

# God Is in Control

## Challenges:

- Observation of the world around us
- Our own experiences
- Conflict with our desires/theology/expectations/etc.
- Freedom vs sovereignty
- Sin vs God is in control
- Personally sometimes we don't want God to be in control

## Observations:

If we do away with the idea that God is in control of everything, that nothing happens without his plan or his permission:

- We'd have to remove all prophecy from scripture.
- We'd have to eliminate all the promises of God from the Bible.
- We'd have to tear the books of Daniel and Revelation out of our Bible.
- We'd have to change the words and life of Jesus so much we wouldn't recognize him.
- We'd have to find another way to explain the lives of Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, Daniel, Job, Jesus, Peter, Paul and hundreds of lesser-known people in the Bible.
- There is no reason to pray.

That God is in control of everything is a bedrock principle of the Bible, and it needs to be a bedrock principle of every Christian's life.

*I remember a particular time when I was struggling with discouragement, doubt, fear, and loneliness. I spent many evenings having long conversations with a close friend to whom I poured out my heart for hours. Many times during these talks, my friend stopped me and said, "But remember, God is in control." This statement became an anchor in my life. No matter how hard the winds blew or how much the adversity intensified, my soul remained anchored to the simple truth: God is in control. I discovered that when a person is able to face terrifying obstacles with the*

*assurance of God's complete control, an awesome sense of power and assurance begins to well up inside his heart.<sup>1</sup>*

## How we know that God is in control

That God is in control is the convergence of four Biblical truths about God:

### God's absolute sovereignty

The fact that God is free and able to do all that he wills; that he reigns over all creation and that his will is the final cause of all things. This is often expressed in the language of kingship.<sup>2</sup>

### God's total power

God is all-powerful (that is omnipotent), and is able to do whatever he wills. His power is limited only by his character.<sup>3</sup>

### God's infinite knowledge

The omniscience of God is that attribute by which he knows all things past, present and future. What is hidden from human sight is still known by God. Scripture stresses the wisdom of God in all his actions, and often grounds this in his all-embracing knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

### God's presence everywhere

God is omnipresent in that he transcends all limitations of space and is present in the fulness of his being in every place but in varying ways.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Charles F. Stanley, *Living the Extraordinary Life: Nine Principles to Discover It* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), 130–131.

<sup>2</sup> Martin H. Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies* (London: Martin Manser, 2009).

<sup>3</sup> Martin H. Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies* (London: Martin Manser, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Martin H. Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies* (London: Martin Manser, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Martin H. Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies* (London: Martin Manser, 2009).

Combined, these truths mean that there is nothing anywhere that could escape God's knowledge nor his power to control. Nothing is beyond his 'reach'. He is everywhere all at once and is Lord over all of it.

## How God controls everything

Other traits of God 'control' how God controls everything. Among them are:

- God's love
- God's mercy
- God's grace
- God's goodness
- God's justice
- God's wisdom
- God's holiness
- Etc.

## Biblical truths about God being in control:

### Biblical truth: God is sovereign

1 Samuel 2:7-8 (NASB95)

"The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts.

"He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap To make them sit with nobles, And inherit a seat of honor; For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, And He set the world on them.

1 Chronicles 16:31 (NASB95)

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; And let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns."

Psalms 31:15 (NASB95)

My times are in Your hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies and from those who persecute me.

Psalms 103:19 (NASB95)

The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, And His sovereignty rules over all.

Proverbs 16:4 (NASB95)

The LORD has made everything for its own purpose, Even the wicked for the day of evil.

Proverbs 16:9 (NASB95)

The mind of man plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.

Proverbs 16:33 (NASB95)

The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD.

Proverbs 19:21 (NASB95)

Many plans are in a man's heart, But the counsel of the LORD will stand.

Proverbs 21:1 (NASB95)

The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.

Proverbs 21:30 (NASB95)

There is no wisdom and no understanding And no counsel against the LORD.

