

God the Sovereign of All Kingdoms

by Samuel Davies

God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men, and he exercises a perpetual providence over the world, governing it according to his sovereign pleasure.

Scripture: Psalm 115:3, Proverbs 21:1, Isaiah 10:5, Daniel 4:25, Joel 2:12

Topics: "Gods Sovereignty", "Divine Providence"

Description

Samuel Davies preaches about the sovereignty of God over the kingdoms of men, emphasizing that God's omnipotence did not end after creation but continues to govern the world. He explains that events in the material and rational world are carried out by God's agency, even when using secondary causes. Davies uses the example of King Nebuchadnezzar to illustrate how God can humble the proud and demonstrate His sovereignty over kingdoms. He argues that God's control over the fate of nations is evident through His perfections, declarations in Scripture, common sense, and the remarkable coincidences in critical times.

Transcript

God the Sovereign of All Kingdoms

by Samuel Davies, at Hanover, Virginia, on March 5, 1755, on a day of fasting and prayer

"The Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men--and gives them to anyone he wishes!" Daniel 4:25

That this world owes its existence to the creating power of God, and that he established its laws, and put its every wheel in motion--is a truth so evident, that it has extorted the consent of all mankind. But did he then exhaust his omnipotence? And has he been inactive ever since? Did he cast it off his hand, as an orphan-world, deprived of his paternal care, and left to shift for itself? No! as we were at first the creatures of his power--we are still the subjects of his government--he still supports and rules the world which he made.

In the material world, events are accomplished according to those laws which he first established in nature; but it is his agency which still continues these laws, and carries them into execution.

In the rational world, events are frequently brought to pass by the instrumentality of free agents; but still they are under the direction of the universal cause; and their liberty is not inconsistent with his sovereign

dominion, nor does it exempt them from it. Though he makes use of secondary causes--yet he reserves to himself the important character of the Ruler of the universe, and is the Supreme Disposer of all events.

This is a truth of infinite consequence, and fundamental to all true religion; and unless we are met here today with a deep impression of this upon our hearts--we are wholly unfit to make a proper improvement of this solemn occasion. It is pertinently observed in that proclamation, in cheerful obedience to which we are now met, that, "In every undertaking it is expedient and necessary to implore the blessing and protection of Almighty God."

But if Almighty God does not govern the world, and order all the affairs of men according to his sovereign pleasure, then where is the expediency or necessity of imploring his blessing and protection? "A powerful and treacherous enemy is making inroads upon our territories, our religion and our liberty, our property, our lives; and everything sacred or dear to us is in danger! We are preparing to make a defense; and our most gracious king has been pleased to send a considerable number of his ships and forces to oppose the unjustifiable attempts of our enemies."

But unless the success of the expedition depend upon the providence of God--to what end do we humble ourselves before him, and implore his help? The thing itself, upon this supposition, would be an incongruity, an empty compliment, a mockery! If he exerts no agency in such cases--but leaves things entirely to their natural course--then we have nothing to fear from his displeasure on the account of sin; and we have nothing to hope from his assistance; and consequently, it is needless and absurd to humble ourselves for the one, or to be importunate with him for the other. I cannot, therefore, inculcate upon you, at present, a more seasonable truth than that contained in my text, "the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whoever he will."

King Nebuchadnezzar, of whom we read so much in the sacred writings, was the first founder of the rich and powerful Babylonian empire, which was built upon the ruins of that of the Assyrians, the metropolis of which was Nineveh, and sundry other mighty kingdoms. Divine Providence had raised him up to be the scourge of the Jews in particular, the favorite people of God. After his numerous and extensive conquests, while living at ease in grandeur and luxury in his palace, and surveying the glories of Babylon, his magnificent metropolis, his heart was elated--he becomes of great importance in his own sight--he ascribes his successes to himself alone; and arrogates a style that befits none but the King of heaven. "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?" Daniel 4:30.

