

God's Sovereignty: Objection and Answers

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: God created and sovereignly rules over everything in this world so that nothing happens by chance but by God's foreordination and purpose. As God's child through Christ, you are to protect or defend the doctrine of God's sovereignty. But it is difficult. How do you defend God's "control of all things" given the fact that people, including Christians, were buried in the rubble in Haiti for many days...and some even starved to death while waiting for rescue? If God is really sovereign, why does he allow even good people to suffer...or why did he allow those young children to die in a house fire in Ottawa recently? How do you answer these and other similar questions? You should want to defend it...and you must defend it. This is what God wants you to hear in this follow up sermon.

This is what God wants you to hear today.

Our goals are: That as God's children, saved by grace, **that you will then defend** this doctrine so that Christ will be glorified...and you will be rewarded.

1. God is sovereign but I am not a robot that dances to God's tunes. In other words, I have free will.

1. Man does what God decrees and yet man is not a robot; God does not destroy man's free will. Man cannot resist the will of God, and yet man freely does what God commanded.

Psalm 135:5 For I know that the LORD is great, And our Lord is above all gods. 6 Whatever the LORD pleases He does, In heaven and in earth, In the seas and in all deep places.

Balance God sovereignty with...

Joshua 24:15 "And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

Look at God's sovereignty...

Exodus 9:12 But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh; and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

Balance God's sovereignty with...

Exodus 8:32 But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go.

God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are consistently taught in the Scripture but never reconciled, because the human mind cannot comprehend all the wonderful things of God. (How can God be sovereign over all things and man still be responsible for his sins?) If you take away God's sovereignty, you may man king. If you take away man's responsibility, you make God a puppet master.

Acts 2: 22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your

midst, as you yourselves also know— 23 "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

Christ came to die – God’s plan. Man killed him – man’s free will. Both are true. Judas’ fulfilled God’s plan, but he made his own wicked choice.

Remember also when Paul was asked the question: Why does God condemn those who were not chosen and therefore did not serve the Lord remember his answer:

Romans 9: 19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" 20 But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?"

Lesson: Those who reject God’s sovereignty lose the comfort that it brings, and instead, have to fight for their own salvation by their own works, something that is impossible to achieve. No one is able to achieve salvation without God first regenerating his heart. Don’t complain. Rejoice.

2. There are others who argue that God is not sovereign. They believe that he only lures man to come to him like a grandfather tries to bribe a grandchild with candy to kiss him. But that is not the picture of God that you find in the Scripture. A grandchild may resist the grandfather, maybe because someone else offered him ice-cream. But no one is able to resist the draw of the Holy Spirit.

John 6:37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. 44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day

“Draw” means “to pull.” It is an irresistible pull, and yet man willingly comes. Man is not a robot.

God is sovereign, so if I make a bad decision, isn’t that okay?

1. No. One young man I heard of in a Reformed church married a non-believer to show that God was sovereign and that his marrying a non- believer was God’s will. This is bad theology. This is promoting the superiority of your will.

2. It is true that Abram went to Egypt and sinfully exposed his wife to danger with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, against God’s will...but God preserved her. But Abram was wrong to expose his wife to danger.

3. So if you feel attracted to someone who is not a Christian and you marry him, it is not God’s will. So you may not take cover behind God’s sovereignty as an excuse to sin...take a bad job... get involved in risky behavior...

Romans 14:12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

1Peter 4:5 They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

Yes, God might use your bad decisions to accomplish his purposes, but you must never excuse bad decisions on account of promoting “God’s will.” God may have spoken through a donkey, but do you want to ordain a donkey to the Gospel ministry? (wrong action)

God is sovereign. Does this make it wrong to say “good luck” or say “thank you” when someone says “good luck?”

1. Saying “good luck” or receiving “good luck” is a bad thing to say. This is to absolutely deny the absolute sovereignty of God.

Proverbs 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap, But its every decision is from the LORD.

Proverbs 16:9 A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.

Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.

God controls even the "chances" of this world. This is a denial of God's sovereignty and making "chance" into your god. It is like when people say "mother nature" is angry. "Father Nature" might be more appropriate.

God is sovereign, but why does he allow such severe suffering in Africa – a place where many children and parents never heard the Gospel?

1. It is not God's fault that many did not hear the Gospel, so God has every right to judge as he wishes.

The Gospel was given to all when Adam and Eve received it. And ignorance of the law is no excuse from God's righteous judgment.

Psalm 96:10 Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns; The world also is firmly established, It shall not be moved; He shall judge the peoples righteously."

2. Furthermore, this judgment on the wicked is useful to show Christians God's love for them, just like the destruction in Revelation was given to show God's love for his people.

Since God is sovereign, and I am living a good Christian life, attend worship, etc, bad things should not happen to me, right?

