

**Scriptures for the Study  
of God's Sovereignty:  
His Holy and Wise Ruling  
Over, Through and In  
All Things**

*For from him and through him and to him are all  
things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.  
Rom 11.36*

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# Scripture Passages on God's Sovereignty

This booklet is a compilation of many Scripture passages that speak of God's holy and wise ordaining of and ruling over, through and in all things. Each verse should be read in its larger context. I have systematized them under the following heading:

1. God Is Holy & Wise
2. God Has an Eternal & Unchangeable Purpose & Plan
3. God's Purpose & Plan Govern the World
4. God's Purpose & Plan Rule Over the Animals
5. God's Purpose & Plan Rule Over the Inanimate World of Man's Creations
6. God's Purpose & Plan Rule Over Natural Evils (Disasters, Calamities, Birth Defects, Etc.)
7. God's Purpose & Plan Rule Over the Seemingly Chance Events (Lightning, Casting Of Lots, Dreams, Shooting an Arrow at Random)
8. God's Purpose & Plan Rule Over Human Being (Considered as Collectives & as Individuals, Even Their Unintentional Acts)
9. God's Purpose & Plan Rule Over the Sinful Acts of Sinful Responsible Men
  - A. God Hardens Men's Hearts & Men Are Responsible & God Not Culpable
  - B. Lord Sends Wicked Nations Against His People to Discipline Them, or He Hands His People Over to Their Enemies. The Nations Are Responsible & God Is Not Culpable
10. God Rules Over Evil Spirits & Fulfills His Purposes Through Them
11. God Ordains Good In & Through the Sinful Acts of Responsible Sinful Men

# ***What Does Scripture Say? God Sovereignly Rules According to His Holy, Wise Eternal & Unchangeable Counsel***

## ***1. God is Holy & Wise***

Isa. 6:1-2 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory."

1 Jn. 1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

## ***2. God Has an Eternal & Unchangeable Purpose & Plan***

Eph. 1:11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.

Rom. 11:36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

Isa. 14:24 The LORD Almighty has sworn, "Surely, as I have planned, so it will be, and as I have purposed, so it will stand."

Isa. 14:26-27 This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?

Ps. 33:10-11 The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

Isa. 46:9-11 Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.

Rom. 8:29-30 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Prov. 19:21 Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

Isa. 23:8-9 Who planned this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns, whose merchants are princes, whose traders are renowned in the earth? The LORD Almighty planned it, to bring low the pride of all glory and to humble all who are renowned on the earth.

*See also* passages which speak of God as Almighty, as Ruler, as King, as Lord, As doing all that he pleases, Ps. 135:6, 115:3; Dan. 4:34-36; 1 Tim. 6:15; etc.

### 3. ***God's Purpose & Plan Govern the World***

Ps. 24:1 The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;

1 Sam. 2:6-7 "The LORD brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up. The LORD sends poverty and wealth; he humbles and he exalts."

Isa. 45:7 I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things.

Amos 3:6 When a trumpet sounds in a city, do not the people tremble? When disaster comes to a city, has not the LORD caused it?

Lam. 3:37-38 Who can speak and have it happen if the Lord has not decreed it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both calamities and good things come?

Isa. 40:12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance?

Amos 4:7 "I also withheld rain from you when the harvest was still three months away. I sent rain on one town, but withheld it from another. One field had rain; another had none and dried up.

Nahum 1:3 The LORD is slow to anger and great in power; the LORD will not leave the guilty unpunished. His way is in the whirlwind and the storm, and clouds are the dust of his feet.

Mt. 5:45 ...that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Ps. 147:15-18 He sends his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly. He spreads the snow like wool and scatters the frost like ashes. He hurls down his hail like pebbles. Who can withstand his icy blast? He sends his word and melts them; he stirs up his breezes, and the waters flow.

**4. *God's Purpose & Plan Rule Over the Animals.***

Ps. 104:14 He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate-- bringing forth food from the earth:

Ps. 104:27-30 These all look to you to give them their food at the proper time. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things. When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.

Mt. 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father.

Mt. 6:26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

Ps. 145:15-16 The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

5. ***God's Purpose & Plan Rule over the Inanimate World of Man's Creations***

Ex. 14:25 He [the Lord] made the wheels of their chariots come off so that they had difficulty driving.

Dt. 29:5 During the forty years that I led you through the desert, your clothes did not wear out, nor did the sandals on your feet.

Ps. 76:6 At your rebuke, O God of Jacob, both horse and chariot lie still.

Isa. 5:27 Not one of them grows tired or stumbles, not one slumbers or sleeps; not a belt is loosened at the waist, not a sandal thong is broken.

