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Sermon Notes

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The Absolute Sovereignty of God

Proverbs

Is human history spiraling out of control? Or is history unfolding according to plan?

So many changes... so much uncertainty

- Economic uncertainty: what will happen to the American economy over the next thirty years? Will the New York Stock exchange crash again? What will happen during our retirement years? What will Social Security look like then?
- Political uncertainty: who will control the future of the country? Will those with an unbiblical agenda be able to push through massive new laws and change the freedoms that have characterized America? Will there be an ever-increasing federal government? How will the nation address massive issues like care for the poor and needy, health care, the national debt, etc.
- International uncertainty: what will become of radical Islam? Will Islamic terrorists be able to obtain and either use or threaten a thermonuclear blast? What will happen if Communist China becomes the most powerful economic and military nation on earth?

More personally, many wonder about their own future:

- If you're in college, you may be wondering about your future career, or even if there will be a job waiting for you when you graduate
- If you're single and in your twenties, you may be wondering about a future spouse... is there someone out there for you?
- If you're elderly, you may wonder about your health, or your relationship with your grown kids or grandkids

There's so much to think about when it comes to the future... and so much temptation toward ANXIETY

This is precisely where the study of God's sovereignty is so vital for us

Two great displays of God's sovereignty in the Bible: predestination (by which God displays His sovereignty over human salvation), and providence (by which God actively rules over earth's daily events and flow of history for his ultimate purposes)

Predestination and Providence... two great doctrines, two great mysteries, two great displays of God's sovereignty

The Book of Proverbs has some of the most memorable verses in the Bible on one of these two, the doctrine of Providence

That makes perfect sense given the gritty, rubber-meets-the-road focus of the Book of Proverbs

This morning, we're going to look at the doctrine of the absolute sovereignty of God over daily life events through the book of Proverbs...

Jesus taught this absolute sovereignty very plainly

Matthew 10:29-30 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. ³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

So also did the Apostle Paul

Romans 8:28 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.

Ephesians 1:11 the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,

The Book of Esther seems to exist to teach one central lesson: That the invisible God controls the events of mighty empires in astonishingly direct ways while remaining hidden from view

King Solomon gives us some of the most memorable statements in the Bible on this great doctrine of Providence... how God actively reigns over seemingly tiny events or even over great ones to achieve His eternal and mysterious purposes

We're going to see God's sovereignty in retaining some secrets to Himself and challenging us to search out what He's revealed

We'll also see

- God's sovereignty over human actions... like the words of our mouths and the paths of our feet... we may make plans, but it is God's will that prevails; this is a major adjustment to a man-centered view of human life that makes free will the hub of every wheel

- God’s sovereignty over the decisions of kings... an incredibly comforting and incredibly deep doctrine, that also brings some challenges with it
- God’s sovereignty over seemingly random events, like the roll of a dice
- God’s sovereignty over the outcome of major events in history, like the winning and losing of a battle
- God’s sovereignty over His enemies, no matter how powerful they may seem

Taken altogether, these simple verses give a sampling of how active is this King of kings and Lord of lords whom we worship

I. God’s Sovereignty over His Mysteries

Proverbs 25:2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings.

A. A Good Place to Start

1. God’s sovereignty over earthly life is both a comforting and a distressing doctrine to Christians
2. Comforting because it means we can look ahead to the future with complete confidence:

“I don’t know what the future holds, but I know WHO holds the future?”

What does it mean that God “holds the future”? It means that God knows it, yes... but more than that! That God has ordained it and is sovereignly working out his plan for our good, for our eternal blessedness

3. BUT the doctrine is also DISTRESSING to many...
 - a. If God is sovereign over all things, why does such evil happen in the world?
 - i) Is God sovereignly responsible for a drive-by shooting of an innocent little girl who gets caught in a cross-fire?
 - ii) Is God sovereignly responsible for some crazed serial pervert who abducts little children and holds them captive for his own twisted purposes?
 - iii) Some choose to answer “No, the God I know and love has NOTHING to do with those evil things, but grieves just as much as we do over them”

iv) This is the answer of the Shack... as well as open theism... God only does loving things, kind things, tender things, and He doesn't always know what's coming up

- b. If God is sovereign over all human decisions, how does God hold sinners accountable for their decisions?
- c. And why doesn't God just sovereignly decide to save everyone? Why send anyone to hell?

