

God The Supreme Ruler

God's supreme rule refers to the fact He is the King, Absolute Lord and Highest Lawgiver of the created universe and heaven.

Relevant Hebrew and Greek Names of God

Some of the Names of God have revealed various aspects of His supreme rule over all beings and things. In the Old Testament, these names are:

- *God Almighty* or “El Sadday” in Hebrew (see Genesis 17:1 and Exodus 6:2).
- *God Most High* or “El Elyon” in Hebrew (see Genesis 14:18-20 and Psalm 78:35).
- *Lord* or “Adon” (see Joshua 3:11, 3:13, Zechariah 4:14) and “Adonay” (see Isaiah 29:13) or “YHWH” (see Genesis 4:26 and Exodus 3:15) in Hebrew.
- *Lord God* or “Adonay YHWH” in Hebrew (see Genesis 15:2, Deuteronomy 3:24).
- *King* or “Melek” in Hebrew (see Psalm 10:16, 47:2 and 47:7).

The New Testament Names of God relating to His supreme rule are:

- *Lord* or “Kurios” (see Matthew 7:21-22, 22:41-45, Acts 2:36 and Luke 10:21).
- *Lord God Almighty* or “Kurios Pantokrator” in Greek (see Revelation 1:8).
- *Master* or *Lord* or “despotes” in Greek (see Luke 2:29, Acts 4:24, 2 Peter 2:1, Jude 4 and Revelation 6:10).
- *King* or “Basileus” in Greek (see 1 Timothy 1:17, 6:15, Revelation 17:14 and 19:16).

Below are details about some of these above Hebrew and Greek words:

The Hebrew word “Adon” means “lord, *master*, as *owner* or *ruler*”.¹ 1 Kings 16:24 uses “adon” in the sense of a human owner of a hill. Joshua 3:11 and 3:13 use “Adon” to refer to God being the Supreme Ruler, Master and Owner of the whole earth. Genesis 24:9 shows “adon” refers to the *master* of *slaves* or *servants*. The Hebrew word “Adonay” means “lord, master”.² Ezekiel 18:3-4 uses the word “Adonay” when referring to the Lord as the *owner* of all humans.

The Greek word “kurios” means “‘Lord,’ ‘master,’ ‘Master,’ ‘owner,’ ‘Sir,’ a title of wide significance, occurring in each book of the NT save Titus and the Epistles of John. It is used (a) of an owner, as in Luke 19:33, cf. Matthew 20:8; Acts 16:16; Galatians 4:1; or of one who has the disposal of anything, as the Sabbath, Matthew 12:8; (b) of a master, ie., one to whom service is due on any ground, Matthew 6:24; 24:50; Ephesians 6:5; (c) of an Emperor or King, Acts 25:26, Revelation 17:14.”.³ Bauer says “kurios” means “lord, Lord, master, owner of possessions...The meaning ‘owner’ easily passes into that of lord, master, one who has full

¹ Wilson, page 259.

² Vine, page 140.

³ Ibid, page 379.

control of something”.⁴ The word “kurios” is the New Testament Greek equivalent of “Adon” in Matthew 22:44, “YHWH” in Matthew 4:7 and 4:10 and “Elohim” (or God) in 1 Peter 1:25. Jesus Christ declared He was the Lord or “Kurios” in Matthew 7:21, 7:22, 22:41-45 and John 13:13. In Acts 17:24, Paul speaks of God being “Kurios” of Heaven and Earth.

The Greek word “pantokrator” means “almighty, or ruler of all”⁵ or “the Almighty, All-Powerful, Omnipotent (One)”.⁶ The Greek word “despotes” means “lord, master, owner”⁷ or “one who has *absolute ownership* and *uncontrolled power*”.⁸ The Greek word “basileus” means “king, figuratively of the possessor of the highest power”.⁹

As Creator, God owns everything

God has created all things visible and invisible and continues to preserve their existence (see Genesis 1:1-27, Psalm 33:6, 148:1-6, Nehemiah 9:6 and Revelation 4:11). As a result, He owns all things. I Chronicles 29:10-11 says: “***...Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head over all.***” (Note David refers to God being both Supreme Lord and Father.)

