

A decorative border of repeating floral motifs surrounds the text. The motifs are stylized, resembling small flowers or leaves, and are arranged in a grid-like pattern.

# A Biblical Review of the Absolute Sovereignty of God

*John 5:39*

*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life:  
and they are they which testify of me.*

Compiled by Pastor Bob Spagnuolo  
Trinity Reformed Baptist Church  
Topeka, KS  
[www.TrinityReformedBaptist.org](http://www.TrinityReformedBaptist.org)

(revised 2010)

*(You may freely copy and distribute this work  
in its original, unaltered form for personal or group study.)*

## Overview

### √ Definitions of the Word “Sovereign”

- ∅ Secular Sources
- ∅ Sacred Sources

### √ General References

### √ Sovereignty Demonstrated

- ∅ Over the inanimate
- ∅ Over the irrational
- ∅ Over the invisible
  
- § Elect angels
- § Demons & Satan
  
- ∅ Over the ill—health issues
- ∅ Over the intellect

“A god whose will is resisted,  
whose designs are frustrated,  
whose purpose is checkmated,  
possesses no title to deity,  
and far from being a fit object of worship,  
merits nothing but contempt.”  
--A. W. Pink

### **Psalm 115:3**

“But our God *is* in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.”

All Scripture references are from the Authorized King James Version.

## ✓ Definitions of the Word “Sovereign”

### ∅ Secular (Non-Christian) Sources

#### § *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary:*

SOVEREIGN, a. *suv'eran*. [We retain this barbarous orthography from the Norman sovereign. The true spelling would be *suveran* from the L. *supernes, superus*.]

1. Supreme in power; possessing supreme dominion; as a sovereign ruler of the universe.
2. Supreme; superior to all others; chief. God is the sovereign good of all who love and obey him.
3. Supremely efficacious; superior to all others; predominant; effectual; as a sovereign remedy.
4. Supreme; pertaining to the first magistrate of a nation; as sovereign authority.

#### § *Roget’s Thesaurus*, p. 453.

sovereign, (*adj.*) dominant, paramount, supreme (POWER); ruling, regnant, reigning (GOVERNMENT); independent, autonomous, self-governing (FREEDOM).

sovereign, (*n.*) king, monarch, majesty (RULER).

sovereignty, (*n.*) dominion, jurisdiction, sway (GOVERNMENT).

#### § *Other synonyms:* potency, strength, might, force, energy, vigor, control, command, authority, rule, sway, ability, capability, influential, and efficacious.

### ∅ Sacred (Christian) Sources

#### § *Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, p. 1006:

“A theological term which refers to the unlimited power of God, who has sovereign control over the affairs of nature and history.”

#### § *Systematic Theology*, A. H. Strong, pg. 419:

“Providence (sovereignty) is that continuous agency of God by which He makes all the events of the physical and moral universe fulfill the original design with which He created it.”

#### § *Christian Doctrines*, James M. Pendleton, p. 49:

“Omnipotence. By this attribute of God (sovereignty) is meant his unlimited power, his power to do whatever he chooses to do.”

#### § *Philadelphia Confession of Faith:*

“God hath decreed in himself, from all eternity, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby is God neither the author of sin, nor hath fellowship with any therein...”

- § *The First London Baptist Confession of Faith, 1646, p. 2-3:*  
 “God in His infinite power and wisdom, doth dispose all things to the end for which they were created; that neither good nor evil befalls any by chance, or without His providence; and that whatsoever befalls the elect, is by His appointment, for His glory, and their good.”
- § *The Baptist Confession of Faith, 1689, p. 12:*  
 “Although God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed (sovereignty) anything, because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.”
- § *The Existence and Attributes of God, Vol. II, Charnock, , p. 365:*  
 “This notion of sovereignty is inseparable from the notion of a God...The very name of God includes in it a supremacy and an actual rule. He cannot be conceived as God, but he must be conceived as the highest authority in the world. It is as possible for him not to be God as not to be supreme...”
- § *The Sovereign God, J. M. Boice, p. 149-150:*  
 “In order to be sovereign, God must also be all-knowing, all-powerful and absolutely free. If he were limited in any one of these areas, he would not be entirely sovereign.”
- § *Definitions of Doctrines, Vol. 1, C. D. Cole, p. 132-133:*  
 “The sovereignty of God may be defined as the exercise of His supremacy. God is the one supreme and independent Being. He is the only one in all the universe who has the right and the power to do absolutely as He pleases... He is the only one who has the right to act for His own glory. The sovereignty of God means that He does as He pleases, always as He pleases, and only as He please... There is no alternative between an absolute sovereign God and no God at all...”
- § *The Sovereignty of God, A. W. Pink, p. 19:*  
 “We mean the supremacy of God, the kingship of God, the godhood of God. To say that God is sovereign is to declare that God is God... 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 none can defeat His counsels, thwart His purpose, or resist His will.”

**Conclusions:**

- Ø Either God rules, or He is ruled.
- Ø Either God governs, or He is governed.
- Ø Either God gets His way, or man gets his way.

## ✓ General References

Read each verse with an open mind to God's truth as He has revealed it to us in His Word. Read with a prayerful approach, and begin to worship the King with a new fresh understanding.

### Deut. 32:39

See now that I, *even I, am* he, and *there is* no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither *is there any* that can deliver out of my hand.

### 1 Chron. 29:10-14

Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed *be* thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. <sup>11</sup>Thine, O LORD, *is* the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all *that is* in the heaven and in the earth *is thine*; thine *is* the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all. <sup>12</sup>Both riches and honour *come* of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand *is* power and might; and in thine hand *it is* to make great, and to give strength unto all. <sup>13</sup>Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. <sup>14</sup>But who *am* I, and what *is* my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things *come* of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.

### Job 12:9-10

Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this? <sup>10</sup>In whose hand *is* the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

### Job 42:2

I know that thou canst do every *thing*, and *that* no thought can be withholden from thee.

### Psalms 62:11

God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power *belongeth* unto God.

### Psalms 103:19-22

The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. <sup>20</sup>Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. <sup>21</sup>Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. <sup>22</sup>Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.

### Psalms 115:3

**But our God *is* in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.**

### Psalms 135:3-6

Praise the LORD; for the LORD *is* good: sing praises unto his name; for *it is* pleasant. <sup>4</sup>For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, *and* Israel for his peculiar treasure. <sup>5</sup>For I know that the LORD *is* great, and *that* our Lord *is* above all gods. <sup>6</sup>Whatsoever the LORD pleased, *that* did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.

### Isaiah 45:5-7

I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else, *there is* no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: <sup>6</sup>That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that *there is* none beside me. I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else. <sup>7</sup>I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these *things*.

### **Isaiah 46:10**

Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

### **Jeremiah 32:27**

Behold, I *am* the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?

### **Daniel 4:35**

And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

### **Matthew 11:25**

At that time Jesus answered and said, **I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.**

### **Matthew 19:26**

But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, **With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.**

### **John 19:11**

Jesus answered, **Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.**

### **Acts 2:23**

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

### **Acts 4:27-28**

For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, <sup>28</sup>For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

### **Romans 9:18-24**

Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth. <sup>19</sup>Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? <sup>20</sup>Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus? <sup>21</sup>Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? <sup>22</sup>*What* if God, willing to shew *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: <sup>23</sup>And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, <sup>24</sup>Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

### **Ephes. 1:11**

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

## ✓ Sovereignty Demonstrated

### ∅ Over the realm of the **inanimate**

- § **Light** [Genesis 1:3](#)
- § **Air** [Genesis 1:6-8](#)
- § **Water** [Genesis 1:9](#)
  - **Red Sea** [Exodus 14:19-22](#)
  - **Jordan River** [Joshua 3:13-17](#) & [Joshua 4:14-24](#)
  - **Seas** [Psalm 33:7](#) [Proverbs 8:29](#)
- § **Wind** [Mark 4:39](#)
- § **Rain** [Genesis 6:17](#) cp. [Genesis 7:11-12](#) [Psalm 147:15-20](#)
- § **Fire** [1 Kings 18:37-39](#) [Daniel 3:25](#)
- § **Planetary objects** [2 Kings 20:8-11](#) [Joshua 10:12-14](#)

Note: None of these inanimate objects ever resisted God's decree concerning them, nor did they ever violate His commands. They obeyed Him as their governor, fulfilling His purpose.

### ∅ Over the realm of the **irrational**

- § **Animal kingdom** [Genesis 2:18-19](#) [Genesis 6:19-20](#)
- § **Insect World** [Amos 4:7-10](#) [Exodus 8:20-24](#)
- § **Whale** [Jonah 1:17](#) cp. [Matthew 12:40](#)
- § **Donkey (dumb ass)** [2 Peter 2:15-16](#) cp. [Numbers 22:28-35](#)
- § **Bears** [2 Kings 2:23-25](#)
- § **Birds** [1 Kings 17:2-4](#) [Rev. 19:17-18](#)
- § **Fish** [Matthew 17:27](#) [Luke 5:4-8](#)
- § **Dogs** [2 Kings 9:30-37](#)
- § **Lions** [Daniel 6:21-22](#) [Daniel 6:24](#)

Note: Now we have moved up to another realm of God's creation—all animal life. Even these are compelled to obey the will, decree, and the eternal purposes of God Almighty.

### ∅ Over the realm of the **invisible** (angelic host)

- § **Holy, elect angels**
  - [Psalm 103:19-22](#)
  - [1 Chron. 21:14-15](#)
  - [1 Chron. 21:27](#)
  - [Acts 12:11](#)
  - [Rev. 22:6](#)
  - [Matthew 13:41-42](#)

Holy angels obey their Creator with unquestioning obedience. Ought not we?

## § Demons and Satan

**Job 1:9-12 Job 2:1-6**

Note how Satan was limited by God's overriding will for Job's upcoming experience.

**Judges 9:22-24**

God sends an evil spirit. Here God allows (permits) an evil spirit (demon) to work evil.

Here we bow at the threshold of Holy Ground. Yet God was not and is not the author of sin.

**I Kings 22:19-23 Psalm 76:10**

God allows a demon (a lying spirit) to give Ahab false information through Ahab's prophets. This is a classic passage on God's right and authority to even use evil as part of His sovereign plan.

**I Samuel 16:14**

Here God removes His spirit from Saul (not a loss of salvation), and allows or permits an evil spirit to plague Saul (for discipline).

**Matthew 4:1-11**

Despite Jesus' humiliation as the Son of Man, Satan was still bound to obey Jesus at His word.

**Matthew 8:16 Matthew 8:28-34 Matthew 9:32-33 Matthew 12:22 Matthew 15:22-28 Matthew 17:14-18**

In these passages, Jesus displays His sovereign control, power and authority over the hoards of Hell. (Compare to: **Romans 16:20 John 12:30-31 Hebrews 2:14 I John 3:8**)

### Ø Over the realm of the **ill** (health issues)

**Numbers 16:46-50**

**Matthew 8:1-4**

**Matthew 12:10-13**

**I Kings 17:17-23**

**Matthew 8:5-13**

**Acts 3:1-8**

**II Kings 4:32-37**

**Matthew 9:1-8**

**Acts 5:15-16**

**II Kings 5:1-14**

**Matthew 9:20-22**

**Acts 9:33-34**

**II Kings 6:19-20**

**Matthew 9:23-25**

**Acts 19:11-12**

**II Kings 13:20-21**

**Matthew 9:27-30**

**Acts 20:9-10**

In all these passages we see God's ability (sovereign power/will) either by Himself or through one of His to exercise control over illness and even death.

### Ø Over the realm of the **intellect**

§ **Genesis 12:14-20**

God was able some way to restrain Pharaoh from violating Sarah. Is God able to restrain you from sin? Compare Genesis 20:1-18.

§ **Genesis 19:10-12**

The angels were able to blind the men of Sodom, preventing them hurting Lot and his household. Can God blind you, preventing you from hurting others?

§ **Genesis 50:18-21**

Stop and think. Joseph was hated by his brothers, who sold him into slavery.

Then he was wrongly accused of rape and placed into prison falsely.

Then he was forgotten by the king's cupbearer who was set free.

Yet, God was in total control over everything that came into his life, both the good and the bad. (Compare Job 1:21-22 and Job 2:9-10.)

Is your faith strong enough to trust God and to submit to His sovereign, providential will and care for you?

§ **Job 23:13-14**

Is your view of God just as big as Job's?  
Is your God confined to a box of self-imposed limitations?

§ **Acts 17:25-28 (note verse 26)**

Do you believe that such things as

- the color of your skin and hair,
- where you live, who you marry, and
- how and when you will die

are in *your* strivings, OR in *God's decrees* that He has planned for your life?  
Do such questions bother you, or do they cause you to fall before God in worship?  
Compare Deuteronomy 32:7-9.

§ **Proverbs 16:1**

Take this verse and compare it with Romans 10:9-10 and 13.  
If a man confesses Christ with his lips, and truly believes in his heart that Jesus is Lord, who gets the credit—God or the “free-will” of the sinner?  
See Proverbs 20:12—which may be applied both physically and spiritually!

§ **Proverbs 16:4**

Take this verse and compare it with Romans 9:21-24.  
Does such a lofty view of God's sovereignty bother you, or are you overwhelmed by His greatness?  
Your response may be a reflection of your standing before God.  
Compare Proverbs 19:21.

§ **Proverbs 21:1**

Were Hitler, Stalin, Nero and Herod under God's control despite the evil that flowed from these men?  
Are our president and his cabinet under God's direct control?  
How about the abortionist, atheist, etc.?  
Compare Daniel 4:35 and 5:23.

§ **Deuteronomy 32:39**

How does this passage comfort or stir up your adamic, sinful nature?  
Is this passage too narrow, rigid, stiff or confining for you?

§ **Isaiah 44:24-28 cp. Isaiah 45:1-7 Isaiah 46:9-11 Jeremiah 50:1-3**

These passages predicted the coming of King Cyrus of Persia some 300 years before his birth. Did God predict this because He saw Cyrus being born in time, or because God decreed that it should be so?

§ **Psalm 37:23-24 & 39 Psalm 65:4 Acts 2:39 John 6:37-40, 44 and 65 John 10:15-16 and 26-27 John 17:2, 6 and 9 John 15:16 Acts 13:48 II Thessalonians 2:13-14**

These few passages also teach us that God is even sovereign over who is saved and not saved.

§ **I Corinthians 1:26-31**

After reading this outline and comparing the words of this passage, do you truly believe God is in complete, absolute control over all things, even the evil that goes on in the world? OR does God share His rule with mankind?

Compare Acts 2:22-24 and 4:24-28, and Psalm 76:10.

§ **Proverbs 20:24**

Are you “lord” of your own life?

**“It is strange, yet it is true, that many who acknowledge the sovereign God over material things, will cavil and quibble when we insist that God is also sovereign in the spiritual realm.”**

**--A.W. Pink, 1918**

**The basic principle of Calvinism is the sovereignty of God.”**

**--Lorraine Boettner**