

→ 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? _____

God's Power - Omnipotence (having absolute power and supremacy; all-powerful)

Consider how God's absolute power and supremacy is related to His Sovereignty. If God is all-powerful, then He has the ability to freely do as He pleases and is therefore by default the SUPREME AUTHORITY.

Job 23:13: But He is unique and who can turn Him? And **what His soul desires, that He does.**

Isaiah 43:13: Even from eternity I am He; And **there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?**

Psalms 115:3: But our God is in the heavens; **He does whatever He pleases.**

Scripture speaks of God's mighty power and describes Him as omnipotent or all-powerful. **Scripture plainly declares** that **God can do anything and nothing is too hard for Him.**

Jeremiah 32:17: Ah Lord GOD! Behold, **Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for Thee,**

Matthew 19:26: And looking upon them Jesus said to them, "With men this is impossible, **but with God all things are possible.**"

Job 42:1-2: ¹Then Job answered the LORD and said, ²"I know that **Thou canst do all things,** And that no purpose of Thine can be thwarted.

God had the creative power to make the universe from nothing, and He sustains it by His power. He made the world for His own pleasure and by His own will.

Revelation 4:11: Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for **Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created.**

His creation is a *small example* of His mighty power. In the creation of the universe, God's resources were not depleted in any way, for they are infinitely vast. Since God created all things, He transcends them; **His power and dominion are infinitely greater than everything He created.** God is actively sustaining everything in creation. He exercises His power continually, bringing to pass "all His good pleasure" (Isaiah 46:10). He made all things by His purposeful will. He possesses the *power to execute* His divine will and bring His intentions to perfect completion. He alone created all things out of nothing. Because of this great truth He is known as "The Almighty."

Isaiah 40:26,28: ²⁶Lift up your eyes on high And see who has created these stars, The One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; **Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power Not one of them is missing.** . . . ²⁸Do you not know? Have you not heard? **The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth** Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable.

John 1:1-3: ¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³**All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.**

Colossians 1:16-17: ¹⁶For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—**all things have been created by Him and for Him.** ¹⁷And He is before all things, and **in Him all things hold together.**

This truth affirms that all power in the creation comes from God. Since God made everything out of nothing, then power must, by necessity, be delegated by God. In fact the **Scripture plainly declares** that God's power is far above all earthly powers.

Ephesians 1:18-21: ¹⁸I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the

saints,¹⁹ and what is **the surpassing greatness of His power** toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might²⁰ which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,²¹ **far above all rule and authority and power and dominion**, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

If someone were more powerful than God, he or she would have authority over Him. Scripture teaches, however, that this is impossible. Therefore, because God is omnipotent, He is also **SOVEREIGN**.

Question #17: List several scriptural truths that affirm God's omnipotence: _____

Question #18: How does God's omnipotence affirm that He and He alone is God? _____

God's Knowledge - Omniscience (all-knowing)

God knows everything. Since God is the source of all things (making everything from nothing), He is therefore the source of all knowledge and wisdom. **A. W. Tozer** helps us understand how complete God's knowledge is with this definition of *omniscience*:

*[God] knows all that can be known. And this He knows instantly and with a fullness of perfection that includes every possible item of knowledge concerning everything that exists or could have existed anywhere in the universe at any time in the past or that may exist in the centuries or ages yet unborn.*³

We might add that God also knows every possible cause and effect, feeling and desire, creature, event, and every other thing that can be named. His knowledge is complete and eternal. The **Scripture plainly declares** that God knows everything.

1 John 3:19-20: ¹⁹We shall know by this that we are of the truth, and shall assure our heart before Him ²⁰in whatever our heart condemns us; for **God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.**

Isaiah 40:28: Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. **His understanding is inscrutable.**

Psalms 147:5: Great is our Lord, and abundant in strength; **His understanding is infinite.**

People rarely argue that God does not know the past, but people do sometimes argue that God does not know the future. **Scripture, however, plainly declares** that God does know the future. He must know it, because the future is the outworking of God's decrees, which were made before He created the world. **He knew in eternity past the entire record of history for all time.** Predictive prophecy in the Bible proves this again and again. God speaks about future events before they come to pass, and multitudes of biblical prophecies have already been fulfilled!

Isaiah 46:9-10: ⁹"Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, ¹⁰**Declaring the end from the beginning**

³ A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1961), 56.

