

**ATTRIBUTES OF GOD #9: Sovereignty Of God (Part A)**  
**Romans 11:33-36**  
**Wednesday, March 22, 2017**  
**Grace Community Church**  
**Kingston, Tennessee**

**1. INTRODUCTION:**

a. **TEXT:** Romans 11:33-36, (33) Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! (34) "For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?" (35) "Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?" (36) For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

b. **REMARKS:**

- i. The God most people worship is too small.
- ii. The reason for these misconceptions is that most people do not recognize the sovereignty of God

**I. SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD**

**A. DEFINE TERM OF DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY:**

**1.** The word comes from the same root as the word, "sovereign" which comes from a Latin word that means, "Above, over"<sup>1</sup>

**2.** Webster defines the word as: Supreme in power; possessing supreme dominion or jurisdiction; ...free of outside influence or control; ...A supreme ruler; the person having the highest power or authority in a state, as a king, queen, or other ruler; a monarch..."<sup>2</sup>

**3.** The SOVEREIGN of a nation is its king/queen who is the ultimate authority in the land

**4.** When we refer to the SOVEREIGNTY of God, we mean that He is the SOVEREIGN of the universe

a. Because God is the SOVEREIGN of the universe:

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<sup>1</sup> *The International Webster New Encyclopedic Dictionary*, "Sovereign," p. 930.

<sup>2</sup> *The International Webster New Encyclopedic Dictionary*, "Sovereign," p. 930.

**1) No person/power outside of God who will ever overrule Him**

**2) He is in complete control of every nation, person, thing, creation, creature and every event within the universe**

**B. DEMONSTRATE TRUTHS OF DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY**

**1. Nothing happens by accident in a universe which is presided over by a sovereign God**

**a. Everything which occurs in the universe happens because God:**

**1) Caused it to occur**

**2) Consciously allowed it to occur**

**b. As the Sovereign of the universe, God has a plan for world history which He is orchestrating according to His desired outcome**

**1) Job 23:13, “But He [is] unique, and who can make Him change? And [whatever] His soul desires, [that] He does.”**

**2) Job 42:2, “I know that You can do everything, And that no purpose [of Yours] can be withheld from You.”**

**3) Psalms 115:3, “But our God [is] in heaven; He does whatever He pleases.”**

**4) Psalms 135:6, “Whatever the LORD pleases He does, In heaven and in earth, In the seas and in all deep places.”**

**5) Eph. 1:11, “He works all things according to the counsel of His own will”**

**6) Rm. 8:28, “All things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to His PURPOSE.”**

**C. God is not the author of evil but can manipulated it in such a way that He remains untainted by it and uses it to produce**

ultimate good according to His eternal purpose for time and space

**1) Psm. 76:10, God can make “the wrath of man to praise Him”**

**2) Genesis 50:20, Joseph, who was sold into slavery by his brothers, told them, “You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good.”**

**3) Prov. 16:4, “The LORD has made all for Himself, Yes, even the wicked for the day of doom.”**

**C. There are 4 misconceptions that most of humanity have about the sovereignty of God:**

**1. Delineated:**

**a. *ATHEISM*, He does not exist**

**b. *DEISM*, He does exist, but He does not care what happens in this world**

**c. God is helpless to control what goes on in the universe**

**d. Satan has wrestled control of the universe from God and God is struggling unsuccessfully to get it back**

**2. The Bible refutes these faulty notions:**

**a. There is a God, Gen. 1:1, “In the beginning God...”**

**b. He did create the universe, Gen. 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...”**

**c. He did not merely create the universe and then sit back and forget about it, Col. 1:17, “By Him all things consist.”**

**d. God alone is the Sovereign of the universe, Isaiah 44:6 “Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: ‘I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God.’”**

