

Consider  
the  
Lilies

"This book is exceptional  
in every way."  
—JOHN MACARTHUR



Finding  
Perfect Peace  
in the  
Character  
of God

Jonny  
Ardavanis

# Consider the Lilies

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## Chapter 9: *Above All*

## The Omniscience of God Is a Comfort to Us Because:

1. Satisfies our deep desire to be fully known, fully loved, and fully accepted.
2. God not only knows *us* fully, but He knows the *circumstances* we face fully, and He uses that knowledge to work His will for our eternal good.

# THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS



“For example, on Christian’s journey to the Celestial City, he falls into the Slough of Despond, is later imprisoned by Giant Despair, and then is badly beaten in Doubting Castle.” (pg. 116)

“John Bunyan’s bestseller was written not from a corner office but from the prison cell that was his home for twelve years.” (pg. 116)



# The English Civil Wars: 1642-1651



King Charles I  
and the Royalists

## Main Causes:

1. Religion
2. Power



Oliver Cromwell  
and the Parliamentarians

# The “Glorious Restoration”



King Charles II

“I will stay in prison till the moss  
grows on my eye lids rather than  
disobey God.”

-- John Bunyan



*“Two years prior to his incarceration at Bedford prison, Bunyan’s first wife died – leaving behind four young children – one of whom was blind. A year later, Bunyan remarried... Following his imprisonment, however, Bunyan’s pregnant and distressed new bride, Elizabeth, went into early labor, and, after eight days, gave birth to a stillborn child. Bunyan heard of the news in his prison cell... Bunyan wrote honestly about the despondency and desolation he faced during this difficult time: ‘The parting with my wife and poor children hath oft been to me in this place as the pulling the flesh from my bones.’” (pg. 117)*



## Psalm 13:1

*How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?*

## Psalm 22:1-2

*<sup>1</sup> My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. <sup>2</sup> O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer.*

## Psalm 44:24

*Why do You stand afar off, O LORD? Why do You hide Yourself in times of trouble?*

## Psalm 89:46

*How long, O LORD? Will You hide Yourself forever?*

## What do we mean by the Sovereignty of God?

- God's supremacy, authority, and absolute rule over all things

*“Simply put, God’s sovereignty means that He is the supreme authority in the universe. It means that He is in control. It means that He ordains, orders, and orchestrates all things for His glory and His children’s eternal good. Our world abounds with chaos, but in heaven there is no panic, only our Father’s perfect plans. The Bible teaches that even the situations, circumstances, and people who have prompted our pain are under the sovereign control and purposeful orchestration of our heavenly Father. Do you believe this?” (pg. 119)*

## What do we mean by the Sovereignty of God?

- God's supremacy, authority, and absolute rule over all things

*“For a moment I want to draw your attention to the reality that if God is not sovereign, if He is not in control, then we have all the reason in the world to be anxious. If there is no divine plan for our adversity and affliction, then we have no hope in the midst of it – only madness and pain... To clarify, **God's sovereignty does not eliminate anguish and grief from our lives, but it does allow us to adopt the Christian's motto of 'sorrowful, yet always rejoicing' (2 Corinthians 6:10).**”*  
(pg. 119)

## What do we mean by the Sovereignty of God?

- God's supremacy, authority, and absolute rule over all things

### Psalm 103:19

*The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all.*

└─→ present perfect tense = an action that began in the past and is continuing in the present.

### Psalm 121:3-4

*<sup>3</sup> He who keeps you will not slumber. <sup>4</sup> Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.*

## What do we mean by the Sovereignty of God?

- God's supremacy, authority, and absolute rule over all things

### Isaiah 46:9-11

*<sup>9</sup> I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, <sup>10</sup> Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure'... <sup>11</sup> Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.*

## What do we mean by the Sovereignty of God?

- God's supremacy, authority, and absolute rule over all things

*“He declares the end from the beginning and none of His plans are thwarted or frustrated by anything in the natural or supernatural world. Have you ever wondered what makes God, God? If so, the answer would be that He and He alone is the ultimate sovereign of the universe. Scripture gives you a big truth anchor to stabilize your soul: your Father rules.” (pg. 121)*

### Isaiah 14:24 & 27

*<sup>24</sup> The LORD of hosts has sworn saying, “Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened, and just as I have planned so it will stand... <sup>27</sup> For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?”*

