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**THE SOVEREIGNTY  
OF GOD  
STUDY GUIDE**





# THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

## SCRIPTURE READING

### Deuteronomy 29:29

The secret things belong to the Lord God; the things that are revealed belong to us and our descendants forever so that we may do all the words of this law.

### Isaiah 44:6-8

Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and His Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts: “I am the first and the last; there is no God besides Me. Who is like Me that can call out, manifest, and set in order as I have done from the very beginning? Let him tell the things that are coming, and let him manifest these things. Do not be alarmed, neither be afraid. From the beginning of time, I have declared what would occur; you are my witnesses. There is no God beside Me. I do not know any.”

### Hebrews 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please God. One who comes to God must believe that God is God, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

## THEME

It is vital that we understand the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. It seems that those who advocate the sovereignty of God disregard the responsibility of man and those who advocate the responsibility of man disregard the sovereignty of God. We must realize that God’s sovereignty and man’s responsibility working together is the only way the will of God can truly be accomplished in earth.

## I. INTRODUCTION

A. What is the sovereignty of God and what does it mean?

1. *Webster’s Dictionary* defines sovereignty as “supreme in power.”

2. *The American Heritage Dictionary* defines sovereignty as “supremacy of authority or rule as exercised by a sovereign state; royal rank. authority, or power; **complete independence and self-government.**”
  3. From these definitions, we can conclude that sovereignty places one in a position to do as he pleases.
  4. One with supreme power has no power above him; therefore, he is accountable to no one.
- B. From the previous statements, we can conclude that God is sovereign; He is supreme in power, and He is not accountable to anyone.
- C. Although God is not accountable to anyone, He has chosen to make Himself accountable to Himself.
1. When God makes a promise or reveals His will, He binds Himself to His word.
  2. When God binds Himself to His word, He cannot usurp His promise through His sovereignty.
  3. God controls His words and actions by His own integrity and power. (Numbers 23:19)

## II. DOCTRINES OF SOVEREIGNTY

- A. There are two prevalent doctrines of men that deal with the sovereignty of God.
1. Both of these doctrines are detrimental to man’s understanding of God’s ways.
  2. One doctrine is built upon the belief that God has predetermined everything that will take place in our lives and that man has no option but to allow these events to occur.
    - a. This doctrine portrays God as all-controlling.
    - b. This doctrine exempts man from all responsibility.
  3. The other doctrine is the exact opposite of the first. This doctrine places all responsibility upon man.

- a. This doctrine teaches that God moves and acts according to man's decisions and choices.
  - b. This doctrine conveys the message that God moves according to man's will.
  - c. This doctrine views man as the controlling factor and God exempt from all responsibility.
- B. Although there is an element of truth in each doctrine, both doctrines are extreme.
- C. Both doctrines misrepresent God and deceive men.
- D. The first doctrine declares that no one can truly know the will of God.
  - 1. Those who believe and teach this doctrine of sovereignty embrace predestination.
  - 2. Those who follow this doctrine do not believe that we can change our course of life by our obedient or disobedient actions.
  - 3. If this doctrine were true, we would be nothing more than clones or puppets whose actions are always dependent upon someone else.
  - 4. If this doctrine were true, why would God highlight two trees in the Garden of Eden?
  - 5. Why would God give man a choice if he is incapable of choosing?
  - 6. Will a just and righteous God ask His creation to perform beyond his capabilities?
- E. We must not use the sovereignty of God to excuse men from the responsibility of knowing the will of God.
- F. The second doctrine of sovereignty teaches that the individual is responsible for every circumstance that comes his way.
  - 1. This doctrine teaches that the individual is at fault if adversity comes.

2. This belief is similar to the beliefs of Job's comforters, whom God rebuked for misrepresenting Him.
3. Those who follow this doctrine are often plagued with guilt and condemnation when adversity comes.
4. These individuals immediately begin to rebuke the devil and confess the Word of God, thinking that nothing bad should happen to good people.
5. The people who adhere to this doctrine disregard the sovereignty of God and assume all responsibility.
6. We must never forget that God's ways and thoughts are not the ways and thoughts of men. His ways and thoughts are superior to the ways and thoughts of men. (Isaiah 55:8-9)
7. We must be confident in our Creator, realizing that Jeremiah 29:11 is the motivating force behind the scenes.
8. God is always for us! The situations and circumstances that touch our lives will ultimately work for us, but we must cooperate with God. (Romans 8:28)
9. Although things cooperate for our good, we must not relax our position in Christ, thereby allowing Satan the opportunity to take undue advantage of us.
10. Satan is resisted and obedience is accomplished through submission to the sovereignty of God **and** His Will.

### **III. SOVEREIGNTY'S RECORDED WILL**

- A. The "law of Moses" was the revealed will of God to the nation of Israel. The New Testament is the revealed will of God to the Church.
- B. God, through His sovereignty, chose to document His will.
- C. There are many things that we can know about the will of God by reading His **Will**.
- D. Saying what God says does not challenge His sovereignty—it substantiates His sovereignty.

