

Treating the Bible as the Literal Word of God

Sometimes we need to plunge our minds into the ocean of God's sovereignty. We need to feel the weight of it, like deep and heavy water pressing in against every pore, the deeper we go.

A billion rivers of providence pour into this ocean. And God Himself gathers up all His countless deeds—from eternity to eternity—and pours them into the currents of his infallible revelation. He speaks and explains and promises and makes His awesome, sovereign providence the place we feel most reverent, most secure, most free.

Sometimes we need to be reminded by God Himself that there are no limits to His rule. We need to hear from Him that He is sovereign over the whole world, and everything that happens in it. We need His own reminder that He is never helpless, never frustrated, never at a loss. We need His assurance that He reigns over ISIS, terrorism, Syria, Russia, China, India, Nigeria, France, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia and the United States of America—every nation, every people, every language, every tribe, every chief, president, king, premier, prime minister and politician, great or small.

Sometimes we need to hear specific statements from God Himself about His own authority. We need God's own words. It is the very words of God that have unusual power to settle our nerves and make us stable, wise and courageous.

On the one hand, hearing the voice of God is like a frightened child who hears the voice downstairs, and realizes that daddy's home. Whatever those other sounds were, it's OK. Daddy's home.

On the other hand, it feels like the seasoned troops, dug in at the front line of battle, and about to be overrun by the

enemy. But then they get word that a thousand impenetrable tanks are rushing to their aid. They are only one mile away. You will be saved and the enemy will not stand.

Vague generalizations about the power of God do not have the same effect as the very voice of God telling us specifically how strong He is, how pervasive His power, how universal His authority, how unlimited His sovereignty and that our times are in His hands.

So let's listen. Let's treat the Bible as the voice of God. Let's turn what the Bible says about God into what God says about God—which is what the Bible really is—God speaking about God.

And as we listen, let us praise Him. There is no other fitting way to listen to God's exaltation of God. This is what happens to the human soul when we plunge into the ocean of God's sovereignty.

We praise you, O God, that all authority in the universe belongs to you.

"There is no authority except from Me, and those that exist have been instituted by Me." (Romans 13:1)

"You, Pilate, would have no authority over My Son at all unless it had been given you from Me." (John 19:11)

We stand in awe, O God, that in Your freedom, You do all that You please and all that You plan.

"Whatever I please, I do, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps" (Ps. 135:6).

"I work all things according to the counsel of My will." (Eph. 1:11).

"I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient

times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all My purpose'" (Is. 46:9–10).

We marvel, O God, that You share this total authority and rule completely with Your Son.

"I have given all authority in heaven and on earth to My Son, Jesus" (Matt. 28:18).

"I love My Son and have given all things into His hand" (John 3:35).

"I have given My Son authority over all flesh" (John 17:2).

"I have put all things in subjection under My Son's feet—all things except Myself" (1 Cor. 15:27).

"I raised My Son from the dead and seated Him at My right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion. ... I put all things under His feet" (Eph. 1:20–22).

"I welcomed My Son into heaven. He is at My right hand, with angels, authorities and powers subject to Him" (1 Pet. 3:22).

We submit with reverence to You, O God, because, through Your Son, You remove and install the rulers of the world.

"Wisdom and might belong to Me. I change times and seasons; I remove kings and set up kings" (Dan. 2:20–21).

"I loose the bonds of kings and bind a waistcloth on their hips" (Job 12:18).

"I sent My angel and struck Herod down, because he did not give Me glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last" (Acts 12:23).

Indeed, O God, You not only raise rulers and put them down; You govern all their deeds in every age.

"The king's heart is a stream of water in My hand, says the LORD; I turn it wherever I will" (Prov. 21:1).

"I will put an end to the wealth of Egypt, by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. ... I will break the yoke of Egypt, and her proud might shall come to an end. ... I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put My sword in his hand, but I will break the arms of Pharaoh" (Ezek. 30:10, 18, 24).

"I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, My servant, and I have given him also the beasts of the field to serve him. All the nations shall serve him and his son and his grandson, until the time of his own land comes. Then many nations and great kings shall make him their slave" (Jer. 27:6-7).

"As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand. I will break the Assyrian in My land; and his yoke shall depart from My people" (Is. 14:24-25).

"I will make the nations the inheritance of My Son, and the ends of the earth will be His possession. He shall break them with a rod of iron" (Ps. 2:8-9).

We acknowledge with wonder, O God, that no plan of man succeeds but those that You, in unfathomable wisdom, permit.

"I bring the counsel of the nations to nothing; I frustrate the plans of the peoples" (Ps. 33:10).

"No wisdom, no understanding, no counsel can avail against Me" (Prov. 21:30).

And how mighty and wise You are, O God, that no man, no nation, force of nature can thwart Your holy plans.

"No purpose of Mine can be thwarted" (Job 42:2).

"I do according to My will among the host of heaven and among

the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay My hand or say to Me, 'What have you done?'" (Dan. 4:35).

"There is none who can deliver from My hand; I work, and who can turn it back?" (Is. 43:13).

So, we bow, as dust in the scales, O God, and confess with joy, that we are as nothing compared to Your greatness.

"Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as the dust on the scales. ... All the nations are as nothing before Me, they are accounted as less than nothing and emptiness" (Is. 40:15, 17).

"I sit above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers. I stretch out the heavens like a curtain, and spread them like a tent to dwell in. I bring princes to nothing, and make the rulers of the earth as emptiness" (Is. 40:22-23).

The joy of our hope, O God, is that You magnify Your greatness by lifting up the low, and putting down the proud.

"Who but Me can say to a king, 'Worthless one,' and to nobles, 'Wicked man'? I show no partiality to princes, nor regard the rich more than the poor, for they are all the work of My hands" (Job 34:18-19).

"I shatter the mighty without investigation and set others in their place" (Job 34:24).

"I look on everyone who is proud and bring him low and tread down the wicked where they stand" (Job 40:12).

"I the LORD kill and bring to life; I bring down to Sheol and raise up. I make poor and make rich; I bring low and I exalt" (1 Sam. 2:6-7).

"I have scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; I have brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted

those of humble estate” (Luke 1:51-52).

And so it will be forever, O God. You rule over all, with an everlasting rule, for the sake of the lowly who trust Your Son.

“I live forever, for My dominion is an everlasting dominion, and My kingdom endures from generation to generation” (Dan. 4:34).

“My dominion shall not pass away, and My kingdom shall not be destroyed” (Dan. 7:14).

“My Son will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:33).

Therefore, overflowing with praise and thanks, O precious and holy God, we rest in Your absolute sovereignty over our lives. And rejoice to hear You say:

“Your times are in My hand” (Ps. 31:15). {eo}

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