

The Sovereignty of God

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What is the meaning of life? How do we determine right from wrong? What must we believe? What should we do as a church? How should the Bible be interpreted today? Who gets to decide? These important questions get to the heart of faith and practice. Before we analyze some facet of faith or how to interpret the Bible, we need to start from a much more fundamental level: the sovereignty of God.

The subject of the sovereignty of God is rarely considered; yet, this is the foundation of the Bible. For example, the term means, "supreme power, authority, or self-rule." The Bible assumes the Creator as the supreme power of the universe. His sovereignty is demonstrated many times throughout the Bible. Consider the following:

1. Creation: By God's supreme power, He spoke the earth into existence. He breathed life into man. He was the source of life. Paul would later explain how God's sovereignty was demonstrated by Creation: "The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place" (Act 17:24-26).

2. Garden of Eden: In man's first dwelling place, God established law. God commanded Adam and Eve to tend the garden and restricted them from eating from a specific tree (Gen. 2:15-17). God did not discuss the formation of law with Adam and Eve. Instead, God exercised authority to rule over Adam and Eve as their Superior.

3. Israel: God led the nation of Israel as their supreme power. He guided them according to a covenant that He alone devised. They were accountable to the covenant. When Israel obeyed, they were blessed. When they rebelled, they were punished.

The Sovereignty of God, the Messiah, and the Second Psalm

The Bible explains how God's sovereignty worked through the Messiah, Jesus. The term Messiah is connected to the concept of sovereignty. Messiah means "anointed." A king would be anointed at his coronation to signify his divine right to rule. God planned to rule the world through His anointed king. God's sovereignty expressed through the Messiah was prophesied in the second Psalm.

In the second Psalm, the nations and kings of the earth plot against God and His Anointed. They plan a rebellion against His rule: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, "Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us" (Psa. 2:2-3).

Despite their sedition, the sovereignty of God was unthreatened. God would enthrone the Messiah, crush the kings of the earth, and give their dominions to the Messiah (Psa. 2:4-9). The only hope the kings of the earth had was to make peace with the Son (Psa. 2:10-12).

The prophecy of the second Psalm was fulfilled by Jesus. Both Jewish and Roman powers participated in the trial and execution of Jesus. While they thought they were victorious by having Jesus killed, God raised Him from the dead. By a divine coronation, God triumphantly brought Jesus to Heaven and made Him king over Heaven and earth (Eph. 1:18-22).

After God made Jesus king, the world continued to rage against Him and His people. Disciples in Jerusalem faced persecution. Peter and John were arrested by the Sanhedrin Council. Realizing they could not legally hold the men, the Sanhedrin released Peter and John. When Peter and John returned to the disciples, they celebrated in worship by praying the second Psalm. They were living the fulfillment of the second Psalm.

“Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, "Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'—for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus” (Acts 4:24-30).

Conclusion

Remember the questions we asked at the beginning of this article? Answers to those questions must be sought with the humble awareness of the sovereignty of God. God is our Creator; therefore, He possesses supreme power over us. There is nothing we can do to alter or prevent His purposes from being accomplished.

By self-determination, God has elected to communicate His will through the Messiah, Jesus: “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world” (Heb. 1:1-2).

For us to submit to our Creator, we must obey His Son, Jesus. We must learn what Jesus has taught. We must obey what Jesus has commanded. We cannot ignore or alter the commands of Jesus. Our Creator has given us no such right. In pursuing answers to questions regarding the purpose of our existence, we must appeal to Jesus. In next week’s article, we will consider Jesus’ authority over us.