

# The Hand of the Lord Has Done This

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[Scripture quotations taken from the NASB 1995](#)

In Isaiah 45 we read:

“The One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and creating calamity; ***I am the Lord who does all these.***” (Isaiah 45:7, emphasis added). God is sovereign over His creation. He is the One who brings prosperity and creates disaster. This verse is one of many in the Bible that teaches us about the sovereignty of God in everything that happens.

In Isaiah 41:17-20 we find our sovereign God promising to miraculously provide for the needs of His people in a barren wilderness. And He did so for this purpose:

That they may see and recognize,  
And consider and gain insight as well,  
That ***the hand of the LORD has done this,***  
***And the Holy One of Israel has created it.*** (Isaiah 41:20, emphasis added.)

We can also see the sovereignty of God in the sufferings that Job endured. The word of God describes Job as “blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil” (Job 1:1, 1:9, 2:3), so we know that his sufferings came about through no fault or wrongdoing of his own.

Nevertheless, Satan, “the accuser of our brethren” (Revelation 12:10), who comes not but to steal, to kill, and to destroy (John 10:10), one day presented himself with the angels before the Lord. It was at this time that the Lord asked Satan if he had considered His servant Job, saying that he was blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. So, we see that it was God Himself who brings Job to Satan’s attention. (Job 1:6-8).

In response, Satan begins to challenge God and the integrity of the man Job, saying that if God takes away all that He has given to Job, he will surely curse Him to His face. Then the Lord replies to Satan's challenge by giving him permission to take away all of Job's possessions and even his family, but the Lord limits Satan, saying that he may not lay a hand on Job's physical person. (Job 1:9-12)

As the biblical account of Job's suffering continues, we see that after Satan had taken all of Job's children and his possessions, he then challenged God to allow him to afflict Job's physical health. And he was allowed to do so, but God limited Satan again, saying that he must not take Job's life.

One thing we can learn from the early chapters of the Book of Job is that our sovereign God limits the harm that Satan can inflict on His people. At this point many of us will ask why God would allow any of His people to suffer when they had done nothing to deserve it.

We can begin to understand the answer to this question when we begin to understand that all of God's people *must*, according to His sovereign plan and purpose for each of us, share in the sufferings of His Son, Jesus Christ, in order that we may also share in His glory (Romans 8:17, John 12:24-26). And we know that all of Jesus' sufferings were undeserved (Hebrews 4:15, others).

As the biblical account of Job's sufferings continues, we see that Job had three "friends" who had come to "comfort" him when they heard of all the tragedy that had come upon him. However, instead of comforting Job, in their ignorance they falsely accused him, saying that the cause of his troubles must certainly be his own sin.

In one of his rebukes to these three "friends", Job referred to the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, and the fish in the sea, saying: "***Who among all these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this***, in whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind?" (Job 12:9-10, emphasis added). Yes, it was Satan who took Job's possessions, his family, and finally his physical health from him, but it was our sovereign God who allowed him to do it. And in this respect, it was the hand of the Lord that had done it.

The Bible also teaches us about the sovereignty of God in the salvation of men. Many of us are familiar with Romans 8:28, which teaches us that all things work together for the good of those who love God. And then in the following verses we read: "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to

become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.” (Romans 8:29-30).

Romans 8:29-30 describes the “order of salvation” by which every one of us who is saved comes to faith in Christ. First, God foreknew us, in that He chose us (His elect) before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless before Him (Ephesians 1:4-5). And all of those “whom He *foreknew*, He also *predestined* to become conformed to the image of His Son”, Jesus Christ. Then in verse 30 we see that those “whom He predestined, He also *called*; and these whom He called, He also *justified*; and these whom He justified, He also *glorified*.”

In every “link” of this “chain” of events by which we come to faith in Christ, we see God’s action involved, and there is no mention whatsoever of man’s action being involved or required. God foreknew, God predestined, and then God calls, God justifies, and God finally glorifies. So in the salvation of men, God Himself accomplishes every aspect of it, and man’s action, cooperation, or agreement in the matter is not mentioned, in this passage or anywhere else in the Scriptures.

When an individual comes to faith in Christ, it is not because *they* chose to believe or decided to believe (Romans 9:16), it is because **God** chose to intervene in their lives to cause them to believe, to bring them to faith in His Son (John 6:44, 65). They believe because they are one of God’s elect, whom He foreknew since before the creation of the world; they are one of those whom He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ.

In God’s time, these predestined individuals are born into the world, and again in God’s time they are called to faith in Christ. And when they are called, they all come to Him, and none refuse (John 6:37). Saul of Tarsus learned this lesson in no uncertain terms when the time for his conversion came on the Damascus Road, even when he was still hostile toward the Gospel message (Acts 9:1)

There are no accidents in God’s creation. Everything that happens has been ordained by God. Jesus taught in Matthew 10:29 that not even an event as small as the death of one sparrow occurs apart from the sovereign will of God the Father. And then in the next verse He taught that God knows every detail of our lives, even down to the number of hairs on our head.

God is sovereign over His creation. When either good things or hard and painful things come into our lives, the One who brings prosperity and creates disaster has done it.

The hard and painful things may cause us to “walk with a limp”, as Jacob did when he wrestled with the Lord for a blessing (Genesis 32:22-32). Sometimes the severity of our loss is so great that we know our “limp” will last for the rest of our lives here on earth. But God’s word promises us that the suffering of our present lives cannot be compared with the glory that will one day be revealed in us (Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 4:16-18).

No matter what troubles may come into our lives, and no matter how badly we may fail in our devotion to the Lord when we are confronted with these troubles, every believer can rejoice in God’s promise that nothing in all of creation will be able to separate us from His love (Romans 8:38-39). The day will ultimately come for us when our God will wipe away every tear from our eyes, and there will be no more death, or mourning, or crying, or pain, for all these things will have passed away (Revelation 21:4). And all of these “former things” that had caused us so much grief “will not be remembered or come to mind.” (Isaiah 65:17)