

Psalms 96:4-9: ⁴For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. ⁵For all the gods of the peoples are idols, But the LORD made the heavens. ***6Splendor and majesty are before Him, Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.*** ⁷Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. ***8Ascribe to the LORD the glory of His name;*** Bring an offering, and come into His courts. ⁹Worship the LORD in holy attire; Tremble before Him, all the earth.

Question #6: According to the above Scripture passages, how is the greatness of God reflected in the demonstration of His power, glory, victory, and majesty? _____

→ indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Thine is the dominion, O LORD: The ***Scripture plainly declares*** that ***GOD CREATED all things and is the Possessor of everything.*** Since God is the creator of all things, He also is the rightful owner and proprietor of all things. He, therefore, has the sovereign right or prerogative to do as He pleases.

Exodus 9:29: And Moses said to him, “As soon as I go out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease, and there will be hail no longer, ***that you may know that the earth is the LORD’S.***

Exodus 19:5: Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, ***for all the earth is Mine;***

Deuteronomy 10:14: Behold, ***to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it.***

Job 41:11: Who has given to Me that I should repay him? ***Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine.***

Psalms 24:1: ***The earth is the LORD’S, and all it contains,*** The world, and those who dwell in it.

Psalms 89:11: The heavens are Thine, the earth also is Thine; ***The world and all it contains,*** Thou hast founded them.

The ***Scripture plainly declares*** that ***GOD RULES and does as He pleases*** with everything He has made. God is ***TOTALLY FREE*** of external constraint.

Daniel 4:34-35: ³⁴But at the end of that period I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever: For ***His dominion is an everlasting dominion,*** And His kingdom endures from generation to generation. ³⁵And all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But ***He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand*** Or say to Him, “What hast Thou done?”

Psalms 135:5-6: ⁵For I know that ***the LORD is great, And that our Lord is above all gods.*** ⁶***Whatever the LORD pleases, He does,*** In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.

Question #7: How do the above Scripture passages justify God’s freedom to do as He pleases? _____

→ and Thou dost exalt Thyself as head over all: The Scripture plainly declares that **God is the highest authority** and that He is the One who **establishes all other authority** in heaven and earth.

Romans 13:1: Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For **there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.**

God is highly exalted above everything. Therefore, God exalts Himself above us and commands that we worship Him. It is right and proper for Him to do so. Let's consider the appropriateness of God's action. Would it be right for some other being to occupy God's great seat of authority? Would it be proper for a creature to somehow be exalted above the One who created it? Indeed these questions must be answered, "No." If they could be answered "Yes," God would not be God. This is why idolatry is the great sin of mankind. Idolatry gives God's proper place to something other than God when God alone must be exalted as King and Sovereign over us. This is high treason against the greatest majesty that exists. Who can fully express how great a sin unbelief truly is? Who can describe the folly and shame of idolatry? Dare we slap the hand that feeds us? Dare we raise clinched fists against the One who holds our life's breath in His hands? God rightly exalts Himself above us and commands that we worship Him, because it is right and proper. It is, in reality, the highest good of the creature to worship and praise the Creator.

Psalms 97:9: For Thou art **the LORD Most High over all the earth; Thou art exalted far above all gods.**

Exodus 20:2-3: ²I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³**You shall have no other gods before Me.**

Isaiah 2:11-12: ¹¹The proud look of man will be abased, And the loftiness of man will be humbled, And **the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.** ¹²For the LORD of hosts will have a day of reckoning Against everyone who is proud and lofty, And against everyone who is lifted up, That he may be abased.

Question #8: On what basis should Christians submit to human governing authorities? _____

Question #9: What is idolatry? _____

Question #10: Why is idolatry the most terrible of sins? _____

→ Both riches and honor come from Thee, and Thou dost rule over all, and in Thy hand is power and might; and it lies in Thy hand to make great, and to strengthen everyone: God in His Sovereignty dispenses what He pleases to all the peoples of the earth. Here the Scripture says that God, the Ruler of all, gives riches to the rich and honor to the honorable. Here the Scripture explicitly states that God has the power and the might to raise up or exalt people and give them strength. Obviously the inverse is also true. If God decides to abase people and make them weak, that is His prerogative. This fact resounds throughout Scripture. God rules His creation, including the earth and men and angels, by His mighty Providence. God is Sovereign over the prosperity and poverty of everyone.

