



IS GOD IN ABSOLUTE CONTROL?—*Is He the greatest criminal in History?*

When the will of God is described as mysterious, and Himself as controlling and directly or indirectly involved in human suffering, it often leads to faith being redefined as resignation. Resignation says that since God is in control, there must be a divine purpose in the evil and suffering that is ever present in the world and we must learn to let the mysterious ways of God play out. That fatalism is then repackaged as faith.

Another misinterpretation of the sovereignty of God teaches that even though God doesn't do the bad stuff Himself, He *allows* Satan to do it and gives His approval.

But how can there be true faith if the will of God is unknown, if His nature is misrepresented as being evil and Himself looked as the source of sickness, suffering or tragedy. How can one believe God for healing if healing might not be His will? How can one ever know what they can believe and expect from God? They can't.

And what about this verse: “*Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a **rewarder** of those who diligently seek Him.*”? (Hebrews 11:6) God is a rewarder? Not for the fatalists. For them, God is the master puppeteer controlling the devil, controlling evil, sickness, sex trafficking, drug use, spousal abuse, child abuse, murder and so much more.

From the idea that “God is in control”, one could make the case that God is *the greatest criminal in history*, and yet we are to have “faith” that He is doing this for our own good !

This concept of God's absolute control in the affairs of humanity pretends to honour God as if absolute control over everything at every moment was a fundamental requirement for God to be God. It also can seem comforting to think that God is controlling events when something horrible happens and that He means for us to suffer in order to serve some greater purpose of His. Unfortunately it's a false comfort because God is not in control of everything that happens here on planet Earth.

In some people's mind, when they say that God is sovereign, they mean He is directly responsible for everything that happens in our world. But they need to understand the difference between power and authority. God is indeed all powerful. However, He sovereignly chose to self-limit His power and interference by delegating some of His authority to mankind in the Garden of Eden. *Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have **dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'* (Genesis 1:26-28)

But Adam promptly sinned and thereby abdicated his authority to Satan who then became the god of this world and started to wreak havoc in the lives of men. Creation also has been subject to

corruption, the planet being unstable with earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, mudslides, tsunamis, etc. that bring death and destruction to millions. We know that God does not send these things because He instead brings life and peace. (See Malachi 2:5)

Believers who say that God is in control of everything are in fact accusing Him of doing all sorts of horrible things that are judged criminal when they are done by a human being. That doesn't make any sense.

God is not the only force at work in our world today. Satan is operating and, in addition, we have 7+ billion people on the planet who all have individual wills of their own and often do stupid things.

Yes, God is indeed sovereign, He is paramount and supreme in the universe. However, regardless of misguided theology claiming that He is absolute control, it is clear that there are other forces at work on earth today.

The good news is that, whatever the situation, He wants to overturn bad things and turn them into good, in the lives of those who love Him. (Romans 8:28)