The all-encompassing sovereignty of God

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Email: preteristadvocate@gmail.com.

Introduction

Acknowledging God's rule over all things is fundamental to a Christian's faith.
God created, and continues to uphold, the entire universe.[1]
Without his sustaining activity all things would immediately cease to exist.
That is true for us as well: "For in him we live and move and are" (Acts 17:28, literal translation).
God foreordains and maintains down to the most insignificant, trivial details.
Nothing happens by chance; all things come from his hand.
Only with such an exalted view of God can one properly fear him, worship him, entrust our lives to him, and seek him in prayer.

God does whatever he pleases

- Psalm 115:3.
- Psalm 135:6.

God's sovereignty over trivial matters

- Proverbs 16:33.
- 2 Kings 8:5.
- Matthew 10:29.

Over the weather

- Psalm 107:25, 29.
- Psalm 147:15-18.
- Jonah 1:4.

Over animals and plants

- Jonah 1:17; 2:10.
- Jonah 4:6-7.

Over personal characteristics (including disabilities)

- Exodus 4:10-11.
- 1 Samuel 1:5.
- John 9:2-3.

[1] Both Father and Son were active in creation, and both continue to uphold the universe (Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:2-3).

God's sovereignty over people, rulers, and nations

- Genesis 45:4-8; 50:20.
- Exodus 4:21; 9:16; 14:17. (Note also Paul's commentary in Romans 9:17-18.)
- Deuteronomy 32:39.
- Joshua 11:20.
- 2 Samuel 17:14.
- 1 Kings 12:15.
- 2 Chronicles 22:7.
- Ezra 1:1, 5; 6:22; 7:27.
- Psalm 33:10-11.
- Psalm 105:25.
- Proverbs 16:4.
- Proverbs 16:9; 19:21; 20:24.
- Proverbs 21:1.
- Isaiah 10:5-7, 15.
- Isaiah 29:16; 45:9.
- Isaiah 44:28.
- Daniel 4:35.
- Daniel 5:23.
- Jeremiah 1:5. (Note also Galatians 1:15.)
- John 17:12.
- Acts 2:23; 4:28.
- Acts 17:28.
- Revelation 17:17.

God foreordains (and thus foreknows) all things

- Isaiah 41:22-23, 26; 42:9; 43:9-10; 44:7-8; 45:21; 46:10; 48:3-5.
- John 13:1, 3, 11; 18:4.[2]
- Acts 2:23.
- 1 Peter 1:20.

God's sovereignty over disasters and suffering

- Job 42:11.
- Psalm 105:16.
- Isaiah 45:7.
- Lamentations 3:38.
- Amos 3:6.

[2] Even as Jesus heads to the cross he has full control over, and knowledge of, all that is about to transpire.

God's sovereign action in salvation

- John 6:37-40, 44, 65; 17:2.
- John 10:11, 14-16, 26-29.
- Acts 13:48.
- Acts 16:14.
- Romans 8:30.
- Romans 9:10-26.
- Ephesians 1:4-11.
- Ephesians 2:1-10.
- 2 Timothy 1:9.
- Revelation 17:8.

God's sovereign action in judgment

- 2 Samuel 12:11-14.
- Psalm 105:28-36.
- Psalm 107:10-12.
- Proverbs 16:4.
- John 12:37-40.
- Romans 1:24, 26, 28.
- Romans 9:17-18, 22.
- 1 Peter 2:8.
- Revelation 18:20.

God's sovereignly acts for his own glory, and for the good of his people

- Exodus 9:16; 14:4, 17-18.
- Psalm 106:8.
- Isaiah 48:9-11.
- Ezekiel 20:22; 36:23.
- Romans 8:28.
- Romans 9:22-23.

Appropriate acknowledgements of God's sovereign activity

- Joseph in Genesis 50:20.
- Hannah in 1 Samuel 2:6-7.
- Naomi in Ruth 1:20-21.
- Ezra in Ezra 7:27.
- Job in Job 1:21; 2:10.
- The Psalmist in Psalm 121.
- Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:34-37.
- Jonah in Jonah 2:1-9.
- Jesus in Matthew 11:25-26.
- Paul in Romans 11:33-36.

God alone is our Savior

- Psalm 27:1.
- Psalm 37:39.
- Psalm 68:19-20.
- Psalm 79:9.
- Isaiah 43:11; 45:21-22.
- Hosea 13:4.
- Jonah 2:9.
- 1 Timothy 1:1; 2:3.
- 2 Timothy 1:10.
- Titus 1:3-4; 2:10, 13; 3:4-6.[3]
- 2 Peter 1:1, 11; 2:20; 3:18.[3]
- Jude 1:25.

From the Heidelberg Catechism (1563):

27 Q: What do you understand by the providence of God?

A: God's providence is his almighty and ever-present power (Jer 23:23-24; Acts 17:24-28), whereby, as with his hand, he still upholds heaven and earth and all creatures (Heb 1:3), and so rules them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty (Jer 5:24; Ac 14:15-17; Jn 9:3; Pr 22:2), indeed, all things, come to us not by chance (Pr 16:33) but from his fatherly hand (Mt 10:29).

28 Q: How does it benefit us to know that God has created all things and still upholds them by his providence?

A: We can be patient in adversity (Job 1:21-22; Ps 39:10; Jas 1:3), thankful when things go well (Dt 8:10; 1Thes 5:18), and with a view to the future we can have a firm confidence in our faithful God and Father that nothing in creation shall separate us from his love (Ps 55:22; Rom 5:3-5; 8:38-39).
For all creatures are so completely in God's hand that without his will they cannot so much as move (Job 1:12; 2:6; Pr 21:1; Ac 17:24-28).[4]

[3] Paul in Titus, and Peter in his second epistle, both assert that Jesus is equally our Savior.
[4] The Heidelberg Catechism (1563), Lord's Day 10, adapted from the website *A Puritan's Mind*: https://www.apuritansmind.com/creeds-and-confessions/the-heidelberg-catechism-by-zacharias-ursinus/.

Appendix: God's sovereignty in the book of Jonah

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Jonah 1:4:

But <u>the LORD hurled</u> a great wind upon the sea, and a mighty storm came upon the sea, so that the ship was in danger of breaking up.

Jonah 1:14 (CSB):

So they called out to the LORD, "Please, LORD, don't let us perish because of this man's life, and don't charge us with innocent blood! <u>For you, LORD, have done just as you pleased</u>."

Jonah 1:17:

Now <u>the LORD appointed</u> a great fish to swallow Jonah. …

Jonah 2:10:

Then <u>the LORD spoke</u> to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon dry land.

Jonah 4:6-8:

6 *Then <u>the LORD God appointed</u> a plant, and it grew up over Jonah to provide shade over his head, to provide comfort from his grief. …*

7 *But at dawn the next day, <u>God appointed</u> a worm to attack the plant so that it withered.*

8 *When the sun rose, <u>God appointed</u> a scorching east wind, and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah so that he became faint …*