

The Sovereignty of God

The Sovereignty of God in the Scriptures

- That phrase does not appear in the KJV, nor does any form of “sovereign.” In the NIV, it appears 286 times in the Old Testament, although the number of occurrences may differ between the various editions of the NIV. “Sovereign Lord” is a rewording of the traditional Lord God, which, transliterated from Hebrew is Adonay Yahweh or “the Lord Who Is.” That change reverses the point God made to Moses in Exodus 6:3 that God wanted to be known as “I am” rather than “God of Power.”
- In addition to being used as part of the name of God, “sovereign” or “sovereignty” appears seven times in Daniel in the NIV. In 4:17, 25, and 32, the common word for ruler is changed to sovereign, although all the other occasions of that word are translated “ruler.” The same is true in 5:21, although it is a different part of speech. In 5:18, God gave a kingdom to Nebuchadnezzar. In all other places, the Hebrew word is translated kingdom. In both 7:14 and 7:27, the same Hebrew word is translated sovereign (or sovereignty) and kingdom in the same verse.
- In the New Testament, sovereign appears four times in the NIV. In Romans 9:6, the word is inserted by the translators although the Greek text has no corresponding word. In 2 Peter 2:1 and Revelation 6:10, the Greek word is despotes (despot), translated Lord. The adjective, Sovereign, is not in the Greek text. In Jude 4, the text has been seriously manipulated so the correspondence to a particular Greek word cannot be discerned.

Observation: The concept of the sovereignty of God is an assumption through which Scripture is interpreted rather than a teaching given in the Scriptures. In order to insert the word into the Scriptures, the concept of “the God Who Is” has been replaced by the “God of All Power,” a reversal of God’s desire expressed in Exodus 6:3.

Two examples of definitions of the Sovereignty of God

1. The Sovereignty of God is the biblical teaching that all things are under God's rule and control, and that nothing happens without His direction or permission. God works not just some things but all things according to the counsel of His own will (see Eph. 1:11). His purposes are all-inclusive and never thwarted (see Isa. 46:11); nothing takes Him by surprise. The sovereignty of God is not merely that God has the power and right to govern all things, but that He does so, always and without exception. In other words, God is not merely sovereign *de jure* (in principle), but sovereign *de facto* (in practice).
2. "What do we mean by the sovereignty of God? We mean the supremacy of God, the kingship of God, the god-hood of God. To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that God is God. To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that He is the Most High, doing according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, so that none can stay His hand or say unto Him what doest Thou? (Dan. 4:35). To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that He is the Almighty, the Possessor of all power in Heaven and earth, so that none can defeat His counsels, thwart His purpose, or resist His will (Psa. 115:3). To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that He is "The Governor among the nations" (Psa. 22:28), setting up kingdoms, overthrowing empires, and determining the course of dynasties as pleaseth Him best. To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that He

is the "Only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim. 6:15). Such is the God of the Bible."

Problems with the descriptions

- The statements are generated outside of Scripture, then are declared true due to a few verses. No effort is made to disprove the generalization or to find all passages that have to do with the subject.
- "Nothing happens without His direction or permission."
 - The idea of "permission" is not well defined. In the context of its paragraph, it implies that God purposefully allows evil to happen, that it would not happen if God did not want it to happen. This means that sin is within the will of God.
 - This asserts that free will does not exist. Because we believe we have the ability to choose, this assertion makes God the Great Deceiver.
 - 1 Corinthians 7:37 says that Christians have power over their own will. "Desire" and "will" are the same word. See also Romans 7:18, 1 Corinthians 9:17, 1 Corinthians 16:12, 2 Corinthians 8:11, 1 Timothy 5:11, 2 Timothy 2:26, 3:12, 1 Peter 4:2, 4:3, all of which say that non-divine spirits can execute their own will (including Satan).
- "God works all things according to the counsel of His own will." "God has the power and right to govern all things ... He does so, always and without exception." In reality, the vast majority of what happens on earth is against God's will: sin. The reference is to Ephesians 1:11. To understand its meaning, one must know what the will of God is:
 - Romans 12:2 Our transformation proves what the will of God is.
 - Ephesians 5:17 Christians are able to know the will of God
 - Philippians 2:13 God assists Christians to desire His good pleasure, in contrast to Romans 7:18 in which the unbeliever fails. (See also Hebrews 13:21.)
 - Colossians 4:12 The goal is to be perfect and complete in all the will of God, implying that many do not.
 - 1 Thessalonians 4:3 God's will is our sanctification, specifically in regard to sexual immorality. Obviously, the percentage of people who do God's will is small.
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:18 The will of God is for Christians to give thanks.
 - 1 Timothy 2:4 God wills for all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. Obviously, that is not going to be the case.
 - 1 Peter 2:15 The will of God is for Christians to do good, putting to silence the ignorance of foolish men.
 - 1 Peter 4:19 Some suffer according to the will of God.
 - God's will is to grow faith. People and angels have their own wills to go along or not. Without free will, neither faith nor love has meaning.
- The reference to Isaiah 46:11 has nothing to do with the author's point about the sovereignty of God. Rather, God message was to emphasize His own faithfulness; He will accomplish what He promises. The reference to Daniel 4:35 is the same. Psalm 115:3 say that God does what He pleases, but has no relationship to the author's point.
- Psalm 22:28 is a description of the Messiah, who is King of all the nations of the earth. Unless one is willing to assert that Jesus controls every governmental decision in every country, we must conclude that the will of Jesus is routinely ignored. However, it does imply that Satan will lose his position as lord of this earth after the Messiah comes. The citation of 1 Timothy 6:15 has the same problem.