While he is thus self-deified, He who is higher than the highest, and who pours contempt upon princes, resents his insolence; and will let him know that he is but a man, by degrading him to a level with the beasts! But he is so gracious as to warn him of it in a dream, that he might escape the doom by a timely repentance; and Daniel gives him a solemn advice, "Therefore, O king, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue." Daniel 4:27.

He continued impenitently proud, and did not regard the counsel; and therefore the threatened judgment was inflicted upon him. His case seems to have been this: after divine patience had tried him for a whole year, while he was venting his arrogance in his palace, he was judicially struck, in an instant, with a melancholy madness; and while he was in a raving fury, his servants turned him out of his palace.

There are instances, now-a-day, of people imagining themselves transformed into other creatures; and Nebuchadnezzar probably imagined himself to be an ox, and therefore tried to imitate the actions of that animal. "He was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird!" At the time appointed, he recovered his reason; made the most humble acknowledgments of the sovereignty of the divine government, and was reinstated in his kingdom.

The text informs us of the design of God in this judgment upon him, and that it should not be removed until it had answered its end. "This is the decree of the Most High God--You will be driven from human society, and you will live in the fields with the wild animals. You will eat grass like a cow, and you will be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven periods of time will pass while you live this way, until you learn that the Most High God rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone he chooses!" Then, and not until then, he was restored to his reason and his kingdom; but he did not enjoy it long, for after a few days, he was cut off by the stroke of death!

I might very properly take occasion from this text to prove the universal agency of Providence in the natural and moral world. But, at present, I must confine myself to the proof and illustration of this important truth--that the Most High God is the sole disposer of the fates of kingdoms, and particularly of the events of war.

This is demonstrable:

from the perfections of God;

from the repeated declarations of Scripture;

from the common sense of mankind;

and from the remarkable coincidence of circumstances in critical times.

First, That the Most High God is the sole disposer of the fates of kingdoms, and the events of war, is demonstrable from his PERFECTIONS, or attributes.

We may infer from his WISDOM--that he formed the world, and particularly man, for some important design, which he determined to accomplish. But could he expect that this design would be accomplished by free moral agents, left entirely to themselves, without any direction or control from him? Or would it be consistent with wisdom to form creatures incapable of self-government, and fit subjects for him to rule--and yet exercise no government over them--but leave them entirely to themselves?

JUSTICE is an solemn and amiable attribute. And on whom shall he display it--but on rational creatures, who are capable of moral good and evil? Indeed, the display of justice on particular people may be deferred, as it generally is--to another state. But on societies, as such, it cannot be displayed but in this life; for it is only in this life that they exist in that capacity. And therefore guilty nations must feel divine judgments in the present state, which supposes that God disposes of them as he pleases.

His GOODNESS, that favorite perfection, is diffusive and unbounded; but how shall this be displayed in this world, unless he holds the reins of government in his own hands, and distributes his blessings to whatever kingdom or nation he pleases! If he does not manage their concerns, his mercy cannot be shown in delivering them from calamities; nor his patience, in bearing with their provocations.

His POWER is infinite, and therefore the management of all the worlds he has made, is as easy to him as the concerns of one individual.

He KNOWS all things, and is everywhere present--and can he be an unconcerned spectator of the affairs of his own creatures, and see them run on at random, without interposing? We may as well say in our hearts, with the fool, "There is no God!" Psalm 53:1, as entertain such low unworthy ideas of him--as an idle being, whose happiness consists in inactivity.

He will display his perfections in the most God-like manner, and this was his design in the creation of the universe; and since he cannot do this without exercising a perpetual providence over it--we may be assured he will do "according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth." Daniel 4:35.

Indeed, there is something unnatural in the idea of a Creator--who takes no care of his own creatures. Do you who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children? Are you shocked at the thought of a parent--who takes no care of his own children--but leaves them as soon as born, to shift for themselves? And will not the great Father of Creation, who has implanted these parental passions in your hearts--will not he look after his own offspring, and manage their affairs. Undoubtedly he will!