**D. WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT GOD IS THAT GOD IS SOVEREIGN:**

1. The Bible refutes ATHEISM: God does exist, Gen. 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...."
2. The Bible refutes DEISM: God did not sit back and "forget" about Creation once He brought it forth, Col. 1:17, "By Him all things consist."
3. He is in complete and unequivocal control of the universe
4. His sovereignty is NOT under the least threat from any person or thing
5. We may not be able to understand/comprehend why God would sovereignly allow certain things to occur
  - a. Rm. 11:34, "...who has know the mind of the Lord? Or, who has become His counselor?"
6. God in His person is infinitely above what we could ever imagine Him to be
  - a. God said: Is. 55:8, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord."
  - b. Most people view God as simply a bigger version of themselves
    - 1) God laughs at attempts to "figure Him out": Psm. 50:21, "...you thought that I was altogether like you..."

## II. THE GLORY OF GOD

- A. The SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD and the GLORY OF GOD are closely linked in Scripture
  1. The SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD deals with His controlling of all persons, events and things within the universe
  2. The GLORY OF GOD is the purpose for which He controls these things
- B. GLORY DELINEATED:
  1. The word "GLORY" is used in two ways in Scripture. One way the word "GLORY" is used in Scripture, is to refer to:

**a. #1: THE PRESENCE OF GOD**

**1) Ex. 40:34, “Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the GLORY of the Lord filled the tabernacle.”**

**2) Man cannot endure the full manifestation of God’s glory**

**3) Ex. 33:20, God tells Moses, ““You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me and live.””**

**b. #2: THE PRAISE OF GOD**

**1) Lk. 17:17-18, Christ said to the leper He healed, “...’Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory (praise) to God except this foreigner?””**

**c. The distinction between the two usages of the word “glory” can be seen on the night of our Savior’s birth:**

**1) GOD’S MANIFESTED GLORY: Lk. 2:8-9, “Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.”**

**2) DECLARED GLORY is seen in Lk. 2:14, on the night of Jesus’ birth, the angels proclaimed, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.”**

**C. GLORY DEFINED**

**1. MEANING OF THE WORD “GLORY”:**

**a. HEBREW (OT)**

**1) “Weight, heaviness, worthiness, reputation, honor”<sup>3</sup>**

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<sup>3</sup> *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, II, 730.

## 2) GREEK (NT)

a) "...primarily signifies an opinion, estimate, and hence, the honour resulting from a good opinion [of someone about someone else]."<sup>4</sup>

b) Ex—(from Scripture) of this usage of the word "GLORY": Gen. 45:13, When Joseph sat upon the throne of Egypt and his brothers who had sold him into slavery stood before him, he told them, "So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt..."

### D. CONTEXT OF OUR TEXT in Rm. 11:36:

1. Paul has just spent three chapters in Romans talking about the sovereignty of God in choosing some to eternal life while rejecting others

2. Paul is attempting to answer the question, "Why would God reject His chosen people and begin working with the Gentiles?"

3. The answer Paul arrives at is twofold:

a. #1: God can do whatever He wants to do because He is SOVEREIGN

b. #2: Whatever He SOVEREIGNLY does will bring GLORY to Himself

4. Paul concluded this discussion on the sovereignty of God by asking three questions (the answer to all 3 questions is, "no one.):

a. QUESTION #1: V. 34, "Who has known the mind of the Lord?"

1) Paul elaborated on his query in v. 33, "How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out.")

b. QUESTION #2: v. 34, "Who has become His counselor?"

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<sup>4</sup> *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, p. 493.

1) Job 38:4, in response to Job's questioning of God's purpose behind his personal sufferings, God told him, "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the world?"

c. QUESTION #3: V. 35, "Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?"

5. As Paul concludes his consideration of this deep subject, he breaks forth with an exclamation, v. 36, "For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

a. Notice the prepositions in this verse (v. 36, "For *of Him* and *through Him* and *to Him* are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."):

1) "OF Him" (Gk., "out from Him"): He is the SOURCE of all things

2) "THROUGH Him": He is the AGENT of all things

a) Jn. 1:3, "All things were made [lit., became] through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

3) "TO Him"—He is the FOCUS of all things

a) "TO" is *eis* (Gk.), "Unto"

b) *eis* is used in Acts 11:25 where Barnabas "departed FOR Tarsus"

b. Verses that show God is the FOCUS of all things:

1) Col. 1:16, "All things were created THROUGH Him and FOR Him"

2) Rev. 4:11 (KJV), the 24 elders say, "You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for You created all things, AND FOR YOUR PLEASURE THEY ARE AND WERE CREATED."