Dan. 3:27b They [Babylonian officials] saw that the fire [from their furnace] had not harmed their bodies [Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego], nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

6. ***God's Purpose & Plan Rule Over Natural Evils***

Isa. 45:7 I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the LORD, do all these things.

Amos 3:6 When a trumpet sounds in a city, do not the people tremble? When disaster comes to a city, has not the LORD caused it?

Ex. 4:11 The LORD said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD?"

John 9:2-3 His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life."

Lam. 3:38 Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both calamities and good things come?

7. ***God's Purpose & Plan Rule Over the Seemingly Chance Events. Lightning, Casting of Lots, Dreams, Shooting an Arrow at Random.***

Prov. 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD. cf. Jon. 1.7; Acts. 1.26

Job 36:32 He fills his hands with lightning and commands it to strike its mark.

Gen. 41:32 The reason the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms is that the matter has been firmly decided by God, and God will do it soon.

Gen. 31:9 So God has taken away your father's livestock and has given them to me.

Ex. 11:7 But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any man or animal. Then you will know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel.

1 Kings 22:34 But someone drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between the sections of his armor. (This was prophesied by Micaiah. Cf. 1 Ki. 22)

8. ***God's Purpose & Plan Rule Over Human Beings***

**A. Humans: Collectively (Over groups, peoples, nations).**

Ps. 24:1 The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it

1 Chron. 16:31 Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!"

Ps. 47:7 For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise.

Isa. 40:15 Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.

Dan. 2:21 He changes times and seasons; he sets up kings and deposes them. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning.

Dan. 4:17 “The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men.”

Dan. 4:35 All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: “What have you done?”

Ezra 6:22 For seven days they celebrated with joy the Feast of Unleavened Bread, because the LORD had filled them with joy by changing the attitude of the king of Assyria, so that he assisted them in the work on the house of God, the God of Israel.

Acts 17:26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

**B. Individuals (Their hearts, minds, desires, wills, emotions; days, and destiny)**

Lev. 26:36 “As for those of you who are left, I will make their hearts so fearful in the lands of their enemies that the sound of a windblown leaf will put them to flight. They will run as though fleeing from the sword, and they will fall, even though no one is pursuing them.”

Dt. 28:28, 34 The LORD will afflict you with madness, blindness and confusion of mind. The sights you see will drive you mad.

Dt. 28:65 There the LORD will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart.

Jer. 1:5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

Jer. 10:23 I know, O Lord, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps.

Isa. 45:1 "This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut:

1 Cor. 4:7 For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?

Ps. 37:23 If the LORD delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm.

Ps. 139:16 Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Prov. 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases.

Prov. 16:9 In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps.

Prov. 20:24 A man's steps are directed by the LORD. How then can anyone understand his own way?

Acts 18:9-10 One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city."

Jas. 4:15 Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."

Jer. 10:23 I know, O LORD, that a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps.

Phil. 2:12-13 Work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Ex. 12:36 The LORD had made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians.

***Even the Unintentional Acts (Accidents) of Men Are Attributed to God:***

Ex. 21:13 However, if he does not do it (kill someone) intentionally, but God lets it happen, he is to flee to a place I will designate.

1 Kings 21:34 But someone drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between the sections of his armor. The king told his chariot driver, "wheel around and get me out of the fighting. I've been wounded." cf. 1 Kings 21:19-23, 29-33

1 Sam. 24:10 [The Chance Visit to a Cave] This day you [Saul] have seen with your own eyes how the LORD delivered you into my hands in the cave.

9. ***God's Purpose & Plan Rule Over the Sinful Acts Of Responsible Sinful Men.***

**A. God Hardens Men's Hearts Yet Men Are Morally Responsible & God Is Not Culpable**

2 Thess 2:11-12 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie 12 and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

Ex. 4:21 The LORD said to Moses, "When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to do. But I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go."

Ex. 7:3 But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my miraculous signs and wonders in Egypt,

Ex. 9:12 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said to Moses.

Ex. 10:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may perform these miraculous signs of mine among them."

Ex. 10:20 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let the Israelites go. cf. 11.10

Ex. 14:4 "And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them. But I will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD." So the Israelites did this. cf. 14.8, 17

Ex. 34:24 I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your territory, and no one will covet your land when you go up three times each year to appear before the LORD your God. (*How could God assure Israel of such unless he directs the desires of wicked men?*)

Deut. 2:30 But Sihon king of Heshbon refused to let us pass through. For the LORD your God had made his spirit stubborn and his heart obstinate in order to give him into your hands, as he has now done.

