

## **THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD**

"None can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan. 4:35) No one can defeat God's plan (Isa. 14:27). Our lesson is about God's governance over the world, known as His sovereignty.

### **WHAT IS GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY?**

Sovereign means "having unlimited power or authority." according to Webster! Sovereignty is God's freedom to exercise His power and authority. He is the God of gods, King of kings, and Lord of lords (Deut.10:17; 1 Tim. 6:15-16; Rev. 19:16). "Sovereign" does not appear in the Bible, but the fact that God alone is sovereign permeates Scripture.

God came before all things (Col. 1:17; cf. Gen. 1:1); God created all things (John 1:3; Col. 1:16); God sustains all things (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:17; Heb. 2:10); God transcends all things (Eph. 4:6; Psa. 8:1; 57:5); God knows all things (Psa. 147:5; Isa. 46:10; Rom. 11:33); God can do all things (Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:27; Matt. 19:26); God owns all things (Psa. 24:1; Psa. 50:10; 1 Cor. 6:19). Therefore, God is sovereign and has a right to control all things. God can do whatever He pleases (Psa. 135:6). All things ultimately work according to His Will (Eph. 1:11). God's plan always comes to pass (Isa. 46:9-10). (Dan. 2:20-21; Job 12:18; Psa. 2:8-9; Prov.21:1; Acts 12:23). No one can thwart God's purpose (Job 42:2; Dan. 4:35; Isa.43:13). (Isa. 40:15,17,22-23)

### **THE PARADOX OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY**

A paradox is a statement that at first seems self-contradictory and impossible but expresses a possible truth. Genuine sovereignty operates within the bounds of rationality and logic.the Bible itself teaches this. (Isaiah 40:28) tells us that God cannot get tired. God Himself says that He cannot change (Mal. 3:6; Jas. 1:17). Paul tells us that God cannot deny Himself (2 Tim. 2:13). The Holy Spirit reminds us that God cannot lie (Heb. 6:18; Titus 1:2). James adds that God cannot be tempted with evil (Jas. 1:13). With God's sovereignty, two issues present a paradox: (1) the problem of sin, and (2) the problem of pain and suffering. The reality of sin and suffering in the world do not dethrone God of His sovereignty.

#### **1. RESPECTING GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY DEEPENS OUR REVERENT FEAR OF GOD**

The last thing you want to do is offend a God who is sovereign. (Isa. 59:1-2; cf. Psa. 51:4). We cannot hide from God (Job 12:22), who will surely carry out divine justice (cf. Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30-31). To be indifferent about God is to be ignorant of His sovereignty. In Isaiah's vision of heaven, (Isaiah 6:1-8), the angelic host are unable to look at God, how much more should lowly mankind bow before God in reverent awe? (Psalm 89:5-7)

#### **2. RESPECTING GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY CHANGES HOW WE VIEW OUR FELLOW MAN**

We will view every human being with greater dignity since man is created in God's image: (Gen 1:26-27). Regardless of race, gender, or economic status, every single person bears the image of our sovereign God, (cf. Matt. 16:26).

#### **3. RESPECTING GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY MOTIVATES US TO RESTORE N. T. CHRISTIANITY**

When we respect God's sovereignty, we are acknowledging His lordship over our lives. (John 10:30) (Matt. 28:18- 20; John 5:19-20; 12:49-50; Heb. 9:15-17). A sovereign God is a God who knows best. (Deut. 6:24; 1 Cor. 2:4, 13; 2 Pet. 1:3). Mankind has two choices: (a) we can follow the teachings of God's Son and His apostles, or (b) we can rebel against God by modifying, minimizing, ignoring, adding to, or picking and choosing which teachings of God's Son and His apostles. (Acts 2:42; Rom. 6:17-18; 1 Cor. 4:6; 2 Thess. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1ff; 2 Tim. 1:13; 3:14; 4:1ff; Gal. 1:23; 2 John 9; Jude 3; John 12:48). Why would any honest servant of God be so disloyal as to modify, diminish, or reform that Word?

#### **4. RESPECTING GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY GIVES US COMFORT IN TIMES OF TROUBLE**

As Christians, we crucified our former selves (Gal. 5:24). Christ is living in us (Gal. 2:20). Like Christ, we going about our Father's business (Luke 2:49). We want God's purpose to be accomplished (Matt. 6:10). And before He created the world, God's purpose was already planned and complete. (Rom. 8:29-30)

Christians, and only Christians, can find peace in that God - notices our pain, suffering, and struggles.

#### **5. RESPECTING GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY CAUSES US TO BELIEVE IN GOD'S PROVIDENCE**

God is actively protecting and guiding His creation (Matt. 6:26-30); God is actively sustaining His creation (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:17); God is actively orchestrating the uniformity of His creation (cf. Gen. 8:22). (Heb. 13:5b-6)

### **MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY**

#### **"WE SHOULD NOT STUDY THE BIBLE TO KNOW GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY"**

True faith in the Bible is based upon revealed evidence (cf. Acts 17:1-4; 11-12; Heb. 11:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:7).

#### **"GOD IS NOT SOVEREIGN BECAUSE EVIL AND SUFFERING EXIST IN THE WORLD."**

God is patiently allowing time for whosoever will decide to repent (2 Pet. 3:9; Rev. 22:17).

**"THE PRIMARY GOAL OF GOD AND HIS PEOPLE SHOULD BE TO FEED THE POOR, HEAL THE SICK, AND CORRECT THE SOCIAL INJUSTICES OF THE WORLD."** (Luke 10:25-37; (Jas. 1:27; John 5:2-9; Rom. 8:19- 25; Luke 19:10; John 3:36).

**CONCLUSION:** God is a sovereign God, meaning He has the right to exercise His divine power and authority. If He were not sovereign, He would not be worthy of our worship. Instead, God's power and wisdom are beyond measure. Therefore, we take great comfort in being His children.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – The Sovereignty of God**

1. What does sovereignty mean?
2. What makes God sovereign?
3. What is a paradox? And why is it a paradox that God is unable to do some things?
4. What is God unable to do?
5. If God is not sovereign, would He still be God? Why or why not?
6. What do you think the realization of God's sovereignty should do to us?
7. Can you have faith in God without acknowledging that He is sovereign?
8. How would you respond to someone who thinks it is counterproductive to study God's sovereignty?
9. What is one reason why evil and suffering exist in our world?
10. If the primary job of God and His people is to engage in social action, what does this say about God's sovereignty?