

## God's Sovereignty

God's sovereignty is a theological term used to describe God's supreme power and authority over the universe and everything within it. This belief asserts that God is the ultimate ruler who governs all aspects of creation, including the affairs of humans, with absolute control and authority. God's sovereignty implies that God's will is paramount and decisive, so that everything that happens is either directly caused by or allowed within God's providential plan. This encompasses the belief that God is omniscient (all-knowing), omnipotent (all-powerful), and omnipresent (present everywhere), guiding and determining the course of history and the destiny of individuals according to His divine will and purpose.

Theological Determinism: a biblical view on sovereignty, where every event in the world, including human decisions, is part of God's sovereign decree. In this view, human will is limited and defined in a way that aligns with God's determinative will, suggesting that humans choose according to their desires, which are themselves within the scope of God's sovereign control.

God's supremacy over every molecule of His finite creation must remain Immutable, or He ceases to be God.

At first glance, this view has a tendency to appear contradictory with the human experience of choice or will, but it is not. First, taking a quick look at the limited nature of our choice, in the book of Genesis helps us establish the limits set by God himself.

Genesis 2:16-17 HCSB: "And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.""

Because of the limitations set by God on our choice, it is better to see our human experience of choice in the light of obedience and disobedience. It's common to view, disobedience, in correlation with reaping consequences, but we should also remember that obedience correlates with storing treasures in heaven.

## Matthew chapter 1

Matthew chapter 1 is primarily focused on the genealogy and birth of Jesus Christ, establishing His legal right to the throne of David and fulfilling Old Testament prophecy, which underscores God's sovereignty in several key ways. Here's an exposition on the verses that highlight God's sovereignty within this chapter:

Genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1:1-17):

This section outlines Jesus' lineage from Abraham through David to Joseph, Jesus' legal father. This genealogy not only confirms Jesus as a legitimate heir to David's

throne but also demonstrates God's sovereign plan unfolding across generations. It shows God's control over history, as He orchestrates events and lineages to bring about His purposes, culminating in the birth of the Messiah. Each name listed is a testament to God's sovereignty, as He works through both faithful and flawed individuals to accomplish His will.

#### The Birth of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:18-25):

This portion of the chapter provides a vivid account of God's sovereign intervention in the natural order to bring about the birth of Jesus through a virgin, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 7:14). God sends an angel to Joseph in a dream to reveal His plan for Mary to give birth to Jesus, who "will save his people from their sins" (v. 21). This divine intervention illustrates God's supreme authority over nature and human events, orchestrating the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

#### Virgin Birth (v. 18-23):

The conception of Jesus by the Holy Spirit is a direct act of God's sovereign will, bypassing the natural processes of human reproduction. This miracle underscores God's power and authority over creation, fulfilling the prophecy: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

#### Joseph's Obedience (v. 24-25):

Joseph's decision to take Mary as his wife and to name the child Jesus is in response to God's command through an angel. This shows God's sovereignty in guiding human decisions to fulfill His divine purposes. Joseph's obedience serves as a means through which God's sovereign plan is realized.

In summary, Matthew chapter 1 demonstrates God's sovereignty through the fulfillment of prophecy, control over human history, and miraculous intervention in the natural order. The genealogy of Jesus illustrates God's meticulous preparation over centuries to bring about the Messiah's birth, while the account of Jesus' virgin birth highlights God's direct and sovereign action in history to save His people. These verses collectively affirm that God is actively involved and sovereign over both the grand narrative of history and the individual lives within it.

## Matthew Chapter 2

Matthew Chapter 2 vividly illustrates God's sovereignty through the narrative of the early life of Jesus, particularly focusing on events surrounding His birth and the actions taken by His family in response to divine guidance. The sovereignty of God is demonstrated through prophecy fulfillment, divine warnings in dreams, and the orchestration of events to protect the infant Jesus. Here's an exposition highlighting these themes:

### The Visit of the Wise Men (Matthew 2:1-12):

The arrival of the wise men from the East underscores God's sovereignty in revealing the birth of Jesus to those outside the Jewish faith, guiding them through a star to worship Him. This event fulfills the prophecy of a ruler coming from Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). The wise men's journey and their guided decision not to return to Herod highlight God's control over human actions and events, ensuring Jesus' safety.