Isaiah 46:9–10 (NASB95)

“Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me,

Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’;

Lamentations 3:37 (NASB95)

Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass, Unless the Lord has commanded it?

Daniel 4:35 (NASB95)

“All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, ‘What have You done?’

Romans 8:28 (NASB95)

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Romans 11:36 (NASB95)

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Ephesians 4:6 (NASB95)

one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

## Biblical truth: God is all-powerful

Psalm 135:6 (NASB95)

Whatever the LORD pleases, He does, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.

Job 42:2 (NASB95)

“I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

Mark 10:27 (NASB95)

Looking at them, Jesus said, “With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God.”

## Biblical truth: God knows all things

Psalm 139:1–6 (NASB95)

O LORD, You have searched me and known me.

You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar.

You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways.

Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all.

You have enclosed me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it.

Hebrews 4:13 (NASB95)

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

## Biblical truth: God is present everywhere

Psalm 139:7–12 (NASB95)

Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?

If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there.

If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea,

Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me.

If I say, “Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night,”

Even the darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You.

Proverbs 15:3 (NASB95)

The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.

Jeremiah 23:23–24 (NASB95)

“Am I a God who is near,” declares the LORD, “And not a God far off?”

“Can a man hide himself in hiding places So I do not see him?” declares the LORD. “Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?” declares the LORD.

Matthew 28:20 (NASB95)

teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

## What God being in control should mean to us:

Isaiah 40, 40:27-31

Isaiah 40:27–31 (NASB95)

Why do you say, O Jacob, and assert, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the LORD, And the justice due me escapes the notice of my God”?

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable.

He gives strength to the weary, And to him who lacks might He increases power.

Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly,

Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

## It should free us from worry.

Matthew 6:25–33 (NASB95)

“For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”

“Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?”

“And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?

“And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin,

yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these.

“But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!

“Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’

“For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

## It should encourage us in difficult circumstances.

Genesis 50:20 (NASB95)

“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

Acts 27:25 (NASB95)

“Therefore, keep up your courage, men, for I believe God that it will turn out exactly as I have been told.

Romans 8:35–39 (NASB95)

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Just as it is written, “FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.”

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*Because God is sovereign, we have the assurance that He will work out every single circumstance in our lives for something good, no matter what. It may be painful, difficult, or seemingly impossible, but God can and will use that situation to achieve His divine purpose.<sup>6</sup>*

## It should comfort us in grief.

Psalm 139:16 (CSB)

Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all my days were written in your book and planned before a single one of them began.

Job 14:5 (NIV)

A person's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.

## It should encourage us to keep going on for God.

1 Corinthians 15:58 (NASB95)

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

Philippians 1:12–18 (NASB95)

Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,

so that my imprisonment in the cause of Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,

and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will;

the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel;

the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.

What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,

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<sup>6</sup> Charles F. Stanley, *Living the Extraordinary Life: Nine Principles to Discover It* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), 134.

## It should give us assurance of our salvation.

John 10:27–29 (NASB95)

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;

and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

“My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.

Romans 8:31–34 (NASB95)

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies;

who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

## It should help us put our life into God’s hands.

Psalms 31:3 (NASB95)

For You are my rock and my fortress; For Your name’s sake You will lead me and guide me.

Psalms 32:8 (NASB95)

I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you.

Psalms 37:5 (NASB95)

Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, and He will do it.

Psalms 73:24 (NASB95)

With Your counsel You will guide me, And afterward receive me to glory.

Proverbs 3:5–6 (NASB95)

Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding.

In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

Jeremiah 10:23 (NASB95)

I know, O LORD, that a man’s way is not in himself, Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.

*This hope enables us to step boldly into the future because we know that God will be there for us, forever protecting us and guiding our steps.<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup> Charles F. Stanley, *Living the Extraordinary Life: Nine Principles to Discover It* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2005), 135.