3) Prov. 16:4, "The LORD has made all things for Himself, yes, even the wicked for the day of doom."

4) Psm. 19:1, “The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork.”

5) The end design of the creature is to glorify God, Is. 43:20, “The beast of the field shall honor Me.”

6) The end design of the creation of man is the glory of God, Is. 43:7, “man was created for the glory of God”

7) The angels proclaim the glory of God, Lk. 2:14 tells us that at Christ’s birth they sang, “Glory to God in the highest....”

8) Our salvation is for the glory of God, Eph. 1:5-6, “having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.”

9) The second coming of Christ is for the glory of God, 2 Thes. 1:10, “When He shall come to be glorified in His saints”

10) All things/people/events are for the glory of God

a) Rm. 11:36, “...unto Him be THE (literally) glory”

**E. The primary purpose of God’s will in this world is His own glory**

1. EX—the purpose statement of Disneyland in California is “to bring people happiness”

2. Since God’s purpose for this universe is to bring Himself glory, then He is free to make any decision which He feels will bring Himself glory

3. Sometimes, God’s will for us may involve things we view as painful

4. EX—Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane

**a. Physical distress, Lk. 22:44, “And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”**

**b. Emotional distress, Jn. 12:27-28, (27) "Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. (28) "Father, glorify Your name." Then a voice came from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again."**

**c. Jn. 17:1, Christ wanted His Father to be glorified, “Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,”**

**5. God’s glory is the “purpose” of Rm. 8:28, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”**

**a. Lit., “All things is working together for good ...”**

### **III. CONCLUSION:**

**A. At present, we may not appreciate the sovereignty of God that is allowing hurtful things in our lives for His own glory, but you will not charge God with folly whenever you stand before Him**

**B. All of the horrible things of life will bring glory to God in the Day of Judgment**

**1. Psm. 76:10, “Surely the wrath of man shall praise You; With the remainder of wrath You shall gird Yourself.”**

**2. In the story of Job, the wrath of man glorified God:**

**a. Job 1:15, “ ‘... when the Sabeans raided them and took them away--indeed they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!’”**

**b. Job 1:17, “While he was still speaking, another also came and said, ‘The Chaldeans formed three bands, raided the camels and took them away, yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!’”**

**c. Job 1:9-11, Satan said, (9) So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? (10) "Have You not made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. (11) "But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely curse You to Your face!"**

**d. Job 1:12, God said, "And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD."**

**e. Job 1:20-22, (20) Job's response, Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. (21) And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." (22) In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.**

**f. V. 21, Job said, "BLESSED be the Name of the Lord" (BLESSED in Heb., "to kneel; to kneel for prayer, praise...hence to...thank, to salute, to wish well to....")<sup>5</sup>**

### **3. Nahum 1:3, "God has His way in the whirlwind"**

**C. No one will be able to charge God with folly in that day, Phil. 2:10-11, (10) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, (11) and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

#### **D. QUESTIONS:**

**1. Since God is going to get the glory out of your life and the events of your life—and everything in your life whether good or bad is going to glorify God, then, should you not relax in the sovereignty/providence of God?**

**2. If God is going to get glory from your life, should it not be an ACTIVE glory and not merely a PASSIVE glory?**

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<sup>5</sup> *Wilson's OT Word Studies*, p. 41.

**3. Do you glorify God in your:**

**a. Marriage?**

**b. Job?**

**c. Relationships?**

**4. Everything about our lives should glorify God:**

**a. 1 Cor. 10:31, "Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God."**

**b. Mt. 5:16, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in Heaven"**

**c. 1 Cor. 6:20, "You are not your own, for you are bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are His"**