



“The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty” (Psalm 29:4).

God Is Sovereign

Central Truth: Storm-tossed saints find comfort in God’s sovereignty.

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Do you believe in the sovereignty of God? If you believe the Bible, you do!

To be sovereign means to be above or superior to all others. It means to be supreme in power, rank, or authority. The sovereignty of God means that He has supreme and independent authority. It means that God does not receive His authority or power from one greater than He and there is none to whom He is obligated to give account.

The sovereignty of God is taught in Scripture passages like these. *“I am God, and there is none else”* (Isaiah 45:22). *“All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand or say unto him, What doest thou?”* (Daniel 4:35). *“There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God”* (Romans 13:1). That list of references could be continued.

Do not let the misunderstanding or misapplication of some rob you of the blessing of this doctrine. God is in control. There is no power greater than His. This is a blessed Bible doctrine in which the saints can find rest for their troubled hearts. Understand it. Believe it. Rejoice in it. God is sovereign. Hallelujah!

I. UNDERSTANDING GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY (Psalm 29:1, 2)

A. Definition: The sovereignty of God means that He is over all persons and things in position and in power. It means that He is working out

His will in the world in spite of man's unbelief or rebellion. It means He will bring human history to an end which He planned from the beginning. It means prophecy is history written beforehand, since He will do all He has said through the prophets (Isaiah 46:10).

In His sovereignty, God has permitted mankind to exercise freedom of will. As the owner of a pet may put it on a leash and let it run at will to the limits of the leash, so God has given mankind freedom within the boundaries of His will. Sovereignty does not mean that every person is locked by fate to a predetermined destiny. But it does mean that God is in charge. He will do His will whether human beings choose it or not. Indeed, He will make even the rebellion of sinful people to work out to His glory and the seeming bad things in the lives of believing people to work out to their good (Romans 8:28). Live under the sense of His divine lordship.

B. Proof: The Bible teaches that God is sovereign.

1. God is *"the Almighty."* He revealed himself to Abraham by that name, *"The LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me"* (Genesis 17:1). *"Almighty"* means "all mighty," the possession of all might (Power, ability, authority). Since God has all might, He is sovereign, as Romans 13:1 declares. When emphasis is placed on the power or authority of God, He is called the Almighty in the Bible.

2. God does what He pleases. Look at Daniel 4:35 again: *"He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"* One who could stay God's hand would be greater in power than He. One who could demand a report on what He is doing would be greater in authority than he. Since no one can stop His work or require a report, that indicates that God is sovereign in power and authority. That is divine sovereignty. *"Our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased"* (Psalm 115:3).

3. God finds nothing too hard for Him to do. When Abraham and Sarah doubted that they would have a child after their reproductive processes had ceased, God inquired, *"Is any thing too hard for the LORD?"* (Genesis 18:14). That was not too hard, for in due time Sarah bore a son when she was ninety years old and Abraham was one hundred.

When Job had seen God revealed, he repented and said, *"I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee"* (Job 42:2). That is an admission of God's sovereign power. It is a lesson that all need to learn.

4. God cannot be controlled by any person or power outside himself.

He has said, *“There is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?”* (Isaiah 43:13). Look at all His works and conclude with the psalmist, *“He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased”* (Psalm 115:3). Look over the preceding paragraphs and notice what they say of God. (1) He is almighty. (2) He does what He pleases to do. (3) Nothing is beyond His ability to do. (4) None can control what He does. That is sovereignty! Our God, whom we call “Father” in Jesus Christ, is the sovereign God.

C. Limitation: God limits the exercise of His sovereignty. He could decree every detail in your daily life, even the most exacting detail. But He leaves you freedom to make choices and direct your life within the limits of His greater will. We see but *“parts of his ways: . . . how little a portion is heard of him”* (Job 26:14). If we could see all that God is doing to work out His precious will among mankind, we would fall before Him in worship and praise. God limits himself and so remains sovereign. He can do all He wills, but He will not do all He can. An understanding of His sovereignty will encourage faith and assure our hearts. *“He ruleth by his power for ever”* (Psalm 66:7).

II. ILLUSTRATING GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY (Psalm 29:3-10)

“The LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet” (Nahum 1:3). That statement is illustrated in Psalm 29. Verses 3-10 picture a thunderstorm as it passes over the land of Palestine. Notice how God is seen in nature.

