

Assurance of Salvation  
Part 95

Prayer:

God's Sovereignty  
and Prayer

PRAYER ISSUES

**PART 6: God's Sovereignty  
and Prayer, in Difficult Times**

LEARNING ABOUT  
PRAYER

? The **BIG** question (#1):  
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**HOW should**  
**God's sovereignty**  
influence our prayers?

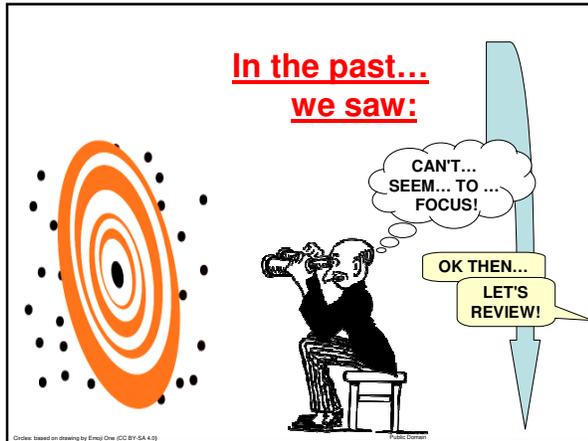


**KEY ISSUE #1:**  
We need to remember that God's sovereignty and human responsibility go together!  
*(We've already seen this fact when looking at other issues.)*

- We can rejoice that it's true, no matter how much (or little) we understand it.
  - It is good to learn what we can about it...
  - But God understands it all, and that's what's important!

<p><b>The devil <u>hates</u> God's sovereignty.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• He has convinced his people (= the world) to twist and distort it into something ugly.</li> </ul> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When we become followers of Jesus, we need to <u>relearn</u> what it's all about!</li> </ul> <p><b>We can <u>rejoice</u> in God's sovereignty!</b></p>	<p>With sovereignty, <u>he cannot win!</u></p> <hr/> <p>With sovereignty, <u>we cannot lose!</u></p>
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<p><b>The devil's <u>ugly message</u> about God's sovereignty:</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Jesus' follower's <u>response</u> about God's sovereignty:</b></p>	<p>If God is sovereign, <u>prayer has NO value!</u></p> <hr/> <p>If God is sovereign, <u>prayer has ALL value!</u></p>
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The **WORLD** teaches us that sovereignty and responsibility work *against* each other

"If God is sovereign, how can I be responsible for my actions?!"\*

\* (Stop "clowning around" with the world's lies!)

[The **WORLD'S** view of "sovereignty."]

NOT the way it is.

But I **WANT** to be saved!

Well, I want you to go to hell. And I'm bigger than you, so you lose!

Never, not ever.

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The **BIBLE** teaches us that sovereignty and responsibility work *with* each other

"Since God *is* sovereign, I **am** responsible for my actions.

My choices have *meaning!*

God guarantees it, and *the devil cannot stop it!*"

Gustavo Velazquez (CC BY 2.0)

[The **BIBLE'S** view of "sovereignty."]

Guess who I just saved!

I **WANT** to be saved!

The way it is.

Always, yes, ever.

OutPhoto (CC BY-SA 3.0)

<p>GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY</p> <p>US</p>	<p>WORSHIP</p> <p>LOVE GOD AND NEIGHBOR</p> <p>OBEEDIENCE</p> <p>HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY</p> <p>EVERYTHING ELSE IN LIFE</p> <p>SERVE</p> <p>PRaise</p>
<p><b>How much of these can we know?</b></p>	
<p>Things related to <b>sovereignty</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Secret</b> until they happen; we do <i>not</i> always understand them.</li> </ul>	<p>Things related to <b>responsibility</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Revealed</b> in Scripture; our obligation <i>can</i> be understood.</li> </ul>
<p>The <b>secret</b> things belong to the Lord our God, but the things <b>revealed</b> belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.</p> <p><small>Deut. 29:29 (NIV)</small></p>	

<p>GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY</p> <p>US</p>	<p>WORSHIP LOVE GOD AND NEIGHBOR OBEEDIENCE</p> <p>HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY</p> <p>SERVE EVERYTHING ELSE IN LIFE PRAISE</p>
<p>Important to know, when we pray,  <b>"Your will be done!"</b></p>	
<p>God's <u>sovereign</u> will ("decree").</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Do what you know is best!"</li> </ul> <p>"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet <i>not my will, but yours be done.</i>"</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>Luke 22:42 (NIV)</small></p>	<p>God's <u>moral</u> will (to be obeyed).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Help us to obey you!"</li> </ul> <p>"... your kingdom come, <i>your will be done</i> on earth as it is in heaven."</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>Matthew 6:10 (NIV)</small></p>

The next **BIG** question (#2):

**HOW** does God bridge the gap between sovereignty and us?

**KEY ISSUE #2:**  
 Prayer (and all of life) involves interaction with God... **3 WAYS.**  
*And all 3 are important!*

- GOD interacts with humans ...**
  - As sovereign creator *over all* creation.
  - As one who chose to come to earth and interact with us *on our level*.
- HUMANS interact with God ...**
  - On *our level only*, as created beings.

The "Bridge" →

- It works in only one direction**
- God became human (Jesus).
- God gave us his Word (the Bible).
- ✗ We cannot become "God" (or deity).

**God on OUR level?? DEFINITELY!**

Here are some examples of how he's done so:

- GOD in person ...**
  - In the Garden of Eden
  - As the Angel of the LORD\* (O.T.)
  - As Jesus Christ (N.T.)
- GOD in communication ...**
  - The Bible

\* Or: Angel of Yahweh. (In O.T. Hebrew: "Yahweh" = God's name.)