Verses speaking similarly to this are Deuteronomy 10:14, Psalm 24:1, 89:11, 95:3-5, Romans 11:36 and 1 Corinthians 10:26. Proverbs 16:4 links God’s work at creation with His ownership of everything and everyone: “***The Lord has made all things for Himself, yes, even the wicked for the day of doom.***”

Because God owns all things, He has supreme rule over all created things. He has control over the physical universe (see Genesis 1:1 and Revelation 4:11). He controls the Sun (see Joshua 10:13-14 and Matthew 5:45), the rain (see Matthew 5:45, Genesis 7:4, Deuteronomy 28:24, Job 37:6, 1 Kings 18:1, 2 Kings 8:1 and 2 Chronicles 7:13), lightning (see Job 28:26, Psalm 135:7 and Jeremiah 10:13), thunder (see 1 Samuel 7:10), clouds (see Job 37:11-12 and Psalm 148:8), waters (see Psalm 104:6-10 and 147:18), wind (see Psalm 135:7, 147:18 and Luke 8:24-25), ice (see Job 37:10), dew (Genesis 27:28), snow (see Job 37:6 and Psalm 147:16), hail (see Psalm 147:17 and 148:8) and frost (see Psalm 147:16). All the stars in the universe do what God commands (see Job 38:31-22).

He controls the occurrence of the day and the night (see Genesis 1:16-18 and Jeremiah 33:20). The seas, rivers and creeks obey Him (see Exodus 7:14-25, 14:1-31, Joshua 3:5-17, 2 Kings 2:19-22, 3:9-20 and Psalm 147:18). Earthquakes occur as God wills (see 1 Kings 19:11-12 and Matthew 28:2). He rules over the productiveness of the ground (see Genesis 3:17-18, 5:29, Deuteronomy 11:15, Psalm 65:9-13, 104:13-15, 145:16 and Acts 14:17). God controls and provides for all plants (see Jonah 4:6 and Matthew 6:28-30), birds (see Matthew 6:26 and 10:29), fish (see Jonah 1:17 and Matthew 17:27) and animals (see Psalm 104:21 and 147:9).

⁴ Bauer, page 459.

⁵ Vine, page 22.

⁶ Bauer, pages 608-609.

⁷ Ibid, page 176.

⁸ Vine, page 395.

⁹ Bauer, page 136.

Read Job Chapters 38 and 39 to see how God declares all natural things have always been under His absolute rule. Also read about God's miracles in relation to the Nile River, the streams, rivers and pools of Egypt, frogs, lice, flies, livestock, hail, locusts and darkness during the daytime (see Exodus 7:14-9:7 and 9:13-10:29). God rules through those realities He has already ordained in the natural and spiritual worlds and through miracles.

Contrary to the teachings of pagan Hinduism, God is *totally distinct* from all things He has created. The Creator is not a part of the creation. This is one reason why it is wrong to worship any created thing. But note God *directs* and *works through* all natural things He has created. He works *behind-the-scenes* directing, for example, all of the natural things which cause rain, wind, thunder, lightning and sunlight.

While He does allow humans to affect these things through pollution, clearing trees and other changes to the natural environment, He has the ultimate rule over how these things influence what He has created. Also, one way God punishes sinful people is through His influence over nature (see Amos 4:6-9).

God also directs and works through the spiritual realities He has created. I refer here to Heaven and Hell.

God delegated some of His authority over certain aspects of the natural certain to Adam and Eve (see Genesis 1:26 and 28).¹⁰

A common modern error

I have heard some Christians suggest that since the Fall of Adam and Eve, Satan legally owns the universe and the Earth. They say verses such as Matthew 4:8-9 and John 14:30 prove this, in that these verses say Satan is the ruler of this world. Such Christians make a very simple mistake. They do not realise that when the New Testament says Satan is the ruler of this world, it is not suggesting Satan is the ruler of God's physical creation – the rain, Sun, winds, oceans, rivers, mountains, trees, animals, birds, insects and other natural things.

