

right where He wants us

The People of God in Times Like These

God is Sovereign.

I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose ... (Isaiah 46:9-10)

Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases. (Psalm 115:3)

In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will . . . (Ephesians 1:11)

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:16-17)

sov·er·eign·ty /'säv(ə)rən(t)ē/ noun

1. supreme power or authority.

*The sovereignty of God is the free exercise of His supreme authority in executing and administering His eternal purposes. God must be sovereign if He is to be truly God. A god who is not sovereign is not God at all. Such is an imposter, an idol, a mere caricature formed in man's fallen imagination. A god who is less than fully sovereign is not worthy of our worship, much less our witness. But the Bible proclaims for all to hear that "the Lord reigns" (Ps. 93:1). God is exactly who Scripture declares He is. He is the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, whose supreme authority is over all. This is **the main premise of Scripture**.*

- Steven Lawson

In my classes in the seminary, I raise questions like, "Is God in control of every single molecule in the universe?" When I raise that question, I say, "The answer to that question will not determine whether you are a Christian or a Moslem, a Calvinist or an Arminian, but it will determine whether you are a theist or an atheist." Sometimes the students can't see the connection. And I say to them, "Don't you realize that if there is one molecule in this universe running around loose outside the scope or the sphere of God's divine control and authority and power, then that single maverick molecule may be the grain of sand that changes the entire course of human history, that blocks God from keeping the promises he has made to his people?" It may be that one maverick molecule that will prevent Christ from the consummation of his kingdom. For if there is one maverick molecule, it would mean that God is not sovereign.

*If there is any element of the universe that is outside of his authority, then he no longer is God over all. In other words, sovereignty belongs to deity. Sovereignty is a natural attribute of the Creator. **God owns what he makes, and he rules what he owns.***

- R.C. Sproul

To say that God is sovereign means that **there is nothing in the vastness of the universe that can thwart His rule or will.**

- Dan Mastrapa

God is utterly sovereign (He is both omnipotent and omniscient) and He is transcendent (in Himself He exists above time and space, i.e., above the created order with its intrinsic limitations). God is omnipotent, that is, He is able to do anything He wishes. Nothing is too hard for Him (Jer. 32:17); He is the Almighty (2 Cor. 6:18; Rev. 1:8). Jesus insists that with God all things are possible (Matt. 19:26). His sovereignty extends over the millions of stars in the universe, over the fall of a sparrow, over the exact count of the hairs of one's head. If you throw a pair of dice, the numbers that come up lie in the determination of God (Prov. 16:33). Ecclesiastes shows that the ancients knew of the water cycle, but still the biblical writers preferred to say that God sends the rain. He is not the distant God espoused by Deism. Through the exalted Son He upholds all things by His powerful word (Heb. 1:3); indeed, He "works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will" (Eph. 1:11). This control extends as much to sentient beings as to inanimate objects. He can turn the heart of the king in any direction He sees fit (Prov. 21:1). He is the Potter who has the right to make some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use (Rom. 9:21). There can be no degrees of difficulty with an omnipotent God.

God reigns, and everyone, everything, every event, every item, every matter, every thought is finally subject to that sovereignty.

- D.A. Carson

The major components of the biblical concept of divine sovereignty (or lordship) are God's _____, _____, and _____. (see John Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 21–115).

His *control* means that everything happens according to His plan and intention.

His *authority* means that all His commands ought to be obeyed.

His *presence* means that we encounter God's control and authority in all our experience, so that we cannot escape from His justice or from His love.

God's control is _____:

Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps. (Ps. 135:6)

The Lord of hosts has sworn: "As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand, that I will break the Assyrian in my land, and on my mountains trample him underfoot; and his yoke shall depart from them, and his burden from their shoulder." This is the purpose that is purposed concerning the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations. For the Lord of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back? (Isa. 14:24–27)

Also henceforth I am he [Yahweh]; there is none who can deliver from my hand; I work, and who can turn it back?" (Isa. 43:13)

...so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. (Isa. 55:11)

'The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens. (Rev. 3:7)

God's control is also _____:

It governs every event that takes place anywhere in the universe.

The events of the _____ come from his hand (Ps. 65:9–11, 135:6–7, 147:15–18, Matt. 5:45, 6:26–30, 10:29–30, Luke 12:4–7).

The details of _____ come from God's plan and his power. He determines where people of every nation will dwell (Acts 17:26).

God determines the events of each _____ (Ex. 21:12–13, 1 Sam. 2:6–7, Ps. 37:23–24, 139:13–16, Jer. 1:5, Eph. 1:4, James 4:13–16).

God governs the _____ we make (Prov. 16:9) including our _____ toward others (Ex. 34:24, Judg. 7:22, Dan. 1:9, Ezra 6:22).

To say that God is sovereign means (at least) ...

I can trust that – even in apparent uncertainty or even chaos – God is _____ for me, my family, my church, my community, my nation, and this world.

Lesson: Genesis 50:15-21

I can rest knowing that – even though we live in a world full of evil – God only _____ what He has _____.

Lesson: Job 1:7-12, James 5:11

I can know that God – while never responsible for human wickedness – nevertheless ordains _____ and _____ to His will.

Lesson: Acts 2:22-23, 4:27-28

I can know that – because God wills something to be so – I have a powerful reason to use every means available to _____ that will.

Lesson: Acts 27:21-32

Next 6 messages:

right where He wants us – Living as Exiles
right where He wants us – Standing and Suffering
right where He wants us – Intentionally United
right where He wants us – Actively Obedient
right where He wants us – Brightly Shining
right where He wants us – Boldly Unafraid