

The Gospel of John
Lesson #61
The Journey
Jim Hoffman

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The Gospel of John

Who wrote the Gospel of John?

An illustration of how God can use one's vocabulary, intellect, and experiences to accomplish his will perfectly without overriding ours, and without us being compelled to do anything against our will.

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The Gospel of John

John 6:37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

God's Sovereignty Man's Responsibility

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Sovereignty

- **God is sovereign** – he has power and authority over all other powers and forces. Nothing can stop what God intends to bring about.
- There can be no credible debate regarding the sovereignty of God – he uses his power to do anything he wants, no one or thing can stop him.
- It is therefore true that anything that happens in the universe is either caused by God or allowed by God – otherwise he is not God.

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Sovereignty

- I would understand the trepidation some have with God's sovereignty if God were not good, but he is beyond good, he is holy.
- Such a concern shows a level mistrust that must surely be an affront to God – actually, it is a level of unbelief to deny that God is sovereign.
- Don't take my word for it that God is sovereign, listen to what the Bible says.

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Sovereignty

- Psalm 135:5 For I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all gods. 6 Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.
- Job 42:2 Then Job answered the Lord and said: 2 "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted."

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Sovereignty

• Matthew 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.

• Proverbs 21:1 The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will.

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Sovereignty

At this point some might ask, "if God is sovereign over the 'kings' in this world then why is the world in such a mess?" And I would answer the world is in the mess it is because God is sovereign over all nations, over all leaders, and over all situations. We have not arrived at the hour we live in because God has lost control, we've arrived here because he is in control.

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Sovereignty

• Isaiah 10:5 Woe to Assyria, the rod of my anger; the staff in their hands is my fury! 6 Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of my wrath I command him, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. 7 But he does not so intend, and his heart does not so think; but it is in his heart to destroy, and to cut off nations not a few.

• Assyria is God's rod of anger and staff of indignation – they are commanded to rob, plunder, and mow down this godless nation of Israel and it was not in the Assyrian king's mind to do so until God put it into his mind!

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Sovereignty

• Isaiah 46:8 “Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, 9 remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’ 11 calling a bird of prey from the east, the man (Cyrus, the great of Persia) of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.”¹⁰

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Sovereignty

• Jeremiah 25:11 This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

• Jeremiah 29:10 For thus says the Lord: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place.

• Babylon was not a world power after King Hammurabi for about 1,000 years until a battle in the Middle East known as Carchemish where a young Babylonian general named Nebuchadnezzar distinguished himself and brought Babylon a victory that would make them a world power.¹¹

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Sovereignty

• As it turns out Babylon’s victory at Carchemish was orchestrated by God for his own purposes – to punish the people of Judah.

• That one battle, Carchemish, brought lowly Babylon from a near nobody on the world stage to be the superpower of their day.

• It was so unlikely that Babylon would even be on the battlefield at Carchemish, but there they were at God’s initiative and against all odds they won.¹²

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Sovereignty

- The victory at Carchemish happened in 605 B.C. the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah.
- So what? Well, the book of Daniel opens with these words, "In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2 And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with some of the vessels of the house of God."

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Sovereignty

- It becomes quite evident God was bringing a nation to power he wanted to use to discipline his people.
- What is even more interesting is that the revived Babylon would last just seventy-three years.
- So, God revives Babylon out of nowhere to shackle and subdue Judah and when he is done using Babylon he casts them aside using the Medes and Persians.

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Sovereignty

Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps. He neither needs nor seeks the permission of anyone to do what he intends. We can rest at ease because God is great and good – he is able to setup and takedown governments. He is able to use tyrants for his purposes and they even think it is their idea. In fact, no one can successfully stand against him for he is the Sovereign of the universe.

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Sovereignty

There can be no debate that God is sovereign over everything that happens to everyone and everything. For such a debate to be credible one would have to ignore his omnipotence, his omniscience, and his omnipresence. There is a credible debate over how much of his sovereign power he chooses to exert in given situations and especially over the individual wills of men and women. Because we can be certain that God is good, it is my opinion we should be indifferent in this matter.

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“Most Christians salute the sovereignty of God but believe in the sovereignty of man.”

R. C. Sproul

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Man’s Responsibility to Choose

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Man's Responsibility to Choose

- Every call to repent, or believe, is a call to choose.
- Matthew 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!
- Acts 3:19 Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out.

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Man's Responsibility to Choose

- Mark 1:15 "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."
- John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life..... 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."

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Man's Responsibility to Choose

Here too there can be no credible debate with respect to mankind's ability to repent and believe to be saved. With the possible exceptions of Jeremiah and specifically John the Baptist, who was filled with the Spirit in the womb all others must choose to believe or not believe. To not choose to believe is to choose to remain in unbelief. In the case of John, the Baptist it seems there are some things, like the redemption plan, that are too important to be left to the choices of men.

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The Gospel of John

- John 6:37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.
- This verse is but one example of the deep waters of the scriptures – God must give you to Christ AND you must come to him.
- By Jesus’ own words above in order to come to Christ the Father must have ordained it, AND anyone who comes to Christ will not be cast out.

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John 16:12 I have many things to say, but you are not ready

The whole debate over how sovereign God is and how autonomous individuals are seems to me like an intramural sport inside Christianity. It’s fun for some to play but each game seems to end in a tie or in anger. I believe when the Bible appears to teach both sides of an issue, neither side on its own is fully correct. Somewhere in the mind and intentions of God lies a nugget of clarifying truth we are not yet ready for.
Isn’t that obvious?

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The Gospel of John

As a general principle, no one who wants to be saved will ever be lost.
Lest there be any doubt, wanting to be saved means wanting Jesus, wanting to live for him, wanting to forsake the life of the unbelieving, and wanting to be in fellowship for eternity with the people of God.

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The Gospel of John

Whether you give more weight to God's sovereignty or to man's responsibility to choose, tell me the Christian behavior that is altered by either of those positions.

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Questions?

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