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Andrew M. Davis

Sermon Notes

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The Absolute Sovereignty of God, Part II

Proverbs

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.

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,

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

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.

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

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

C. Implications and Applications

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

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

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

B. Supporting Proverb

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

C. Summary Proverb

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

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 in 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

B. Displayed in Biblical History

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.

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

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.

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

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.'

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

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.

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.

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

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."

C. Displayed in Secular History

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.

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 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.

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

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