

The Truth about Sovereignty – Part 4

Fourth, does God control every detail of life?

1. There are many who teach that God's sovereignty means that God has set up a prearranged plan for every person and every detail of his/her life. It has all been pre-plotted, and God in His sovereignty sees to it that it all happens as He has decreed it.
 - Quote from David Steele - "The Five Points of Calvinism" - "All events (both small and great) come about as the result of God's eternal decree. The Lord God rules over heaven and earth with absolute control. Nothing comes to pass apart from His eternal purpose."
 - This is what many people mean when they say, "God is in control."
2. But what does the Bible teach? Does the Bible lead us to believe that God in His power controls every detail of every person's life?
3. The Bible, in fact, teaches the opposite. It teaches that mankind, by and large, rebels **against** the will of God. **Isaiah 1:2, 4**
4. This is illustrated quite vividly in **Jeremiah 32:30-35**. God had tried to teach them, but they would not receive His instruction. They did wicked, abominable things that God said never even entered His mind. cf. **Jeremiah 7:31, 19:5**
5. God sent Jeremiah to read all the prophecies of judgment that God had purposed to do to Israel. Why did God want him to do this? God said, "It may be they will repent and I can forgive them." **Jeremiah 36:1-7**
 - Two times God says "*It may be...*" This does not sound like a God who controls every detail of this wicked world. It sounds like a God who gives men His truth and then gives them a choice to either receive it or reject it.
6. This same concept is seen in Jeremiah 26. God commanded Jeremiah to give Israel His Word in hope that they would repent, and God would not have to bring the judgment He had **purposed** against Israel. vs. 1-3, 13
 - Jeremiah then used the example of King Hezekiah in verses 17-19.
 - Hezekiah was the king of Judah that God told "*thou shalt die.*" God made a sovereign choice that he would die and declared it. Hezekiah prayed, God heard his prayer, and God decided to add 15 years to his life. **2 Kings 20:1-6**
7. In **Jeremiah 23:16-22**; God was angry with the prophets because they had not stood in God's counsel or God's words. God said if they had, Israel would have turned from their evil way.
8. Someone may say, "But God is the potter and we are the clay. The potter can do whatever He wants to do with the clay." Let's read **Jeremiah 18:1-11** carefully. Would you like to see an example of Jeremiah 18 in action? Read **Jonah 3:3-10**.
9. Are you starting to get the picture? God's will is **not** always done on earth. This is why Jesus told His disciples to pray, "*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done **in earth**, as it is in heaven.*" (**Matthew 6:10**) Why pray for it if it is already being done?
 - The Satanic policy of evil currently fills this earth, but Jesus came to give us understanding. **1 John 5:19-20**
 - One day Christ will return and establish His righteous government over this earth. **Jeremiah 23:5-6**

10. Even though a Calvinist would say that God is in control of every detail of life down here on earth, the fact is that we have seen that the Bible simply does not substantiate this kind of thinking.
 - Notice the words Jesus used in **Luke 10:30-31**. The words "*by chance*" mean "accident." Jesus chose to use this phrase.
 - We don't like the word "luck" because it gives us the impression that God is somehow not in control. But what have we learned as we have been studying the Bible? God's actions stem from who He is (His character and nature), not some pre-fixed and pre-plotted plan.
11. 1 Samuel 23 is an interesting text relating to the question, "Does God control every detail of every person's life?"
 - David saves the inhabitants of the city of Keilah from the Philistines.
 - King Saul hears that David is in Keilah and pursues him, planning to surround the city and destroy it if need be.
 - Before Saul gets there, David asks God if the people of Keilah will deliver him up to Saul to save their own necks. The Lord said, "*They will deliver thee up.*"
 - David then acts on this information and escapes Keilah and flees to the wilderness.
 - It's interesting that God said, "*They will deliver thee up*", but yet they never did. Was God wrong? Of course not. God was simply saying, "If you make **a choice** to stay in this city, they will deliver you up."
 - Because David made a wise decision, what God said **would happen**, never had to happen.
12. What does this teach us? Man's actions and choices have consequences. A fatalistic view of sovereignty inherently takes the responsibility **off** of mankind and diminishes the importance of godly decision-making.
13. If we are puppets playing out a script already written, why pray fervently? It won't make an ounce of difference in the final outcome. Why fight sin and sickness and pain? Why send missionaries? Why give sacrificially? Why vote?
14. Proponents of Calvinism can try to manipulate their people with semantic word games, but the bottom line is this - a fatalistic view of sovereignty teaches that man's choices and decisions have no life-changing impact whatsoever. In fact, in this system, you really don't make decisions; God already pre-planned every move you would make.
 - I've heard preachers go so far as to say or imply, "God even planned my failures and sin so I could appreciate His grace and understand it."
 - This is ludicrous (**Romans 6:1**). An understanding of grace comes through the truth of God's Word, not your subjective experiences.
 - God did not plan or pre-plot your sin. We sin because we choose to sin.

Concluding thoughts:

1. The plan of God is not to manipulate the details of your life, but rather to conform you to the image of His Son.
2. How does God accomplish this in our lives? First, when we are saved, He places us in Christ, and places His Spirit within us.

- This allows us to spiritually understand His plan and will as revealed in His Word. God then desires for us to learn His Word and apply it to the details of our lives.
 - This is why we are commanded to walk in the Spirit (**Galatians 5:16**). God leads and guides us through this wicked world as we walk in the Spirit, with our faith resting in an intelligent understanding of His Word.
 - As we do this, we make godly decisions and will ultimately reap eternal glory. But when we walk after the flesh, we make ungodly choices and we reap corruption. **Galatians 6:8**
 - You make a daily choice to either walk in the Spirit, allowing God to control your life or walk after the flesh fulfilling **your** desires.
 - God desires to be an active part of your daily life and guide you by His Word and by His Spirit, but He will not force His fellowship upon you.
3. Your choices are just what they are - **your choices!** Your choices have consequences.
- Joshua told Israel, "*...choose you this day whom ye will serve.*" **Joshua 24:15**
 - Moses told Israel, "*I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.*" **Deuteronomy 30:19**