

Part 2. The Nature and Work of God

Lesson 2: The Sovereignty of God

Lesson Summary

The sovereignty of God means that He reigns over all creation with supreme authority, wisdom, and power (Ps. 115:3; Eph. 1:11). He ordains history, salvation, and even human decisions within His divine plan (Rom. 11:36). Though God is not the author of sin, He permits it to accomplish greater purposes (Gen. 50:20).

Scripture teaches both God's sovereign election (Eph. 1:4–5; Rom. 9:15) and human responsibility (John 3:16; Rom. 10:9–10)—truths that meet in a mystery beyond human comprehension (Isa. 55:8–9). His sovereignty is revealed through the Trinity: the Father ordains, the Son accomplishes, and the Spirit applies redemption (Eph. 1:3–14).

Different theological traditions—Calvinism, Arminianism, Molinism, Catholic Thought, Open Theism, and Ryrie's Free Grace view—wrestle with the tension between divine sovereignty and human freedom. Yet the Bible calls us to trust God's wisdom, proclaim the gospel (Rom. 1:16; Matt. 28:19), and to rest in His sovereign grace.

Key Takeaways

- **God reigns supremely:** He does all He pleases, and no purpose of His can be thwarted (Ps. 135:6; Isa. 46:10).
- **Salvation is God's work:** From election to glorification, redemption is by His grace alone (Eph. 1:4–5; Jonah 2:9).
- **Sovereignty and responsibility:** God sovereignly chooses, yet man is responsible to believe and respond (John 6:37; Rom. 10:17).
- **The Trinity in sovereignty:** Father ordains, Son accomplishes, Spirit applies (John 1:3; Eph. 1:3–14).
- **Sin permitted, not authored:** God uses evil for good (Gen. 50:20) without ever being guilty of wrongdoing (1 Sam. 2:2).
- **Why we preach:** The gospel is God's ordained means of salvation (Rom. 10:17; Acts 1:8).
- **The tension remains:** Election and free will coexist beyond human comprehension (Rom. 11:33).

Questions & Answers

1. **Q:** What does it mean that God is sovereign?
A: That He reigns with supreme authority, ordaining all things according to His will (Ps. 115:3; Eph. 1:11).
2. **Q:** How can God be sovereign and humans still responsible?
A: Scripture affirms both: God chooses (Eph. 1:4), yet people must believe (John 3:16; Rom. 10:9–10).
3. **Q:** Is God the author of sin?
A: No—He is holy and just (1 Sam. 2:2), yet He permits evil to serve redemptive purposes (Gen. 50:20).

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4. **Q:** How is God's sovereignty revealed through the Trinity?
A: The Father ordains, the Son accomplishes, and the Spirit applies salvation (John 1:3; Eph. 1:3–14).
5. **Q:** Why must we preach if God sovereignly saves?
A: Because God ordains the means as well as the ends—faith comes by hearing the Word (Rom. 10:17; Matt. 28:19).
6. **Q:** What is the believer's response to God's sovereignty?
A: Humility, worship, obedience in evangelism, and trust in His perfect wisdom (Rom. 11:33; Acts 1:8).

“God's sovereignty is not cold control but loving rule—He reigns, He saves, and He calls us to trust, worship, and proclaim His gospel.”