

THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE: PART TWO – THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD PART 1

- I. THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE AS A SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY
 - A. The need and purpose of systematic theology
 - 1. To instruct us in doctrine
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 - II. A BRIEF HISTORY AND THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT
 - III. A CONTRAST OF ARMINIANISM AND CALVINISM
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IV. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

- I said before that I am a 6 point Calvinist. And this is what I mean. I believe the first and fundamental point of Calvinist teaching is the supreme and gracious sovereignty of God over all things. To state it more clearly and theologically: **God is the only absolutely free and totally sovereign being in the universe**. That is the first point of my Calvinism. And the rest of the doctrines are not difficult for me because I believe that. So we will spend some time laboring that point and for the coming weeks, all these doctrines are merely the outworking of that central truth.
- A. God's sovereignty defined
 - **QUOTE**: A. W. Pink defines it as follows: "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 no one can defeat His counsels, thwart His purpose, or resist His will."¹
 - **QUOTE**: Jerry Bridges says, "God's providence is His constant care for and His absolute rule over all His creation for His own glory and the good of His people."²
- B. God's sovereignty defended
 - 1. The nature of God's sovereignty
 - a) Sovereign freedom and pleasure
 - **1 Tim. 6:15** - He who is the **blessed** and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords,
 - **Ex. 33:18-19** - 18 Then Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!" 19 And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."
 - **Ps. 115:3** - But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He **pleases**.

¹ A.W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God* (Alachua, Fla.: Bridge-Logos, 2008), 216-217.

² Jerry Bridges, *Is God Really in Control?: Trusting God in a World of Hurt* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress, 2006), 25.

- **Ps. 135:6** - Whatever the Lord **pleases**, He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.
 - **Pr. 21:30** - There is no wisdom and no understanding and no counsel against the Lord.
- b) **Sovereign power**
- **Col. 1:16-17** - 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.
 - **Heb. 1:3** - And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by His powerful word.
 - **Ac. 17:28** - for in Him we live and move and exist
- c) **Sovereign mercy**
- **Rom. 9:14-18** - 14 What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! 15 For He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” 16 So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth.” 18 So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.
- d) **Sovereign blessings, including and especially salvation**
- **Eph 1:3-14** - 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed us** with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He **chose** us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He **predestined** us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, **according to the good pleasure of His will,** 6 **to the praise of the glory of His grace,** which He **freely** bestowed on us in the Beloved. 7 In Him we have **redemption** through His blood, the **forgiveness** of our trespasses, according to the riches of His **grace** 8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight 9 He **made known** to us the mystery of His will, **according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him** 10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him 11 also we have obtained an **inheritance**, having been **predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,** 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be **to the praise of His glory.** 13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also **believed**, you were **sealed** in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the **redemption** of God’s own possession, **to the praise of His glory.**
- e) **Sovereign purpose**
- **Ps. 33:10-11** - 10 The Lord nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the peoples. 11 The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation.

- **Is. 14:24** - The Lord of hosts has sworn saying, “Surely, just as I have **intended** so it has happened, and just as I have **planned** so it will stand,
- **Is. 46:8-10** - 8 “Remember this, and be assured; Recall it to mind, you transgressors. 9 “Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, 10 declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, ‘My **purpose** will be established, and I will accomplish all My **good pleasure**’
- **Heb 6:17** - In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath,
- **Rev. 17:13-17** - 13 “These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast. 14 “These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.” 15 And he said to me, “The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues. 16 “And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire. 17 “For **God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled.**

(1) His purpose in evil and suffering for the wicked

- **Pr. 16:4** - The Lord has made everything for its own purpose, even the wicked for the day of evil.
- **Ps 92:5-7** - 5 How great are Your works, O Lord! Your thoughts are very deep. 6 A senseless man has no knowledge, nor does a stupid man understand this: 7 That when the wicked sprouted up like grass and all who did iniquity flourished, it was only that they might be destroyed forevermore.
- **The people of conquest: Josh. 11:19-20** - 19 There was not a city which made peace with the sons of Israel except the Hivites living in Gibeon; they took them all in battle. 20 **For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts**, to meet Israel in battle **in order that he might utterly destroy them, that they might receive no mercy, but that he might destroy them**, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.
- **Pharaoh: Ex. 9:16** - But, indeed, for this reason I have allowed you to remain, in order to show you My power and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth.
- **The Egyptians: Ex. 14:17-18** - 17 “As for Me, behold, **I will harden the hearts** of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and **I will be honored** through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. 18 “Then the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord, when I am honored through Pharaoh, through his chariots and his horsemen.”
- **Israel: Jdg. 2:11-15** - 11 Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals, 12 and they forsook the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them,

