**The Sovereignty of God**

*“Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name.”*

1 Chronicles 29:11-13

**Definition:**[[1]](#footnote-1)

“[The Sovereignty of God] refers to the fact that all things are under His rule and control, and that nothing happens in this universe without His direction or permission. He is a God who works, not just some things, but all things after the counsel of His own will (see Eph. 1:11). God's purpose is all-inclusive and is never thwarted (see Isa. 46:11); nothing takes Him by surprise.”

"It is not merely that God has the power and right to govern all things but that He does so always and without exception." - John Piper

**A Brief introduction to God’s sovereignty and human responsibility:[[2]](#footnote-2)**

Divine Sovereignty

~~Fatalism~~

**DS DS DS DS DS DS DS DS DS DS**

~~Power to the contrary~~

Human

Responsibility

**HR HR HR HR HR**

**Explanation:**

* is the teaching that God is so in control that humans have no responsibility or real choices.
* is the teaching that humans have ultimate control over choices and decisions.
* Some actions only have “DS.” This indicates things done by God alone such as creation and resurrection.
* Some actions have both DS and HR. See Genesis 45:8, 50:20 and Acts 2:23; 4:27-28, Philippians 2:12-13.

**The argument:**

Premise #1:

Premise #2:

Conclusion:

1. **Scripture teaches that God is sovereign over all things.**[[3]](#footnote-3)
   1. **In General:**
      1. Ephesians 1:11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.
      2. Psalm 115:1-3 Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness! Why should the nations say, “Where is their God?” Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.
      3. Job 42:2 I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
      4. Daniel 4:34-35 “At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High, and praised and honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom endures from generation to generation; all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, and he does according to his will among the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand or say to him, “What have you done?””
   2. **Over seemingly random things or “accidents”:**
      1. Proverbs 16:33 “The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.”
      2. Jonah 1:7 And they said to one another, “Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah.
      3. 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.
   3. **Over nations and kings:**
      1. Proverbs 21:1 The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.
      2. Psalm 47:7-9 For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm! God reigns over the nations; God sits on his holy throne. The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; he is highly exalted!
      3. Dan 2:20-21 Daniel answered and said: “Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;
      4. Dan 4:34-35 (above)
      5. Romans 13:1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God
   4. **Our daily lives and plans:**
      1. Proverbs 20:24 A man’s steps are from the LORD; how then can man understand his way?
      2. Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.
      3. James 4:13-15 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit”— yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”
   5. **Life and Death:**
      1. Deuteronomy 32:39 ‘See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.
      2. 1 Samuel 2:6 The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up.
   6. **Salvation:**
      1. Romans 9:15-16 For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.
      2. Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.
      3. John 6:44, 37
         1. 6:44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.
         2. 6:37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.
            1. Ephesians 1:3-6:
   7. **The death of God’s Son:**
      1. Acts 2:23 This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.
      2. Acts 4:27-28 for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.
      3. Isaiah 53:10 Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief.
   8. **Disabilities:**
      1. Exodus 4:10-11 But Moses said to the LORD, “Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue.” Then the LORD said to him, “Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD?
   9. **Nature:**
      1. Psalm 135:6-7 Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps. He it is who makes the clouds rise at the end of the earth, who makes lightning for the rain and brings forth the wind from his storehouses.
      2. Matthew 5:45 so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.
      3. Matthew 6:25-30 Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?
   10. **Evil things:**
       1. Amos 3:6 Is a trumpet blown in a city, and the people are not afraid? Does disaster come to a city, unless the LORD has done it?
       2. Isaiah 45:7 I form light and create darkness, I make well-being and create calamity, I am the LORD, who does all these things.
       3. Job 1:21-22, 2:10 And he said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong…But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.
   11. **Free acts of men:**
       1. Ex. 3:21, 12:35-36 And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty…The people of Israel had also done as Moses told them, for they had asked the Egyptians for silver and gold jewelry and for clothing. And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.
          1. The point here is that the Egyptians will freely give Israel their treasures.
       2. Ezra 7:27 Blessed be the LORD, the God of our fathers, who put such a thing as this into the heart of the king, to beautify the house of the LORD that is in Jerusalem,
          1. The context here is the Persian King sending Ezra back to Jerusalem to reestablish the nation of Israel.
   12. **Sinful acts of men and Satan**
       1. The entire Joseph narrative
          1. Gen 45:5 And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life…
          2. Gen 50:20-21 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear; jI will provide for you and your little ones.” Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.
       2. Job 1:12 And the LORD said to Satan, “Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand.” So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

1. “Monergism: The Sovereignty of God,” *Monergism*, August 1, 2013, n.p. Online: http://www.monergism.com/directory/link\_category/Sovereignty-of-God/. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Taken and adapted from: Robert A. Peterson, *Election and Free Will: God’s Gracious Choice and Our Responsibility* (P & R Publishing, 2007), 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. I am indebted for many of the references to: Justin Taylor, “What Is God Sovereign Over?,” Gospel Coalition, n.d., n.p. [cited 1 August 2013]. Online: http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2011/10/18/what-is-god-sovereign-over/. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)