### The Flight to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15):

After the wise men depart, Joseph is warned in a dream to take Jesus and Mary to Egypt to escape Herod's impending massacre. This immediate action, prompted by divine intervention, showcases God's sovereign protection over Jesus. The sojourn in Egypt fulfills Hosea's prophecy: "Out of Egypt I called my son" (Hosea 11:1), demonstrating God's foreknowledge and orchestration of events to fulfill His redemptive plan.

### Herod's Massacre and Its Aftermath (Matthew 2:16-18):

Herod's attempt to kill Jesus results in the tragic massacre of the infants in Bethlehem, which fulfills Jeremiah's prophecy of mourning in Ramah (Jeremiah 31:15). This dark event underscores the contrast between human wickedness and God's sovereignty, even in the midst of suffering and evil. God's ability to work His purposes out, despite human actions, highlights His supreme control and ultimate authority over history.

### The Return to Nazareth (Matthew 2:19-23):

After Herod's death, Joseph is again directed by God through a dream to return to Israel with Jesus and Mary. The decision to reside in Nazareth fulfills the prophets' declaration that the Messiah would be called a Nazarene. This series of divine interventions and guidance not only protects Jesus but also ensures that every step taken aligns with God's sovereign will and the fulfillment of prophecy.

Throughout Matthew Chapter 2, God's sovereignty is evident in His control over events, His protection of Jesus from Herod's wrath, and the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. Each element of the narrative—from the journey of the wise men guided by a star, to the flight into Egypt, and the eventual settling in Nazareth—reveals a meticulous divine plan unfolding. God's ability to direct human actions, utilize dreams for communication, and orchestrate the fulfillment of prophecies underscores His ultimate authority and sovereign hand guiding the course of history for the purpose of redemption.

## Matthew Chapter 3

Matthew Chapter 3 introduces John the Baptist and narrates the baptism of Jesus, both significant events that underscore God's sovereignty in the unfolding of the redemptive narrative. This chapter highlights the fulfillment of prophecy, the divine orchestration of Jesus' ministry, and the affirmation of Jesus as God's Son, showcasing God's supreme authority and purpose.

John the Baptist Prepares the Way (Matthew 3:1-12):

John the Baptist's ministry itself is a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" (Isaiah 40:3). This establishes God's sovereign plan in preparing the people for the coming of Jesus. John's role as the forerunner to Christ was ordained by God, demonstrating God's control over historical events and individuals' lives to bring about His redemptive purposes.

The Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17):

The baptism of Jesus by John in the Jordan River is a pivotal moment that reveals God's sovereignty in several ways:

- Jesus' Submission: Jesus' decision to be baptized, despite John's initial hesitation, underscores Jesus' submission to God's will, fulfilling all righteousness. This act demonstrates Jesus' obedience to God's sovereign plan for salvation of the church.
- Heavenly Affirmation: As Jesus is baptized, the heavens open, the Spirit of God descends like a dove, and a voice from heaven says, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (v. 17). This divine affirmation of Jesus as the Son of God reveals God's authority and sovereignty in affirming Jesus' identity and mission.
- The Trinity: The baptism scene also displays the Trinitarian nature of God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—indicating the sovereign work of God in the process of redemption.

Throughout Matthew Chapter 3, God's sovereignty is manifested through the preparation of the way for Jesus by John the Baptist, the fulfillment of prophecy, and the divine affirmation of Jesus at His baptism. These events not only validate Jesus' messianic identity but also illustrate God's overarching control and purpose in the redemption story. God's direct intervention in Jesus' baptism, the orchestration of John's ministry, and the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies all testify to His sovereign rule and the deliberate unfolding of His plan for humanity.

