

## Do Our Prayers Really Make a Difference? – Part 1

### Introduction:

1. Many people have a very unbiblical view of God's sovereignty. We would all agree that God is sovereign (all-powerful), but how does God choose to **exercise** His sovereignty?
2. Some believe that God's sovereignty means that God laid out a pre-fixed, pre-plotted plan for all of mankind before the foundation of the world. The details of every person's destiny were set. God is carrying out His plans to the letter.
3. This kind of fatalistic theology leads people to ask some inevitable questions.
  - Why should I really pray? Do my prayers make any difference? What is the purpose of prayer? Isn't God going to do what He wants to do anyway? Does God really need me to pray?
4. The theology of fatalism can kill a person's prayer life. If God has everything on auto-pilot, let's take a siesta and let it happen.
5. To the contrary, John Wesley said, "God does nothing on the earth save in answer to believing prayer."
  - If this concept is true, I'll lose some sleep for that! I'll change my life-style for that! I'll turn off the TV and even miss a meal for that!!
6. Does a sovereign, all-powerful God need our involvement or not? Is prayer really necessary? Does prayer really make a difference concerning the affairs of this earth? In this lesson we will show from God's Word that it does.

### Why do our prayers make a difference?

#### First, because of God's original plan.

1. In Genesis 1 God created mankind. What was God's purpose? vs. 26-28
  - We see that it was for mankind to take dominion over all the earth.
  - The word "dominion" simply means "to rule." It carries the idea that Adam (and his descendants) was God's manager or steward over the earth.
2. God didn't give away **ownership** of the earth, but He did assign the **governorship** of it to mankind. Psalm 8
3. The word "keep" in **Genesis 2:15** means "to guard or protect." Adam was God's watchman or guardian of the earth. Adam was clearly God's representative on the earth.
4. He took his orders from God, but he was created with volition to make choices and decisions while governing the earth.
  - **Genesis 2:15-17** - the responsibility to dress and keep the garden, but not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
  - **Genesis 2:18-20** - the responsibility to name each animal. Adam obeyed God, deciding on each animal.
  - **Genesis 2:21-24** - the responsibility to take Eve and love her as his wife. Adam obeyed and took Eve unto himself.
5. God made man in His own image (**Genesis 1:27**) and likeness (**Genesis 1:26**).
  - The word "image" means "an illusion, a representative figure, a resemblance."
  - The word "likeness" means "to model, shape; resemblance."

6. Adam was modeled or shaped to resemble God. Why is this? So Adam could represent God on the earth.
  - **Psalm 8:5** teaches that God crowned mankind with glory and honor.
  - When creation looked at Adam, they were supposed to see God.
7. Of course, Adam sinned and fell short of the glory of God. Mankind must now be changed back into God's image by the Holy Spirit from glory to glory.
 

**2 Corinthians 3:18**
8. God created the earth to be under the governorship of mankind. When mankind failed to obey God, Satan became "*the god of this world*" and began to implement his satanic policy of evil in this world. **2 Corinthians 4:4**
9. There would now be enmity (hostility) between Satan and mankind. Mankind would struggle to regain his dominion over the earth and Satan would seek to confound man's efforts. **Genesis 3:15**
10. God raised up a nation that was designed to glorify the Lord throughout the entire earth. Through their obedience, Israel would reclaim God's authority on the earth and establish a righteous kingdom. God would be King, and Israel would be a kingdom of priests on the earth. **Exodus 19:3-6**
  - This is why the Psalmist wrote in **Psalm 115:16**, "*The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.*"
11. Here is the point: God made a decision at creation. He created mankind and gave them authority and dominion over the earth. Humans were forever to be God's link to authority and activity on the earth.
  - God made a "through humans" decision when He created mankind and gave them dominion or governorship of the earth.
12. So complete and final was God's decision to do things on the earth through human beings, that it meant there was only one way to redeem fallen mankind. There was only one way that God could regain for mankind what man lost in Adam.
  - God would have to become part of the human race and take on flesh and blood. **John 1:1, 14; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:14-16**
  - The incarnation was the only answer. God became man. **Philippians 2:6-8**
13. This is why Jesus did not dispute Satan's claims when Satan claimed to possess present power over the kingdoms of this world in **Luke 4:5-8**.
14. Jesus, the Son of **man**, will one day exercise dominion, and seize control of the kingdoms of this world, but Satan wanted Him to short-circuit the Father's plan and take a short cut. It was a clever temptation, but Jesus saw right through it.
15. One day, Christ, the Son of man, will regain total dominion and control of the earth for mankind. **Daniel 7:13-14**

**Second, because God has purposed to work through the prayers of His people.**

1. Here we have a key that unlocks the reason for the necessity of prayer. God chose, from the time of creation, to work on the earth through humans, not independent of them.
2. God accomplishes His work on the earth through people. He always has and He always will - even at the cost of becoming one Himself.
3. Is God all-powerful? Of course He is. But the Scripture reveals that when it comes to the affairs of the earth, God has **chosen** to work through people.

4. Is this not the story woven throughout the entire Bible?
  - Because of Abraham's prayers, Lot was not destroyed with Sodom. **Genesis 19:27, 29**
  - Because of Moses' prayers, God did not destroy the nation of Israel. **Psalm 106:23**
  - Because of the prophet Elisha's prayers, a woman's son was raised from the dead. **2 Kings 4:32-37**
  - Because of Hannah's prayers, God gave her a son (Samuel). **1 Samuel 1:10, 17-20**
  - Because of Samuel's prayers, God delivered the Israelite's from the Philistines. **1 Samuel 7:5-10**
  - Because of Jesus' prayers, His disciples saw His glory. **Luke 9:28-29, 32**
  - Because of Jesus' prayers, Peter's faith did not fail. **Luke 22:31-32**
  - Because of the disciples' prayers, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word with boldness. **Acts 4:23-31**
  - Because of believers' prayers, Paul was confident that he would be released from prison (and he was for a time). **Philippians 1:19; Philemon 22**
5. Do you see it? We could go on and on. This is but a brief list of people's prayers moving the hand of God and making a difference on this earth.
6. In our next section we will examine some clear Bible examples of this principle in action.