Exodus 4:11: And the LORD said to him, **“Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes him dumb or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?”**

Isaiah 45:7: The One forming light and creating darkness, **Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.**

1 Samuel 2:7-9: ⁷**The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts.** ⁸He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap To make them sit with nobles, And inherit a seat of honor; For the pillars of the earth are the LORD’S, And He set the world on them. ⁹He keeps the feet of His godly ones, But the wicked ones are silenced in darkness; **For not by might shall a man prevail.**

The **Scripture plainly declares** that ***God is Sovereign over the LIFE AND DEATH of every creature.*** God determines the length of our days, and His limits cannot be adjusted. No one lives unless God decrees it; and no one dies unless God decrees it. He is the Author, Giver, and the Sustainer of every living thing. He holds in His hand the lives of both His beloved ones and His enemies. Even Satan, the father of lies, the destroyer, owes his next breath to the Almighty.

Job 14:5: Since **his days are determined, The number of his months is with Thee, And his limits Thou hast set so that he cannot pass.**

Deuteronomy 32:39: See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; **It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded, and it is I who heal;** And there is no one who can deliver from My hand.

1 Samuel 2:6: **The LORD kills and makes alive;** He brings down to Sheol and raises up.

Job 12:9-10: ⁹Who among all these does not know That the hand of the LORD has done this, ¹⁰**In whose hand is the life of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind?**

Matthew 10:29-30: ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And **yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.** ³⁰But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

The **Scripture plainly declares** that ***GOD SUSTAINS and MAINTAINS all things which He has created.***

Hebrews 1:3: And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and **upholds all things by the word of His power.**

Job 34:14-15: ¹⁴If He should determine to do so, **If He should gather to Himself His spirit and His breath,** ¹⁵**All flesh would perish together, And man would return to dust.**

Question #11: What is the ultimate answer to the question, *Why are things the way they are?*:

Question #12: How does this brief look at God’s total control over His creation affect your sense of security in this world? _____

Question #13: Does this brief look at God’s total control over His creation raise some questions in your mind? If so, write them out and look for answers to them as you continue this study:

➔ Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name: Now here is a proper response to the knowledge of God's Sovereignty. We should first acknowledge His greatness and power, and then humbly thank Him for WHO He is and what He has given us. More than this we should praise His glorious name!

Psalm 106:1: Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

Psalm 33:1: Sing for joy in the LORD, O you righteous ones; Praise is becoming to the upright.

Question #14: What are some practical ways in which you might acknowledge God's greatness and power, thank Him for who He is and what He has given you, and praise His glorious name?

Summary

We have seen that the Bible clearly teaches that God is sovereign over all His creation. We have also seen that the *nature* of this sovereignty is absolute and supreme authority, exercised over all things He has created. Our dear brother Charles Hodge defines sovereignty well in his work entitled, *Systematic Theology*:¹ "*Sovereignty is not a property of the divine nature, but a prerogative arising out of the perfections of the Supreme Being. If God be a Spirit, and therefore a person, infinite, eternal, and immutable in his being and perfections, the Creator and Preserver of the universe, He is of right its absolute sovereign. Infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, with the right of possession, which belongs to God in all his creatures, are the immutable foundation of his dominion.*" Dear reader, hear now the word of the Lord!

Deuteronomy 4:39: Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, **that the LORD, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.**

Application

How do we apply this doctrine to our life; that is, how must it affect us in our thinking and our living?

- We must recognize Him as the sovereign authority in our lives by humbly submitting to His will. **(Deuteronomy 4:39-40, 27:10; Job 2:10; Lamentations 3:37-41; Jeremiah 44:23; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Luke 11:28)**
- We must love God in His sovereignty and find our joy in the fact that the goodness of God rules over our lives, decisions, and everything that we are and all that we have. **(Matthew 22:37-39; Romans 12:12)**
- We must realize that trust in God's sovereign and gracious hand allows us to rest in amazing security. **(Romans 8:28,31)**

Why is this doctrine important?

- The truth of God's sovereignty explains the being, nature, essence, and destiny of all things. **(Revelation 14:6-7)**

¹ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 440.