1. This is an important question. I should not get paralyzed, etc. The TV preacher said so. As long as I rebuke sickness...and ask God to cover me under the blood of Christ...and I plead the blood of Christ...I should be okay. The problem with that, is that it is not true. After all, you teach your children, but they turn out bad. You eat healthily, but you get heart disease. You study hard for your exam but get sick on the day of it and you can't take it. Consider how the Psalmist expressed this frustration even more that bad things were happening to him...

Psalm 73:12 Behold, these are the ungodly, Who are always at ease; They increase in riches. 13 Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, And washed my hands in innocence. 14 For all day long I have been plagued, And chastened every morning.

Shouldn't good things happen to me? TV preachers said it should (and if its on TV it must be true) ...Paul talked about the thorn in his side and he could not even heal his own friend, Epaproditus, when he was sick. Jesus said to expect hardships because you live a righteous life.

2. First, the premise of that argument is wrong (good is blessed, wicked are punished). You see, those who are enjoying life may be quite sinful.

Psalm 73: 3 For I was envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 4 For there are no pangs in their death, But their strength is firm. 5 They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like other men. 6 Therefore pride serves as their necklace; Violence covers them like a garment. 7 Their eyes bulge with abundance; They have more than heart could wish.

You know that wicked person sells illegal drugs, but owns the Hummer. On the contrary, you may be sick and even sicker of the Chevy Chevette that you are driving. You have no guarantee that you will get a Hummer if you do well.

The problem is some are trained today to feel they have an entitlement to everything. There are those who advocate for a right to good health care, a right to get good water, a right good food, a right to subsidized public transportation, and my personal favorite from my poor country Guyana, a right to a laptop computer. But I hope from earlier you understand that God uses troubles for a reason. You have no “right” to demand these blessings. Remember, denials of blessings may be good for you. How? God has plans.

3. Remember some of the benefits of adversity:

a. It causes you to bring **glory to the sovereign God.**

b. It causes you to **show your love for Christ**

c. It causes you to show your love for fellow Christians – as the Philippians did for Jewish Christians. 2 Corinthians 8:1ff. Paul endured many afflictions for Christians also.

d. It **causes you to spread the Gospel.** (Acts 8:1) and bring blessing to the church.

e. It **causes you to the church to rally around and care** for each other as when James was sawn in two by Herod.

f. It **causes people pray to God for help?** This is for the Christ’s glory and man’s good at the same time. (James 5:14-15).

And yet, remember that sometimes sickness is directly because of sin.

g. It causes **Christians to be more dependent on God.**

Revelation 2:10 "Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Mark 10:21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me."

Keep in mind that the poor may be poor not because they were lazy or laced faith.

4. Further, keep in mind that Christians who faced adversity – poverty, persecution, famines, etc. were no worse than those who did not!

a. Remember that widow in Luke 21:1-4? Jesus commended her for her faith. He did not rebuke her for laziness or a lack of faith.

Luke 21:3 So He said, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all;

b. Paul commended help for the poor, not rebuke for their poverty.

Galatians 2:10 They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.

If the poor here were lazy, the Apostle Paul would not have said: I want you to help them.

c. In Luke 13, some people saw that a tower fell on people and killed them while they worshipped and some others saw people killed while they were worshipping in the Temple. They assumed that such a tragic death was a sign of judgment for great wickedness. But Jesus said that those who assumed those people were being punished by God for great wickedness were no less guilty than those who died in such a tragic way.

d. Consider what Job's friends said to him.

Job 14: 20 The wicked man writhes with pain all his days, And the number of years is hidden from the oppressor.

This is what Job's miserable comforters told him. They were wrong. Job was chastised for his strengthening.

e. Joseph told his brother, after he was sold into slavery for many years, you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. It was not Joseph's sin that caused his suffering.

Genesis 50:20 "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

Finally, based on what you have seen here, you may not tell someone "you have troubles because you did something really bad." Don't assume people sinned. You cannot understand all the ways of God.

Conclusion:

The sovereignty of God is a precious doctrine that lends much comfort to the Christ. Christians who reject the doctrine of God's sovereignty rob themselves of its blessings and keep worries for themselves.

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: Fight for this doctrine so others can understand it and enjoy its benefits. Don't say: We have different views...and we agree to disagree. You see, you have to speak for this doctrine not just for the person, but that Christ will be glorified as well. And you, when you face adversities...death of a loved one...losing a job...verbal attacks...you learn that God is sovereign, and all of the horrible things you face are for your strengthening...and purification...and for your reward.

Finally, the non-believer who rejects God's sovereignty – that God controls every thought and every action in this world – has made himself sovereign. God is a jealous God and does not want anyone to worship anyone but himself...and he especially hates when you worship yourself. Why not ask God today to give you a new perspective – that you will see that he is sovereign – and then ask him to change your heart because of Christ's work, that you will then bow in submission to him.