

had to do was actually controlled by the Lord directly for the purpose of releasing Israel from the Babylonian captivity.

Sovereignty of God

Naturally enough this declaration of God's power in history leads to renewed emphasis on God's supremacy and control in verses five to twelve. It is a remarkable passage for teaching the sovereignty of God. In verse seven God declares the falsity of any dualistic idea of the universe. He is not, as held by some modern philosophers, a finite god trying his hardest to bring good out of a disagreeable situation. Nor is He a spirit of good struggling against a spirit of evil, as was held by the later Persian religion. God controls all things; He forms the light and creates the darkness; He makes peace and He creates evil. The word translated "evil" here does not mean moral evil, which would make God the author of sin. It means physical evil - calamity or destruction. The word translated "peace" has a much larger meaning in the Hebrew than our English word "peace." It covers the whole idea of well-being or freedom from trouble. The word here translated "evil" is the same word that is used in Genesis 41:3, 4 for the cows which were thin and scrawny. Evidently no moral factor is involved. When things that are pleasant come into our lives we can thank God because He has sent them. When things that are disagreeable come into our lives we know that He has sent these also and if we are children of His we know that He has sent them for His own good purposes and that they can be means of blessing to us if we see His hand in them.

Verses nine and ten are very similar to Paul's statement in Romans 9:21 about the sovereignty of God. "Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?" This great passage about the supremacy of God ends with a note which always arouses wonder and admiration in the mind of one who observes nature. God is the creator of all things. Our telescopes pierce the great distances of the celestial