

Welcome to “The Sovereign of God and...”



Carmel Baptist Church

The Sovereignty of God

[www.learningandlivingtheword.com](http://www.learningandlivingtheword.com)

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# Sovereignty of God

This is a functional idea about God's

Ruling

Reigning

Ownership

It brings together the attributes as these are the things that make Him sovereign. God is good, wise, holy and these things come to bear as He rules, leads and governs.

**Definition:** *God plans and carries out His perfect will as He alone knows is best, over all that is in heaven and earth, and He does so without failure or defeat.*

Sovereignty is a statement about God's CONTROL over all things in His PLAN and His EXECUTING that plan.

How wide? - *over all heaven and earth*

How successful is God in this plan? - *without failure or defeat*

## Scriptural support for the sovereignty of God

This is the summary song that Moses gives to the people from God, when they go after other gods and He says I want them to know who I AM.

### **Deuteronomy 32:39:**

See now that I myself am He!

There is no god besides me.

I put to *death* and I bring to *life*,

I have *wounded* and I will *heal*,

and no one can deliver out of my hand.

The rest of the verses state that whatever comes against God He will defeat it.

Notice in verse 39 a “Feature” of God’s rulership

*Spectrum verses:* The two sides of the spectrum are announced and God is in control of both edges of the extremes and obviously everything in between. God is alpha and omega, in all moments

## **Deuteronomy 32:39**

Look at the parallelism in the verses:

### **Puts to death**

*Gives life*

### **Who wounds**

*And heals*

We often like to think of God's sovereignty in terms of One who gives life and One who heals. However in these verses we also learn that God is the One who puts to death and He is the One who wounds. God is saying I rule over both edges.

This is often not taught in our evangelical churches today and therefore there is a need to go slow and let this sink in.

It is imperative that we take people back to God's word!

# The Spectrum of God's Sovereignty

← And everything in between →

**Death**  
**Wound**  
**Down to grave**  
**Make Poor**

**Life**  
**Heal**  
**Raise up**  
**Make Rich**

## **Daniel 4 (One of strongest statements on sovereignty)**

The words of King Nebuchadnezzar who was a pagan king.

### **Daniel 4:29-30**

*‘Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon.*

*The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?'*

### **Daniel 4:32**

*and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes. ’*

**Conclusion:** God say to Nebuchadnezzar you are king at this moment but *God gives the kingdoms of the world to those He chooses*

But then after seven years of eating grass, his beard growing and fingernails not being cut, his reason returns.

### **Daniel 4:34-35**

But 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.  
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** (Rom.9, Jer.18)  
Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'

What does this mean?

King N. talks about the dominion of **God being everlasting** as compared with **his which is temporal**

The phrase “are nothing compared to Him”(cross ref:Isaiah 40)

Doesn't this mean:

That they add nothing to God even with all their power and prowess and might.

The nations do not add or take away from the all sufficiency of God.

In context it means that they are able to do nothing in terms of being able to accomplish their own will in lieu of God's will. (Eph.1:11)

**Daniel 4:35** - No one can keep God from accomplishing His good and pleasing will.

No one can question His wisdom, justice and authority!

### **Psalm 135:5-6**

For I know that the LORD is great  
And that our Lord is above all gods.  
Whatever the LORD pleases, He does,  
In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.

What in this verse distinguishes God?

Answer - God does whatever He pleases

How wide is the sovereignty of God? And How deep?

There are no qualifications to these statements. Such as, God can only do this as long as human beings are stubborn in their hearts.

### **Psalm 115:3**

But our God is in the heavens;  
He does whatever He pleases.

### **Proverbs 16:33**

The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD.

### **Matthew 6:26**

Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. (NKJV)

### **Proverbs 19:21**

Many plans are in a man's heart, But the counsel of the LORD will stand.

### **Isaiah 46:10**

Declaring 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';

## **Jeremiah 32:27**

Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?”

## **Genesis 18:14**

“Is anything too difficult for the LORD?...”