## Matthew Chapter 4

Matthew Chapter 4 showcases God's sovereignty through the temptation of Jesus, His calling of the first disciples, and the beginning of His ministry in Galilee. This chapter highlights the fulfillment of prophecy, Jesus' authority over Satan, and the divine calling

of His followers, demonstrating God's control and purpose in establishing His kingdom.

#### The Temptation of Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11):

Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, illustrating God's sovereignty in several ways:

- Divine Purpose: The Spirit leading Jesus into the wilderness indicates that the temptation was part of God's sovereign plan, designed to prove Jesus' obedience and righteousness.

- Jesus' Authority: Jesus' responses to Satan's temptations demonstrate His authority and knowledge of Scripture, reinforcing His divine sonship and mission. Each refusal is a declaration of God's sovereignty and Jesus' submission to His Father's will over Satan's offers.

- Angelic Ministry: After the temptation, angels come and attend to Jesus, showing God's care and sovereignty in providing for His Son, even in the midst of trials.

#### Jesus Begins His Ministry (Matthew 4:12-17):

Hearing that John had been imprisoned, Jesus withdraws to Galilee, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah about the light rising in Galilee of the Gentiles (Isaiah 9:1-2). This strategic move not only avoids potential conflict but also signifies the beginning of Jesus' public ministry in fulfillment of God's redemptive plan, demonstrating His sovereignty in the timing and location of Jesus' ministry.

#### The Calling of the First Disciples (Matthew 4:18-22):

Jesus calls Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him, promising to make them fishers of men. Their immediate response to Jesus' call illustrates the divine authority Jesus holds and the sovereign work of God in calling individuals to His purpose. This moment underscores God's sovereignty in choosing those who would be close to Jesus and lead the early church.

#### Jesus Teaches, Preaches, and Heals (Matthew 4:23-25):

Jesus travels throughout Galilee, teaching in synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. These acts of healing and teaching not only affirm Jesus' divine authority but also fulfill the messianic expectations outlined in the Old Testament, demonstrating God's sovereignty in Jesus' ministry. The crowds following Him from diverse regions signify the broad impact of Jesus' ministry and God's sovereign plan to reach various peoples through His Son.

Throughout Matthew Chapter 4, God's sovereignty is evident in the orchestration of Jesus' temptation, the initiation of His ministry, the calling of His first disciples, and His miraculous works. These events collectively reveal God's control over history, the fulfillment of prophecy, and the establishment of Jesus' earthly ministry, highlighting God's supreme authority and redemptive purposes being accomplished through His Son.

## Matthew Chapter 5

Matthew Chapter 5 is the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus teaches about the values and principles of the Kingdom of Heaven, offering profound insights into righteousness, justice, and the nature of true discipleship. This chapter, while primarily ethical and instructive in nature, also subtly underscores God's sovereignty through the establishment of divine standards for living and the promise of God's blessing upon those who follow them.

### The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12):

The Beatitudes open with blessings for those who embody the qualities valued in God's Kingdom. These verses reflect God's sovereignty in several ways:

- Blessing the Humble and Righteous: The blessings pronounced on the poor in spirit, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, and the persecuted, among others, reveal God's sovereign values, which often contrast with worldly values. This demonstrates God's authority to confer blessings and determine what is truly valuable and worthy.

- Promise of the Kingdom: The repeated assurance of the kingdom of heaven to those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake (verses 3 and 10) emphasizes God's sovereign rule over this promised future reality. It assures listeners of God's ultimate control and the vindication of His people.

### Salt and Light (Matthew 5:13-16):

Jesus uses the metaphors of salt and light to describe the influential role of His followers in the world. This section reflects God's sovereignty in His call for believers to influence the world according to His divine standards. The expectation that His disciples would act as preservatives against moral decay and as light in a dark world underscores the sovereign will of God in establishing a people who reflect His character and purposes.

