

God is in Control?

The belief that God controls everything that happens to us is one of the devil's biggest inroads into our lives. If this belief is true, then our actions are irrelevant, and our efforts are meaningless. What will be will be. If we believe that God wills everything—good or bad—that happens to us, it gives us some temporary relief from confusion and condemnation, but in the long term, it slanders God, hinders our trust in Him, and leads to passiveness.

Religion has invented a new meaning for the word sovereign, suggesting that God controls everything and nothing can happen apart from His will or permission. However, there is nothing in the actual definition that states that. Here's how the dictionary defines sovereign: "1. Paramount; supreme. 2. Having supreme rank or power. 3. Independent: a sovereign state. 4. Excellent." None of these definitions means that God controls everything.

It is often assumed that since God is paramount or supreme, nothing can happen without His approval. That is not what the Scriptures teach. In 2 Peter 3:9, Peter said, "The Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." This clearly states that it is not the Lord's will for anyone to perish, but people are perishing.

Jesus said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat" (Matt. 7:13). Relatively few people are saved compared to the number who are lost. God's will for people concerning salvation is not being accomplished.

This is because the Lord gave us the freedom to choose. He doesn't will anyone into hell. He paid for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2 and 1 Tim. 4:10), but we must choose to put our faith in Christ and receive His salvation. People are the ones choosing hell by not choosing Jesus as their Savior. It is the free will of man that damns them, not God.

Free Will's Role in Our Lives

People virtually have to climb over the roadblocks that God puts in their way to continue on their course to hell. The cross of Christ and the drawing power of the Holy Spirit are obstacles that every sinner encounters. No one will ever stand before God and be able to fault Him for withholding the opportunity to be saved. The Lord woos every person to Him, but each person has to cooperate. Ultimately, the Lord simply enforces the consequences of people's own choices.

God has a perfect plan for every person's life (Jer. 29:11), but He doesn't make us walk that path. We are free moral agents with the ability to choose. He has told us what the right choices are (Deut. 30:19), but He doesn't make those choices for us. God gave us the power to control our destinies.

Typical teaching on the sovereignty of God puts Jesus in the driver's seat with us as passengers. On the surface, that looks good. All of us have encountered the disastrous results of doing our own thing. We desire to be led of the Lord, and the idea that nothing happens outside God's will fits that desire nicely. However, the Scriptures paint a picture of each of us being behind the wheel of our own lives. We are the ones doing the driving. We are supposed to take directions from the Lord, but He doesn't do the driving for us.

People have been given authority over their own lives, but they must have the Lord's direction to succeed. Jeremiah 10:23 says, "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." God created us to be dependent upon Him, and our independence is at the root of all our problems. As if it weren't bad enough for man to try to run his affairs independently of God and His standards, religion has made it even worse by teaching that all our problems are actually blessings from God. This is a faith killer and makes people totally passive.

James 4:7 says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." This verse makes it clear that some things are from God, and some are from the devil. We must submit to the things that are of God and resist the things that are from the devil. The word resist means to actively fight against. Saying "Whatever will be, will be" is not actively fighting against the devil.

If a person really believes that God is the one who puts sickness on them because He is trying to work something for good in their life, then they should not go to the doctor or take any medicine. That would be resisting God's plans.

They should let any sickness run its course and thereby get the full benefit of God's correction. Of course, no one advocates that. That is absurd. It is even more absurd to believe that God is the one behind bad things that happen.

Acts 10:38 says that Jesus healed all who were oppressed OF THE DEVIL. It was not God who oppressed them with sickness. It was the devil. It's the same today. Sickness is from the devil, not from God. We need to resist sickness and, by faith, submit ourselves to healing, which is from God through the atonement of Christ.

Understanding God's Role in Hardships

What about the Old Testament instances where God smote people with sickness and plagues? None of those instances were blessings. They were curses. God did use sickness in the Old Testament as punishment, but in the New Testament, Jesus bore our curse for us (Gal. 3:13). The Lord would no more put sickness on a New Testament believer than He would make us commit a sin. Both forgiveness of sin and healing are part of the atonement Jesus provided for us.

Deuteronomy 28 should forever settle this question for all who believe the Word of God. The first fourteen verses of Deuteronomy 28 list the blessings of God, and the last fifty-four verses list the curses of God. Sickness is listed as a curse (Deut. 28:22, 27–28, 35, and 59–61). God called sickness a curse. We should not call it a blessing.

Knowing that God is not the author of our problems is one of the most important revelations the Lord has ever given. It is very comforting to know that God only has good things in store for me. Any problems in my life are from the devil, of my own making, or just the results of life on a fallen planet. Rom 8:28 is encouraging in that it teaches God will turn bad things for good to those who love Him and are called by Him.

God is sovereign in the sense that He is paramount and supreme. There is no one higher in authority or power, but that does not mean He exercises His power by controlling everything in our lives. God has given us the freedom to choose. He has a plan for us. He seeks to reveal that plan to us and urge us in that direction, but we choose. He doesn't make our choices for us.

In many instances, it is our wrong choices that bring disaster upon us. In other cases, our problems are nothing but an attack from the devil. In some cases, natural forces of an imperfect world cause us pain. Our tragedies are never the judgment or correction of God. Jesus came to give us abundant life. The devil came to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). Don't ever get that confused. If it's good, it's God. If it's bad, it's the devil.

This is a fundamental doctrine of Christianity that must be understood properly if you want victory in your life. Believing that God controls everything renders a person passive. Why pray and believe for something better if whatever God wants will come to pass? That simply is not true.

Satan is the god of the world (i.e. the world system) 2 Corinthians 4:4, John 12:31, 14:30, Ephesians 2:2, 1 John 5:19.

Our God is the God of the earth (i.e. the created planet) Psalm 24:1, 95:5, Colossians 1:16, Exodus 19:5, Job 41:11

God, in His infinite, inscrutable wisdom, has allowed Satan to operate in this world within the boundaries He has set for him. Satan's limits are clearly seen in Job 1 and 2. There, Satan must give an account of himself to God, and it seems he must have God's permission to carry out his plans. At no time can Satan do all he wants, for God restricts his actions.

Satan is the god of this world, but his domain is limited to unbelievers (although he will do everything he can to deceive you). Born-again children of God are no longer under the rule of Satan. God the Father "has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves" (Colossians 1:13). The apostle Paul was sent by God to turn people "from the power of Satan to God" (Acts 26:18). Unbelievers, however free they may think they are, are caught "in the snare of the devil" (2 Timothy 2:26) and lie in the "power of the evil one" (1 John 5:19).

What about job? Job was under the Old Covenant and did not have the authority we have under the New Covenant. Satan is under our feet. Rom 16:20. Jesus is the head but WE are the body. Where are the feet? On the body! Eph 1:22-23, Col 1:18 Therefore, satan is under our feet! However, if we give place to the devil, WE allow him to steal, kill and destroy in our lives.