

Psalms 115:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

Analysis

But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

This verse responds to pagan mockery ("Where is now their God?" v.2) with confident assertion of God's sovereignty. While idols are confined to temples, Yahweh dwells in heavens, ruling over all creation with absolute authority.

"But our God" (וְאֱלֹהֵינוּ/ve'Eloheinu) contrasts Israel's God with pagan idols described in following verses. The possessive "our" emphasizes covenant relationship. The adversative "but" introduces stark contrast: unlike lifeless idols, our God lives and acts.

"Is in the heavens" (בַּשָּׁמַיִם/bashamayim) doesn't limit God to location but establishes His transcendence, sovereignty, and freedom from human manipulation. He isn't confined to shrines or controlled by priests. His throne transcends earthly limitations. From heaven, He governs all creation. This echoes Solomon's dedication prayer: "the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee" (1 Kings 8:27).

"He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" (כָּל אֲשֶׁר-חָפֵץ עָשָׂה/kol asher-chafetz asah) declares absolute divine sovereignty. Chafetz means to delight in, take pleasure in, desire. God's actions flow from His will and pleasure, not external constraint. Asah (done, made, accomplished) indicates completed action. Whatever God wills, He accomplishes. No force can thwart His purposes.

This sovereignty extends across creation, history, and redemption. God created worlds by His word (Hebrews 11:3). He raises and deposits kings (Daniel 2:21). He accomplishes salvation through Christ (Ephesians 1:11). Nothing occurs outside His sovereign will—whether permitting evil temporarily or accomplishing good eternally. This doesn't make God arbitrary tyrant but assures believers: no chaos, accident, or evil can ultimately defeat divine purposes.

Historical Context

The contrast between Yahweh and pagan idols runs throughout Old Testament. When Philistines captured the Ark, their god Dagon fell prostrate before it and broke apart (1 Samuel 5:1-5). When Elijah challenged Baal's prophets at Carmel, their god couldn't respond despite frantic rituals, but Yahweh answered immediately with fire from heaven (1 Kings 18:20-39). When Sennacherib threatened Jerusalem, his gods proved powerless while Yahweh destroyed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers overnight (2 Kings 19:35).

Isaiah extensively mocks idol worship: craftsmen cut down trees, burn part for cooking, carve the rest into gods, then bow to their own handiwork (Isaiah 44:9-20). The absurdity is obvious—gods who cannot see, speak, hear, or move, requiring human transport and protection. Yet people worshiped such idols, perhaps finding comfort in controlling their deities through ritual and manipulation.

Ancient Near Eastern religion centered on influencing gods through sacrifice, incantation, and ceremony. Humans believed proper rituals compelled divine action. Fertility cults used sexual rituals attempting to ensure crop abundance. Nations paraded idol statues during battle hoping to guarantee victory. Religion became mechanism for controlling divine forces.

Biblical faith radically differs: Yahweh cannot be manipulated or controlled. He acts according to His sovereign will and pleasure. This initially seems threatening—if God acts as He pleases, what protects us? But covenant provides assurance: God's pleasure includes keeping His promises, maintaining His faithful love, and accomplishing redemption. His sovereignty exercises itself consistently with His

revealed character—holy, just, merciful, faithful.

Paul affirms this sovereignty: God "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Ephesians 1:11). Jesus taught: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father" (Matthew 10:29). Nothing escapes God's sovereign control—from sparrows to empires to salvation itself. This should produce profound peace: if God rules all and His character is faithful love, believers can trust completely even when circumstances seem chaotic.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does God's heavenly dwelling relate to His sovereignty, and why is this comforting rather than threatening?
2. What is the difference between God doing 'whatsoever he hath pleased' and being arbitrary or capricious?
3. How should God's absolute sovereignty affect prayer—if He does as He pleases, why pray?
4. In what ways does modern culture create 'functional idols' we attempt to control, and how does this verse challenge such idolatry?

Interlinear Text

וְאֵלֵּינוּ	בְּשָׁמַיִם	כִּי	אֲשֶׁר	כִּפּוֹץ
But our God	is in the heavens	H3605	H834	whatsoever he hath pleased
H430	H8064			H2654
עָשָׂה:				
he hath done				
H6213				

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 135:6 (Parallel theme): Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

Daniel 4:35 (Parallel theme): And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Isaiah 46:10 (Parallel theme): Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

Ephesians 1:11 (Parallel theme): In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

Psalms 103:19 (Parallel theme): The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

Romans 9:19 (Parallel theme): Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

Psalms 2:4 (Parallel theme): He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.

Psalms 123:1 (Parallel theme): Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.

Matthew 6:9 (Parallel theme): After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

1 Chronicles 16:25 (References God): For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised: he also is to be feared above all gods.

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