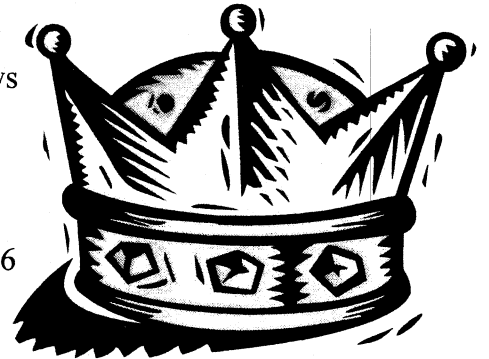


Lesson 8 – The Sovereignty of God

He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen. – 1 Tim. 6:15-16

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End,*” says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” Rev. 1:8

The heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the LORD’s;
But the earth He has given to the children of men.¹ – Psalm 115:16



The term *Sovereignty of God* does not appear in the Bible. It was coined during the Protestant Reformation to describe the opinions of certain Reformation leaders concerning God. These opinions affect the attitudes and practices of many Christians in the areas of:

1. Bible teaching
2. Prayer
3. Salvation
4. Evangelism

Although the term *Sovereignty of God* appears nowhere in the Bible, no Christians would ever question whether or not God is sovereign. They do, however, have different opinions as to how God’s sovereignty is exercised.

The term *Sovereignty of God* is somewhat like the term *Fundamentalism*. They are both good terms. We prefer to avoid using them, however, because of their connotation to a lot of people. (Remember, *Denotation* is what a word actually means; *Connotation* is what people think it means when they hear it, or what it communicates to people). Most of the theologians who use the term *Sovereignty of God* use the term to teach a radical interpretation of the doctrine of predestination believed by some Presbyterians, Reformed churches and a very small minority of Baptists.

That being said, we will use the term in this lesson to show the greatness of our God.

1. Definition of *Sovereignty* - *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*.

- a. supreme power, dominion
- b. undisputed ascendancy, dominance
- c. unlimited extent, absolute
- d. autonomy, independence, absolutely free
- e. superlative quality, excellent
- f. unqualified, unmitigated, unconditional

¹All Scriptures quoted taken from *The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc.) 1982.

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2. How it applies to God

- a. There is no power above Him. He is “It.” – 1 Tim. 6:15-16
- b. He owns the Universe and everything in it – Psalm 50:10-12; 95:5
 - i. He owns you
 1. Because He created you
 2. Because He purchased you (if you are saved) – 1 Cor. 6:20; 2 Cor. 5:15
 - ii. He owns all that you “own”
 1. He has the rights to your possessions
 2. He has the right to tell you to allocate 10% of your increase to support the Great Commission. – Malachi 3:10
 - a. He owns 100% of it.
 - b. He allows you to keep 90% of it.
 - iii. He can do anything He wants to do what that which is His
 1. Your children are His – Psalm 127:3
 2. He just allowed you to have them for a season
 3. He has the right to take one of your children to Heaven any time He wants
 - a. Job learned this – Job 1:18-21
 - b. I learned that when He took my 15 year-old daughter to Heaven through a car accident.
 - i. She wasn’t ours
 - ii. He allowed us to have her and enjoy her
 - iii. He gave us the responsibility to raise her in a Christian home
 - iv. He gave us the responsibility to seek to lead her to Christ
 - v. For reasons known only to Him, He took her to Heaven when she was 15 years old.
- c. Knowing she was His brought great comfort after her death
 - i. She had received Christ as her Saviour, so I know where she is, and I knew Whom she is with.
 - ii. The God who was in control loved her more than we could possibly love her. – Rom. 5:8
 - iii. Because of that, I could believe Him and recover from the shock of her death much more quickly and completely than unsaved people could.
 - iv. I didn’t need a reason. I could trust in my Sovereign God who was and is in control of everything. A great hymn says it all:

*I am not skilled to understand
What God has willed; what God has planned.
I only know at His right hand
Is One Who is my Savior.*

- c. He has the authority to make the rules
 - i. We do not have the right to make the rules – Prov. 14:12; 16:25; Isa 53:6
 - ii. We have the responsibility to follow the rules – Gal. 3:1
 - iii. We will suffer the consequences if we don’t follow the rules – Gal. 6:7-8
- d. He can do anything He wants to do without limitation – except for Self-imposed limitations
 - i. He cannot lie – Num. 23:19
 - ii. He cannot break a promise – Micah 7:20
 - iii. He cannot deny His Word – James 1:17

