

God's Sovereignty At All Times!

by Phil Sessa, January 1, 2021



What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of 2020? Do you think about fear, anxiety, coronavirus, riots, elections, face masks, or other things? Does the blessings of God surface in your mind? Is God's sovereignty at the forefront?

When life feels to be spinning out of control, we can have great comfort in knowing that we're never out of the sight of our Sovereign Lord—and He never loses control, it is impossible for Him to do so.

May the following Scriptures and thoughts about God's sovereignty encourage your heart.

[Psalm 115:3](#) ***“Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.”***

The place that God sits and looks from is not the same vantage point that we see from. He has a high heavenly view of all things, not a low base view that man does. Recall in Genesis 11, when man tried to build a tower to heaven, that the Lord had to come down from heaven to see what was equivalent to a child's Lego project. It paints a picture of God squinting in mockery at man's feeble attempt. No wonder the psalmist wrote in Psalm 2:4, “He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.” It is truly laughable to The Lord that man tries to rise above the throne of God. John Calvin stated, *“The world is subject to His will, and nothing can prevent him from accomplishing His purpose. God has all power in the preservation of his Church, and providing for her welfare; and secondly, all creatures are under His control, and therefore nothing can prevent Him from accomplishing all His purposes...we must not be ashamed frankly to acknowledge that God, by His eternal counsel, manages all things in such a manner, that nothing can be done but by His will and appointment”*.

[Hebrews 1:3](#) ***“He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”***

His is the radiance, like a kingly seal being imprinted in wax. Christ not only made created all things, but He sustains all things. If he were to let go His sustaining hand for a second, all things would spiral out of control. “He providentially governs all of creation *by the word of his power* and is bringing history to a final and glorious end or purpose.”¹

[Jonah 1:17](#); ***And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.*** God sovereignly appointed and commanded it to swallow His

¹ Beeke, J. R., Barrett, M. P. V., & Bikes, G. M. (Eds.). (2014). [The Reformation Heritage KJV Study Bible](#) (p. 1783). Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books.

servant, and to swim toward Nineveh against Jonah's will. In [Jonah 3](#), He also appointed a sirocco (a hot windstorm), a plant, and a worm to eat the plant. God's sovereign will overwhelmed Jonah's will.

[Proverbs 16:33](#) **"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD".**

"Casting lots" involves the random selection or distribution of objects in order to make an unbiased choice by the participants. God's people believed God controlled the lot. This is seen in the narrative of Jonah on the ship ([Jonah 1:7](#)) when the lot fell on Jonah, and in [Acts 1:26](#) when the lot landed on Matthias as the replacement for Judas. ([Proverbs 19:21](#)) Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.

[Lamentations 3:37-40](#) ***"Who can command things to happen without the Lord's permission? Does not the Most-High send both calamity and good?"***

Then why should we, mere humans, complain when we are punished for our sins? Instead, let us test and examine our ways. Let us turn back to the LORD."

Amos 3:6 ***"If a trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid? If there is calamity in a city, will not the Lord have done it?"***

The focus is on God's sovereign right in executing judgment. It is self-defeating to murmur against that which God has ordained in providence. When suffering is deserved, it is confession rather than a complaint that the Lord desires to hear."² Whatever God sends is His will, and man doesn't get to decide if God was just in carrying forth His will.

[Jeremiah 9:23–24](#) ***"Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, 24 but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord."***

The Lord has shown us that He can easily cause the ungodly to go into a frenzy when he sends calamity. Man cannot boast in his sending away what God has sent. As powerful as it was at the time, Egypt couldn't stop the plagues. 1 Cor 1:31, *"Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."* *"Knowing God in Christ is the only legitimate reason for proper boasting* (1 Cor. 1:19–31). Knowing The Lord in His sovereignty and love is the only true wisdom, power, and wealth (Hos. 2:20; 4:1; 6:6).³

[Romans 8:28](#) ***"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose"***

God weaves everything together in a perfect tapestry to display His glory on behalf of and for the good of His beloved children. The "good" in this context does not refer to earthly comfort but conformity to Christ ([Rom. 8:29](#)), closer fellowship with God, bearing good fruit for the kingdom, and final glorification ([Rom. 8:30](#)). Christians can have the assurance that all things work together for good: which He has done good His glory and their good for them before creation (eternity past), in their conversion (the recent past), presently in their current circumstances, and ultimately when Christ's return (the future).

[Job 42:2](#) ***I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted."***

² Beeke, J. R., Barrett, M. P. V., & Bilkes, G. M. (Eds.). (2014). *The Reformation Heritage KJV Study Bible* (p. 1117). Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books.

³ Beeke, J. R., Barrett, M. P. V., & Bilkes, G. M. (Eds.). (2014). *The Reformation Heritage KJV Study Bible* (p. 1049). Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books.

In his second speech, the Lord questions Job specifically about contrasting Job, God's sovereign power, and the creatures he has made (40:6–41:34). Job has no response; he did not know God's hidden purposes. He is overwhelmed with God's greatness which causes him to cease thinking of himself. He learned God's sovereign control over all things and submits to it. The more we are overwhelmed with God, the less we will be consumed with ourselves.