Josh. 11:20 For it was the LORD himself who hardened their hearts to wage war against Israel, so that he might destroy them totally, exterminating them without mercy, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

1 Sam. 2:25 “If a man sins against another man, God may mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?” His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the LORD's will to put them to death.

Ps. 105:24-25 The LORD made his people very fruitful; he made them too numerous for their foes, whose hearts he turned to hate his people, to conspire against his servants.

Isa. 63:17 Why, O LORD, do you make us wander from your ways and harden our hearts so we do not revere you? Return for the sake of your servants, the tribes that are your inheritance.

Rev. 17:17 For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to give the beast their power to rule, until God's words are fulfilled.

**B. The Lord Sends Wicked Nations Against Israel, or Delivers Israel Up to Its Enemies. The Sinful Nations Are Responsible & God Is Not Culpable.**

Judges 3:8 The anger of the LORD burned against Israel so that he sold them into the hands of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram Naharaim, to whom the Israelites were subject for eight years.

Judges 3:12 Once again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and because they did this evil the LORD gave Eglon king of Moab power over Israel.

Judges 4:2 So the LORD sold them into the hands of Jabin, a king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth Haggoyim. cf. JDG 6:1; 10:7; 13:1

2 Sam. 12:11-12 “This is what the LORD says: ‘Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.’”

2 Kings 24:2 The LORD sent Babylonian, Aramean, Moabite and Ammonite raiders against him. He sent them to destroy Judah, in accordance with the word of the LORD proclaimed by his servants the prophets. cf. 2 CH 24:24; 28:5; 33:11

Job 1:21 and (Job) said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised."

Isa. 10:5-7 "Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger, in whose hand is the club of my wrath! I send him against a godless nation, I dispatch him against a people who anger me, to seize loot and snatch plunder, and to trample them down like mud in the streets."

But this is not what he intends, this is not what he has in mind, his purpose is to destroy...

Isa. 10:10-13 when the Lord has finished all his work against Mount Zion and Jerusalem, he will say, "I will punish the king of Assyria for the willful pride of his heart and the haughty look in his eyes. For he says: "By the strength of my hand have I done this, and by my wisdom, because I have understanding.

Isa. 10:15 Does the ax raise itself above him who swings it, or the saw boast against him who uses it? As if a rod were to wield him who lifts it up, or a club brandish him who is not wood!

Jer. 11:17 The LORD Almighty, who planted you, has decreed disaster for you, because the house of Israel and the house of Judah have done evil and provoked me to anger by burning incense to Baal.

Jer. 12:12 Over all the barren heights in the desert destroyers will swarm, for the sword of the LORD will devour from one end of the land to the other; no one will be safe.

Jer. 51:20 "You are my war club, my weapon for battle-- with you I shatter nations, with you I destroy kingdoms,"

Lam. 1:17 Zion stretches out her hands, but there is no one to comfort her. The LORD has decreed for Jacob that his neighbors become his foes.

Habk. 1:6 I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own.

John 19:11 Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.”

Acts 4:27-28 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

**10. *God Fulfills His Sovereign Purposes Through Evil Spirits (More Than Mere Permission)***

Judges 9:23 God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem, who acted treacherously against Abimelech.

1 Sam. 16:14 Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him.

Compare: 2Sam. 24:1 Again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, “Go and take a census of Israel and Judah.”

with 1Chron. 21:1 Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take census of Israel.

1 Kings 22:19-23 Micaiah continued, “Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left.

And the LORD said, ‘Who will entice Ahab into Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?’ “One suggested this, and another that.

Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD and said, ‘I will entice him.’ ‘By what means?’ the LORD asked. ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,’ he said.

‘You will succeed in enticing him,’ said the LORD. ‘Go and do it.’ “So now the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The LORD has decreed disaster for you.”

See parallel 2 Chron. 18:21

Job 1:10-12 Satan to LORD: “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.”

The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.” Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

Job 2:6-7 The LORD said to Satan, “Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head.

**11. *God Ordains Good In & Through the Sinful Acts of Responsible Men.***

Prov. 16:4 The LORD works out everything for his own ends—even the wicked for a day of disaster.

Gen. 45:5-8 And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will not be plowing and reaping.

But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt.

Gen. 50:19-20 But Joseph said to them, “Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”

Acts 2:23 This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

Acts 4:27-28 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

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## *What does the Westminster Confession Teach?*

### Chapter 3:1-2

God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet he has not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

### Chapter 5:1-4

God the great Creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.

Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first Cause, all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly; yet, by the same providence, he orders them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

God, in his ordinary providence, makes use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at his pleasure.

The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in his providence, that it extends itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men; and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering, and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceeds only from the creature, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.