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iv. He cannot do anything that is inconsistent with His character. – John 3:33; 2 Cor. 1:18

e. He is answerable to no one

i. He doesn't have to explain the reasons for His actions to you – Rom. 9:20

ii. We are accountable to Him; He is not accountable to us. – Rom. 14:12

3. How it applies to Man

a. In the Garden of Eden

i. He gave Adam and Eve dominion over His animals – Gen 1:28

ii. He gave them responsibility to populate the Earth – Gen 1:28

iii. He gave them responsibility to keep the Garden of Eden – Gen. 2:15

iv. He gave them the responsibility to refrain from the forbidden fruit – Gen 2:16-17

v. They were not irresistibly obedient – Gen. 3:6

vi. They suffered the consequences of disobedience to God – Gen. 3:16-19

b. In the life of Abraham

i. He gave Abram the responsibility to leave Ur, move to a new land and found a great nation. – Gen. 12:1

ii. He gave Abraham the responsibility to wait until He was ready to give Abraham and Sarah a son (seed) – Gen. 12:2;

iii. He gave Abraham the responsibility to believe God and put Him first – Gen. 22:1-18

iv. Questions

1. Could Abram have disobeyed God when He sent him away from Ur?

2. If Abram would have stayed in Ur, would that mean God's plan to establish Israel would be destroyed? (See Num. 14:11-20)

c. In the life of Israel

i. He gave Israel the responsibility to obey His Law – Ex. 19:5

ii. He gave Israel an important responsibility in the world

1. To not let the world influence them for evil

2. To influence the world for God. – Ps. 67:2-4

iii. What happened?

1. Did Israel – whom God's Elect (Isa. 45:4) – have the freedom to resist God's grace?

2. Did Israel – God's chosen people (Deut. 7:6) – have the ability to resist God's purpose?

d. In Salvation

i. God loves everyone – John 3:16

ii. God wants everyone to be saved – 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9

iii. God offers eternal life to everyone

iv. Jesus died for everyone – 1 John 2:2

4. Can God be sovereign if man has the free will to accept or reject God's salvation?

a. Some theologians say NO

i. They don't understand that a Sovereign God doesn't have to make every decision for us. (You can even decide what to have for lunch today).

ii. They don't understand that God can be sovereign and give you the final decision. (It was His sovereign choice to do so).

b. Sovereignty doesn't necessarily mean He controls every decision a person makes.

i. He gives us the privilege and ability to make decisions.

ii. It all comes as a gift from God.

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c. Sovereignty means God can make a sovereign decision to give man the opportunity to decide for or against salvation. (There are many other implications to this, which we will cover in another lesson).

5. Conclusion

a. God's sovereignty means that He has the right to do anything He wants in the Universe.

- i. He has the power to do it – He created it
- ii. He has the right to do it – He owns it
- iii. He has decreed to give man certain rights, privileges and responsibilities
 1. Over the earth – Psalm 115:16
 2. Over his personal salvation – John 3:16
 3. Over his walk with God – James 1:22

b. The fact that man has free will to choose in no way takes from God's sovereignty, because God made the sovereign decision to give man that free will. – Rev. 22:17

- i. God sends proclaimers, but not all proclaimers go. – Rom 10:15; 2 Tim. 4:10
- ii. God draws sinners, but not all sinners come. – Acts 26:28

Honoring God's Sovereignty

God, for some unknown reason, in His Sovereignty, decided to entrust us with the Gospel for the salvation of the world. – Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15; 1 Cor. 4:1

We honor Him and His sovereignty by:

1. Making Him the most important part of our lives
2. Spending time in His Word every day – Matt. 4:4
 - a. A lot of Christians spend a lot more time watching TV than they do in the Word, yet they say Jesus is #1 in their lives.
 - b. Most Christians are more concerned with what others think of them than they are with what God thinks of their lives.
3. Spending time in prayer every day
4. Sharing the Gospel with the lost, whether they be church or unchurched.
5. Being willing – really willing – to give up our careers and go into full-time Great Commission work as you pray as the Lord commanded – Matt. 9:37-38
 - a. There's a reason the laborers are few. It's because most of us would rather have high paying careers and make a lot of money instead of spending our lives in His service.
 - b. There's another reason the laborers are few. It's because Christian parents are urging their kids to go to secular universities and prepare for high paying careers rather than spending their lives in the ministry or on the mission field.
 - c. The message we're giving is that money and career prestige are more important than God in our lives and our children's lives.
 - d. This doesn't mean that everybody is called to full-time Great Commission work. It means that every believer should 100% willing to go and to honestly seek for the Holy Spirit's prompting concerning the matter.
 - e. Have you ever earnestly prayed, "Lord, my life is Yours. I'm willing to give up my goals and ambitions for lifetime of service if You want. Please show me, and I'll do it."