

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD – PART ONE

Do some thinking while we wait to begin...

Think: why – sometimes – do Christian people doubt that God is in control?

Read Psalm 104:1-13, 31-35.

Then discuss with a friend...

- How does the Psalmist show us the power of God?
- How does the Psalmist encourage us to respond to the power of God?

1. THE POWER OF GOD – INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

- **Meet the sovereign God**

“I am God Almighty” / El Shaddai (Genesis 17:1, etc)

“the Lord of hosts” / Yahweh Sabaoth (1 Sam. 1:3, etc)

“You will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power” (Mark 14:62)

- **The power and the simplicity of God.**

God IS power

God’s power puts all His other perfections into action

- **Definitions:**

“That ability and strength, whereby he can bring to pass whatsoever he please.” (Stephen Charnock)

- **Some things God CAN’T do:**

- Work to the full extent of his power

- Perform the logically impossible

- Things inconsistent with His nature and character. He cannot...

Die (1 Tim 1:17). Change (Num 23:19, 1 Sam 15:29, Mal 3:6). Disown himself (2 Tim 2:13). Lie, (Tit 2, Heb 6:17-18). Break a promise (2 Cor 1:20). Ignore sin (Hab 1:13). Be tempted to sin (Jam 1:13). Allow grace to override justice (Rom 3:26).

2. GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER HIS CREATION

(a) He made everything

Genesis 1:1, Psalm 104:5

Jer. 32:17, "Ah Lord God! It is you who has made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you"

Colossians 1:16, "by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible"

Job 26:14, "Behold, these are but the outskirts of his ways, and how small a whisper do we hear of him! But the thunder of his power who can understand?"

(b) He sustains and upholds everything

Psalm 104:1-4 – light, outer space, and the weather

Psalm 104:10, 14, (see Matt 6:26-30, 10:29)

All God's works of nature are miracles:

"All God's works of nature are truly miracles, though we consider them not, being blinded with too frequent and customary a sight of them... But let us consider, that this power of preserving things in their station and motion, and the renewing them, is more stupendous than that which we commonly call miraculous. We call those miracles, which are wrought out of the track of nature, and contrary to the usual stream and current of it; which men wonder at, because they seldom see them, and hear of them as things rarely brought forth in the world; when the truth is, there is more of power pressed in the ordinary station and motion of natural causes than in those extraordinary exertings of power. Is not more power signalled in that whirling motion of the sun every hour for so many ages, than in the suspending of its motion one day, as it was in the days of Joshua?" (Stephen Charnock, *The existence and attributes of God*, vol. 2, pp35, 51.)

3. GOD IS SOVEREIGN OVER HISTORY

(a) GLOBAL history

Acts 17:26, "God made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place."

Ps 33:11, "The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the LORD stands for ever, the plans of his heart to all generations." (See also Pss 45:6-12, 47:1-9, 95:3, see Gen 18:25. Ps 47:1-9. Daniel 4:17)

For example, Cyrus the Emperor of Persia– Isaiah 44:28, 45:4
(See also 2 Kings 19:25-28, Ezra 1:1, Jer. 30:4-24)

(b) He is sovereign over MY history

Conception:

Jer. 1:5, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Ps 139:13-15, "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth."

The course of my life & my decisions:

Psalms 139:16, "Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them."

Jer. 10:23, "I know, O Lord, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps" (See also Prov. 21:1, 16:9)

John 19:24, "This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said, 'They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing'." (quoting Ps 22:18. Cf. Jn 19:31-37).

Suffering, evil and death

Psalm 104:29-30 (see also Job 1:21-22, Ex 21:12-13)

1 Samuel 2:6-7, "The Lord brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up. The Lord sends poverty and wealth; he humbles and he exalts." (cf. Ps 37:23)

Lamentations 3:37-38, "Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?"

4. APPLICATIONS: WHAT IS THE "USE" OF THIS DOCTRINE

Him: God is all-powerful... glorious... and happy

Us: fear Him... praise Him... take comfort in Him

"As Omnipotence is an ocean that cannot be fathomed, so the comforts from it are streams that cannot be exhausted. What joy can be wanting to him that finds himself folded in the arms of Omnipotence? This perfection is made over to believers in the covenant, as well as any other attribute... How comfortable is it to think, that you have a God that can do what he pleases; nothing so difficult but he can effect, nothing so strong but he can overrule! You need not dread men, since you have One to restrain them; nor fear devils since you have One to chain them; no creature but is acted by this power." (Charnock, pp98-99)

5. IN THE LIGHT OF WHAT WE'VE LEARNED TODAY WRITE YOUR OWN MEDITATION ON THE POWER OF GOD

Write down what you would like to say to yourself the next time you doubt that God is in control.

Write down what you might then say to God (i.e. pray). For example, you could complete each of these sentences...

Heavenly Father, you are...

Heavenly Father, you have...

Heavenly Father, I am...

Heavenly Father, please would you..