

The Sovereignty of God

Ephesians 1:3-12 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,⁵ having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace⁸ which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,⁹ having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,¹⁰ that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.¹¹ In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,¹² that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

- In this passage we have words like “He chose us,” “before the foundation of the world,” “predestined us to adoption,” “according to the good pleasure of His will,” “according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,” “in the dispensation of the fullness of the times,” “being predestined according to the purpose of Him,” “Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will.”

Which leads to this question, “How much of this life is due to the sovereignty of God, and how much choice do I actually have?”

What is sovereignty?

- Sovereignty: of God, his absolute right to do all things according to his own good pleasure
- John Piper - When we say God is sovereign, we mean He is powerful and authoritative to the extent of being able to override all other powers and

authorities. Nothing can successfully stop any act or any event or design or purpose that God intends to certainly bring about.

Is the sovereignty of God Biblical?

- **Job 42:1-2** Then Job answered the LORD and said:² “I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose *of Yours* can be withheld from You.
 - Note the use of can. He can do everything. Nothing can be withheld
- **Isaiah 46:9-10** Remember the former things of old, For I *am* God, and *there is* no other; I *am* God, and *there is* none like Me,¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done, Saying, “My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,’
 - God will do what He pleases. There are no other gods that even come close to comparing with Him.
- **2 Chronicles 20:6** and said: “O LORD God of our fathers, *are* You not God in heaven, and do You *not* rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand *is there not* power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?
 - God rules over all. He has the power and might to do so, and no one can stand against Him.

What about sovereign over people?

- **Genesis 50:19-20** Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for *am* I in the place of God? ²⁰ But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive.
 - Even when people chose to do evil, God is able to make it for good.
 - This of course begs the question – Did Josephs brothers have the ability to choose here? We will get to free will. But short answer - yes. Even with choice, God is still in control.
- **Romans 14:11** For it is written: “*As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.*”

- This passage is in reference to judgement. God allows choice, but ultimately, He determines our eternal destiny. But He has given us everything we need to make the choice to have a good destiny.
- **Lamentations 3:37** *Who is he who speaks and it comes to pass, When the Lord has not commanded it?*
 - We cannot make things happen by speaking them – if they are not in agreement with God! That is why coming into agreement with God is what brings authority, answered prayer, and more.

What about over nature, or the earth?

- **2 Kings 19:15** Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said: “O LORD God of Israel, *the One* who dwells *between* the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth.
- **Matthew 8:27** So the men marveled, saying, “Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”
 - These 2 verses show that God does have authority over the earth. We also have delegated authority over the earth.
- **Proverbs 16:33** The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision *is* from the LORD.
 - Even seemingly random things God is able to control.

So according to the Bible, God is all-powerful, and is in complete control.

- This is important because God is worth worshiping because He is sovereign. He has the power to be able to save. And His will, His desire is that all people are saved and come to Him.
- It means He has power over death. And it means He will make the promise of Heaven come to pass. If He has decreed it, it is done.
- So, since He has decreed that those that believe in Him are righteous, then if you believe you are righteous. Since He declared He will never leave you, then He will never leave you. Since He declared that He has a place prepared for you with Him, then He does.
- AND He has the power and authority to see all of that and more to completion.

The sovereignty of God is governed by his wisdom.

- **Romans 11:33** Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out!
- Everything that is unsearchable and inscrutable to us is governed by the deepest divine wisdom. God never does anything or allows anything whimsically — that is, in a meaningless way or randomly or without an infinitely wise purpose.

His sovereignty is governed by his justice and his mercy.

- **Romans 9:14-15** What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! ¹⁵ For He says to Moses, *“I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.”*
- God never, never wrongs anyone. All that he does is righteous and just.
- If we believe God is being unjust in a situation, then that shows that we do not understand the situation.

His sovereignty is for His glory

- **Romans 15:9** and that the Gentiles might glorify God for *His* mercy, as it is written: *“For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name.”*
- The ultimate aim is that he be glorified for his mercy and his grace toward undeserving rebels. He sovereignly planned and accomplished salvation for sinners by the death of his Son.

If God is sovereign, how much choice do we have?

- We have freewill in the confinements of our nature. Or within the confinements of God’s perfect will.

- If “free will” means that God gives humans the opportunity to make choices that genuinely affect their destiny, then yes, human beings do have a free will.
- However, free will does not mean that mankind can do anything he pleases. Our choices are limited to what is in keeping with our nature. For example, a man may choose to walk across a bridge or not to walk across it; what he may not choose is to fly over the bridge—his nature prevents him from flying. In a similar way, a man cannot choose to make himself righteous—his (sin) nature prevents him from canceling his guilt (Romans 3:23). So, free will is limited by nature.
- **John 5:39-40** You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. ⁴⁰ But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.
 - Again, God has given us what we need, but we must choose Him.
- **Deuteronomy 30:19** I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;
 - We have choice in how we live this life, whether we will have abundant life, victorious life, and most importantly, eternal life.
 - We can choose what we do. We cannot choose the consequences.

Cruise ship – God picks the destination, but you choose what activities, what food you eat, lots of things. But you are still on the ship.

- How good that cruise is depends on your choices. But when and where you end the cruise is up to the captain.
- Our captain is available to assist you in making right choices. We are not left to do this on our own.

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

3 Types of the will of God: Good, Acceptable (pleasurable) and Perfect (Sovereign)

1. Perfect or Sovereign will. This will happen no matter what.
 - a. We do not have the power or the right to break or alter these things.
 - b. The death burial and resurrection of Jesus.
 - c. The end times in Revelation.
2. Perceptive will (Good) (also will of commandment) – The revealed law and commandments of God.
 - a. We have the power but not the right to go against His will.
 - b. Honor your parents.
 - c. Do not murder.
3. Will of Disposition (Acceptable will, or will of pleasure) – What is pleasing to God. What brings God joy? (Relational)
 - a. You have the right and the power to choose. He will help you choose wisely if you let Him, or you can do your own thing.
 - b. What job you want
 - c. what car you drive
 - d. Who you marry

God is in control. He has the power and authority to do what He wants. And there is nothing and no one that can come against Him.

But He allows us to choose how we spend our lives. He acts as our guide and if we will call on Him He will answer us.

We can make choices, but we cannot control the consequences.