



# GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#22)

God's sovereignty and human responsibility:  
Not just in the New Testament, but also the Old.

## SOVEREIGNTY and RESPONSIBILITY

DIDN'T BEGIN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

**GOD REVEALED IT**  
many centuries before  
the dead Greek philosophers  
invented their counterfeit  
opposing views.


WE CAN THINK CLEARLY  
WITHOUT THE GOD OF  
THE BIBLE!



**YOU CAN FOLLOW THE WORLD'S VIEWS, if you want.**

Where is the wise person?  
Where is the scholar?  
Where is the philosopher of this age?  
**God has turned the wisdom of the world into nonsense, hasn't he?**  
1 Cor. 1:20 (ISV)

I'M NOT IMPRESSED!



But it sure won't impress God!

**THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE, GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY ARE SEEN AS WORKING TOGETHER.**

- ✓ As far back as the book of GENESIS.
- ✓ In both desirable and undesirable situations.
- ✓ Whether or not people were aware of it.
- ✓ Sometimes seen by people; sometimes hidden.
- ✓ Sometimes even acknowledged by unsaved people!

- ▲ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ▲ -

- ✓ Every prophecy and promise from God also implies it.

SOME RANDOM OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLES:

✓ **When Joseph was sold as a slave into Egypt.**

HIS BROTHERS HATED HIM AND SOLD HIM AS A SLAVE.

They hated Joseph ... "Let's sell him to the Ishmaelites." ... The Ishmaelites took him to Egypt. ← responsibility

Genesis 37:4b, 27a, 28b (GW)

IT WAS MANY YEARS LATER, WHEN GOD'S SOVEREIGN PURPOSE WAS UNDERSTOOD. AS JOSEPH TOLD HIS BROTHERS ...

You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result—the survival of many people. ← responsibility

Genesis 50:20 (CSB) ← sovereignty

✓ **When God used Gideon to destroy the Midianites.**

SOME OF THE MIDIANITES RECOGNIZED GOD'S PLAN BEFORE IT HAPPENED!

[One Midianite interpreting the dream of another...]  
His friend said, "Your dream can mean only one thing—God has given Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite, victory over all the armies united with Midian!" ← awareness of sovereignty

Judges 7:14 (NLT)

GOD USED THE MIDIANITE'S PANIC TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSES.

[The Israelites] watched as all the Midianites rushed around in a panic, shouting as they ran. ← responsibility

... the Lord caused the warriors in the camp to fight against each other with their swords. ← sovereignty

Judges 7:21b, 22b (NLT) ← responsibility

✓ **The book of Job – sovereignty acknowledged, though initially misunderstood.**

**JOB'S ACTUAL MISFORTUNE CAUSED BY PEOPLE, NATURE, ETC.\***

... the Sabaeans raided us. ... The fire of God has fallen from heaven ... Three bands of Chaldean raiders ... a powerful wind ...

Satan ... struck Job ...

Job 1:15b, 16b, 17b, 19b; 2:7b (NLT)

responsibility = people, acts of nature, Satan

**JOB'S RESPONSE?**

"The Lord has given, and the Lord has taken away! May the name of the Lord be praised."

"We accept the good that God gives us. Shouldn't we also accept the bad?"

Job 1:21b; 2:10b (GW)

sovereignty  
responsibility

\* (although we know that God permitted it)

**IN HIS DESPAIR, JOB ACCUSES GOD OF WRONGDOING.**

"Know then that God has wronged me, And has closed His net around me."

"Behold, I cry, 'Violence!' but I get no answer; I shout for help, but there is no justice."

Job 19:6-7 (NASB)

sovereignty (misunderstood)

**AFTER: (1) GOD CONFRONTS JOB, AND (2) JOB REFLECTS ON GOD'S WISDOM IN CREATION.**

"I know that you can do anything and nothing that you plan is impossible."

... I have talked about what I don't understand—awesome things beyond me that I don't know."

As a result, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes."

Job 42:2, 3b, 6 (ISV)

sovereignty  
right response after accusing sovereignty (God) of wrongdoing

✓ **The King of Babylon admitted God's sovereignty.**

**GOD WARNED: HE WOULD HUMBLE THE KING IF HE GOT PROUD. HE GOT PROUD... HE GOT HUMBLER... HE ACKNOWLEDGED GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY.**

Then I praised the Most High and honored and glorified him who lives forever:

For his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation.