And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, “My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure”;

Isaiah 44:7-8: ⁷And who is like me? Let him proclaim and declare it; Yes, let him recount it to Me in order, From the time I established the ancient nation. And let them declare to them the things that are coming And the events that are going to take place.

⁸**Do not tremble and do not be afraid. Have I not long since announced it to you and declared it?** And you are My witnesses. Is there any God besides me, Or is there any other Rock? I know of none.

Nothing escapes God’s notice; and nothing is hidden from Him. He is aware of past, present, and future events just as if they were all laid out before Him. His knowledge is as perfect as His being. Since God is perfect in knowledge, He is all-knowing and can never be confused, misled, or surprised.

Hebrews 4:13: And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but **all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him** with whom we have to do.

Nothing escapes the attention of God. He sees all things, even the inner thoughts of man. Jesus said that the hairs of our heads are all numbered (Luke 12:7) and that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice (Matthew 10:29). “No creature is hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare” before the Lord (Hebrews 4:13). He knows our thoughts (Ezekiel 11:5) before we even express them. Indeed, there is no place where we can hide from God. He sees everything in full view; and He understands “the thoughts and intentions of our hearts” (Hebrews 4:12) better than we do. **He is God!**

1 Kings 8:39: then hear in heaven Thy dwelling place, and forgive and act and render to each according to all his ways, **whose heart Thou knowest, for Thou alone dost know the hearts of all the sons of men,**

1 Chronicles 28:9: As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; **for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts.** If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.

Proverbs 5:21: For the **ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD,** And He watches all his paths.

Psalms 139 speaks of God knowing our thoughts and words “*before there is a word on our tongue.*”

Psalms 139:2-4: ²Thou dost know when I sit down and when I rise up; **Thou dost understand my thought from afar.** ³Thou dost scrutinize my path and my lying down, And art intimately acquainted with all my ways. ⁴**Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, Thou dost know it all.**

A. W. Pink describes God’s knowledge of our sins: “*Neither the darkness of night, the closest curtains, nor the deepest dungeon can hide any sinner from the eyes of Omniscience. The trees of the garden were not able to conceal our first parents. No human eye beheld Cain murder his brother, but his maker witnessed his crime. Sarah might laugh derisively in the seclusion of her tent, yet was it heard by Jehovah. Achan stole a wedge of gold and carefully hid it in the earth, but God brought it to light. David was at much pains to cover up his wickedness, but ere long the all-seeing God sent one of His servants to say to him, “You are the man!” And to writer and reader is also said, “Be sure your sin will find you out” (Num 32:23).*”⁴

Proverbs 15:3: The **eyes of the LORD are in every place,** Watching the evil and the good.

⁴ Arthur W. Pink, *The Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), 17-18.

Job 34:21-22: ²¹“For His eyes are upon the ways of a man, And He sees all his steps.

²²**There is no darkness or deep shadow Where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.**

Psalms 90:8: Thou hast placed our iniquities before Thee, **Our secret sins in the light of Thy presence.**

S. Lewis Johnson⁵ summarizes God’s knowledge like this:

- **Intuitive:** God knows everything by default, His knowledge exists within Himself
- **Simultaneous:** God knows everything in one simple act, instantaneously, not gradually
- **Independent:** God knows everything apart from any learning, He cannot learn, because He knows all things from eternity, His knowledge comes from Himself
- **Distinct:** God knows everything clearly, without ambiguity, specifically not generally, absolute
- **Infallible:** God’s knowledge is unfailing, certain, accurate in every detail
- **Immutable:** God’s knowledge never changes because He has never learned a new fact, it is not subject to anything outside of Himself
- **Complete:** God’s knowledge is infinite, the scope or extent of it is exhaustive, He knows all things actual and possible, all events, all creatures of the past, present and future.

Consider how God’s knowledge is related to His Sovereignty. Since God is all-knowing, nothing can escape His attention or surprise Him. He is intimately aware of everything at all times, knowing it all from before the creation of the world. God knows everything *freely* because He has both willed everything to be and providentially brought it about.