In verses like John 8:23, 12:31, 14:30, 15:18, 15:19, 16:11, 17:14, 17:16, 18:36, 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:19, 5:10, 11:32, Galatians 6:14, Ephesians 2:2, Colossians 2:8, James 1:27, 4:4, 2 Peter 1:4, 2:20, 1 John 2:15-16, 3:1, 3:13,4:17, 5:4 and 5:19, "*the world*" or "kosmos" in Greek refers to the pressuring system that tries to influence us to think and act in ways contrary to God's will as revealed in His Scriptures and by His Spirit.¹¹ It is the non-Christian way of thinking and acting that constantly uses other people, advertising, television, even many religious ideas and practices and many other things to try to get us to conform to it. Bauer defines "kosmos" in the context of the above verses as meaning "the world, and everything that belongs to it, appears as that which is hostile to God, i.e. lost in sin, wholly at odds with

¹⁰ One debatable interpretation of Job 1:6-12, 16 and 19 is that sometimes God allows Satan to influence the lightning and wind. Possibly Revelation 13:13 relates to a similar thing.

¹¹ In other contexts, "kosmos" can mean "1. adornment – 1 Peter 3:3. 2. the world as the sum total of everything here and now, the (orderly) universe – Matthew 13:35, Acts 17:24, Romans 1:20, Ephesians 1:4, Hebrews 4:3, 9:26, 1 Peter 1:20 and Revelation 13:8. 3. the world as the sum total of all beings above the level of animals – 1 Corinthians 4:9. 4. the world as the earth, the planet upon which we live – Romans 4:13. 5. the world as mankind – John 12:19, Romans 3:6, 3:19, 1 Corinthians 6:2, 2 Corinthians 5:19 and 1 John 2:2. 6. the world as the scene of earthly joys, possessions, cares and sufferings – Matthew 16:26, 1 Corinthians 7:31, 7:33 and 1 John 2:15-16... 8. totality, sum total – James 4:6 (Bauer, pages 445-447).

anything divine, ruined and depraved".¹² John 16:11 says of Satan's rulership of the world: "***of judgement, because the ruler of this world is judged.***" John 14:30 says a similar thing. 1 John 5:19 says: "***We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.***"

The Fall of Adam and Eve did not hand over control of God's natural creation to Satan. God still owns His physical creation.

There are a number of Old Testament verses which show God owned the natural creation in Old Testament times. These verses are Exodus 19:5, Leviticus 25:23, Psalm 50:9-11, 104:24 and 147:8-9. In Exodus 19:5, God said "...***for all the earth is Mine.***" Leviticus 25:23 says God owned the land and the Israelites were His tenants: "***The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine...***" Psalm 50:9-11 states: "***I will not take a bull from your house, nor goats out of your folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the birds of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are Mine.***" These words were spoken years before the Lord Jesus died on the Cross and was later resurrected. So even in Old Testament times, God still owned the physical creation.

In Acts 17:24, Paul shows God is the Lord of the physical Earth in New Testament times: "***God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth...***" Bauer says the world or "kosmos" in the context of Acts 17:24 means "the orderly universe". Similar verses to Acts 17:24 are Matthew 11:25 and 1 Corinthians 10:26. (The latter verse is a quote from Psalm 24:1. Psalm 24:1 says God owns the earth and the world. But note the Hebrew word for "***world***" in this verse is "tebel" and means in this context the "earth, including the atmosphere".¹³ Psalm 24:1 is an example of Hebrew parallelism – repeating a similar thought in different words.)

In Greek, the word "***earth***" is "ge". Forms of "ge" are used in Luke 21:35, Acts 1:8, 17:26 and Revelation 13:8 to refer to the planet Earth. Forms of "ge" are found in Matthew 13:5, 8 and 15 to mean "soil, earth", in Matthew 10:29 and John 8:6 to mean "ground", in Mark 4:1, 6:47 and Luke 5:3 to refer to the "land as opposed to sea" and in Matthew 2:20, 4:15, 14:34, John 3:22, Acts 7:3 and 7:36 to mean "a region, a country".¹⁴

In Acts 5:4, the Apostle Peter told Ananias about Ananias' ownership of some land. But human ownership of land is only a *delegated ownership*. God is the real owner of all land on earth and everything else. This is shown in Leviticus 25:23 previously quoted. Also read Deuteronomy 4:39 and 10:14. Deuteronomy 10:14 states: "***Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the Lord your God, also the earth with all that is in it.***"

The Fall of Adam and Eve put the human race into the hands of Satan. After the Lord Jesus' death and resurrection, however, any person, who becomes born-again, no longer is a member of what the Scriptures call "***the world.***" Galatians 6:14 says: "***But God forbid that I should glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.***" Colossians 2:20 says a similar thing. Born-again Christians are in the world, because they must live and work among non-Christians (see Philippians 2:15 and 1 Peter 5:9) who are a part of the world system ruled indirectly or directly by Satan and his demons. But Christians are not of the world. They are not members of the non-Christian world system. Instead, they are members of God's Kingdom (see Colossians 1:13).