[Ephesians 1:4](#) Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

In the inter-trinitarian counsel, in eternity past, before the foundation of the world, the Father chose Christians in the Son (Christ). God's initiative in redeeming believers from sin and death was not happenstance, but God's will, being carried out in Christ. Jonah realized, "*Salvation belongs to the Lord!*" Therefore his chosen people can take no credit for their salvation. God chose them and would make them to be holy and blameless before him. This goal is not an option for those that follow Christ—rather it is the very purpose of our election in Christ. Holiness here expresses living separate from the world, righteously before Him in moral purity, while blamelessness expresses having freedom from the debt, and guilt of trespasses and sins in which Christians have formerly walked (1:7; 2:1, 5).

[Psalm 23](#) *The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. 3 He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

The Lord worked in the life of David, as David acknowledged repeatedly that "He" makes, He restores, He leads, He comforts, He prepares, He anoints, because He, The Lord, sovereignly directed David's life from the pasture to the palace. The sovereign care the God bestowed upon David, even experiencing the Lord taking him through the valley of the shadow of death, propelled David's faith that he would dwell in the house of the Lord forever!

[Matthew 10:29–31](#) Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Sparrows were customarily thought of as the smallest of creatures, and the penny was one of the least valuable Roman coins. Yet despite their monetary value and size, the Lord takes care of them. There is no one maverick molecule in existence, for all is under God's sovereignty. 2020 might not have been business as usual in our eyes, however the Lord was and is still sovereign over all events, including the most insignificant events in our lives. Since our heavenly Father gives constant sovereign supervision even to seemingly insignificant creatures, surely, he will also care for us, his disciples, in our mission to proclaim the good news of the kingdom.

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Soli Deo Gloria: The beginning of a New Year is an ideal time to apply the title of our podcast, “**STOP and THINK ABOUT IT**”. We don’t want to be careless about God’s sovereignty in your lives. God’s people become careless in their relationship with Him, the Lord rebuked them through the prophet Haggai. “*Consider your ways!*” (Haggai 1:5) It’s time to look up and get our bearings about how you lived under the sovereignty of God last year, and how will you live under His sovereignty this year. Are you living on autopilot on your journey to the celestial city? Are you just bumping along from one busy week to another without ever stopping to ponder, where you are, and where are you going? To that end, here are an additional 10 QUESTIONS to ask yourself:

Application (10 Questions to Ask at the Start of a New Year or On Your Birthday) by Donald Whitney

- (1) *What’s one thing you could do this year to increase your enjoyment of God?*
- (2) *What’s the most humanly impossible thing you will ask God to do this year?*
- (3) *What’s the single most important thing you could do to improve the quality of your family life?*
- (4) *Which spiritual discipline do you most want to make progress this year, and what will you do about it?*
- (5) *What is the single biggest time-waster in your life, and what will you do about it this year?*
- (6) *What is the most helpful new way you could strengthen your church?*
- (7) *For whose salvation will you pray most fervently this year?*
- (8) *What’s the most important way you will, by God’s grace, try to make this year different from last year?*
- (9) *What one thing could you do to improve your prayer life this year?*
- (10) *What single thing that you plan to do this year will matter most in ten years? In eternity?*

Additionally, there are 21 more questions to consider to help you “Consider your ways.” Think on the entire list at one sitting, or answer one question each day for a month.

- (11) *What’s the most important decision you need to make this year?*
- (12) *What area of your life most needs simplifying, and what’s one way you could simplify in that area?*
- (13) *What’s the most important need you feel burdened to meet this year?*
- (14) *What habit would you most like to establish this year?*
- (15) *Who is the person you most want to encourage this year?*
- (16) *What is your most important financial goal, and what step will you can take toward achieving it?*
- (17) *What’s the single most important thing you could do to improve the quality of your work life?*
- (18) *What’s one new way you could be a blessing to your pastor (or to another who ministers to you)?*
- (19) *What’s one thing you could do to enrich the spiritual legacy you will leave to your children and grandchildren?*
- (20) *What book, in addition to the Bible, do you most want to read this year?*
- (21) *What one thing do you most regret about last year, and what will you do about it this year?*
- (22) *What single blessing from God do you want to seek most earnestly this year?*
- (23) *In what area of your life do you most need growth, and what will you do about it this year?*
- (24) *What’s the most important trip you want to take this year?*
- (25) *What skill do you most want to learn or improve this year?*
- (26) *To what need or ministry will you try to give an unprecedented amount this year?*
- (27) *What’s the single most important thing you could do to improve the quality of your commute this year?*
- (28) *What one biblical doctrine do you most want to understand better this year, and what will you do about it?*
- (29) *29. If those who know you best gave you one piece of advice, what would they say? Would they be right? What will you do about it?*
- (30) *30. What’s the most important new item you want to buy this year?*
- (31) *In what area of your life do you most need change, and what will you do about it this year?*

Sources:

- [10 Key Bible Verses on God’s Sovereignty](#)
- [Ten Questions to Ask at the Start of a New Year or On Your Birthday](#)