

God's Sovereignty

by Zac Poonen

Our salvation is 100% from God, and we must recognize and submit to His sovereignty in our lives.

Scripture: Romans 9:7-11

Topics: "God's Sovereignty", "Grace and Humility"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes God's sovereignty in His choices, illustrating this through the examples of Abraham's sons, Isaac and Ishmael, and Jacob and Esau, as well as Moses and Pharaoh. He explains that God's selection is not based on human merit but on His divine will and mercy, reminding us that our salvation is entirely due to God's grace. Poonen urges believers to recognize that they are chosen by God, not because of their own actions, but solely by His decision, which should lead to humility and worship. He highlights that true discipleship focuses on the person of Christ rather than our own achievements. Ultimately, Poonen calls for acceptance of God's sovereignty, even in the face of unanswered prayers and unexplained circumstances.

Transcript

Abraham's two sons Ishmael and Isaac grew up in the same home with the same father. Yet God chose only one of them - Isaac (Rom.9:7). That was not because God was partial, but because He is sovereign. He has the absolute right as the Creator of the universe to do exactly what He likes and to choose whomever He likes for any task. No-one can question His right, because He created all things for His pleasure, and as Paul says (at the end of these three glorious chapters), "From Him, through Him and to Him are all things" (Rom.11:36).

Isaac had two boys, Esau and Jacob who grew up in the same home with the same parents. Yet God chose only the younger Jacob. "Though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him Who calls, it was said, 'The older will serve the younger'" (Rom.9:11,12). There was nothing unjust in this action of God's, for He is the sovereign Ruler of the universe.

Moses and Pharaoh both lived in Egypt at the same time and in the same palace. Yet God raised up Moses to be a prophet of His. And Pharaoh was raised up, "to demonstrate God's power in him and that God's Name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth" (Rom.9:17), through the hardness of Pharaoh's heart and the judgments that God would send on him as a result.

In all these three examples, we see the sovereignty of God in choosing people. We need to see the same sovereignty at work in our salvation too. Why did God chose you and not some of your relatives - your brother, your sister, your uncle etc.,? Was it because you were better than them? Certainly not. Perhaps you were a greater crook and a hypocrite than them (like Jacob was). Yet God chose you. It is sheer mercy and grace.

What shall we say in the light of all this? We can only bow before this Almighty Sovereign God and worship Him with all our hearts, and acknowledge that He alone is worthy, and that our salvation is entirely (100%) due to his grace. It is true that we accepted what He offered us. But the work was entirely His.

There is nothing that so humbles man to the dust as the fact of God's sovereign choice of His children. That is why clever people find it difficult to accept it, and fight against it, and try to twist the Scriptures to make them mean what they don't mean.

It is not because a man determines to be a child of God (or to be holy), or because he decides to run faithfully, that he is saved. It is only because God has shown him His mercy. It is God Who "grants us repentance unto life" and it is He Who "works in us to desire His will and to do His will" (Acts 11:18; Phil.2:13). What can we glory in then?

Here is what Romans 9:16 says: "It does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God Who has mercy".

And here is what 1 Corinthians 4:7 says: "What do you have that you did not receive? If you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?"

Memorise these two verses and keep them always in your heart. They will help in keeping you small in your own eyes at all times.

The new birth does not come through the will of the flesh (human determination), but by the will of God (Divine determination) (John 1:13).

Jesus told his disciples, "You did not choose Me but I chose you" (John 15:16). Do we realise that fact?

Very often we imagine that it was WE who had accepted the Lord as our Saviour and that that has made the difference between us and the unbelievers. It is good for us therefore to remember that it was God Who chose us. And He chose us in Christ before we were born - in fact, even before He created the world!! (Eph.1:4).

From start to finish, our salvation is 100% from God - so that no man might boast in God's presence one day.

Have you done something wonderful for the Lord and for His kingdom? If so, then try your best to forget about it. Recognise that you could have done nothing if God had not given you health, strength, intelligence, gift, talent, opportunity, knowledge of His Word and of Himself etc., etc., The list is endless. How can you glory then?

When we are taken up with how spiritual we have become or how much we have done for the Lord, we are already Pharisees. A true disciple is one who is taken up with the Person of the Lord Himself at all times.

There are many things God does for which he gives us no explanation. There are many prayers for which His answer is "No", and we don't understand the reason why. It is as impossible for God to explain all His dealings to us as it is to fill the Indian Ocean into a cup. God's wisdom is like an ocean. But our minds are only like a little cup.

Scripture says, "Who are you O man to criticise God?" (Rom.9:19,20 - Living). When we are small in our own eyes we don't have any complaints about God's ways. We just submit to God, even when we don't understand His dealings, because we accept His sovereignty.

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