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Section: Doctrine of God

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**Q18. Does God control and have authority over all things?**

Yes. He rules in and over all things. He is in control of all things. God does all that He wills with creation.

**(Part 3 of 3)**

* **Introduction**

**Proverbs 3:5** Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

* **God's Sovereignty Over Mankind: Each and Every Person to Ever Live**
* **Two pillars of truth from Scripture:**
* God is absolutely sovereign, and He never sins; His will is supreme, He has preordained all that comes to pass, and He is the first cause of all things.
* Each human has a real will, genuinely acts accordingly as a second cause, and is morally responsible for all he/she does.

* **God ordained evil and He uses evil for His purposes**

**Isaiah 45:7** (KJV) I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.

**Lamentations 3:38** Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?

We can know a thing is good for God to do *because God does it*. He is truly & completely good; therefore, we know a thing is good for God to do *because God does it*.

**The 1689 Confession of Faith:** “All things come to pass unchangeably and certainly in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, who is the first cause. Thus, nothing happens to anyone *[or anything]* by chance or outside of God’s providence. Yet by the same providence God arranges all things to occur according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.”

**The 1689 Confession of Faith:** “The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God are so thoroughly demonstrated in his providence, that his sovereign plan includes even the first fall and every other sinful action both of angels and humans. God’s providence over sinful actions does not occur by simple permission. Instead, God most wisely and powerfully limits and in other ways arranges and governs sinful actions. Through a complex arrangement of methods he governs sinful actions to accomplish his perfectly holy purposes. Yet he does this in such a way that the sinfulness of their acts arises only from the creatures and not from God. Because God is altogether holy and righteous, he can neither originate nor approve of sin.”

“Evil or sin is a lack of good *where good ought to be*.” (Dr. James Dolezal)

When sin happens in creation, it is not God who lacks good, rather it is a lack of good from creature.

**Note:** In Scripture, the fault/blame/responsibility/guilt of sin is never assigned to God, rather, it is assigned to one or more of these three parties:

1) Demons (especially Satan)

2) Adam (the first man, the first federal head)

3) Us (fallen men, women, boys, and girls after Adam)

**James 1:13** Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one.

**Psalm 11:7** For the Lord is righteous ...

**Psalm 18:30** (NIV) As for God, his way is perfect …

**John 8:44 “**You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

**Revelation 12:9** … that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world …

**Romans 5:12, 15-19 12**… sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin … **15**… many died through one man's trespass … **16**… the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation … **17**… because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man … **18**… one trespass led to condemnation for all men … **19**… by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners …

**James 1:13-14** Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God,” for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. *But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire*.

Yes, God ordained evil—He ordained sin—and He did so in such a way He Himself never sins, Fault/blame/guilt are not in God, but rather in the moral agents within creation.

When God ordained evil, it is for His good purposes. Recall back to the first lesson for His wise and perfect reasoning of this reality.

* **God’s Sovereignty over All Aspects of Our Lives**

**Psalm 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 was none of them.

**1 Samuel 2:6** “The LORD kills and brings to life ...”

**Deuteronomy 32:39**“See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.”

**Exodus 4:11** Then the LORD said to him, “Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?”

**Job 14:5** “Since [man’s] days are determined, and the number of his months is with you [God], and you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass”

**Acts 17:26** “And [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”

**Acts 17:28** “… ‘In him we live and move and have our being…’”

* **Man’s Will**

“Libertarian Free Will” falsely claims humans are free, autonomous beings with the liberty and ability to do anything—rulers of our own lives, masters of our own destinies.

Each of us do have a real and personal will. But we do not have a libertarian free will:

Our will is always subject to God's will, and, due to our fall in Adam, we are seriously affected by sin.

Man is able to desire and act *in accordance with his nature*.

Know this: we do have a real and personal will—we do have genuine desires from within ourselves, and we do make real choices that have real consequences.

* **Man’s Will Is Always Subject to God's Will**

**Proverbs 16:9** The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps.

**Proverbs 19:21** Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand. (cf. Proverbs 16:1; Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 21:1)

**James 4:13-15** Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”

* **Man’s Will Is Seriously Affected by Sin**

**The 1689 Confession of Faith:** “Humanity in the state of innocence [before the fall] had freedom and power to will and to do what was good and well-pleasing to God. Yet this condition was unstable, so that humanity could fall from it.”

**The 1689 Confession of Faith:** “Humanity, by falling into a state of sin, has completely lost all ability to choose any spiritual good that accompanies salvation. Thus, people in their natural state are absolutely opposed to spiritual good and dead in sin, so that they cannot convert themselves by their own strength or prepare themselves for conversion.”

**Ephesians 2** says we are “… dead in trespasses and sins” (2:1), “… by nature children of wrath …” (2:3), and again in verse 5, before regeneration, we were “… dead in our trespasses ...”

**1 Corinthians 2:14** The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

**Romans 3:10-12** … “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

**John 6:44** “No one *can* come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.”

* **God’s Sovereignty in Salvation**

**John 3:3 & 5** … “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” … “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”

This means God has to cause a change in us; namely, He must cause us to be born again. And this “new birth” is something we cannot and do not cooperate in. We are *not* a second cause in the new birth. There is no will in us before God gives us new birth that longs for God or chooses to believe, so God acts upon us—He alone causes new birth.

**John 1:13** [Those given new birth] were born [*again*], not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

**John 6:63** “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all ...”

**1 Peter 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

**Ephesians 2:8-9** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

* **God’s Sovereignty in the Life of the Saved Living on This First Creation**

**1 John 1:8** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

**Philippians 2:13** (NASB) for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

**Philippians 2:12** (NASB) So then my beloved ... work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

**1 Corinthians 15:10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

**Ephesians 2:10** For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

**John 3:27** … “A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.”

**James 1:17** Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

**James 1:22** ... be doers of the word, and not hearers only ...

* **Practical Implications**
* **Lift up in Prayer Our Requests, Cares, and Anxieties to the Lord**

**1 Peter 5:7**[cast] all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

* **Zealous to Obey and Honor the Lord**
* **Proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ**

**Romans 10:1, 14-15, 17 1** Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. **14**How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? **15**And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” **17**So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

God has decreed the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ for the Holy Spirit to give new life and give saving faith. Therefore, let us take the gospel to the world with boldness, knowing that our sovereign God is able, and, by His will, saves!

Ultimately, people are not saved because we have convinced them or because by their own will they have decided to choose to believe in God. People are saved because God has chosen them; He sends us to share the good news, and if they are elect, in His timing, He regenerates them by His Spirit to understand and love the gospel, and He gives them saving faith in which they repent and believe. Let’s go with confidence!

* **In Closing**

**Charles Spurgeon:** “There is no attribute more comforting to His children than that of God’s Sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe trials, they believe that Sovereignty has ordained their afflictions, that Sovereignty overrules them, and that Sovereignty will sanctify them all. There is nothing for which the children ought more earnestly to contend than the doctrine of their Master over all creation—the Kingship of God over all the works of His own hands—the Throne of God and His right to sit upon that Throne.”

**Psalm 97:1** The LORD reigns, let the earth rejoice ...