All the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing, and he does what he wants with the army of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth.

There is no one who can block his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"

Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt, and glorify the King of the heavens, because all his works are true and his ways are just. He is able to humble those who walk in pride.

Daniel 4:34b-35, 37 (CSB)

responsibility  
sovereignty  
responsibility  
sovereignty

✓ **Cyrus, King of Persia, would do God's sovereign will – though he wouldn't realize he was doing it.**

**WHEN GOD SAID THIS, CYRUS HAD NOT YET BEEN BORN!**

I am the Lord, ... who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please;

he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid." "

I will go before you ... I summon you by name ... though you do not acknowledge me.

... I will strengthen you, though you have not acknowledged me, ...

Isaiah 44:24b, 28; 45:2a, 4b, 5b (NIV)

sovereignty  
responsibility  
sovereignty

**IN THE BOOK OF ACTS**

(WHERE WE LEARN ABOUT THE GOOD NEWS)

We frequently see examples of **God's sovereignty** at work alongside **human responsibility.**

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE SOME EXAMPLES

**SOVEREIGNTY AND RESPONSIBILITY IN ACTS. (EXAMPLES)**

**AT THE OFFER OF SALVATION.**

"Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Acts 2:38b, 47b (CSB)

responsibility  
sovereignty

**WHEN THE JEWISH CHRISTIANS LEARNED THAT GOD SENT PETER TO GENTILES, SO THAT THEY COULD BE SAVED...**

When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life."

Acts 11:18 (NIV)

sovereignty

**SOVEREIGNTY AND RESPONSIBILITY AT JESUS' CRUCIFIXION;  
THE PEOPLE WERE STILL GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO REPENT AND BE SAVED.**

You handed [Jesus] over to be killed, and you disowned him before Pilate, though he had decided to let him go. ← responsibility

... I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. ← responsibility

But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer. ← sovereignty

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, ... ← responsibility

Acts 3:13b, 17b-19 (NIV)

[A similar focus is seen in: Acts 2:23; 18:9-11.]

**WHEN THE JEWS REJECTED THE GOOD NEWS,  
THE APOSTLES WILLINGLY PREACHED THE GOOD NEWS TO THE GENTILES,  
KNOWING IN ADVANCE THAT IT WAS GOD'S SOVEREIGN PLAN FOR THEM TO DO SO.**

Paul and Barnabas boldly replied, "It was necessary that the word of God be spoken to you first. Since you reject it and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, we are turning to the Gentiles. For this is what the Lord has commanded us: ← responsibility

I have made you a light for the Gentiles to bring salvation to the end of the earth." ← (obeying prophecy!)

Acts 13:46-47 (CSB) ← sovereignty (Old Testament prophecy!)

**CAN WE DO THE SAME?  
CAN WE PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS AND KNOW (BEFORE WE DO IT) THAT WE WILL BE FULFILLING GOD'S SOVEREIGN PLAN?**

This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Matthew 24:14 (CSB)

**THE DISCIPLE'S RESPONSE TO PERSECUTION; THEIR BASIS FOR PRAYER.**

"Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: [quote O.T. prophecy about Jesus' death] ← sovereignty

[The leaders and people] did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. ← responsibility

Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus." ← (Their response to sovereignty.)

Acts 4:24b-25a, 28-30 (NIV)

**THE JEWS WHO REJECTED THE GOOD NEWS  
WERE WARNED THAT THEY WOULD BE FULFILLING  
A PROPHECY OF JUDGMENT AGAINST THEM.**

[They left] ... after Paul had quoted this particular passage to them:

"How well the Holy Spirit spoke to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah! The Spirit said: 'Go to these people and say,

"You will hear clearly but never understand. You will see clearly but never comprehend. ← sovereignty

These people have become close-minded and hard of hearing. ← &

They have shut their eyes so that their eyes never see. ← responsibility

Their ears never hear. ← (working together)

Their minds never understand. ←

And they never turn to me for healing." ' ' "

Acts 28:25b-27 (GW)

**YOUR OPPORTUNITY**

**Consider these things:**

- ✓ The apostles knew that sovereignty and responsibility worked together in *all* of life – including salvation. ← DO WE ACKNOWLEDGE IT?
- ✓ That awareness influenced the way they lived and interacted with both God and people. ← HOW DOES IT INFLUENCE US?

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