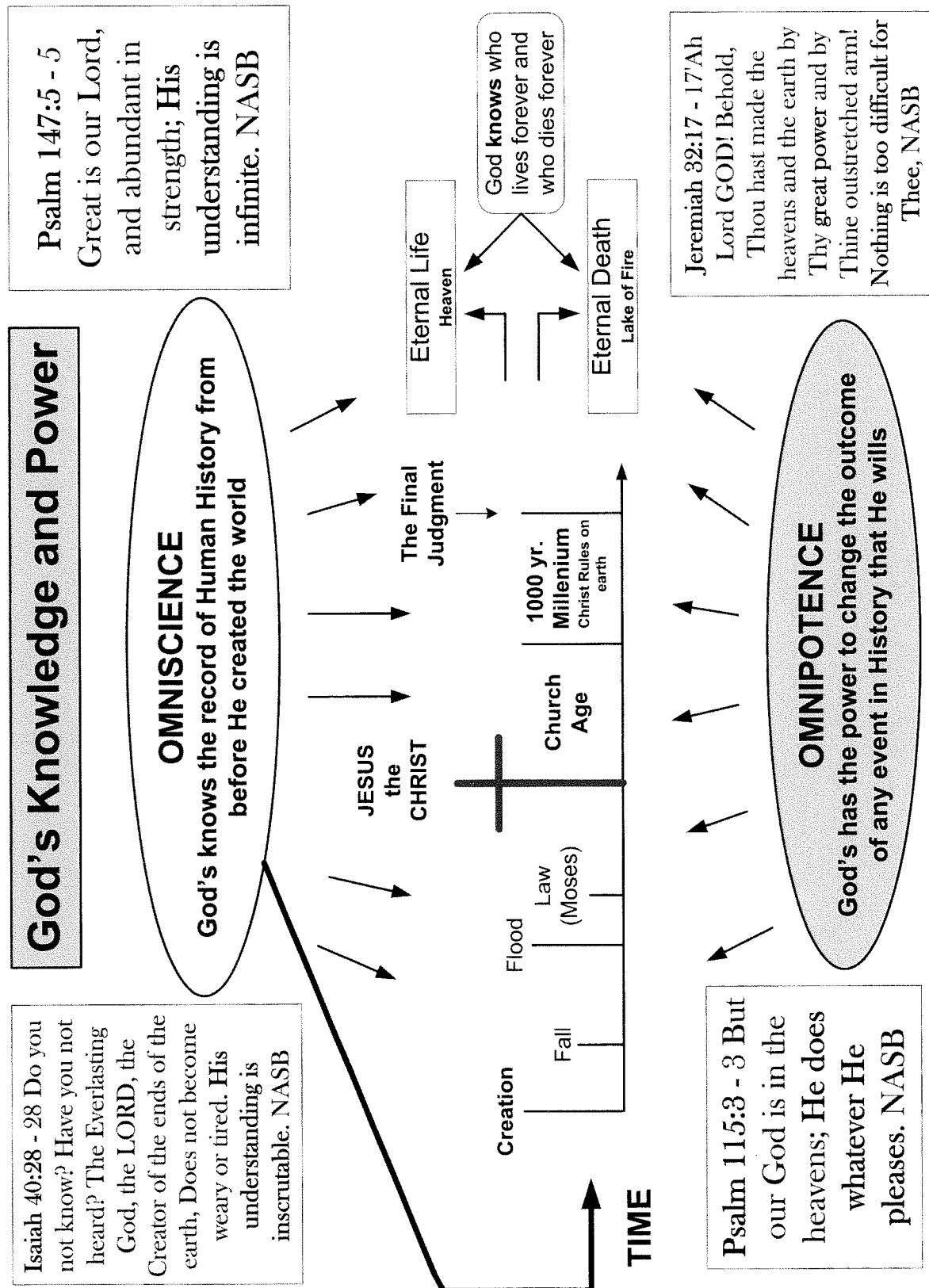
Ephesians 1:9-11: ⁹He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him ¹⁰with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him ¹¹also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined **according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,**

Summary - See chart on **God’s Knowledge and Power**, page 17.

Question #19: Study the chart, “God’s Knowledge and Power,” on page 17. Then *briefly* describe the connection between omniscience and omnipotence. _____

Question #20: Why are omniscience and omnipotence necessary elements of sovereignty? _____

⁵ Taken from a sermon delivered at Believer’s Chapel, Dallas Theological Seminary, date uncertain.



Notes: