

## **The Sovereignty of God**

In the book of Daniel, King Nebuchadnezzar is king over one of the powerful empires that has ever existed, the Babylon Empire. He was arrogant, confident, and it appeared that he was in complete control of everything within the Empire and that he was sovereign over his own life.

However, in the fourth Chapter of Daniel he has a dream. Scripture tells us that, “*the dream disturbed him greatly!*” Nebuchadnezzar asked his magicians, astrologers and sorcerers to tell him what the dream meant, but they could not help him.

God’s prophet, Daniel, is asked to interpret the dream. Daniel 4:24, begins the interpretation. Nebuchadnezzar came to realize that he was not in control of things, that the God of heaven was!

Let’s read Daniel 4, verses 24 through 26, “*This is the interpretation, O king, You will be driven away from the people and will live with the wild animals . . . [last of verse 25], “until you acknowledge that the Most high is sovereign over the kingdoms of men.” Verse 26, “Your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that heaven rules!”*”

God says in these verses that Nebuchadnezzar would come to “*acknowledge*” that God was in control. Notice it is not just *realize*, or *know*, but he came to *acknowledge* the sovereignty of God.

Verse 27, “*Therefore, O king, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.*” Daniel is saying to the king, “*Resign to the sovereignty of God!*”

### **We need to release the control of life to God!**

Look at verse 29, “*Twelve months later . . .*” God always gives time to change! God waited for Nebuchadnezzar to take Him seriously. But, God doesn’t wait forever. Verses 30-31, “*He said ‘Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?’ The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven, ‘This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you.’*”

Daniel says to Nebuchadnezzar in verse 31, “*Your sovereignty is removed from you.*” Verse 32 says, “*You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; until you acknowledge that the Most high is sovereign over the kingdoms of men.*”

**UNTIL YOU ACKNOWLEDGE (SUBMIT) TO GOD’S CONTROL,** “*Until you see what can happen to someone who resists God.*”

Verse 33 says, “***Immediately*** what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.”

Nebuchadnezzar went insane, living like a mad-man. Many today are determined to maintain control of their own life. Is that true of you?

God has spoken in various ways to get your attention; yet, it may be that you are determined not to submit to God's control.

Nebuchadnezzar speaks in verses 34-37, "*At the end of that time, I Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward Heaven, and my sanity was restored [my reason returned] Then I praised the most High; I honored and glorified Him Who lives forever.*" There was no bitterness, or saying, "How dare You treat me this way?" or, "How could You allow this to happen to me?"

Nebuchadnezzar continues speaking in verse 34, "*His kingdom is an eternal dominion; His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as He pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back His hand or say to Him: 'What have You done?' At the same time that my sanity was restored - [my reason returned] my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything He does is right and all His ways are just. And those who walk in pride, He is able to humble.*"

Nebuchadnezzar said, "My reason returned to me." Only when we turn everything over to God can we reason sanely, think theologically – [thinking from the Bible's point of view]. We think that life is only a *human* struggle, but I want you to know that God is in control. He is sovereign. Our life must become one of "*doing God's will!*" We have a choice, however, if we determine to do His will, let Him take over, this knowledge of God's sovereignty will affect everything we do, everything we are involved in, how we fulfill our obligations at the job, how we treat our family and how we raise our children.

How comforting it is to know that the events of our life may catch us by surprise, but they never take God by surprise. Everything is in His hands. God is never out of control. He never says, "*What will I do now?*" We think, "*God, why don't You do things this way, or that way?*" But, God has purpose in everything that happens, primarily to "*bring Him glory!*"

Scripture tells us that even when God allows evil, it is to cause men to praise Him.

I don't understand it all! (If I could I would be the 4<sup>th</sup> member of the Trinity) Not until we acknowledge God's sovereignty can we reason theologically, that is Biblically. When we let God take charge, we will find that our confidence will be increased, our insecurity will fade, our worries will decrease, and calmness will replace our striving and the need "*to get even,*" or to hold a grudge, will fade away. We will receive guidance from God and His Word, rather than living life by "*guess work.*" We will live a fulfilling life, rather than just dream of one. We will bring our life to a perfect conclusion, rather than close our eyes and just hope for the best.

## **DOES GOD QUALIFY AS SOVEREIGN?**

Mel Dawson, Youth for Christ Director, died, suddenly and unexpectedly in a freak drowning accident. Family and friends were concerned how his wife would react when she heard the news of her husband's death. When they told her of his death, she was still for several minutes, then she responded with the words, "*Our God is in the heavens, and He has allowed whatsoever He pleases.*" That is embracing God's sovereignty!

In Matthew 6:26 Jesus said, "*Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?*"

You can live your life "*free as a bird,*" or you can live your entire life in a cage made of fears.

You think a bird doesn't have problems? A bird's hunger and instincts are limited by weather conditions. He must seek the air pressures that are suitable for his flight to find the local food supply. He has predators; beasts that would just love to sink their teeth into him. He must live within a small plot of land, a certain area and the air space that is assigned to him by the bird-land community. The freest bird alive, along with every other created being, is held in by constant check, by a net of necessities. Only God is truly free! That's great theology!

We think we are free, but the very breath we breathe and, even our lungs to breathe the air, are gifts from God. Our heart, that pumps blood through our veins, is a gift from God.

When God says, "*Enough,*" it is curtains. It's all over then! But, until then, we have to "*Get with it!*"

Romans 11:33 says, "*Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!*"

We need to know that! We need to know that an all-knowing, all-wise, God reigns in realms beyond our comprehension, to bring about a plan! God is bringing about a plan that is beyond our ability to hinder, halter or to stop. Whether it is tragedy or ecstasy, joy or sorrow, gain or loss, healing or disease, perilous times or comfortable times, safety and ease, disasters and calamities, God is working through handicaps and heartaches, helpless moments, disappointments, broken dreams and lingering difficulties, God will guide through accomplishments and discoveries.

### **God is in charge of all of our life – if we let Him be**

When we cannot understand *why*, He knows the reason why. When we do not have a clue as to *when*, He is in control of the timing. God understands exactly how we feel. When we cannot even begin to imagine any good coming out of something, God works it out "*together for good.*"

Why don't all Christians accept the Biblical teaching of the sovereignty of God? What keeps us from believing that God to take complete control of our life? The answer is "fear." We fear that to believe that God is sovereign will make Christians passive and indifferent.

They fear that, in accepting the concept of the sovereignty of God, it will cause Christians to assume the attitude, "*If one is elected to be saved, they will be saved, no matter what I do about it!*" They fear the danger of Christians losing their zeal for witnessing . . . the danger of shrugging off responsibilities . . . the danger of having people say, "*We'll Just leave everything in the hands of fate!*" The problem is that it is not the hands of fate; it is God's hands!

God's purposes and His goals are very clearly set forth in His Word.

Romans 11:36 says, "*For from Him everything comes; through Him everything exists; and in Him everything ends . . . [one translations says, `All things find in Him their origin, their impulse, the center of their bring] . . . are all things to whom be glory forever. To Him be the glory!*" This verse says "*for Him,*" meaning God is the Originator; "*through Him,*" meaning God is the Enforcer; and "*to Him,*" meaning God is the Provider. God does it all! No man will be able to brag in heaven and say, "*I did it.*" God is all in all. God does it all. The only word on our lips, when we get to heaven, will be "*grace!*"

Life may seem so frustrating and unfair now, but remember, "*It's not the end of the chapter!*" God will have His way!

In Monaco, high above the harbor, is a location above Monte Carlo. Hitler realized that this would be a strategic place to build a broadcasting station. Its radio waves would reach the Mediterranean, Africa, the whole Middle East and, even, sections of Europe. He had a radio station built out of marble, so it would last forever, on this site to spread his Nazi propaganda. From here he would influence and conquer the whole world.

Today, out of this commanding location above Monte Carlo, Transworld Radio, a Christian radio station, is spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ to that whole area of the world.

Daniel 4:35, "*God will have His way in the heavens and the inhabitants of the earth*"

No one can stay God's hands, or say to Him, "*What do you think You are doing?*"

Are you anxious to run your own life? Do you feel you are competent to govern your life? Maybe you are *over*confident and proud. You need to discover that God can handle your life, a lot better than you can.

### **A Biblical concept of the sovereignty of God will:**

1. Release you from much of your anxiety. I wish I could assure you that believing in the sovereignty of God would release you from ALL of your anxiety, but, as long as

you live in your earthly body, we will not be completely rid of all our anxiety. We must still wait for God to take control in all the areas of our life

2. This acceptance of God's sovereignty, will keep you from pride. When things go well, remember Nebuchadnezzar. Knowing God is in control will humble you. We need to give God gratitude and praise Him for His grace toward us.
3. Believing and accepting God's sovereignty will free you from trying explain why things happen. You will not have to have all the answers. Those who think they have all the answers = have deceived themselves

Do you need examination? Could it be that you are proud? Are you feeling too competent? Do you still think that you are in charge of your life? Do you think that things may not work out together for good? Your plans will turn out disastrous if you try and run it yourself.

Poem:

*God writes in character too grand  
For our short sight to understand.  
We catch the broken strokes,  
And try to fathom all the mystery of winter hopes  
Of death, of life, the endless way, the useless strife.  
But there, in heaven, with large, clearer sight  
We shall see this, His way was right, His way was right.*

I want to close by telling you three things:

1. We must count on God's mercy for our past mistakes
2. We must count on God's love for our present needs
3. We must count on God's sovereignty for the future