¹² Bauer, page 446.

¹³ Harris, Archer and Waltke, page 359.

¹⁴ Bauer, page 157.

As Creator, God owns everyone

God created the human race (see Genesis 1:26-27). As a result, God owns all humans. In Ezekiel 18:4, God says: ***“Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine...”***

Because God owns all humans, He has the absolute right to rule over us all. God rules over humans in the ways mentioned in the following seven sections.

God is the Absolute King or Supreme Lord

Psalm 103:19 stresses that God is the Absolute King who rules over all: ***“The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.”*** I Timothy 6:15 states: ***“...He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords.”*** Similar verses are Psalm 10:16, 29:10, 47:2, 47:7, 95:3-7 and Matthew 6:13. God the Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is the Supreme Ruler or Lord or King of kings. Therefore, the *supreme rule* or *sovereignty of God* and the *Lordship of Christ* are closely linked.

Despite their wickedness, God is the Supreme Ruler over all humans. Daniel 4:35 emphasises: ***“All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand or say to Him. ‘What have You done?’”***

No human or demon has the power to stop God from doing whatever He has decided He will do. Psalm 115:3 says: ***“But our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases.”*** Psalm 135:6 states: ***“Whatever the Lord pleases He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deep places.”*** Nothing is impossible to God (see Genesis 18:14, Jeremiah 32:27, Matthew 19:26 and Luke 1:37). Proverbs 19:21 declares: ***“There are many plans in a man’s heart, nevertheless the Lord’s counsel – that will stand.”***

In Isaiah 46:9-11, God says: ***“Remember the former things of old, for 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 that are not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,’ calling a bird of prey from the east, the man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.”***

God’s predetermination, permitting of evil and prayer

In His infinite wisdom and foreknowledge, God has predetermined for what periods of time every nation on Earth will exist and what are the limits or boundaries of these nations geographically. Acts 17:26 says: ***“And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation.”***¹⁵ Psalm 139:16 states: ***“Your eyes saw my substance, being***

¹⁵ In Greek, the expression ***“has determined”*** is a form of the word “opizo” meaning “determine, appoint, fix, set” (Bauer, page 581) and the word ***“preappointed”*** is the perfect tense form of the word “prostasso” which means “to give detailed instructions as to what must be done” (Louw and Nida, page 425). Also, in Greek, the word ***“times”*** is a form of the word “kairos” which means “definite fixed time” (Bauer, page 395) in the context of Acts 17:26. The word ***“boundaries”*** in Greek is a form of the word “horothesia” meaning “fixed boundary” (Bauer, page 582) or

yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.” Job 14:5 declares *“Since his days are determined, the number of his months is with you; you have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass.”* Refer also to John 21:18-19, 21:22-23, Acts 27:22-25, 2 Peter 1:13-14 and Jeremiah 1:5.

God sometimes allows His supreme rule over when individuals die to be influenced by the prayers of faith of people (see 1 Kings 17:17-24, 2 Kings 4:8-37, 20:1-6, Matthew 10:8 and Acts 9:36-42).

In King Hezekiah’s life, we see the interrelationship between God’s supreme rule and prayer. 2 Kings 20:1 records God told Hezekiah he was going to die. After Hezekiah prayed, God gave him another 15 years to live (see 2 Kings 20:6). So he died at 54 years of age. During these extra 15 years, Hezekiah fathered a son called Manasseh. Manasseh was 12 when he began to reign after Hezekiah’s death. Before he repented, Manasseh was one of the most wicked kings Judah ever had (see 2 Kings 21:1-18 and 2 Chronicles 33:1-17). Manasseh had a evil son called Amon who had a son called Josiah (see 2 Kings 21:19-26 and 22:24). Josiah was an exceptionally godly king (see 2 Kings 22:1-23:25). 2 Kings 23:25 records: *“Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the Lord with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did any arise like him.”* Josiah’s birth and life had been prophesied roughly 250 to 300 years earlier by a prophet of God. 1 Kings 13:2 records this prophet’s words: *“O altar, altar! Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, a child, Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you...’”* Note if Hezekiah had not lived the extra 15 years, Josiah would not have been born.

