



[Daniel 5:23](#)

(23) And you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the vessels of His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, which do not see or hear or know; and the God who *holds* your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified.

New King James Version

This verse ought to make us consider how deeply [God](#) is involved in our lives. We should not deceive ourselves into thinking that this principle does not apply to us because we are insignificant. It applies to all men, high or low, rich or poor, slave or freeman, Gentile or Israelite, converted or unconverted. It is deeply moving to consider that the breath on which our life depends, itself such a frail thing, is in the "hand" of an invisible Being over whom we can have no control. He can stop our breath at any time. We continue living only at His pleasure! There is perhaps nothing more absolute than the power God holds over us, yet we do not seem disposed to acknowledge it.

In addition, He claims to have the power to control all our ways. We can go nowhere without his permission; once we leave, we cannot return home without His allowance. We like to think we have [faith](#), but do we really live our lives considering His nearness to us? How little we recognize this! Yet it is what the apostle Paul means when he tells the Athenians, "[I]n Him we live and move and have our being." Solomon reiterates this thought in [Proverbs 19:21](#), "There are many plans in a man's heart, nevertheless the LORD's counsel—that will stand." Again he writes in [Proverbs 16:9](#), "A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps," and in chapter 21:1 it says, "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes." *The Living Bible* paraphrases this last verse, "Just as water is turned into irrigation ditches, so the Lord directs the king's thoughts. He turns them wherever He wants to."

If the king's heart is in God's hand, and He is influencing his decisions, is it not clear that

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all governors of men are completely beneath the governmental control of the Almighty? What ruler can resist Him? This does not mean He is inspiring the evil things they decide to enact as policy, but He oversees and thus allows them, or they would never be able to implement them. Belshazzar seemingly had a free hand until God dramatically intervened to bring about His will. We should consider this in light of the "sovereign citizenship" movement gathering grassroots support among certain elements in America. It presents a growing danger to some church members who are being deceived into ignorantly opposing the very governance of God!

— John W. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[The Sovereignty of God: Part Five](#)

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