sees fit to leave certain individuals on this earth long after it is obvious that they are condemned and cut off from any hope of salvation.

Now, to be certain, there are those who are indeed cut off from any hope of salvation. Romans, chapter one makes this plain, as does the example of Pharaoh in the book of Exodus. It is quite plain that Pharaoh was not going to repent and neither was the LORD going to allow him to repent. This was also the case with Esau when he despised the birthright of having the Messiah come through his lineage. The operative rule for this is Jeremiah 17:9-10 which states:

even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. (*Jeremiah 17:9-10*)

Thus, according to what was in Pharaoh's and Esau's hearts, they received the due reward for their attitude toward the LORD God and the things of God – the LORD cut them off. Yet, the LORD also left them on this earth. Although, Pharaoh did not make it as long as Esau did, he still lived a considerable length of time. Yet, the question remains: Why did the LORD let them continue to live?

There are two answers to this question. The answers to both questions require an understanding of how the LORD uses the evil nature of man for judging man, and the sovereignty of God and how far that extends.

In the first instance, we do well to understand that the LORD God does not have to raise His hand (so to speak) against someone who is utterly rebellious against the law of God. The reason for this is that there are plenty of wicked men who love nothing more than to destroy someone else for a variety

of reasons. All the LORD has to do is give His permission for wicked men to act against another, and it is done. There are specific instances of this in Scripture. Of the many that exist, I will only use two to illustrate. The first is the judgement of Ahab, the wicked king of Israel.

I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the LORD said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramothgilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee. (*I Kings 22:18-23*)

In the above incident, all the LORD had to do was allow the lying spirit (a devil) to give the wicked prophets of Israel the words to say to convince Ahab that he would be victorious at Ramothgilead. The false prophets were all too happy to say what Ahab wanted to hear, and Ahab was all too willing to believe it. In fact, both Ahab and the false prophets got angry at Micaiah for telling them what they did not want to hear. Unfortunately for Ahab, Micaiah was quite correct, and Ahab died in battle the next day. Thus, all the LORD did, was allow the devil the leeway to do what devils love to do, and allow the false prophets and Ahab to say and do what they loved to do, which is tell lies to each other.

In the second illustration, the LORD brings judgement upon Edom (the descendants of Esau) for their lack of compassion upon Israel in the day of judgement of Israel. It is notable how the Lord does it.