B. What It Means

Proverbs 25:2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings.

- 1. God retains to Himself many significant secrets
 - a. For example: His sovereign plan for human beings... predestination and reprobation applied to this or that person
 - b. How God uses people's sin, their wickedness and their rebellion, in His sovereign plan without in any way being responsible for their actions

Illus. Like Judas, whose betrayal of Jesus was predestined, but whose fault for that betrayal was completely his own!!! The exact relationship between God's sovereignty and human responsibility is a mystery

- c. Also "WHY???" why God brings certain calamity... notice that after all of Job's afflictions, God speaks to Job out of the whirlwind and brings him to an appropriate sense of His greatness and power and knowledge and sovereign rule... BUT HE NEVER GAVE JOB WHAT HE WANTED THE MOST: AN EXPLANATION OF WHY ALL THAT SUFFERING HAPPENED
- d. Also, the exact timetable and many of the circumstances of the end of the world

Acts 1:6-8 they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷ He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Did you hear that? **"It is not for you to know...."** There are some things God has concealed from us, and it's best for us to be satisfied concerning those great mysteries

- 2. Deuteronomy says it best:

Deuteronomy 29:29 The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever

3. In the Proverb... it is God's glory to conceal, a king's glory to search out what God has concealed
 - a. We must seek to go as far as God has revealed, but no farther
 - b. So many people, seeking to avoid controversy, avoid ever speaking of that which God has revealed: predestination, God's sovereign control over all of human history

Illus. Philip Melancthon, Martin Luther's friend and successor, was also a good friend of John Calvin, and, though he agreed with Calvin on predestination, thought it best never to speak of it; Calvin disagreed and wanted to teach fully whatever God had revealed, even if it brought divisions and disagreements, but Calvin was also extremely careful not to speculate beyond what God had revealed

C. Implications and Applications

1. We ought to go as far the Scripture reveals... take seriously all of God's words on His sovereignty
2. BUT we ought to limit ourselves to what He actually has revealed and not speculate... many of the deepest mysteries of God's plan He has kept to Himself

II. God's Sovereignty over Human Wills and Actions

Proverbs 16:1 To man belong the plans of the heart, but from the LORD comes the reply of the tongue.

A. What the Proverb Says

1. Human beings make many plans... this is of the essence of our status as created in the image of God
2. A plan is an intended course of action... to peer ahead into the future and decide that you will do this or that
3. Frankly, planning ahead is a GOOD THING in Proverbs, seeing what is coming and taking decisive action based on anticipation

Proverbs 22:3 A prudent man sees danger and takes refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.

4. HOWEVER, our plans are all subject to the will of the Sovereign God, the King of the universe!

5. A man can plan even a REPLY to a statement... he can intend to say this or that; but God finally determines what the man actually says in the end!!
6. This proverb goes beyond what Psalm 139 says:

Psalm 139:4 Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD.

This Proverb says "You may plan to say this or that to a person, but the words you actually end up saying have been ordained by God"

B. Supporting Proverb

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

1. Similar teaching... here it extends to the actual steps he takes as he walks down the road
2. It is a simple way of saying God ultimately controls human actions

C. Summary Proverb

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

1. We may make many plans... small and large... to orchestrate the events and paths of our lives
2. MAJOR LIFE PLANS: We may plan to go to college, or to get married, or to have children, or to have a certain career, or to visit certain countries, or to be missionaries, or to retire by age 55 ... ALL OF THOSE PLANS ARE SUBJECT TO THE OVERRIDING WILL OF THE LORD
3. DAILY LIFE PLANS: We may plan to go to Wall-Mart and buy a new set of towels for the guest bathroom, or we may plan to go to the Streets at South Point to meet a friend for lunch, or we may plan to go to church early to join the prayer time... ALL OF THOSE PLANS ARE SUBJECT TO THE OVERRIDING WILL OF THE LORD

D. Wisdom from James

James 4:13-16 Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." ¹⁴ Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that." ¹⁶ As it is, you boast and brag. All such boasting is evil.