### Fulfillment of the Law (Matthew 5:17-20):

Jesus' declaration that He came not to abolish the Law but to fulfill it (verse 17) underscores His role in God's sovereign plan for redemption. This statement affirms

Jesus' authority and the divine purpose behind His ministry, emphasizing the continuity and fulfillment of God's sovereign will through the Law and the Prophets.

Higher Righteousness (Matthew 5:21-48):

In these verses, Jesus expounds on the Law, offering a deeper, more radical interpretation that focuses on the heart's intent rather than mere external compliance. This teaching demonstrates God's sovereignty in dictating not just actions but the motivations of the heart, calling for a righteousness that surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law (verse 20). This section reveals God's comprehensive authority over all aspects of moral and ethical life, demanding a transformative righteousness that reflects the character of God Himself.

Throughout Matthew Chapter 5, God's sovereignty is woven through the teachings of Jesus as He outlines the standards, values, and behaviors of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Beatitudes, along with the teachings on salt and light, the fulfillment of the Law, and the call to a higher righteousness, all reflect God's supreme authority over moral and ethical directives, His control over the Kingdom, and His sovereign plan to redeem and transform His people. This chapter, therefore, not only provides ethical teachings but also deeply affirms the sovereignty of God in establishing and governing the principles of His Kingdom.

## Matthew Chapter 6

Matthew Chapter 6 continues the Sermon on the Mount, with Jesus teaching about piety, prayer, forgiveness, fasting, and trust in God. This chapter underscores God's sovereignty through instructions on how to live in a manner that reflects a dependence on and trust in God's provision and rule.

Giving to the Needy (Matthew 6:1-4):

Jesus begins by instructing His listeners to give to the needy not for public recognition but in secret, where the Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward them. This teaching emphasizes God's sovereign observation and valuation of our motives and actions. It underscores the principle that God's kingdom operates on sincerity and humility, with God Himself overseeing and rewarding the righteous deeds of His people.

Prayer (Matthew 6:5-15):

The Lord's Prayer (verses 9-13) is a central piece of this chapter, teaching us how to pray in a way that acknowledges God's sovereignty:

- Acknowledging God's Holiness and Sovereignty: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name" recognizes God's holiness and authority over all things.

- Submission to God's Will: "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" is a direct submission to God's sovereign will, asking for His rule and plans to be realized fully in our world and lives.

- Dependence on God for Provision: "Give us today our daily bread" shows trust in God's sovereign provision for our daily needs.

- Seeking God's Forgiveness and Deliverance: The request for forgiveness and help in avoiding temptation acknowledges God's role as the judge and protector, highlighting His sovereignty in guiding and sustaining moral and spiritual well-being.

Fasting (Matthew 6:16-18):

Jesus instructs on fasting with a focus on sincerity rather than seeking human approval. The emphasis on the Father, who sees in secret and rewards, continues the theme of God's sovereignty, recognizing Him as the one who truly sees and evaluates the intentions behind our actions.

Treasures in Heaven (Matthew 6:19-24):

Jesus contrasts earthly and heavenly treasures, urging His followers to lay up treasures in heaven where they are secure. This teaching points to God's sovereignty over all earthly and heavenly realms, emphasizing the transient nature of earthly possessions and the eternal significance of spiritual investments under God's watchful eye.

Do Not Worry (Matthew 6:25-34):

The final section of the chapter is a profound teaching on trust in God's sovereignty over our lives. Jesus encourages His listeners not to worry about basic needs like food and clothing, pointing to God's provision for the birds of the air and the flowers of the field as evidence of His care and sovereignty. The exhortation to seek first God's kingdom and righteousness (verse 33) and the assurance that all these things will be given as well emphasizes reliance on God's sovereign provision and prioritization of His rule in our lives.

Throughout Matthew Chapter 6, Jesus' teachings reinforce the idea of living under God's sovereign rule, emphasizing a lifestyle characterized by sincerity, dependence on God for provision, and trust in His ultimate authority over our lives. The chapter guides believers to focus on the eternal and invisible realities of God's kingdom, confidently relying on God's sovereign care and provision.