

The Sovereignty of God

"So then each of us will give an account of himself to God." Romans 14:12

1. God's sovereignty and Human responsibility

1. What is the relationship between God's Sovereignty and man's responsibility?
 1. If God is sovereign, how can man be responsible?
 2. Difficult subject – many believe we cannot understand it
 3. There is much mystery here, but scripture does affirm both
2. If God exerts influence over man it appears that would rob him of his freedom.

2. How can God prevent man from doing the things he desires to do and compel him to do the things he does not want, and still hold him responsible for his actions?

1. *"Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that you have done this in the integrity of your heart, and it was I who kept you from sinning against me. Therefore I did not let you touch her." Genesis 20:6*
 1. God intervened, and restricted Abimelech's actions
 2. Abimelech would have certainly sinned against Sarah
2. *"And the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were around Judah, and they made no war against Jehoshaphat." 2 Chronicles 17:10*
 1. God withholds both individuals and nations
 2. How can God restrain freedom and still require accountability?
3. What is moral freedom?
 1. The freedom from sin. *"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." John 8:36*
 2. The closer we get to Christ likeness, the closer we get to true freedom.
 3. *"True liberty is not the power to live as we please, but to live as we ought!" A.W. Pink. The only person who lived in true freedom on Earth was Jesus!*
 4. What about God's freedom?
4. *"Knowing this first of all that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." 2 Peter 1:20-21*
 1. God used these men, He enlightened their minds to deliver His truth
 2. God restrained their sin for His purposes, but not their individuality
 3. A taste of real freedom, error on their part was eliminated by God

3. How can the sinner be responsible for what he's unable to do, and be condemned for what he can't do?

1. We are volitional, moral creatures that are responsible to God
 1. *"For In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "for we are indeed his offspring." Acts 17:28*
 2. Man, as a creature, is responsible to love, obey and serve God
 1. To Love **Mt 22:37**; Obey **Mt 28:20**; Serve **R 14:18**
 3. The sinner is responsible to repent and believe the Gospel
 1. To repent **A 17:3**; believe **A 16:31**
 4. But we are in bondage, *"dead in the trespasses and sins" Ephesians 2:1*
2. So what's our problem? Why don't we come to Christ? *"Yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life." John 5:40*
 1. We don't know we need Christ
 1. Don't realize the danger of our predicament- under God's judgment
 2. Don't acknowledge that God is our only hope

3. Don't recognize the utter filth of our righteousness
2. We don't want Christ; *"For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot."* **Romans 8:7**
 1. We don't realize our need of rescue
 2. We're unwilling to part with our idols
 3. We believe we're basically good
 4. *"For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked."* **Revelation 3:17**
 5. We are so depraved in our heart that we cannot come to Christ
3. So how can God hold us responsible for not coming to Christ?
 1. We don't lack the natural ability to come to Christ, we lack the moral and spiritual ability (depraved heart) **J 17:9**
 1. Natural inability vs. Moral and Spiritual inability
 2. *"Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them."* **Jonah 1:13**
 3. *"Those who are in the flesh cannot please God."* **Romans 8:8**
 2. We don't come to Christ for lack of natural ability, but because of a depraved heart. We love sin and hate Christ. *"For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse."* **Romans 1:19-20**
 3. Man's responsibility is tied to his natural ability. He is accountable to God regardless of the depravity of his heart.
 1. Man has the same ability to love God as to hate him
 2. The same heart to believe as to disbelieve
 3. It's his failure to love and believe that constitutes his guilt
 4. Man's accountable because he possess a rational mind and a conscience
 5. His failure to responsibly exercise his natural ability constitutes his guilt
 6. God has not lost his right because the sinner has lost his power
4. **How can God decree men should commit certain sins, and then hold them responsible and accountable for them?**
 1. The case of the crucifixion
 1. Prophesied how Jesus would be betrayed and killed
"Then I said to them, 'If it seems good to you, give me my wages; but if not, keep them.' And they weighed out as my wages thirty pieces of silver." **Zechariah 11:12**
 2. *"This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men."* **Acts 2:23**
 3. In prophecy God makes know what will be, and thus what He's ordained
 2. Responsibility is determined by motive
 1. Principal of motive: deliberate vs accident
 1. Judas' intention was evil, even though God decreed and directed his actions
 2. The leaders of Israel delivered up Jesus because of their own wicked hearts
 2. All these men were responsible for their own actions
 1. Their intentions were evil
 1. God directed their paths
"The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps." **Proverbs 16:9**
 2. God doesn't produce sin in His creatures, but He does restrain and direct them for His own purposes

3. He did not take a "good" man and make him evil and use him, he used a sinful man and directed his paths.
5. **How can the sinner be held responsible to receive Christ and be held accountable for rejecting Him, when God has ordained all things?**
 1. First, no one knows whether they are God's Chosen
 1. Man's responsibility is revealed in God's word
 2. Hearing the gospel we are to repent and believe *"And this is his commandment that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us."* **1 John 3:23**
 2. Second, we're commanded to search the scriptures
 1. *"And how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."* **2 Timothy 3:15**
 2. God gave the us His word which testifies to Christ our savior
 3. Truly seeking after God, brings us into His presence
 4. *"Let him use the means, and leave the success of his labor and his own salvation to the will and good pleasure of God."* Thomas Manton
 3. Third, It's a fact that no one can come to God on his own
 1. Sinners are dead in their transgressions **Ephesians 2:1**
 2. Their moral inability is what keeps them from seeking God
 3. That moral inability leads to a "will not"
 1. Men love darkness

"And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil." **John 3:19**
 2. They delight in evil
 4. Finally, God does require what man cannot deliver
 1. Old Testament
 1. God gave the Law to Israel and demanded obedience **D 28**
 2. They could not comply; *"For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,"* **Romans 8:3**
 2. New Testament
 1. Jesus said, *"You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."* **Matthew 5:48**
 2. Paul said, *"Wake up from your drunken stupor, as is right, and do not go on sinning. For some have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame."* **1 Corinthians 15:34**
 5. So why does God require of man, that which he cannot deliver?
 1. God is perfect and will not lower His standard
 2. Man is required to recognize his inability and repent and cry out!
 6. Human responsibility is tied to the amount of light we have. *"...Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more."* **Luke 12:48**
 7. Man's responsibility rests on his natural ability, witnessed by his conscience and demanded in the scripture.
 1. Man is a rational being, able to consider eternal consequences
 2. Man has a written revelation from God

