
Sunday, September 24, 2017
Did You Know?

The Sovereignty of God

Many Christians and non-Christians have issues with the total and absolute sovereignty of God. They have a hard time accepting that God determines all things. They assume that God's sovereignty implies the denial of human freedom. What does the Bible say about this? One of the major themes in the book of Daniel is the sovereignty of God, but first, remember with me a definition from theologian and former PM of the Netherlands, Abraham Kuyper

There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, "**Mine!**"

God is so sovereign that in the book of Daniel (1:9) it says, "Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel." At this point huge red flags should go up. Your Bible reading should come to a screeching halt, as you ponder these words, asking, "You mean to tell me that God has the authority and ability to cause people to act in certain ways that would go against their normal behavior?" Another question, "Does that not impinge upon the individual's freedom?" God does have that authority, that is, he possesses the right to influence people and cause people to act in ways that would be contrary to the norm AND at the same time not violate their free will. This is part of the outworking of His sovereignty.

Let's put the shoe on the other foot. Are you against God exercising his sovereignty when it works in your favor? Does a missionary pray for safe passage across a notoriously difficult border? Doesn't she pray, "Allow the border guards to be favorable to us."? Are you against God exercising his sovereignty among the HR personnel of a company you really want to work for? Are you against God moving in the heart of a man or woman you would like to date and eventually marry? In fact, isn't that how we are praying? If God has no influence in these things, why pray at all?

Consider this as well. When God saves a person (i.e. you) he is exercising his rightful sovereignty to choose and elect those he would make his own. When you and I became Christians God caused us to believe, when up to the point of our conversion we didn't believe. God caused our minds and hearts to be receptive to the Gospel message. God created in us new appetites and affections for God, for holiness, for Christian fellowship, just to name a few. Apart from God exercising his sovereignty over our lives, none of us would be Christian!

The best statement I've read on this is by R.C. Sproul in his book, *Chosen By God*.

Human freedom can never restrict the sovereignty of God. That is what sovereignty is all about. If God's sovereignty is restricted by man's freedom, then God is not sovereign; man is sovereign. God is free. I am free. God is more free than I am. If my freedom runs up against God's freedom, I lose. His freedom restricts mine; my freedom does not restrict his.

How then should I respond to God, knowing that he is sovereign? With fear and reverence, awe, love, thanksgiving, submission, prayer, trust, and worship.

Soli Deo Gloria
Pastor Peter