A. The voice of God is heard in the thunder. *“The voice of the LORD is upon the waters.”* It is *“powerful,” “full of majesty,”* and it *“breaketh the cedars of Lebanon”* (Psalm 29:3-5). What a picture of God that is! He speaks in the rumble of the thunder (Psalm 77:18). Perhaps the buildings tremble as deep thunder rolls across the land. It is like the earth trembling at Mount Sinai when God came down to speak to Israel through Moses. There is no reason to feel terror at the thunder if it is heard as the voice of the Lord. **B. The power of God is felt in the wind.** The cedars of Lebanon are broken as the wind lashes them about (Psalm 29:5, 6). What a great wind the psalmist witnessed. The cedars of Lebanon are giant trees with huge limbs. For them to be broken or to skip like a young calf, a fierce wind must have been blowing. But the psalmist faced the wind without fear. He saw it as the evidence of the power of God who *“walketh upon the wings of the wind”* (Psalm 104:3). The wind which opened the Red Sea for the Hebrews to cross was called *“the blast of thy nostrils”* as the people praised

God for deliverance (Exodus 15:8). When you feel the wind stirring about you, or hear its sound as it passes your house, think of the power of God manifested in it

C. The majesty of God is seen in the lightning. *“The voice of the LORD divideth the flames of fire”* (Psalm 29:7). How amazing is the display as the lightning flashes here and there! Its light against the dark background of the clouds makes it the more beautiful. The psalmist looked at the forked streaks of lightning and said, *“The LORD divideth the flames of fire.”* We tend to be afraid of lightning because of its possible destructive effects. But look at it as the handiwork of God and it will speak of His majesty.

D. The provision of God is seen in the rain. He sits upon the flood and is king over all nature (Psalm 29:10). We could get along without windstorm, thunder, and lightning, but we must have rain for our very survival. So the rain is a beautiful witness to the provision of God. God controls the fall of the rain, whether in a destructive flood (Genesis 6:17) or a gentle shower (Isaiah 55:10). When it rains in answer to your prayer, see it as God's provision. When it rains out your picnic or golf game, see it as God's provision. He is in control and does all things for the best.

E. The sovereignty of God is seen in the storm clouds. After viewing God's control of thunder and lightning, wind and rain, the psalmist concludes, *“The LORD sitteth King for ever”* (Psalm 29:10). Look at His control of the hail and lightning, which was the seventh plague of judgment to fall on Egypt (Exodus 9:22-35). Man is helpless against those natural elements. But God controls them and makes them do His will. What a God is He!

III. RESTING IN GOD'S SOVERIGNTY

The doctrine of divine sovereignty is not a cause for fear but for rejoicing. Nothing assures the human spirit so much as the realization that God is in control. The text says, *“The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace”* (Psalm 29:11).

A. God is able to strengthen His people. *“God is our refuge and strength”* (Psalm 46:1). He does not just give us strength; He is our strength. *“They go from strength to strength, everyone of them in Zion appeareth before God”* (psalm 84:7). *“He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. . . . But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength”* (Isaiah 40:29, 31). That is a power *“that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,”* (Ephesians 3:20).

B. God is able to provide for His people. He blesses the works of our hands so we have need of nothing (Deuteronomy 2:7). He feeds us with the finest of wheat and honey out of the rock (Psalm 81:16). As we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all necessary things will be added to us (Matthew 6:33). He does not promise to give us all our wants, but he does guarantee to provide all our needs. *“My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 4:19).

C. God is able to govern circumstances to favor His people. That is what we call “divine providence.” You see it in God's sending Joseph into Egypt as a slave, then elevating him to the throne, that He might provide for the Hebrews. He governed the circumstances by which Joseph was placed in Potiphar's house, was imprisoned through false accusation, came in contact with members of Pharaoh's staff, and arose to the throne of Egypt. He who did it then can and does do it now. *“We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose”* (Romans 8:28). That is what the sovereignty of God guarantees.

God is sovereign. Rejoice! The sovereign God, who does whatever He will, is our Father by faith in Jesus Christ. Hallelujah!

Questions

1. What does it mean to be sovereign?
2. How do Romans 13:1 and Isaiah 45:22 show God's sovereignty?
3. How does Daniel 4:35 prove God's sovereignty?
4. In what sense does God limit His sovereignty?
5. How does the storm cloud show God's sovereignty over nature?
6. How does the experience of Joseph show God's sovereignty over human beings?
7. How does God's sovereignty give assurance to His children?
8. How is God's sovereignty related to His providence?
9. How does God's sovereignty relate to you?
10. How can the doctrine of God's sovereignty explain current events?