BUT this is no way makes God the author of evil!!! God judges each man for his actions, based on that man's MOTIVES... but yet God orchestrates his actions for His own purposes

III. God's Sovereignty over the Hearts of Kings

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

A. What It Means

1. God is able to influence the minds of Kings so effectively that He controls human history through them
2. The image: an irrigation system from the Nile River... the water flows from the river through a series of sluice gates, controlled by the farmer to irrigate this or that patch of ground; so is the heart of the king in the hand of the Lord
3. He will bring in a counselor to say this or that, and the king listens and decides to follow this or that course of action... he thinks he is making his own decision, but he is really being effectively led by the sovereign plan of God

B. Displayed in Biblical History

1. Clear example: Absalom in his revolt against his father David
 - a. Absalom was on the brink of total success... David was fleeing for his life; he was exhausted and weary, tottering like an old rotten fencepost... all it took was a sharp blow and David would be defeated
 - b. At that time, the shrewdest counselor in Israel was a man named Ahithophel

2 Samuel 16:23 Now in those days the advice Ahithophel gave was like that of one who inquires of God. That was how both David and Absalom regarded all of Ahithophel's advice.

- c. As David fled for his life, he prayed

2 Samuel 15:31 "O LORD, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness."

- d. Now what did that mean?
 - i) Either, make Ahithophel give bad counsel... shape his thoughts so that he will lead Absalom to do the wrong thing and make Absalom TAKE THE BAD ADVICE... OR

- ii) Make Ahithophel's good advice SEEM bad to Absalom so that he doesn't take it
- iii) Either way, it would be a display of our proverb... God is sovereign over men's hearts to make them THINK a certain way
- iv) As it turned out, Ahithophel gave excellent advice, but Absalom asked for a second opinion; another man named Hushai the Arkite gave different advice, and God shaped Absalom's mind to accept the BAD advice of Hushai and spurn the good advice of Ahithophel

2 Samuel 17:14 Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The advice of Hushai the Arkite is better than that of Ahithophel." For the LORD had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel in order to bring disaster on Absalom.

- v) LIKE A WATERCOURSE IN THE HANDS OF THE LORD IS THE HEART OF A KING... God directs it whatever way He chooses

- 2. Most famous example: God hardening Pharaoh's heart to achieve all ten plagues and the dramatic Red Sea crossing

Exodus 14:8 The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, so that he pursued the Israelites, who were marching out boldly.

God directed Pharaoh's heart like a watercourse to refuse to allow Israel to leave, then, after his own son was dead, to allow them to leave, then, after they had left, God directed Pharaoh's heart once again to pursue Israel at the Red Sea

- 3. Most dramatic example: Nebuchadnezzar's mind changed to that of an animal, and then changed back again

Daniel 4:15-17 "Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the animals among the plants of the earth. ¹⁶ Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let him be given the mind of an animal, till seven times pass by for him. 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.'

- 4. Key moment of Redemptive History: Cyrus, King of Persia, agrees to allow the Jews return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple

2 Chronicles 36:22 In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing

- 5. Other examples

a. What God decreed for Sennacherib, King of Assyria

Isaiah 37:7 Listen! I am going to put a spirit in him so that when he hears a certain report, he will return to his own country, and there I will have him cut down with the sword.

6. Most dramatic example of all: the Jewish leaders and Pontius Pilate with the death of Christ

Acts 4:27-28 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. ²⁸ They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

God directed their hearts like a watercourse to kill Jesus

Why?

Isaiah 53:10 Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and ... the LORD makes his life a guilt offering

BUT this in NO WAY reduces the guilt of Herod or Annas or the Sanhedrin or Pontius Pilate:

John 19:10-11 Pilate said. "Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?" 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."

It was a GREAT SIN for them to have handed Jesus over to Pilate... and Pilate himself was guilty of sin by executing an innocent man... yet God orchestrated everything according to His plan

God's is the plan, man's is the responsibility!!!

C. Displayed in Secular History

1. How can we be certain? Because the Bible tells us there are NO ACCIDENTS

2. Adolph Hitler's blunders:

a. He allowed a huge British force of almost a third of a million men to be rescued from Dunkirk

b. He invaded Russia (a mistake of epic proportions); to make matters worse, he first viciously put down an uprising in the Balkans before invading... thus the invasion of Russia started weeks too late, well into summer; the German army was stopped just short of Moscow by the onslaught of winter

- c. He declared war on the United States of America the day after the Pearl Harbor attack, at a time when most Americans would have focused entirely on Japan and perhaps advocated staying out of Europe; but Hitler's foolhardy move resulted in the US making defeating Hitler the TOP priority, then defeating Japan the second priority
 - d. And on the morning of D-Day, Hitler overslept; as a result, the Germans could not unleash their tanks at the fragile Allies as they were trying to establish a beachhead
 - e. According to Proverbs 21:1, these blunders were all under the control of a Sovereign God, who was using Hitler's own mind against him
3. KEY CONCEPT: Book of Esther

- a. The words "God" or "Lord" never appears in the whole book... God is never mentioned directly at all!!
- b. Why would a book that never mentions God be included in the Bible? I think the storyline of the book answers that question... God is SO CLEARLY orchestrating the events of the book to protect the Jews from genocide while at the same time remaining hidden, it teaches us this is how God usually guides history: in secret, with no interpretation
- c. Invisibly: God directed King Xerxes to choose Esther to be his wife, to show Esther favor when she came unannounced into the throne room, and the night before Esther's banquet, when she was about to reveal the wickedness of Haman's plot to destroy the Jews, God moved Xerxes's heart

Esther 6:1 That night the king could not sleep; so he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him.

During that reading, Xerxes found out that Mordecai, the man who was secretly Esther's cousin and caretaker, but also Haman's enemy, had saved the king's life some time ago, but had never been rewarded

TIMING WAS EVERYTHING!!!

4. Providential History a little dangerous
- a. It is usually couched in very patriotic terms, making the American ideals God's highest purposes in history
 - b. So it will point out some remarkably and surprising aspects of American history and claim God directly intervened to accomplish this or that
 - c. Plain example:

From *America's Providential History*, by Mark A. Beliles and Stephen K. McDowell

During the Civil War, the Confederate Army's phenomenal success in almost every major battle induced Abraham Lincoln to seek God for the reasons why. He called for a Day of Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer throughout the North on April 30, 1863. Interestingly, within two days, one of the most crucial Providential events of the entire war occurred: General Stonewall Jackson, who had never lost a battle, was Providentially removed from the scene. Shortly after this, on May 10, 1863, Jackson died. Had God not removed him, the outcome of the war may have been different. God had removed the stigma of slavery from this nation, and Providence now turned to a new objective: to preserve the union of the United States as one whole people.

- d. The problem with Providential History is that, while we can say that God ordained an event to occur if in fact it occurred, INTERPRETATION OF WHY THAT EVENT HAPPENED is problematic at best

Ecclesiastes 8:17 then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all his efforts to search it out, man cannot discover its meaning. Even if a wise man claims he knows, he cannot really comprehend it.

Romans 11:33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

D. Significance and Encouragement

1. This is an incredibly comforting doctrine!!!
2. It means that human history is NEVER out of control, for God is able to invade the brains of the movers and shakers and make them do whatever His will ordains any time He chooses
3. In fact, I believe God is doing it, not just once in a great while, not just every so often, not just occasionally, not just frequently, BUT CONSTANTLY!!! God shapes and molds human decisions at every turn in the road!!! And at every moment, God's is the sovereign plan, and man's is the responsibility
4. So when a Hitler or a Stalin or a Mao or a Kim Jung Il or a Saddam Hussein or an Osama Bin Laden or whoever makes a series of decisions, God is directing his heart to express the leader's own wicked desires but also to sow the seeds of his own destruction and of the advance of the Gospel
5. So we need never fear... God is ruling over even the WORST dictators and conquerors to bring about God's purpose
6. Furthermore, we can pray for kings and those in authority, both for their conversion (like Nebuchadnezzar) and for the controlling of their decisions to allow us to lead fruitful lives

1 Timothy 2:1-2 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone-- ² for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

7. YES, this brings us into very challenging waters... does God will every decision made by a king? In one sense, no... for God says the decision of Manasseh to burn his own sons in the fire as an offering to Molech

Jeremiah 19:5 something I did not command or mention, nor did it enter my mind.

8. But yet, God still ruled over even Manasseh in that God spared the son He had chosen to be in Jesus' Messianic line, Amon

IV. God's Sovereignty over Seemingly Random Events

Proverbs 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.

A. What It Means

1. The lot was the ancient world's way of rolling the dice
2. It is a seemingly random event, the casual tossing of a lot into the lap... since it cannot be controlled by the one who tosses it, it is a way of making decisions in a random fashion
3. It represents the seemingly CHANCE events of life... this proverb says there are none!!

B. Biblical Example: Jonah... it was by the casting of lots that they found out that Jonah was the cause of their troubles... and it was true

C. Implications and Applications

1. There is NO SUCH THING AS LUCK!!! Luck doesn't exist!! Or chance... or fortune...
2. Las Vegas is a whole city devised and built on so-called "Games of chance"... the Roulette Wheel spins around and the ball happens to land on Red 19 and someone wins or loses a bunch of money... so also the craps table... the dice go tumbling down the table rolling, bouncing, and coming up double six; its every decision is from the Lord
3. Some have criticized Christian football players and coaches praying to the Almighty as though He actually cares who wins a football game!! Well this Proverb tells me God is INTENSELY INVOLVED in who wins every football game... but He is working at a MUCH HIGHER LEVEL than any of us can imagine... He wills the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat for His children and His enemies alike, and achieves different goals in each case...

but to say God doesn't care about a football game is to underestimate how sovereign and involved He is

4. Extend it: the seemingly random events of life are ALL under God's sovereign control... the flat tire, the lost wallet, the missed flight, the chance meeting at the mall, everything is under God's control for His highest purposes

D. Limitation

1. Though the church in Acts 1 used casting lots to find out who should be Judas's replacement as an apostle, yet the Lord had given us much better ways of seeking His will
2. Christians should not use a "Magic 8 Ball" or a coin flip or a dice roll to make important decisions
3. Many times Christians advocate "laying down a fleece" (like Gideon did) to determine a course of action

Kevin DeYoung wrote a book on determining God's will called **Just Do Something: "How to make a decision without dreams, visions, fleeces, impressions, open doors, random bible verses, casting lots, liver shivers, writing in the sky, etc.**

4. Rather, God has given us other means
 - a. Scripture reading
 - b. Counsel of godly friends
 - c. And best of all, prayer for wisdom

James 1 "If anyone lacks wisdom he should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault and it will be given to him."

V. God's Sovereignty over Battles

Proverbs 21:31 The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the LORD.

A. What the Proverb Means

1. It is for men to prepare for the day of battle, to get his mightiest weapons ready, but in the final analysis, victory or defeat rests with the Lord
2. In those days, the horse was the mightiest weapon on the battlefield... an awesome power, charging across the field of war with immense force, sweeping common footsoldiers before it; the horse's dominance continued

right to the end of the 19th century when mechanized vehicles coupled with machine guns and soon airplanes made the horse obsolete

3. So this proverb is saying, “A general can get his army as ready as he wants, with the most overpowering technology available, but the victory does not depend on his weapons, or his battle plan, or his reserves, or ultimately on anything but the will of the Lord

B. Parallel Verses

Psalm 33:13-21 From heaven the LORD looks down and sees all mankind; ¹⁴ from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth-- ¹⁵ he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do. ¹⁶ No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. ¹⁷ A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save. ¹⁸ But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, ¹⁹ to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine. ²⁰ We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. ²¹ In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name.

God warned Israel not to trust in their military prowess:

He said if they forsook the Lord, they would be shockingly defeated on the battlefield

Deuteronomy 32:30 How could one man chase a thousand, or two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, unless the LORD had given them up?

C. Implications

1. This doesn't mean that armies ought not to train, or that weapons systems mean nothing

Psalm 144:1 Praise be to the LORD my Rock, who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle.

If training for battle were meaningless, why would David write that?

Jesus also spoke of the wisdom for an outmanned king suing for peace:

Luke 14:31-32 Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? ³² If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace.

2. BUT what this proverb does teach is that the final outcome of every battle on earth has always been the will of the Lord, not the technology or size of the army or the skill of its warriors

3. God controls the battlefield, and this God controls human history
4. The boundary lines for the world have mostly been forged in battle... and Acts 17 shows God's sovereign power over the battlefield

Acts 17:26 he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.

Therefore, America should not rely on the overwhelming technological superiority of our weapons systems... our Advance Tactical Fighters, our cruise missiles and smart bombs, our aircraft carriers and M1A1 Abrams Tanks with reactive armor and laser-guided weapons systems

God can easily defeat all that if He so chooses...

Rather a people's security has always been in the Lord!!!

VI. God's Sovereignty over His Enemies

Proverbs 21:30 There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan that can succeed against the LORD.

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

A. What These Proverbs Mean

1. God is omnipotent... all power is HIS... He controls even the power of His enemy
2. Why?

Acts 17:28 For in him we live and move and have our being.

Romans 11:36 For from him and through him and to him are all things.

3. If Satan and all the wicked men on earth assembled directly to fight the Lord and His Messiah, they would lose... by an infinite margin
4. Actually, this is precisely what WILL happen at the Second Coming of Christ
5. Psalm 2 depicts God LAUGHING at such an alliance of His enemies

Psalm 2:2-5 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. ³ "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters." ⁴ The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. ⁵ Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath

B. God Sovereignly Ordains the Defeat and Death of His Enemies

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

1. God actually controls events to bring about the demise of His enemies in His own good time
2. This is the exact opposite of Romans 8:28

Romans 8:28 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.

3. God has this kind of sovereign power... to decree the death of His foes and it is so
4. The Proverb implies that some orchestration of events is sometimes need for the wicked to meet the decreed end... but nothing is too difficult for God

C. Implications

1. Do not fear the awesome power of the wicked... God rules over all things
2. Do not be one of Christ's enemies... trust in Him
3. God has power to transform His enemies and make us His friends

Colossians 1:21-22 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. ²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation

4. Come to Christ!!!

VII. Application

A. Summary

God's Sovereignty over

1. His mysteries which He has not revealed
2. The words and actions of human beings
3. The hearts of Kings
4. Seemingly random events
5. The battlefield

6. His enemies

B. Application

1. Rest confidently in God's power... do not fret because it seems the world is out of control
2. Pray confidently to God for His plan to be accomplished
3. Do not make too much nor too little of human wills and choices: we have freedom to exercise our wills, and we are accountable for what we choose... but that doesn't in any way unseat God from His throne... God wills and ordains BASED on human wills and choices, and He achieves His ends in every case