- E. God has recorded His will concerning salvation. (Mark 16:15-16; John 3:16; Romans 1:16; Romans 10:13-15; II Peter 3:9)
  - 1. God does not want anyone to perish; He wants everyone to repent. (II Peter 3:9)
  - 2. Although God desires for everyone to be saved, not everyone will be saved.
    - a. The gospel of Jesus Christ must be heard before one can be saved. (Mark 16:15; Romans 10:13-15)
    - b. Those who hear the gospel of Jesus must believe the message and receive Jesus into their hearts. (Mark 16:16)
  - 3. When the will of God is violated, the desire of God does not come into fruition.
- F. God has recorded His will concerning the Holy Spirit. (Luke 11:13; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:38-39)
  - 1. The Holy Spirit is a gift made available to all those who receive Jesus as Savior. (Acts 2:38-39)
  - 2. Although the Holy Spirit is freely given, not everyone receives the Holy Spirit.
  - 3. The believer must receive the gift which has been given; otherwise, the gift will not be beneficial.
- G. God has recorded His will concerning healing. (Isaiah 53:4-5; Psalm 103:1-3; Matthew 8:16-17; I Peter 2:24)
  - 1. The provision for healing has been accomplished through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.
  - 2. In His earthly ministry, Jesus revealed God's will concerning healing by healing everyone who came to Him for healing.
  - 3. God is not a respecter of person's; consequently, God does not exercise His sovereignty to pick and choose.
  - 4. One who does not know or believe the Word of God concerning healing will not enjoy the benefit of healing.

- H. The sovereignty of God and the Word of God never disagree; they work together.
- I. The Bible was written to reveal the will of God, not to declare the destiny of man.

#### **IV. GOD'S PROVISIONS ARE NOT AUTOMATIC**

- A. The devil opposes the sovereign will of God and, through deception, he attempts to discourage people from following God's will.
  - 1. Satan does not have the power to keep one from doing the will of God so he lies and deceives people through false doctrine and religious beliefs.
  - 2. Satan can hinder the will of God by influencing people to doubt the will of God.
- B. God rewards those who **diligently** seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)
  - 1. Rewards are not automatic; they are given to the diligent.
  - 2. Diligent effort and perseverance are rewarded.
  - 3. This passage of scripture places certain responsibilities upon the individual.
- C. Ignorance of God's will produces negative results. (Hosea 4:6)
- D. One who refuses to learn the will of God makes himself vulnerable to the attacks of the enemy.

#### **V. THE INTEGRITY OF SOVEREIGNTY**

- A. Sovereignty allows God the privilege of operating by His own rules, which He does.
- B. God knew that man could not perform the will of God unless he knew the will of God.
- C. God, in His sovereignty, recorded His will for man through man. (II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:21)
- D. Sovereignty decreed that He and man would work together in earth to accomplish His will and purpose.



- E. God reveals unto us the things we need to know in order to fulfill His purpose for our lives.
- F. It is imperative that we recognize God's right to reserve certain things for Himself. God does not have to tell us everything He does. (Deuteronomy 29:29)

## **VI. SUMMARY**

- A. Sovereignty means supreme in power.
- B. God is supreme in power, and He is not accountable to any other being.
- C. Although God is not accountable to anyone, He has made Himself accountable to Himself.
- D. There are two prevalent doctrines of sovereignty:
  - 1. The first doctrine declares that men **cannot** know the will of God. This doctrine embraces predestination and places all responsibility upon God.
  - 2. The second doctrine teaches that the individual is responsible for every circumstance that comes his way; consequently, God is released from all responsibilities concerning the individual's life.
- E. Sovereign God has revealed and recorded His will in the Word of God.
- F. The provisions of God are not automatic; God does His part, but we must do our part and overcome all opposition, realizing that God **is not** opposing us.
- G. Sovereign God always operates with absolute integrity. God is good for His word one hundred per cent of the time.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

- A. We must recognize and respect the sovereignty of God.
- B. We must not excuse ourselves from the responsibility placed upon us by the sovereign God.

- C. We must apply ourselves to know the Word of God; otherwise, we cannot know the will of God.
- D. We must understand that God does not do everything for us; He only does what we cannot do.
- E. One who understands and pursues the will of God does not, in any way, challenge the sovereignty of God.
- F. One who obeys the will of God confirms the sovereignty of God by proving that the sovereign God honors His Word.
- G. God's sovereignty does not excuse our responsibilities.
- H. Fulfilling our responsibilities does not challenge God's sovereignty.
- I. When God's sovereignty and man's responsibility unite, great things will be accomplished in the kingdom of God.
- J. God, in His sovereignty, can declare our destiny without manipulating our will.