Also, sometimes because of unrepented of sin, people can die earlier than it was God’s intention had they turned from their sin. Psalm 55:23 says: *“But You, O God, shall bring them down to the pit of destruction; bloodthirsty and deceitful men shall not live out half their days....”* Proverbs 10:27 states: *“The fear of the Lord prolongs days, but the years of the wicked will be shortened.”* Refer also to 1 Corinthians 11:29-30, Ephesians 6:1-3 and 1 Peter 3:10-12.

But note sometimes, God willingly permits humans who do not turn from wickedness to live long lives and godly believers to die young. Ecclesiastes 7:15 says: *“I have seen all things in my days of vanity: There is a just man who perishes in his righteousness, And there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his wickedness.”* John the Baptist died at the age of about 31, but note what Jesus said about him in Matthew 11:11: *“Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist;”* Also, observe Luke 1:15 says John was filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother’s womb.

King Josiah died at the age of 39 years. 2 Chronicles 34:1-2 records how long he lived and how godly he was: *“Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.”* Note also in context, Philippians 1:21-26 does not teach Paul or we can demand God empowers us to

“fixed limit” (Perschbacher, page 297). In Greek, the word *“dwellings”* is a form of the word *“katoikia”* which means “a place of dwelling, whether an object or area” (Louw and Nida, page 731). In context, Acts 17:26 refers to the nations. But because of the following verses – Acts 17:27-30 which have an emphasis on individual people – it is possible Acts 17:26 also refers to God predetermining when and where every human of every nation will be born and when they will die.

live 969 years like Methuselah did (see Genesis 5:27) or to 10,000 years old or to whatever we would choose.

In addition, we cannot say God wishes some unborn children to be murdered by abortion. But in His supreme rule, He willingly permits such wickedness to occur.

Psalm 68:20 shows God sovereignly oversees all escapes from death: ***“Our God is the God of salvation; and to God the Lord belong escapes from death.”***

1 Kings 20:42 reveals that God had predetermined that King Ben Hadad of Syria should die at a particular time at the order of King Ahab of Israel. But note because Ahab had a God-given free-will, Ahab let Ben Hadad live longer than God originally intended. God held Ahab responsible for this. This example shows God sometimes willingly permits His supreme rule to be limited by human decisions.

God works out His purposes in every person’s life (see Psalm 33:13-15, Proverbs 16:9 and 20:24). This occurs regardless of whether the person recognises it or not (see Esther 4:14 and Isaiah 45:5).

God rules over the rebellious nations

God rules over the nations despite their rebellion against Him. Psalm 47:7-8 declares: ***“For God is the King of all the earth...God reigns over the nations; God sits on His holy throne.”*** Psalm 33:10-11 says: ***“The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect. The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart to all generations.”*** Job 12:23 declares: ***“He makes nations great, and destroys them; He enlarges nations, and guides them.”***

God appoints rulers of nations to exercise delegated authority from Him (see Psalm 75:6-7, Daniel 2:37-39, 4:25, 4:32, 5:21, Jeremiah 27:5 and Romans 13:1-7). Daniel 5:21 says: ***“...the Most High God rules in the Kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.”*** He removes rulers also (see Luke 1:52). God allows Satan and demons to tempt and influence those He has appointed as rulers of various nations and areas (see 1 Kings 22:19-23, Daniel 10:20 and Revelation 16:14). But at least sometimes, God also has His own angels minister to kings even if they are unbelievers (see Daniel 11:1).

Sometimes the wickedness of various kings becomes so great, God judges them with physical death. Acts 12:21-23 records that God’s angel struck evil King Herod dead. Read 1 Chronicles 10:13-14 for other examples.

God uses nations and their rulers to achieve His will (see Ezra 1:1, 6:22, Isaiah 7:20, 45:1-5 and Jeremiah 51:1-58). Isaiah 10:5-15 shows God can even use proud wicked people like the Assyrians and their rulers to achieve His higher long-term purposes. God’s supreme rule over all nations and humans is expressed in Isaiah 14:26-27 when He said: ***“This is the purpose that is purposed against the whole earth, and this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations. For the Lord of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, and who will turn it back?”***

2 Kings 5:1 reveals that God used Naaman, a non-Israelite pagan to give victory to a pagan nation, the Syrians, over their enemies: ***“Now Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master, because by him the Lord had given victory to Syria...”***

Naaman did not convert to the Lord until after his later meetings with Elisha the prophet (see 2 Kings 5:2-19).

