

Subject: *Our Supreme and Sovereign God*

Scripture: *Daniel 4:34-37*

King Nebuchadnezzar learned one of the most important lessons in life. He learned that there is a King much higher than he was and this King was really in charge of things. He learned that God is supreme and sovereign over all. He learned that God is in control and able to do whatever He pleases, whenever He pleases, however He pleases, and with whomever He pleases. He is absolutely free to think and do what He wants and no one can stop Him or question Him. He can't be controlled by anyone or anything else. He can't be manipulated or managed. He's not going to retire or resign. He can't be impeached. He can't be voted out because He wasn't voted in. God is on His throne. Now if God is supreme and sovereign, how do we square that with all we see going on in the world?

- If God is in control, why does He allow sin and suffering?
- If God is in control, are we still responsible for our actions?
- If God is in control, why pray about things?
- If God is in control, why witness and share the Gospel?

EXTENT OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

Psalms 115:1-3¹ *Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake.*² *Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God?*³ *But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.*

- God is in control at all times (past, present, and future)
- God is in control in all places (heaven and earth and everywhere in His universe)
The false gods of the world were often thought to be local gods with local control.
- God is in control of all things (big things and little things)
Proverbs 21:1 *The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.* In Bible times kings were typically absolute tyrants. Their word was law. But God was able to change the hearts of the most powerful people on earth. ***Proverbs 16:33*** *The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD.* There is no such thing as luck or chance. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth will make you free." You need to be free from fear and silly superstitions.
- God is in control of all circumstances (good and bad) – ***Romans 8:28*** *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* All things work out for good because God is working them for our good.

The sovereignty of God is a soft pillow to lay our troubled head. We can lie down at night and sleep because we know God is in control. ***Psalms 121:1-4*** *I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.* All of God's attributes are related to His sovereignty. For example, if God were loving but not sovereign, something might keep Him from loving. God is too wise to make a mistake and He is too powerful to fail.

EXAMPLES OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

- God's control of the physical world – God spoke and everything was made. He controls the seas and the stars. **Job 38:11** *And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?* **Psalms 135:5-6** ⁵ *For I know that the LORD is great, and that our Lord is above all gods.* ⁶ *Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.* God is sovereign over the laws of nature. He made these laws and maintains them. Sometimes God works outside the normal course of these laws to perform miracles. In working miracles God shows that He is not limited by the laws He ordained.
- God's control of the spiritual world – God is sovereign over angels. Even Satan and demons are subject to His limits and restraints. **Job 1:12** *And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.* **Job 2:6** *And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.*
- God's control of human history – God controls the events of human history. It has been said that “History is His story.” **Acts 17:24-27** *God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: He determines the boundaries of nations and empires and the rise and fall of leaders. Nebuchadnezzar understood this.*
- God's control in the life of Christ – He controlled the details of His birth. He was born at just the right time. **Galatians 4:4** *But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.* He was born at the right place (Bethlehem, Micah 5:2). Christ taught that God is sovereign over all events. **Matthew 10:29** *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.* God was sovereign in the special protection of Christ. He would not allow Christ to be killed before His time. **Luke 4:28-30** *And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way.* He was crucified just as the Father planned. **Acts 2:23** *Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: He rose from the grave just like He said He would. He ascended back to heaven when the Father was ready for Him. And He is coming back when the Father says, “Son, go bring my children home.”*
- God's control in our lives – He determines when and where we are born and how long we will live. He determines who are parents are, our race and nationality, our time in history, and our physical features. This is one scripture you don't hear from the health, wealth, and prosperity preachers: **Exodus 4:10-11** *And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the LORD said*

unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD? Everything in our lives happens to us either by God's direction or by His permission.

EXPLANATION OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY (in light of some difficult questions)

- If God is sovereign, how do you explain sin and suffering? If God is in control, why does He allow these things? We don't know all the answers to our questions, but it is helpful to look at the big picture. All of human history covers about 6,000 years. This is such a small speck of time in comparison to eternity. Another thing to consider is how God uses sin and suffering to accomplish his purpose. Think about Ruth, David, Hosea, and Joseph. **Genesis 50:20** *But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.* Think about Esther. Think about God's plan in the Book of Acts. Stephen was stoned to death and James was beheaded, but Peter was spared and set free by an angel.
- If God is sovereign, how do you explain man's choices? If God is in control, are we responsible and accountable for what we do? An example of this is Judas Iscariot. It was predicted of him in Scripture that he would betray Jesus, yet he was responsible for his actions. God's sovereignty is never an excuse for our sin. If God is in control, why pray? Why evangelize? Because God tells us to. How can we reconcile God's sovereignty and our responsibility in salvation? Both are true. Spurgeon was asked how he reconciled them, and he said, "I never try to reconcile friends." Picture yourself standing on a railroad track between the two rails. One of those rails represents God's sovereignty and the other one represents man's responsibility. From our vantage point they are separate, but look down the track and they merge into one. In eternity all of this will make perfect sense. D. L. Moody used to explain it this way. It's as if God has put a sign over the door into Heaven, "Whosoever will may come," and He has put another sign over that same door on the inside, "Chosen from the foundation of the world."

I am sure of this: whatever I do that is wrong and sinful, I must take the blame, but whatever I do that is good and right and holy, God gets all the credit. It's all the grace of God in my life. The real issue is this: are you willing for God to be in control of your life? Are you willing to say, "Lord, here's my life, take it and use it for your glory." Every time we worship, God invites us to cooperate with Him and do His will. We ought to understand the invitation as an opportunity to obey God and submit to His authority over our lives.