- The truth of God's sovereignty gives meaning and significance to the way we live our lives. (**Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Proverbs 1:7; Psalm 147:11, 112:1**)
- Since sovereignty is "a prerogative arising out of the perfections of the Supreme Being,"² rightly understanding God's sovereignty equips us to think rightly about Him and His Kingdom. All theological heresy flows from misunderstanding the character and nature of God. (**Proverbs 9:10**)

Why is this doctrine controversial?

The basic nature of sin is rebellion against God's sovereignty. From the time Adam and Eve first decided to disobey God's commandment in the Garden of Eden, their descendants have sought to exalt their own autonomy in resistance to God's authority. Sinful humanity is naturally repulsed by the idea of submitting to Someone of higher authority and continually seeks to usurp God's authority. This is the highest crime against God and worthy of death. (**Proverbs 29:15; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:10-18; 8:7-8**)

Question #15: How will your study thus far immediately impact your typical thoughts, words, attitudes and actions? (Be very specific in your answer.)

Thoughts: _____

Words: _____

Attitudes: _____

Actions: _____

Sovereignty and God's Attributes

God's sovereign authority works in perfect harmony with all of His attributes to manifest God's perfection in every way. Consider just a few examples:

Sovereignty and Wisdom: God uses His authority in accordance with perfect wisdom. God always makes decisions and executes His authority in ways that fulfill the eternal counsel of His will. Everything He does fulfills the purpose for which He planned it.

Jeremiah 10:12: It is He who made the earth by His power, **Who established the world by His wisdom; And by His understanding He has stretched out the heavens.**

Sovereignty and Love: God's authority is always dispensed with concern for those He loves. God's motivation, in the exercise of His authority, is to benefit and bless those to whom He obligates Himself by covenant – indeed to all who fear Him and call upon Him.

Psalm 103:11-13: ¹¹For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So **great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him.** ¹²As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. ¹³Just as a father has compassion on his children, So **the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.**

² Hodge, 440.

Sovereignty and Power: God has the ability to bring to pass whatsoever He pleases; thus, the exercise of His authority cannot be effectively resisted. God brings to pass whatever His wisdom and love decide. If He could not do what He wills and perform all His pleasure, He would not be God!

Isaiah 46:9-11: ⁹Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, ¹⁰Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, “My purpose will be established, And **I will accomplish all My good pleasure**”; ¹¹Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. **I have planned it, surely I will do it.**

Sovereignty and Knowledge: God uses His authority with perfect knowledge because He is the source of perfect knowledge. Nothing escapes the attention of God nor does anything invalidate His purposes. God’s authority is always exercised with complete knowledge of what has happened, is happening, and will happen as a result. God never errs, never changes, and never overlooks anything.

Isaiah 40:14: With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And **who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge**, And informed Him of the way of understanding?

Sovereignty and Holiness: God’s use of His authority is always motivated by His hatred of sin, spotless purity, and zeal for His own honor. He expects His creatures to revere His holiness and issues serious warnings and threats to those who fail to honor Him. God must be zealous for His own honor because He is truly honorable and most worthy of praise and glory. A failure to revere and honor God’s holiness is the very definition of sin itself.

Revelation 14:6-7: ⁶And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having **an eternal gospel to preach** to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; ⁷and he said with a loud voice, “**Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him** who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.”

1 John 3:10: By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: **anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God**, nor the one who does not love his brother.

Sovereignty and Righteousness: The foundation of everything God does is justice. All of His judgments are morally perfect and upright. In fact, God Himself is the very standard of what is just and righteous. God’s authority is always executed in perfect righteousness. Whatever is right, is right because it is approved by God.

Deuteronomy 32:4: The Rock! His work is perfect, For **all His ways are just**; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, **Righteous and upright is He.**

Since all of these things are true of God, who is the highest authority, we have grounds for tremendous security and exceeding joy. We can rest in the security of God’s righteous judgment and find in Him a refuge and strength in every adversity we face.

Psalms 5:11: But let **all who take refuge in Thee be glad, Let them ever sing for joy**; And mayest Thou shelter them, That those who love Thy name may exult in Thee.

Romans 8:28: And we know that **God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God**, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Question #16: Carefully consider what you have just studied about God’s sovereignty and His attributes. How does Scripture’s teaching on this subject encourage you to trust God completely and serve Him boldly? _____