Occasionally, God *forces* various political rulers to do His will (see Exodus 4:21, 11:10, Deuteronomy 2:30 and Joshua 11:20). Exodus 14:17 reveals He even hardened the hearts of the whole Egyptian army to achieve His plans.

God oversees the most trivial matters

As Supreme Ruler, God oversees even the most trivial of matters. In Matthew 10:29-30, Jesus said: ***“Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.”***

God provides the needs of all humans

God provides for the needs of all humans (see Job 36:31, Matthew 6:11 and 7:7-11). Philippians 4:19 is a special promise of God in relation to believers: ***“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”***

God permits humans to do evil

In His supreme rule, God permits humans to do evil and rebel against Him. In Acts 14:16, Paul said: ***“who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways.”*** God hates evil (see Habakkuk 1:13) and never forces any person to sin (see James 1:13-14). But He does test humans to see what is in their hearts. 2 Chronicles 32:31 records God’s testing of King Hezekiah’s heart: ***“...God withdrew from him, in order to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart.”***

God often uses human evil for good purposes

God often uses the evils done by humans for good purposes. For example, humans committed the evil of hatefully murdering Jesus Christ (see Acts 2:23), but God used this as the wonderful means of saving believers (see Acts 4:27-28). John 10:18 shows Christ was murdered only because He permitted this to occur. Also, God did not force these murderers to act against their own wills. Instead, He brought about His plan through their willing choices for which He held them accountable. Luke 22:22 says: ***“And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!”*** Matthew 26:24 refers to this also. God did not commit this evil but used the evils of others to achieve His will.

Jonah 1:5 records that sailors threw Jonah overboard. In Jonah 2:3, Jonah recognised God wanted him thrown overboard. God here brought about His plan in Jonah’s life through the willing choices of humans who were morally responsible to God for their actions.

Romans 8:28 says: ***“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”*** Joseph understood this wonderful principle of God’s supreme rule. Genesis 50:20 records Joseph’s words to his brothers who had treated him wickedly, this resulting in him suffering in prison for a number of

years: ***“But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.”*** Genesis 45:5 and Psalm 105:17 contain similar words about Joseph.

God can also use the evil temptations of Satan (see 1 Chronicles 21:1-3 and 1 Kings 22:19-23) to achieve His purposes of judgement (see 2 Samuel 24:1-3 and 1 Kings 22:29-37). 2 Samuel 12:11-12 and 16:22 show God can use the evil decisions of humans to bring about His punishments of sin. After Solomon sinned terribly by turning from the Lord (see 1 Kings 11:1-13), God raised up two evil foreign kings to oppose Solomon (see 1 Kings 11:14 and 23).

2 Kings 19:25-27, Isaiah 10:5-12 and 37:26-27 refer to God using the wicked Assyrians to punish other sinful people. Jeremiah 25:9 says God would punish the sinful Israelites through the hands of the wicked Babylonians. But note Jeremiah 25:12 says God would punish the Babylonians for treating the Israelites so harshly. Amos 4:10 refers to God punishing through the swords of other evil humans.

As Supreme Ruler, God used Adam and Eve’s wicked decisions to disobey and rebel against Him to show His wonderful mercy to humans. Romans 11:32 relates to this: ***“For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.”***

Revelation 17:17 records God wills that all human leaders give their political power to the Antichrist: ***“For God has put it into their hearts to fulfil His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.”***

Evil is always evil. God can use it to achieve good, but He always holds those who commit it as personally responsible. Also, note Romans 3:8 condemns the idea that we should deliberately do evil so good may result.

God often restricts human evil

God often restricts the evil among humans. 2 Thessalonians 2:7 says: ***“For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.”*** Psalm 124:1-3 refers to God sometimes preventing people from doing evil to others. As Supreme Ruler, God has the power to limit the sins of both demons and humans (see Job 1:6-17 and 2 Kings 19:1-37).

