

THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

**A Journey Through the
Old Testament**

Romans 15:4 For everything that was written in the past was written for our instruction, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope.

The Sovereignty of God

- **How Sovereign is God?**
- **If God is sovereign, what about evil?**
- **How does God's sovereignty work with human free will?**



**God has ...
the rightful authority,
and the freedom,
and the wisdom
and the power
to bring about everything He intends to happen.**

- Therefore, everything He intends to happen,
happens**
- Whatever comes about, He intends to come about**

The Sovereignty of God

How Sovereign is God?

- **Primary Cause**
 - God
- **Secondary Cause**
 - Satan, calamities, men, animals, etc.

Job 1

21 “Naked I came from my mother’s womb,
and naked I shall return.

The LORD gave, and **the LORD has taken away.**
Blessed be the name of the LORD.”

22 In all this, Job did not sin or charge God with
wrongdoing

Job 2

9 Then Job's wife said to him, "Do you still retain your integrity? Curse God and die!"

10 "You speak as a foolish woman speaks," he told her. **"Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?"**

In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

2 Corinthians 12

7 So to keep me from becoming conceited,
I **was given** a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of
Satan, to torment me.

8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to **take it
away** from me.

9 But He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for
you, for My power is perfected in weakness.”

1 Peter 4

19 So then, those who suffer **according to God's will** should entrust their souls to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

John Piper -

“Now you have got to have a category here from the Bible that says: God can ordain that sin come to pass without himself sinning.

God is not a sinner. God is not evil. God is holy, just, true, and good.

And in the way he governs and runs the world this text says: it may be God’s will that you suffer for doing good, which always involves somebody sinning against you.”

The Sovereignty of God

If God is sovereign, what about evil?

God is not the author of evil...

- He did not create it, nor can He be blamed for it

...yet, He does will that it happens

- He “causes” it, directs it, and uses it for His glory

Isaiah 45

7 I form light and create darkness;
I bring prosperity and **create calamity**.
I, the LORD, do all these things.

Amos 3

6 If calamity comes to a city, has not the
LORD caused it?

2 Samuel 12

11 This is what **the LORD** says: ‘**I will raise up adversity against you** from your own house.

Before your very eyes **I will take your wives and give them to another**, and he will lie with them in broad daylight.

12 You have acted in secret, but **I will do this** thing in broad daylight before all Israel.’”

Deuteronomy 2

30 But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass through,
for **the LORD your God had made his spirit stubborn and his heart obstinate**, that He might give him into your hands, as is the case this day.

Psalm 33:13 The LORD looks down from heaven;
He sees all the sons of men.

14 From His dwelling place He gazes on all who
inhabit the earth.

15 **He shapes the hearts of each;** He considers all
their works.

Psalm 105:24 And the LORD made His people very
fruitful, more numerous than their foes,

25 **whose hearts He turned to hate His people,** to
conspire against His servants.

Genesis 50

19 But Joseph replied, “Do not be afraid. Am I in the place of God?”

20 As for you, you meant **evil** against me, but God meant **it** for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.

Genesis 45

4 “I am Joseph, your brother,” he said, “the one you sold into Egypt!

5 And now, do not be distressed or angry with yourselves **that you sold me** into this place, because it was to save lives that **God sent me** before you.

6 For the famine has covered the land these two years, and there will be five more years without plowing or harvesting.

Genesis 45

7 **God sent me** before you to preserve you as a remnant on the earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8 Therefore **it was not you who sent me here, but God**, who has made me a father to Pharaoh—lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

Psalm 105

16 He called down famine on the land and cut off all their supplies of food.

17 **He sent a man** before them— Joseph, sold as a slave.

Acts 4

‘Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?
26 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against His Anointed One.’

27 In fact, in this very city Herod and Pontius Pilate conspired with the Gentiles and the people of Israel against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed.

28 They carried out what Your hand and **will had decided beforehand would happen.**

Luke 22

22 Indeed, the Son of Man will go **as it has been determined,**
but woe to that man who betrays Him.”

Isaiah 53

10 Yet it was the **LORD's will** to crush Him and
cause Him to suffer.

Jonathan Edwards -

"Evil is an evil thing, and yet it may be a good thing that evil should be in the world...as for instance, it might be an evil thing to crucify Christ, but yet it was a good thing that the crucifying of Christ came to pass.

As men's act, it was evil, but as God ordered it, it was good."

D. A. Carson -

“To put it bluntly, God stands behind evil in such a way that not even evil takes place outside the bounds of his sovereignty, yet the evil is not morally chargeable to him: it is always chargeable to the secondary agents, to secondary causes [i.e., those who actually do it].

D. A. Carson

On the other hand, God stands behind good in such a way that it not only takes place within the bounds of his sovereignty, but it is always chargeable to him, and only derivatively to secondary agents...

If this sounds just a bit too convenient for God, my initial response is that according to the Bible this is the only God there is."

The Sovereignty of God

If God is sovereign, what about evil?

- **Moral Will**
 - Revealed will
- **Sovereign Will**
 - Hidden will

1 Thessalonians 4

3 For it is God's will that you should be holy:

You must abstain from sexual immorality; 4 each of you must know how to control his own body in holiness and honor,

5 not in lustful passion like the Gentiles who do not know God

Matthew 7

21 “Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does **the will of my Father.**”

Ephesians 1

11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of **his will**

Matthew 26

39 Going a little farther, He fell facedown and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Yet not as I will, but as **You will.**”

The Sovereignty of God

If God is sovereign, what about evil?

- **Moral Will**

- We obey His moral will
- Jesus is our High Priest

- **Sovereign Will**

- We trust Him with His sovereign will
- Jesus is our King

The Sovereignty of God

If God is sovereign, what about evil?

God is the positive cause of good

- God positively brings about all good
- God always gets the credit for good

God is the negative cause of evil

- God is always restraining evil
- God “causes” evil by removing His restraint
- God can never be blamed for evil or sin

Exodus 7

1 The LORD answered Moses, ...

2 You are to speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron must declare it to Pharaoh so that he will let the Israelites go out of his land.

3 But **I will harden Pharaoh's heart**, and though I will multiply My signs and wonders in the land of Egypt,

4 **Pharaoh will not listen to you.**

Romans 9

16 So then, **it does not depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy.**

17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed in all the earth."

18 Therefore God has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy, and He hardens whom He wants to harden.

2 Samuel 24

1 Again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and **he incited David** against them, saying, “Go, number Israel and Judah.”

10 After David had numbered the troops, his conscience was stricken and he said to the LORD, “**I have sinned greatly in what I have done.** Now, O LORD, I beg You to take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly.”

Jude 1

24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you unblemished in His glorious presence, with great joy—

25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all time, and now, and for all eternity.

The Sovereignty of God

Five Take-aways:

1. It all depends on God's mercy
2. We can lean into His sovereignty and trust Him
3. We always take the blame for our sin
but God gets the credit for our good
4. God's sovereignty NEVER removes my
responsibility to choose and to act
 - God works through the free will of man
5. God intends that we long for our eternal home

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