## What do we mean by the Sovereignty of God?

- God's supremacy, authority, and absolute rule over all things

*“Now, again, if you don't believe that God is in control, what's at stake? Well, for one, if He is not sovereign, then you cannot trust Him. If God is not in control, then our entire lives are out of control, and we are left straining and striving to control all things ourselves – which only serves to perpetuate our anxiety and fear.” (pg. 121)*

## Isaiah 40:

**Verse 10** – *Behold, the Lord GOD will come with might, with His arm ruling for Him.*

**Verse 12** – *Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and marked off the heavens by the span, and calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, and weighed the mountains in a balance and the hills in a pair of scales?*

**Verse 15** – *Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust.*

**Verse 17** – *All the nations are as nothing before Him, they are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless.*

**Verse 22** – *It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.*

## Isaiah 40:

**Verses 23-24** – *He it is who reduces rulers to nothing, Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless. Scarcely have they been planted, scarcely have they been sown, scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, but He merely blows on them, and they wither, and the storm carries them away like stubble.*

**Verse 26** – *Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars, the One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, not one of them is missing.*

## Isaiah 40:

**Verse 11** – *Like a shepherd He will tend His flock, in His arm He will gather the lambs and carry them in His bosom; He will gently lead the nursing ewes.*

**Verse 29** – *He gives strength to the weary, and to him who lacks might He increases power.*

*“God is a powerful ruler, and He is a gentle Shepherd... It is only by holding all of these truths simultaneously that we can heed the imperative exhortation by our Lord: ‘Do not fear.’” (pg. 123)*

# 1. God Is Sovereign Over Kings and Kingdoms:

## Isaiah 40:23-24

*<sup>23</sup> He it is who reduces rulers to nothing, Who makes the judges of the earth meaningless. <sup>24</sup> Scarcely have they been planted, scarcely have they been sown, scarcely has their stock taken root in the earth, but He merely blows on them, and they wither, and the storm carries them away like stubble.*

## Daniel 2:21

*He removes kings and establishes kings.*

## Proverbs 21:1

*The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.*

## 1. God Is Sovereign Over Kings and Kingdoms:

Pharaoh: Exodus 9:12 – *And the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not listen to them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.*

Saul: 1 Samuel 16:14 – *Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him.*

Cyrus the Great: Ezra 1:1-3 – *...the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying: "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.'"*

# 1. God Is Sovereign Over Kings and Kingdoms:

Nebuchadnezzar: Daniel 4:31 – *...A voice came from heaven, saying, “King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes.” Immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled.*

Herod Agrippa: Acts 12:23 – *And immediately an angel of the Lord struck him because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died.*

**John 19:11 – Jesus’ words to Pilate:**

*“You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above.”*

## 1. God Is Sovereign Over Kings and Kingdoms:

*“Scripture is clear – God is sovereign over kings and kingdoms. Why? Because He is sovereign over every single individual. No emperor, boss, manager, or CEO has any power unless it has been given to him or her by our sovereign and loving God. Even those who are bent on hurting us or harming us cannot touch us unless God first grants permission.” (pg. 125)*

## 2. God Is Sovereign Over Nature:

What is nature comprised of?

1. Living Things: plants, animals, fungi, bacteria, etc.
2. Inanimate Matter: rocks, minerals, water, air, etc.
3. Terrain: mountains, rivers, seas, deserts, ice caps, etc.
4. Weather: wind, rain, snow, thunder, lightening, tornados, etc.
5. Geological Events: earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, etc.
6. Systems: geosphere, hydrosphere, biosphere, atmosphere, etc.
7. "Laws of Nature": gravity, thermodynamics, conservation of matter and energy.

## 2. God Is Sovereign Over Nature:

*“No baby is born (Psalm 139:13), no sparrow dies (Matthew 10:29), no lightning strikes (Job 38:35), no stars shift their positions (Job 38:31-32), no wave crashes (Job 38:11), no drop of rain falls (38:26), no lion hunts (Job 38:39), and no hawk soars (Job 39:26) apart from God’s sovereign rule. God not only can hush the proudest kings (Daniel 4), but He can also hush the wind and the seas and they immediately obey Him (Mark 4).*

*“... Contrary to what David Attenborough tells you as he narrates ‘Planet Earth,’ we are not victim to random acts of ‘mother nature’; we are under the sovereign orchestration of God... Our sovereign God created the world, sustains the world, and will one day soon remake the world (Revelation 21:5).” (pgs. 126-127)*