**God interacts with us in two ways**

<p>GOD</p> <p>God interacting as Creator over creation.</p> <p>US</p>	<p>God interacting with us on <u>our</u> level of existence.</p> <p>FOLLOW ME, MY TEACHINGS, MY EXAMPLE!</p>
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 <p><b>GOD as CREATOR</b> US</p>	 <p><b>GOD on OUR LEVEL</b></p>
<p>For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">Col. 1:16 (NIV)</p>	<p>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">John 1:14 (NIV)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also, the WORD, the Bible!</li> </ul>	

Because of these 3 ways of interaction:

(2 for God / 1 for us)

This is the reason

some Scripture passages appear to "contradict" others, or they say things in completely different ways.

- One passage may be describing God's sovereign perspective.
- Another passage may focus on our responsibility.
- Still another may involve God interacting with us on our level.

... yet all may be referring to the same topic!

 <p><b>GOD as CREATOR</b> US</p>	 <p><b>GOD on OUR LEVEL</b></p>	 <p><b>HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY</b></p>
Results in many contrasting themes (examples):		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>God</u> will accomplish good in our lives (Romans 8:28).</li> <li>• Some verses tell us that God <u>never changes</u>.</li> <li>• "God <u>cannot</u> be seen."</li> <li>• <u>Yahweh*</u> = one God</li> </ul> <p style="font-size: x-small;">* (Yahweh = God's name, in the O.T.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>We</u> must seek first his kingdom / righteousness (Matthew 6:33).</li> <li>• Some verses tell us about God <u>changing</u> a course of action (when people change theirs).</li> <li>• God <u>can</u> be seen. (Angel of the LORD* in O.T.; Jesus in N.T.)</li> <li>• <u>Father/Son/Spirit</u> = one God.</li> </ul> <p style="font-size: x-small;">* (Or: the Angel of Yahweh.)</p>	

?

The last **BIG** question (#3):

"So What?"

What value is there in knowing these things?



KEY ISSUE #3:

ALL of these relationships have value in PRAYER!

- And in all aspects of life!

- Human responsibility.
- God's sovereignty.
- God interacting with us on our level.

Because of Human Responsibility:

- We can obey God. (The Holy Spirit helps us.)

For God [gave us] a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.

2 Tim. 1:7 (NIV)

- We can pray. (The Holy Spirit helps us.)

We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

Romans 8:26b (NIV)

## Because of God's Sovereignty:

- We can **trust** God, no matter what happens.

**THE APOSTLES:** AN EXAMPLE OF **TRUST** DURING PERSECUTION (ACTS 4:23-31)

[A SUMMARY OF THE PASSAGE]:

"You are the Lord over all things, the Creator. They killed Jesus, just like you said they would. (v. 24-28)

"Now they're coming to get us! So give us the boldness to speak the truth. Show your power through us!" (v. 29-30)

## Because of God's Sovereignty:

- We can **praise** God, no matter what happens.

**JESUS:** AN EXAMPLE OF **PRAISE** WHEN ALL HIS EFFORTS SEEMED TO BE A FAILURE (MATTHEW 11:25-26)

WHEN THE PEOPLE REFUSED TO REPENT:

Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure."

Matthew 11:25-26 (NIV)

## Because the sovereign God interacts with us on our level:

- As our "heavenly Father"...
  - He understands what we're going through.
  - He knows our needs.
  - He will guide and protect us.

### Lessons from Romans 8:15-39

#### 8:15-17 – Our new family.

- God has chosen us to become members of his family (through adoption – Romans 8:15-17, 23).

#### 8:18-21 – The mess of sin.

- Sin has messed-up everything – not just us, but all of creation.
- When Jesus returns, he will clean up this mess – all of it.
  - Creation itself looks forward to this future event!

#### 8:22-25 – Our present situation.

- Right now, we have trials and difficulties.
- We eagerly look forward to the day of Jesus' return.

#### 8:26-30 – The sovereign work of God.

- The Holy Spirit is praying on our behalf.
- God is using all the troubles of life to accomplish eternal good for us.

#### 8:31-39 – The only right conclusion to all this.

- Nothing can hinder God from accomplishing what he has planned for us.
- Nothing can separate us from God's eternal love.

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

Romans 8:37 (NIV)

## Are you ready for the conclusion?

[Drum roll, to



build excitement!]

**CONCLUSION!**

**BECAUSE OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY**  
 & his interaction on our level

**DURING TRIALS, WE CAN PRAY!**

- Confidently!
- Filled with trust and praise!
- *Even when things aren't going well!*

**AND THIS IS BECAUSE OF...  
 GOD'S "GREAT PLANNING"!**

**CONCLUSION!**

- **GOD** has great plans for us!
- **THE HOLY SPIRIT** is praying in our behalf, in accordance with those plans!
- **THE FATHER** is using all things that happen, to accomplish those plans!
- **JESUS CHRIST** is going to return and complete those plans!
- **NOTHING** can get in the way of his plans!

**THEREFORE ...** 

**WINNER** **OVERCOMER** **CHAMPION**

**WE are WINNERS,**  
 and will experience the  
 outcome of **HIS plans!**

**VICTORY** **CONQUEROR** **TRIUMPH** **SUCCESS**

**YOUR MISSION:  
 REMEMBER & REJOICE!**

**Remember your responsibility to follow Jesus!**

- God's sovereignty guarantees that your choices do matter!

**Rejoice that God is sovereign!**

- Nothing will be able to stop him from accomplishing the good he has planned for those who love him!

**YOUR MISSION:  
 (continued)**

**And pray appropriately!**

- Prayer is one of the things God uses to accomplish good in your life!

**This shows us how important our actions are!**  
 The sovereign God planned them to be important!

**Credits (1)**

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