## **Proverbs 21:1**

The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes. (Think about this when you are in a situation where someone else has control)

## **Illustration: Bruce Ware's house for sale**

Remember the 10 plagues that God sent against the Egyptian people via His servant Moses. Wouldn't you think that after all these hardships the people of Egypt would hate and want to kill the Israelites? But look what happened.

### **Exodus 12:35-36**

Now the sons of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, for they had requested from the Egyptians articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have their request. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.

## Two kinds of issues

**Mechanical** - How does divine sovereignty, God's control over everything that happens mesh with human freedom?

How does this work that we are free and yet God is in control of everything?

Unless you hold the belief that there is no human freedom in Scripture

Very few over the course of church history have argued for the view above

**Moral issue** - How can it be that if God is sovereign and in control of everything that He could hold us accountable for evil?

And God Himself is always praise worthy, we get all the blame and God gets the praise, so how can this be?

## **“Compatibilist” Texts**

This means two things that need to be brought together in convergence.

One is the sovereign control of God, He is ordaining, He is determining, He is causing to bring about certain things but that sovereign ordination of God doesn't cancel out human free action and responsibility.

Instead that sovereign action of God is compatible with and doesn't happen separate from responsible human action.

So these two things are compatible – Divine Sovereignty and Free Human Responsibility

## **Genesis 45:4-8**

You remember the story, there was seven years of plenty and seven years of famine.

So when the brothers went down to Egypt to buy food the one that they appeared before was in fact there brother Joseph.

The brothers sold Joseph as a slave hoping that he would have a painful death.

They had no idea that he was promoted, God had given him those dreams, and now he was second in command in all of Egypt.

Then in Genesis 45 Joseph decides to reveal his true identity to his brothers.

“Then Joseph said to his brothers, . . . ‘I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.

Question – is this true?

Did his brothers sell him into Egypt?

Yes indeed they did, they plotted it and carried it out and did exactly what they wanted to do.

First of all they wanted to kill him but Reuben was there and kept them from doing that, but when the caravan came along they decided that was better because they could make some money and also be sure he would have a painful death as a slave.

Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life . . .

Now stop and think, notice it does not say this “don’t be angry with yourselves for selling me into Egypt for God took what you did and turned it into good.”

Instead it says that God sent me, this is the language of past tense or past action to indicate what God did and what they did. The brothers selling Joseph into Egypt was God’s sending Joseph into Egypt. It was not using what they did for some good purpose.

Now here is the question —when you have two activities that converge in bringing about what happens:

- The brothers selling Joseph into Egypt
- God sending him to Egypt

Now the question is would one of the two actions be more ultimate or primary? Or does one of the two weigh in heavier than the other in explaining what happens.

Verse 7 God sent me (notice who gets dropped out of the equation all together in this verse – the brothers are no longer mentioned because God’s purpose is fulfilled in what they did) before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. *(It looks like a stronger weight given to God’s action than the brothers)*

Verse 8 Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; *(This verifies what we thought in verse 7 that God has the ultimate action here)* and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt.””

In an ultimate sense, what happened to Joseph can't be explained by what happened according to the brothers jealousy and anger and vengeful action toward Joseph in selling him into Egypt.

Basically what this means is that the brothers carried out God's sovereign will.

God sent Joseph through the brothers selling him.

Question: If that is the case then on judgment day can the brothers of Joseph hold up this passage from Genesis 45 and say "we can't be held accountable for this because we didn't send Joseph but it was God and therefore we are off the hook."

Is that going to work? Answer - No way

And the reason we know this is because in Genesis 50 when Jacob dies and the brothers are left with Joseph they are worried because the father is gone so what is Joseph now going to do with them?

So they plead with him to forgive them and Joseph responds “you meant it for evil but God meant it for good.”

It is very clear that God’s sending Joseph to Egypt through the brothers selling Joseph to Egypt does not in any way absolve them of responsibility.

God is praised for the action that He does for the people and they are blameworthy for the action they did in selling Joseph down to Egypt.