Secondly, That God is the supreme Disposer of the fates of kingdoms, and of the events of war, is demonstrable from the repeated declarations of SCRIPTURE. And this alone is sufficient proof to those who believe their divine authority.

This great truth, in one form or other, runs through the whole Bible. Sometimes the divine government is asserted to be universal, supreme, and sovereign.

"Our God is in the heavens--he has done whatever he pleases!" Psalm 115:3.

"I know that the LORD is great, that our Lord is greater than all gods. The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths!" Psalm 135:5-6

"The Lord has prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom rules over all!" Psalm 103:19.

"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?" Daniel 4:35.

Now his universal government, which is so strongly asserted in these passages, implies his particular government of the affairs of kingdoms and nations. And the Scriptures declare that the care of Providence extends to the most minute and inconsiderable parts of the creation; and therefore much more does it extend to the affairs of men, and the fates of kingdoms.

"He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills. He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call." Psalm 147:8-9.

"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." Matthew 6:26. Hence Christ draws the inference now in view, "Are you not much more valuable than they?" And therefore must not you be more particularly the objects of your Father's care? "God," says he, "clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire--will

he not much more clothe you." Matthew 6:26-30.

The value of two sparrows is but one farthing; and yet, says Christ, not one of them can so much as fall to the ground without your Father; that is, without the permission of his providence. Nay, the very hairs of your head, the most trifling things that belong to you--are all numbered--God takes as particular care of them, as if he kept an account of each of them, and not one of them can be lost without his notice! Here again our blessed Savior makes the same improvement as before, which is directly to my purpose: "Fear not, therefore, you are of more value than many sparrows," Matthew 10:29-31.

Does divine Providence take notice of ravens and sparrows, and the grass of the field? and will God not concern himself with the kingdoms of the earth? Does he take care even of the hairs of men's heads? And will he not take care of men themselves? Undoubtedly he will!

The Scriptures farther expressly assert, that the promotion and degradation of princes, and the prosperity and destruction of kingdoms--are from God. "Promotion," says the Psalmist, "comes neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south; but God is the judge; he puts down one, and sets up another!" Psalm 75:6.

"He changes the times and seasons," says Daniel: "he removes kings--and sets up kings." Daniel 2:21. "The Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men--and gives them to anyone he wishes!" Daniel 4:32. And sometimes in his wise sovereignty, "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," verse 17.

"When he gives quietness--who then can make trouble?" Job 34:29. "Shall there be evil (or affliction) in a city, and the Lord has not done it?" Amos 3:6. "Come and see the works of the LORD--the desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear, he burns the shields with fire!" Psalm 46:8, 9. Hence pious warriors have confided for victory in the providence of God, and been sensible that without him--all their military forces were in vain.

"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God!" And observe the difference: "They are brought down and fallen: but we, (who put our trust in the Lord,) are risen, and stand upright." Psalm 20:7; 33:16, 17.

Again, we find many instances in the sacred writings of God's overruling the conduct of men, even of the wicked--to accomplish his own great designs, when the people themselves had nothing in view--but their own personal interest, or the gratification of their malignant passions; and thus he brings good out of evil.

Who could have had any raised expectations from the sale of Joseph, a poor helpless youth, as a slave into Egypt? His evil brothers had no other end in it, than to remove out of the way the object of their envy, and their rival in their father's affection. But God had a very important design in it, even the deliverance of the holy family and thousands of others from famishing! And therefore Joseph tells his friends, "It was not you who sent me here--but God!" Genesis 40:8.

The crucifixion of Christ was the most wicked action that was ever committed on this guilty globe; and the Jews freely followed their own malignant passions, and were not prompted to it by any influence from God, who cannot tempt to evil. But I need not tell you that this greatest evil--is over-ruled for the greatest good of mankind.

Though I might easily multiply instances, I can take time only to mention one more, exactly pertinent to my purpose; and this is the haughty and powerful Assyrian monarch, Isaiah 10:5-7. Having pushed his conquests far and wide among other nations, he resolves to turn his victorious arms against the Jews. He was an arbitrary king in his own empire, and imagined that he was subject to no control. His design in this expedition, was not to chastise the Jews for their sins against God--but to enlarge his own territories, to increase his riches, to display his power, and spread the terror of his name. He proudly thought he acted wholly from himself, and disdained the thought of being a mere agent, commissioned by another.

But hear in what a style the King of kings speaks of him--and degrades him into a rod, or a mere servant under command, "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!" Isaiah 10:5-7

Thus, says God, I commission him--these are the orders I give him to perform. "But this is not what he intends, this is not what he has in mind; his purpose is to destroy, to put an end to many nations!" This is all his design. And when this haughty Assyrian arrogates to himself the honor of his successes, and vents himself in the most extravagant rant of self-applause, hear how God pours contempt upon him, and speaks of him in the most diminutive language, as a passive axe in his hand to hew rebellious nations--an ax, a rod, a staff of wood. "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!" Isaiah 10:15.

What mortifying images are these to represent a powerful and insolent king! And how strongly may we infer from hence--the supreme and absolute dominion of the King of heaven over the kings and empires of our world, and his directing the fate of war! Surely he has the hearts of men wholly under his command, who can make even their sins subservient to his good purposes, and who can accomplish his wise designs by them, even when they have no such thought--but are entirely ignorant of him!

Thus he appears worthy of that grand character, which he assumes to himself in his Word more frequently, perhaps, than any other; I mean, "the Lord Almighty," or "the Lord of armies". Thus appears the truth of Solomon's observation, "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD--he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases!" Proverbs 21:1.

Thirdly, It is the COMMON SENSE of all mankind--that the affairs of kingdoms, and particularly success in war, depend upon God. Read over the historical parts of the Old Testament, and you will find it the common sense of the Jews, that they should never engage in war, without first consulting God, and imploring his blessing. The instances of this are so many, that it would take up too much time even to mention them.

And since Christian kingdoms have been formed, we find the same sense prevailing among them, even in the darkest times. Nay, the very heathens were taught this by their reason, as one of the plainest dictates of the light of nature. They had all of them heathen gods for the protection of their nation. They had a Mars and a Minerva--the one the god, and the other the goddess of war. They never engaged in war without anxiously consulting oracles, and offering a profusion of sacrifices and prayers. And after a victory, they were accustomed to express the grateful sense of their success as from their god, by rich offerings, and by consecrating to their deities a part of the spoils they had taken, which they hung up in their temples.

Now that which is common to all mankind, in all countries, in all ages, and of every religion--seems to be implanted in their nature by its author; and, consequently, must be true. And since all mankind agree to supplicate divine assistance in their expeditions, and to return him thanks for victory; since they agree in this, however different in sentiments and prejudices, it follows that this is the common sense of the world, and a very important truth, that the fate of war depends upon the divine Superintendent. But I cannot enlarge on this head.

Fourthly, The interposition of Providence is frequently visible in the remarkable coincidence of circumstances to accomplish some important end in critical times.

I am not enthusiastic enough to look upon every event as the effect of an immediate Providence, excluding or controlling the agency of natural causes.

But when such things happen--must we not own that it is the finger of God? Will we affect the philosopher so much as to dispute it? Can we suppose that mere natural causes, which act without design, or that free agents, who act as they please, and who have different views, different prejudices, and contrary interests and inclinations --can we suppose that all these should conspire to promote one design, unless they were under the overruling influence of divine Providence? Must not such a remarkable and even supernatural concurrence of various circumstances convince us of the truth of Solomon's remark, "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand!" Proverbs 19:21. "He frustrates the schemes of the crafty so that they achieve no success. He traps the wise in their craftiness so that the plans of the deceptive are quickly brought to an end." Job 5:12, 13.

Both sacred and profane history may furnish us with many instances of such remarkable interpositions of Providence; but I can, at present, only select a few out of the history of our mother-country, in which we are more particularly concerned, and which may therefore excite our gratitude for the divine goodness to our guilty nation, and break our hearts into penitential sorrows for our unsuitable returns. These may also convince us, that though divine Providence did, in a more visible and miraculous manner, manage the affairs of kingdoms in the earlier ages of the world; yet even in our days, when the age of miracles has ceased, God does really exercise the same government, and dispose the concerns of nations as he pleases.

And is there nothing of the hand of God in all this? Is it not so evident as to extort an acknowledgment even from the thoughtless and reluctant? Has not God appeared the guardian of that favorite island, Great Britain?

I may now presume, the great truth I had in view is sufficiently evident: namely, that God is the Supreme Disposer of the affairs of nations and the events of war.

If any of you should ask, "In what manner does he do this? Or how is it possible that he should do it, when we see no sensible appearances of his controlling the laws of nature, or restraining the liberty of men? Natural causes produce their proper effects; and men fight against men; and perceive they are free to act or not to act, as they please. Where, then, is there any room for the agency of Providence?"

I answer, it is the excellency of the Divine government to accomplish its purposes, without throwing the world into disturbance and confusion, by great breaches upon its established laws; it accomplishes them, either by continuing the course of nature, or by altering it in so gentle and easy a manner, that it is hardly, if at all, perceivable.

And as to men, God carries them on to effect his designs, without offering the least violence to their free and rational nature; and sways their minds so gently, that while they are performing his orders--they often seem to themselves to act from principles wholly within themselves. He manages all events--as really as if he had made no use of secondary causes! and yet secondary causes produce their effects, and are, in action, as really as if they were the only agents. What a surprising, mysterious government; what a perfect administration is this!

Yet, I think, we can form some general ideas how the Lord manages the affairs of men, and particularly determines victory in the field of battle as he pleases. The event of war often depends in a great measure upon the winds and waves, clouds and rain. And why may not he, by a secret touch of his hand, order these so as to favor one party, and incommode the other? The fate of war greatly depends on the prudence of counsels, and the courage of the soldiers; and why may we not suppose, that he who formed the souls of men, and knows all their secret springs of action, and how to manage them--why may we not suppose that he may imperceptibly direct the minds of the one party to concert proper measures, and darken and confuse the understandings of the other, to take measures injurious to themselves, and advantageous to the enemy, though they appear right to them, until the event shows them mistaken? He may suggest hints of thoughts, and secretly bias the mind to a certain set of counsels; and yet the influence, though efficacious, may be so gentle, and so consistent with human nature--as hardly to be perceived. Why may he not imperceptibly animate the one party with intrepid courage, and damp the other, and strike them with terror? These things and the like--may easily be done by "the Lord Almighty, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working." Isaiah 28:29.

This subject is so rich in important PRACTICAL INFERENCES, that I am sorry I have not time to mention and enlarge upon them all. I only crave your attention to the following:

First, if God rules in the kingdoms of men, and manages the affairs of the world--then we should live upon earth as in a world governed by divine Providence. Though secondary causes may be used to bless or afflict us; yet let us look upon ourselves as in the hands of God--and all the blessings and afflictions of life as coming from him.

Is it God who chastises us with sickness and misfortunes? Can we dare, then, to fly in his face by impatient murmurings and fretful complaints? Rather say, though I might take this ill from my fellow-creatures--yet, if it is Your hand, "I was silent; I would not open my mouth, for you are the one who has done this!" Psalm 39:9.

Are you prosperous and happy? Then it is God that makes you so, however many secondary causes you may observe contributing to it; and must not your devoutest gratitude ascend to him?

When you fret at the dispensations of life, remember that you are quarreling with the divine government. This rebellious disposition may show itself about the smallest things. When you find fault with the winds or weather, the heat of summer, or the cold of winter--whom do you find fault with? Is it not with him that is the Disposer of these things? And do you not tremble at such a blasphemous insurrection against him! While a Being of such infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, sits at the helm, it befits us implicitly to approve all his dispensations, and to be still, and know that he is God. Psalm 46:10.

Secondly, If the affairs of nations are at the disposal of the King of heaven, then how dreadful is the case of a guilty, provoking, impenitent nation! If he is the Supreme Ruler of the kingdoms of the earth, then it belongs to his character to punish the rebellious disobedience to his authority, the contempt of his laws,

the abuse of his mercies, and a sullen incorrigibleness under his chastisements. These crimes must turn his heart from a people, and provoke him to punish them. This world, as I observed before, is the only place where societies are punished as such; for in the future world they are dissolved; and then every man is dealt with according to his own personal works.

And if God is turned against a nation, if he is resolved to punish them, how helpless is their condition! Who can defend them--if the Ruler of the universe is their enemy? Now, it is guilt alone, which can incur his displeasure--it is guilt alone, which can remove a nation from off its only sure basis--the protection of God. Guilt, therefore, is poison in the veins of a nation, and will cast it into dreadful convulsions, if not remedied in time by a speedy repentance.

And, if this is the case, how may we tremble for our country, and fear the divine displeasure? We have enjoyed a long, uninterrupted peace in this land. We have not been alarmed with the sound of the war trumpet, nor seen garments rolled in blood. But what a wretched improvement have we made of this, and many other inestimable blessings? What a torrent of vice, irreligion, and luxury has broken in, and overwhelmed the land? What ignorance of God and divine things; what carelessness about the concerns of religion and a future state? What a neglect of Christ and his precious gospel--has spread, like a subtle poison, among all ranks and characters!

How daring are the immoralities of some, their profane oaths, their drunkenness, immorality, and many other monstrous vices under which our land groans? What luxury and extravagance in eating and drinking, and especially in diversions and amusements, (if they deserve so soft a name,) may we see among us, especially among people in high life?

How few are the penitent, affectionate, dutiful servants of God among us! How little is the Ruler of the universe regarded by his own creatures--in his own world! Creatures supported by his constant bounties, and protected by his guardian care. Alas! my friends, what shall I say? Most willingly would I draw a veil over the shame of my country; but, alas! it cannot be hidden! While such glaring crimes are rampant among us; while such a stupid carelessness about the concerns of eternity prevails among us--it is impossible for the most benevolent charity to avoid the discovery.

And may we not fear that the measure of our iniquity is full? May we not fear that the righteous Judge of the earth will visit us for these things? Under the present happy government, we have enjoyed our liberty, our property, and our religion, and everything dear to us; but we have abused them all! And may we not fear that these blessings shall be exchanged for the tyranny of a French government, and the superstitions and cruelties of the church of Rome? I hope and pray that this may not be our doom; but I think it is the part of stupid presumption, and not of rational courage, to be quite fearless about it. We are, indeed, so happy as to be closely connected with our mother country, and under its protection. But, alas! vice and luxury have spread like a deadly contagion, there, as well as here: and Great Britain is worthy of divine vengeance, just as well as ourselves!

Now what shall we do in this dreadful case? Shall we put our trust in our military forces? Alas! what can an arm of flesh do for us, if the Lord Almighty deserts us? Though our army was ever so powerful, how sad would be our case, had we reason to say, like Saul, "The French are upon us--and God is departed from us!" Who can bear the thought? What then remains--but,

Thirdly, That we should humble ourselves before the King of kings, and take all proper means to gain his protection! If God disposes the victory as he pleases, then it is most fit, and absolutely necessary, that we

should seek to secure his friendship. If we have such an Almighty Ally--then we are safe. But if we have provoked his displeasure, and forfeited his friendship, what can we do but prostrate ourselves in the deepest repentance and humiliation before him? for that is the only way to regain his favor.

This is the great design of a fast; and from what you have heard, you may see it is not a needless ceremony--but a seasonable and important duty. Indeed, if he did not concern himself in the affairs of men, then we need not concern ourselves with him. But since all our successes depend upon his Providence, then how fit is it we should mourn over our provocations, and seek his favor?