God’s supreme rule and human suffering

God also works out His will through various types of human suffering. On some occasions, human suffering is a punishment of God because of sin (see Psalm 55:19). At other times, it is not (see John 9:1-3). But in all situations, God uses suffering to correct (see Proverbs 3:11-12), discipline (see Hebrews 12:5-11), teach (see Psalm 119:67 and 119:71), refine us (see Isaiah 48:10) and/or to lead us to turn from sin to Him (see Jeremiah 31:18-19). He also uses suffering to draw us closer to Himself (see Isaiah 26:16 and Hosea 5:14-15).

All believers suffer various troubles in their lives, but God promises to comfort and empower us during such trials and to eventually deliver us from them (see 2 Corinthians 1:3-7, Philippians 4:13 and 2 Timothy 4:18). Psalm 34:19 says: ***“Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.”***

On many but not all occasions, Satan and his demons cause human suffering (see Job 1:6-2:7, Luke 13:16 and Acts 10:38). But this occurs only with God’s permission (see Job 1:6-

2:7). Also, note through Christ, God continually releases people from various Satanically-caused sufferings. Such deliverances come in different ways and after different lengths of time.

The best response to God's supreme rule

The best response we as God's children can have to His supreme rule over everyone and everything is to remind themselves continually in faith that all rejections, injustices, hurts, criticisms and injuries other humans inflict on us are *completely* under *His overseeing control* and are only *permitted* by Him because He has *lovingly* decided these are for our *long-term best* (see John 19:11). The same applies to all seeming accidents and other sorrows. True faith recognises that God could have prevented all such things if it were His will, but because He did not there must be some good purpose He intends to achieve in our and/or others' lives through these.

This does not mean it is wrong to trust God for healing for the bodily injuries we receive in accidents and through the violence of others. Also, we should pray and lovingly work towards removing injustices from the lives we influence (see Isaiah 58:1-9).

Awareness of God's supreme rule should increase our faith

The more we realise the degree of God's supreme rule over all created beings and things, the more our faith or trust in Him should grow. Our Supreme Lord watches over and cares for us as His children (see Matthew 6:25-26, 6:30, and 10:29-31).

Because of God's sovereign care over *every minute* of our lives wherever we are, we should *not fear* any *evil, trouble, problem* or *hurt*, even if these things happen to us. This is because such things can only happen by God's willing permission and will somehow and in some way ultimately work for our good. God is *all powerful* and *perfectly loving*. He is working everything and not just some things for our good (see Romans 8:28).

Non-Christians regard the events of life as being controlled by chance, fate, spiritual forces, natural laws, "gods" and/or spirits. But believers know the truth of Psalm 23:4 and 6: ***"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."***

Bible Study Questions

1. Which Old Testament and New Testament Names of God reveal aspects of His supreme rule over all beings and things?
2. Explain the meanings of the Hebrew words "Adon" and "Adonay" and the Greek words "Kurios", "Pantokrator", "Despotes" and "Basileus".
3. Which verses reveal that God has created all things visible and invisible?
4. List verses which show God has control over various aspects of nature. Give examples of natural things which God controls.
5. Is God a part of His natural creation?
6. Give Biblical proof why it is wrong to believe that after the fall of Adam and Eve, Satan legally owned the Universe and Earth.

7. What is the difference between the natural Earth and the sinful world?
8. Who does Ezekiel 18:4 teach owns all humans?
9. Explain what verses like Daniel 4:35, Psalm 115:3 and 135:6 reveal about God's supreme rule.
10. What do verses like Acts 17:26, Psalm 139:16 and Job 14:5 show about God's predetermining of various events?
11. List examples of God permitting His supreme rule over all humans to be influenced by prayers of faith.
12. Explain the inter-relationship between God's supreme rule and prayer in relation to Hezekiah's prayer to live longer.
13. Discuss the various verses which relate to what ages believers may die.
14. Explain the various aspects of God's rule over rebellious nations.
15. Provide a verse which shows God in His supreme rule permits humans to do evil and to rebel against Him.
16. Give Biblical examples of God using human evil for good purposes.
17. Which verses reveal God sometimes restricts evil among humans?
18. List the various reasons the Bible says humans can suffer.
19. What is the best response we can have to God's supreme rule in our lives?
20. Why should we not fear any evil, trouble, problems or hurt?