### 3. God Is Sovereign Over Time: Days

#### Genesis 1:5

*God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.*

#### Joshua 10:12-14

*<sup>12</sup> Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, "O sun, stand still at Gibeon, and O moon in the valley of Aijalon." <sup>13</sup> So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies. Is it not written in the book of Jashar? And the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and did not hasten to go down for about a whole day.*

*<sup>14</sup> There was no day like that before it or after it, when the LORD listened to the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel.*

### 3. God Is Sovereign Over Time: Days, Seasons

#### Genesis 8:22

*“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”*

#### Psalm 74:14

*You [LORD] have made summer and winter.*

#### Psalm 104:19-20

*<sup>19</sup> He made the moon for the seasons; The sun knows the place of its setting.*

*<sup>20</sup> You appoint darkness and it becomes night.*

### 3. God Is Sovereign Over Time: Days, Seasons, and Epochs

#### Daniel 2:21

*It is He who changes the times and the epochs.*

#### Acts 1:7

*“It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority.”*

#### Acts 17:26

*“He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation.”*

### 3. God Is Sovereign Over Time: Days, Seasons, and Epochs

Revelation 22:13

*“I am the **Alpha** and the **Omega**, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”*

Jesus is expressing His sovereignty over the start and finish of all things and every time in between.

## 4. God Is Sovereign Over Suffering:

*“The only comfort in our suffering is that the God who loves us is sovereign over it all... Even those who intend to harm us, God can use it for His glory and our good (Genesis 50:20). God is not attempting to salvage our suffering so that it has some remnant of redeeming value; He is the orchestrator behind it all.” (pg. 129)*

### Genesis 50:20

*“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.”*

### Exodus 4:11

*“Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?”*

### Amos 3:6

*Does disaster come to a city, unless the LORD has done it?*

## 4. God Is Sovereign Over Suffering:

### Isaiah 45:6-7

*<sup>6</sup> “I am the LORD, and there is no other, <sup>7</sup> The One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.”*

### Lamentations 3:38

*Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both good and ill go forth?*

*“Maybe this is discomfoting to you to hear that God is sovereign even over suffering, but let me tell you this: there is no comfort in suffering unless God is sovereign over it.” (pg. 129)*

### Ephesians 1:1

*[God] works all things after the counsel of His will.*

#### 4. God Is Sovereign Over Suffering:

*“We must learn to trust that God is working out His plan, even when we can’t connect the dots. Are you in pain? Have you experienced great affliction? Do you grieve the loss of those you once held dear? Scripture says there is no trial, no tear shed, no diagnosis, and no unjust firing outside of a sovereign God who is also infinite in His wisdom and perfect in His love.” (pg. 129)*

## 5. God Is Sovereign Over Satan and Evil:

*“Again, this is not to say that God is the author of evil, nor does He condone evil, but He allows it, uses, and ordains evil to accomplish His good purposes.” (pg. 131)*

*“We don’t always know why God allows evil. But we do know that God Himself is always good. Furthermore, we know this: God never allows any evil to take place that does not facilitate a greater good that could not have happened unless that evil had taken place.” (pg. 134)*

## 5. God Is Sovereign Over Satan and Evil:

### 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.*

*“...There is not a single molecule, nor a single man, nor a single supernatural being in all of creation that is outside the sovereign rule of our heavenly Father. If you are anxious, pray that God will grant you a magnified conviction of His control... If you are in a great trial or deep affliction, or facing what may seem to be unbearable sorrow, pray this way: ‘Lord, help me to believe You are sovereign and loving and have the power to redeem all my pain and brokenness and that You have a perfect plan for Your glory and my good.’” (pg. 124)*

*“In his book ‘Seasonable Counsel, or Advice to Sufferers,’ Bunyan shared the truth that was most precious, comforting, and invigorating to him during this difficult time: the sovereignty of God. Amid the waves of adversity and the gut-wrenching pain of loss, God’s sovereignty was the solid rock that Bunyan clung to. When confined to the darkness of his prison cell and when wrestling with the black anxiety and despair of his heart, Bunyan had only one hope: ‘my God is sovereign.’” (pg. 118)*

*“Hope is never ill when faith is well.”  
– John Bunyan*



Next Time: Chapter 10

*Lavish Love*