Let us, therefore, follow the advice of Joel, chapter 2:12-18, and "turn to the Lord with weeping, with mourning, and with fasting." Let us confess our own sins, and the sins of our land--which have brought all our evils upon us. Let us be importunate and incessant in prayer, that God would pour out his Spirit and promote a general reformation; that he would direct our rulers to proper measures, inspire our soldiers with courage, and decide the event of battle in our favor. If the doctrine I have proved is true, then there is a congruity, a fitness in these things; yes, an absolute necessity for them.

To excite you, therefore, to these duties, let your hearts be deeply impressed with the truth I have been inculcating: that our success must come from God, and that without him all the means of our defense are in vain!

Consider the many blessings you enjoy under the present government. I think it may be truly said that the constitution of the British government is the most righteous in all the world. It is a proper mixture of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. The people choose their representatives to make laws for them, and the king, as well as the subject, is bound by these laws. No man is disturbed in his liberty, his property, or conscience; nor subjected to the capricious pleasure of the greatest man in the kingdom. I may also safely affirm, that of all the kings in Europe, or perhaps in the world, our gracious sovereign is the most tender of the liberties of his subjects, and zealous for the constitution of his country. Mercy and clemency are his delight; but his gentle nature is pained when he is constrained to exercise even the wholesome severities of justice; and never was a king's government more firmly established in the hearts and affections of his subjects. He is not perpetually making exorbitant claims by a pretended prerogative, like many of his predecessors, especially those of the family of Stewart. He does not assume the province of God to prescribe to conscience--but allows every man the free and unmolested exercise of his religion, who lives inoffensive to the government. And, through the mercy of God--the principles of liberty are more generally embraced than ever in Great Britain.

In short, the inhabitants of that favorite island and the colonies dependent upon it, are the happiest of mankind as to all the blessings of government. And shall we not be tenacious of these blessings, which are of such great importance to us, and our posterity, and which were purchased at the expense of their blood, by our brave forefathers.

And now, by way of contrast, let us take a view of the French government, and of our wretched circumstances if we should fall under it. There, everything is done according to the pleasure of an arbitrary, absolute monarch, who is above law and all control. He may take away the liberty, and even the lives of his subjects, without assigning a reason why. There you must conform to all the superstitions and idolatries of the church of Rome--or lose your life; or, at best, be obliged to flee your country, hungry and famishing, and leave all your estate behind you. Nay, to such a height is persecution carried there now, that they place soldiers to guard the frontiers of the country, and will not allow the Protestants the poor

favor of going to beg their bread, or begin the world anew, in a strange country.

It is but a little while ago, that a Christian minister was apprehended, condemned, and hanged, all in three hours, and for no other crime but preaching a sermon to a number of Protestants. And even now, such as can make their escape, are flying over in multitudes to Great Britain--that land of liberty. And can you bear the thought, that you and your children should have such an iron yoke as this, riveted about your necks? Would you not rather die in defense of your privileges? I am sure you would, if you had the spirit of men or of Christians. Therefore, improve your religion--lest you lose it: make a good use of your liberty--lest you forfeit it; and cry mightily to God for deliverance.

To heighten the terror of a French government, they have on this continent a numerous body of Indian savages in their interest, whom they will hound out upon us; and from them we may expect such bloody barbarities as we cannot bear so much as to think of. If the barbarities should make inroads upon us, as they have begun to do in some of the neighboring provinces, then how miserable are we!

To alarm you the more, reflect upon the growing power of France. She keeps an army of a hundred and forty thousand men on foot, even in time of peace; and is undoubtedly superior to the English by land. She has, also, of late, greatly increased in strength at sea; in which Britain has hitherto maintained the sovereignty. And though in America the French are but few in comparison of the English--yet they receive very powerful recruits from their mother country.

It is also a most discouraging omen, that though the British colonies are superior in number--yet they are so possessed with a spirit of contention, or so stupidly insensible of danger, that they do not exert themselves with proper vigor for their own defense, or delay it too long to prevent the influence of so active an enemy. If we tamely allow ourselves to be enslaved, while we are so much superior in power--then we well deserve it!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/samuel-davies/god-the-sovereign-of-all-kingdoms/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net