and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the Lord to anger. 13 So they forsook the Lord and served Baal and the Ashtaroth. 14 The anger of the Lord burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hands of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around them, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. 15 Wherever they went, the hand of the Lord was **against them for evil**, as the Lord had spoken and as the Lord had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed.

- **Those who don't believe: 1 Pet. 2:7-8** - 7 This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who **disbelieve**, "The stone which the builders **rejected**, This became the very corner stone," 8 and, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; for they **stumble** because they are **disobedient** to the word, and to this doom they were also **appointed**.³

(2) His purpose in evil and suffering for the righteous

- **Rom. 8:18, 26, 28-30** - For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us...26 In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;...28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.
- God's gracious purpose to make His children like Jesus is **guaranteed** and **secured** by His sovereign control over evil and suffering in our lives.

2. The scope of God's sovereignty

a) Over creation

(1) Nature

- **Gen. 1:1** - In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
- **Ps. 33:6-9** - 6 By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host. 7 He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deeps in storehouses. 8 Let all the earth fear the Lord; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. 9 For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.
- **Ps. 147:15-18** - 15 He sends forth His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly. 16 He gives snow like wool; He scatters the frost like ashes. 17 He casts forth His ice as fragments; Who can stand before His cold? 18 He sends forth His word and melts them; He causes His wind to blow and the waters to flow.
- **Job 37:9-13** - 9 "Out of the south comes the storm, and out of the north the cold. 10 "**From the breath of God ice is made**, and the expanse of the waters is frozen. 11 "Also with moisture He loads the thick cloud; He

³ See also Rom. 9:22.

disperses the cloud of His lightning. 12 “It changes direction, turning around by His guidance, that it may do whatever He commands it on the face of the inhabited earth. 13 “Whether for correction, or for His world, or for lovingkindness, He causes it to happen.

- **Is 40:25-26** - 25 “To whom then will you liken Me that I would be his equal?” says the Holy One. 26 Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these stars, the One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, not one of them is missing.
- **Mk. 4:39** - And He [Jesus] got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Hush, be still.” And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.
- One meteorologist has determined that there are over 1,400 references to weather in the Scripture, many of which attribute the weather directly to the hand of God.⁴
- **Job chapters 38-39** – God’s government over creation

(2) Life and death

- **Dt. 32:39** - ‘See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides Me; **It is I who put to death and give life**. I have wounded and it is I who heal, and there is no one who can deliver from My hand.
- **1 Sam. 2:6** - **The Lord kills and makes alive**; He brings down to Sheol and raises up.

(3) Animal kingdom

- **Gen. 6:20** - Of the birds after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive.
- In the plagues of Egypt, God sent frogs (Ex. 8:13), flies (Ex. 8:22), locusts (Ex. 10:14).
- God commanded ravens to feed Elijah (1 Kn. 17:2-4).
- He made a donkey speak to reprimand the prophet Balaam (Num. 22:28-30).
- He shut the mouth of lions so they wouldn’t devour Daniel, then later used the same lions to devour his accusers (Dan. 6:22, 24).
- He commanded a great fish to swallow Jonah, then commanded him to spit Jonah out three days later (1:17; 2:10).

b) Over angels, both good and evil

- **Jdg. 9:23** - Then **God sent an evil spirit** between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech,
- **1 Kn. 22:23** - “Now therefore, behold, the Lord has put a deceiving spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; and the Lord has proclaimed disaster against you.”
- **1 Sam. 16:14** - Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and **an evil spirit from the Lord** terrorized him.

⁴ Mike Nichols, “How’s the Weather?” *Christian Herald* (July-August 1984), 33; quoted in Bridges, *Is God Really in Control?*, 55.

- God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem in 1 Chronicles 21.
 - Satan himself was unable to touch Job without God’s explicit permission (Job 1:12; 2:6).
 - The Son of Man will send His angels to gather the elect (Mt. 24:31).
 - Satan had to gain permission before he could sift Peter (Lk. 22:31).
 - The Lord sent an angel to deliver Peter from prison in Acts 12.
 - In the final battle, God will cast Satan into the lake of fire prepared for him and his angels (Rev. 20:10).
- c) **Over suffering and evil**
- **Lam. 3:37-38** - 37 Who is there who speaks and it comes to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it? 38 Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both **good and ill**⁵ go forth?
 - **Is 45:6b-7** - ...I am the Lord, and there is no other, 7 The One forming light and creating darkness, **causing well-being and creating calamity**⁶; I am the Lord who does all these.
 - **Ex 4:10-11** - 10 Then Moses said to the Lord, “Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.” 11 The Lord said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it **not I, the Lord?**”
 - **Job 23:13-17** - 13 “But He is unique and who can turn Him? And **what His soul desires, that He does.** 14 “For He performs what is appointed for me, and many such decrees are with Him. 15 “Therefore, I would be dismayed at His presence; When I consider, I am terrified of Him. 16 “It is **God** who has made my heart faint, and the Almighty who has dismayed me, 17 but I am not silenced by the darkness, nor deep gloom which covers me.⁷
- d) **Over nations, governments and groups of people**
- **1 Chr. 29:11** - 11 “Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O Lord, and You exalt Yourself as head over all.
 - **Ps. 103:19** - The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His **sovereignty rules over all.**
 - **Ps. 22:28** - For the kingdom is the Lord’s and **He rules over the nations.**
 - **Ps. 47:8** - God reigns over the nations, God sits on His holy throne.
 - **Is. 10:5-7** - 5 Woe to Assyria, the rod of **My anger** and the staff in whose hands is **My indignation**, 6 **I send it** against a godless nation and commission it against the people of **My fury** to capture booty and to seize plunder, and to trample them down like mud in the streets. 7 **Yet it does not so intend, nor**

⁵ Hebrew רַע (*ra*). Translations vary: “bad” (ESV), “calamity” (NIV, NET), “evil” (KJV, RSV), “adversity” (HCSB), “woe” (NKJV).

⁶ ‘well being’ is the Hebrew שְׁלוֹם (*shalōm*), usually translated ‘peace’ and ‘calamity’ is the Hebrew רַע (*ra*), as in Lam. 3:38.

⁷ The NET Bible translates **Job 23:14**, “For he fulfills his decree against me, and many such things are his plans.” See a similar translation in the NIV and HCSB.

does it plan so in its heart, but rather it is its purpose to destroy and to cut off many nations.

- **Is. 40:17-18** - 17 All the nations are as nothing before Him, they are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless. 18 To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare with Him?
- **Ps. 33:10-11** - 10 The Lord nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the peoples. 11 The **counsel** of the Lord stands forever, the **plans** of His heart from generation to generation.
- **2 Chr. 20:5-6** - 5 Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord before the new court, 6 and he said, “O Lord, the God of our fathers, are You not God in the heavens? And are You not **ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations**? Power and might are in Your hand so that **no one can stand against You**.
- **Is. 14:24-27** - 24 The Lord of hosts has sworn saying, “Surely, just as I have **intended** so it has happened, and just as I have **planned** so it will stand, 25 to break Assyria in My land, and I will trample him on My mountains. Then his yoke will be removed from them and his burden removed from their shoulder. 26 “This is the **plan** devised against the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out against all the nations. 27 “For the Lord of hosts has **planned**, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?”
- **Ps. 2:1-6** - 1 Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 3 “Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!” 4 He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them. 5 Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury, saying, 6 “But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain.”
- **Ac. 5:38-39** - 38 “So in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown; 39 but **if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them**; or else you may even be found fighting against God.”

e) Over individuals

(1) Over the hearts of men

- **Pr. 21:1** - The king’s heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes.
 - The will of the most powerful man on earth is directed by God just as easily and effortlessly as a farmer directs water to his crops. **The argument then is from the greater to the lesser** – if God controls the heart, surely He controls the hearts of every man. Every heart, mind and will moves before the sovereign influence of God.⁸
- **1 Sam. 10:9** - Then it happened when he [Saul] turned his back to leave Samuel, **God changed his heart**; and all those signs came about on that day.

⁸ Bridges, *Is God Really in Control?*, 42-33.

- **1 Sam. 10:26** - Saul also went to his house at Gibeah; and the valiant men whose hearts God had touched went with him.
- **Is. 44:18** - They do not know, nor do they understand, for He has smeared over their eyes so that they cannot see and their hearts so that they cannot comprehend.
- **Is. 63:17** - Why, O Lord, do You cause us to stray from Your ways and harden our heart from fearing You?
- **Lam. 3:64-65** - You will recompense them, O Lord, according to the work of their hands. 65 You will give them hardness of heart, Your curse will be on them.
- **King of Assyria: Ezra 6:22** - And they observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy, for the Lord had caused them to rejoice, and had turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them to encourage them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.
- **Cyrus: Ezra 7:27** - Blessed be the Lord, the God of our fathers, who has put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to adorn the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem,
- **Pilate: Jn. 19:10-11** - 10 So Pilate said to Him, "You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?" 11 Jesus answered, "You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."
- **Nebuchadnezzar: Dan. 4:34-35; 5:21** - 34 "But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation. 35 "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, 'What have You done?' ... 5:21 - "He was also driven away from mankind, and his heart was made like that of beasts, and his dwelling place was with the wild donkeys. He was given grass to eat like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until he recognized that the Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind and that He sets over it whomever He wishes.

(2) Over the decisions of men

- **Pr. 16:1** - The plans of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.
- **Pr. 16:9** - The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.
- **Pr. 19:21** - Many plans are in a man's heart, but the counsel of the Lord will stand.
- **Pr. 20:24** - Man's steps are ordained by the Lord, how then can man understand his way?
- **Ps. 37:23-24** - 23 The steps of a man are established by the Lord, and He delights in his way. 24 When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, because the Lord is the One who holds his hand.

- What **great comfort** this verse is! Because our steps are established by God and God delights in ordering our steps, when we fall, God holds our hand. He ordains that we fall and is with us when we fall. He purposes that we fall. **We suffer by the hand of a gracious God!**
- **Jer. 10:23** - I know, O Lord, that a man's way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps.
- **Job 23:14** - For He performs what is appointed for me, and many such decrees are with Him.
- Of **Abimelech**, king of Gerar, when Abraham came into his land and Sarah was taken as a wife for Abimelech (because Abraham had lied that she was his sister), **Gen. 20:6** says, "I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and **I also kept you from sinning against Me**; therefore I did not let you touch her."
- Of **Joseph**, **Gen. 37:18** clearly states that his brothers "plotted against him to put him to death." Yet God did not allow them, but instead ordained that Joseph would go to Egypt and after many years become the instrument of deliverance for the whole world during the famine. Joseph told his brothers in **Gen. 50:20**, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive." Their intention was evil, but God's was good!
- Of **Samson**: **Jdg. 14:1-4** - 1 Then Samson went down to Timnah and saw a woman in Timnah, one of the daughters of the Philistines. 2 So he came back and told his father and mother, "I saw a woman in Timnah, one of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife." 3 Then his father and his mother said to him, "Is there no woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?" But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for she looks good to me." 4 However, his father and mother did not know that it was **of the Lord**, for He was seeking an occasion against the Philistines. Now at that time the Philistines were ruling over Israel.

(3) Over the salvation of men

- **Jn. 3:3-8** - 3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." 4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?" 5 Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 "Do not be amazed that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

- **Tit. 3:5** - He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,
- **1 Pet. 1:3** - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
- **Ac. 13:48** - When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

C. God's sovereignty and human responsibility

1. The dual testimony of sovereignty and responsibility in Scripture

- **Neh. 4:9** - But we prayed to our God [sovereignty], and because of them we set up a guard [responsibility] against them day and night.
- **Mt. 11:25-30** - 25 At that time Jesus said, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. 26 "Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. 27 "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. [vv. 25-27: sovereignty] 28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." [vv. 28-30: responsibility]
- **Jn. 6:39-40** - 39 "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day [God gave His elect to the Son as a gift – sovereignty]. 40 "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day. [everyone who believes will have eternal life – responsibility]"
- **Ac. 2:23** - this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God [sovereignty], you nailed to a cross [responsibility] by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.
- **Ac. 2:37-39** - 37 Now when they heard this [Peter's sermon], they were pierced to the heart [sovereignty], and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" 38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins [responsibility]; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 "For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself [sovereignty]."
- **Ac. 13:48** - When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord; and as many as had been appointed to eternal life [sovereignty] believed [responsibility].
- **1 Pet. 2:7-8** - 7 This precious value, then, is for you who believe; but for those who disbelieve, "The stone which the builders rejected, This became the very corner stone," 8 and, "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offense"; for they

stumble because they are disobedient to the word [responsibility], and to this doom they were also appointed [sovereignty].

- **QUOTE:** J. I. Packer comments on this tension of Divine sovereignty and human responsibility in Scripture: “What is true is that all Christians believe in divine sovereignty, but some are not aware that they do, and mistakenly imagine and insist that they reject it. What causes this odd state of affairs? The root cause is the same as in most cases of error in the church – **the intruding of rationalistic speculations, the passion for systematic consistency**, a reluctance to recognize the existence of mystery and to let God be wiser than men, and a consequent subjecting of Scripture to the supposed demands of human logic.... We like to tie up everything into neat intellectual parcels, with all appearance of mystery dispelled and no loose ends hanging out. Hence we are tempted to get rid of antinomies from our minds by illegitimate means: to suppress, or jettison, one truth in the supposed interests of the other, and for the sake of a tidier theology. So it is in the present case. The temptation is to undercut and maim the one truth by the way in which we stress the other: to assert man’s responsibility in a way that excludes God from being sovereign, or to affirm God’s sovereignty in a way that destroys the responsibility of man.”⁹

2. Examples of God’s sovereign control and man’s responsibility as complementary truths

- Does God **decisively** and **determinatively** control the actions of man without destroying his responsibility?
- **Abimelech:** Turn to Genesis 20:1-6. **Gen. 20:6** says, “I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also kept you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her.” Now what this teaches us that Abimelech was responsible, but at the same time was “kept” by God from sinning against Him. “I did not let you touch her.” That is sovereignty. But God also says, “I know that in the integrity of your heart, YOU have done this” You see the responsibility and sovereignty right next to each other. “you have done this [responsibility], and I also kept you from sinning [sovereignty].”
- **Pharaoh:** **Ex. 9:34-10:3** - 34 But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned again and hardened his heart, he and his servants. 35 Pharaoh’s heart was hardened, and he did not let the sons of Israel go, just as the Lord had spoken through Moses. 1 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Go to Pharaoh, for **I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants**, *that* I may perform these signs of Mine among them, 2 and *that* you may tell in the hearing of your son, and of your grandson, how I made a mockery of the Egyptians and how I performed My signs among them, *that* you may know that I am the Lord.” 3 Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him, “Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, ‘How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me.
- Notice – v. 34 Pharaoh and his servants hardened their heart. 10:1 – God hardened Pharaoh’s heart and the heart of his servants. There is God’s **sovereignty**. Why did God do this? So that God could perform His miracles, the

⁹ Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, 22, 32 et passim.

Israelites could tell of God's wonders (Ps. 145:5) and that Israel would know that He is the Lord (the Master, the Sovereign God).

- Then look at 10:3. God says to Pharaoh "How long will you refuse to humble yourself?" There is Pharaoh's **responsibility**. Verse 1, God's sovereignty; verse 3, Pharaoh's responsibility.
- **the people of Jerusalem: Lk. 19:41-44** - 41 When He [Jesus] approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now **they have been hidden from your eyes** [**sovereignty**]. 43 "For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, 44 and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation [**responsibility**]."
- **entire kingdoms: 2 Chr. 17:10** - Now the dread [fear] of the Lord was on all the kingdoms of the lands which were around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat.
- The implication here is that if the fear of God had not fallen upon the kingdoms surrounding Judah, they would have gone to war with Judah. So the restraining power of God prevented them from going to war. Had their own desires been allowed to take place, they would have gone to war with Judah. Yet God did not make those kingdoms robots or machines without any freedom or responsibility. So God not only sovereignly restrains individuals, but nations as well when it pleases Him to do so. You can see this same principle in **Gen. 35:5**, "As they journeyed, there was a great terror upon the cities which were around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob."