**A Sovereign God and Men with Free-Will**

**Introduction**

1. The sovereignty of God is a keystone in the premise of the scarlet thread of redemption, as is the free-will of man.
   1. A plan as intricate and vast as the redemption of man could not be devised or carried out by anyone other than a true sovereign – i.e. THE true sovereign.
   2. The free-will of man is a matter designed by the Sovereign God and is ultimately the reason a plan of redemption had to be devised. (Because of man’s choice to sin.)
2. A misunderstanding of God’s sovereignty causes a domino effect to unfold, taking down basic Biblical principles like the free-will of man. (EX: Calvinism)
3. In order to understand the God of scripture all human theological perspective must be laid aside, and scripture must have the ultimate say.
4. God is Sovereign
5. Defined
   1. Sovereignty – supreme power or authority. (New Oxford American Dictionary)
   2. Sovereign – possessing supreme or ultimate power. (New Oxford American Dictionary)
   3. God is the supreme ruler of all. He has the ultimate authority.
6. Stated and Observed
   1. Creation – God has supreme power and authority in creation.
      1. God as creator of all is a basis for His sovereignty.
      2. **Psalm 24:1-2** – because God created it, He is ruler over it.
      3. **Psalm 135:5-7** – because God created it, He governs it as He pleases.
         1. By His authority – **Psalm 33:6-9 –** both created and sustained in order.
      4. Jesus as the agent of Creation – **Colossians 1:15-17** – as creator He has the preeminence – **Hebrews 1:3** – upholds all by His word.
      5. In regard to the end – **2 Peter 3:7** – preserved by His word, reserved for destruction.
   2. Kingdoms of men – God has supreme power and authority (control) in the kingdoms of men.
      1. Mankind is part of creation, and God governs in that area as well.
      2. **Proverbs 21:1** – God, through His providence, uses kingdoms for His purposes.
      3. **Daniel 5:18-21** – Daniel right before giving Belshazzar the interpretation of the writing on the wall – reminding of his father Nebuchadnezzar.
         1. Nebuchadnezzar was arrogant and forgot that it was God who ***“gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand” (Daniel 1:2)***.
         2. **(v. 21)** – Nebuchadnezzar’s punishment showed him that God was in control.
      4. General rule regarding God’s governance in nations – **Proverbs 14:34** – WHILE GOD RULES, AND USES KINGDOMS TO HIS WILL, HE DOES NOT DO SO IN A RANDOM, INCONSISTENT WAY.
         1. **Psalm 135:8-9** – He gave Egypt a choice to comply/submit.
      5. The same remains true in the New Testament – **John 19:10-11** – Jesus to Pilate – **Romans 13:1** – no authorities exist apart from God’s appointment.
   3. Redemption – God has supreme authority in redemption, thus, determines the “how” of redemption.
      1. Setting the Anointed on the throne to forgive – **Psalm 2** – men tried to thwart God’s purpose, but failed.
         1. In their rebellion God’s purpose was still executed – **Acts 2:23-24** – determined purpose and foreknowledge.
         2. **Acts 5:30-31** – Murdered, but God exalted to the throne to grant salvation.
      2. Authority for salvation – **Matthew 28:18-20** – His decree must be followed to be redeemed.
      3. That which was chosen to redeem man – **Romans 1:16** – this is by God’s decree alone – **2 Thessalonians 1:8** – those who choose otherwise cannot overthrow God’s decree – they receive just punishment.
         1. **(v. 6)** – It is a righteous thing with God to punish such people.
         2. It is righteous because by His sovereign will He chose the gospel to save.
7. Men Have Free-Will
8. Defined
   1. Free-will – the power of acting without the constraint of necessity or fate; the ability to act at one's own discretion. (New Oxford American Dictionary)
   2. Man’s free will is ultimately a choice of God to let men choose for themselves.
      1. Yes, God has the power to force men.
      2. However, God chose to create men with free-will.
9. Stated and Observed
   1. This concept of man’s free will is especially important to be understood in regard to redemption.
   2. The purpose of man – **Ecclesiastes 12:13** – this is man’s all.
      1. Man’s all – i.e. the whole reason for man’s existence – why God created man.
      2. Choice – Solomon’s whole conclusion is as an urge to choose that path, the path you were designed to take.
      3. **(v. 14)** – good and evil are ultimately set as choices.
   3. **Matthew 7:13-14** – two paths to choose – life or destruction – salvation or eternal punishment.
   4. As seen with Israel:
      1. **Deuteronomy 30:19** – life or death, blessing or cursing
      2. **Joshua 24:15** – Serve God or idols.
   5. The whole idea of the invitation involves man’s choice – **Revelation 22:17**
10. These Coexist
11. In His Sovereignty God Created Man with Free-Will
    1. Men have exaggerated the idea of God’s sovereignty and have taken it beyond what is revealed in scripture.
       1. If God is sovereign, some say, then He must determine all things.
       2. I.e. nothing happens apart from God’s predetermined will that it would happen.
    2. This leads to the classic false doctrine of individual predestination – some are created for the purpose of salvation, and some are created for the purpose of damnation.
       1. Also, taken to its logical end, there is no choice that man really makes, but all matters, from the least to the greatest, are predetermined by God.
    3. Contradiction – God has supreme power and authority, so nothing can be done apart from His will for it to happen.
       1. However, if God has supreme power and authority, can’t He decide to create man with the ability to choose?
    4. God created man to seek Him, but does not force man to do so – **Acts 17:26-27; Romans 1:20-21** – Gentiles as an example of choosing to ignore God’s existence instead of seeking Him further. (Created with a choice.)
12. God’s Sovereignty and Man’s Free-Will in Salvation
    1. Jesus is the only way:
       1. **John 5:21-27** – God has given the authority to grant life to the Son.
       2. **John 14:6** – none come to God except through Jesus.
       3. **Acts 4:12** – preached by the apostles – no other authority for salvation.
    2. Men can choose to follow Jesus, nor not:
       1. **Romans 9:30-10:4** – The Jews were rejected because they rejected GOD’S plan of salvation through Christ.
          1. It was not their right to choose.
          2. It was God’s right to choose how men were saved – i.e. by what system men are saved.
       2. **Mark 8:34-38** – whoever desires to save his life.
       3. **Ephesians 1:3, 7** – God chose Jesus as the place wherein all spiritual blessings, namely redemption and forgiveness, lie.
       4. **Galatians 3:26-29; Mark 16:15-16** – Baptism is how one gets into Christ, and baptism is a choice men make in submission to the gospel. (**cf. Acts 8:36** – each can ask, “What hinders me?” And the answer is nothing.)

**Conclusion**

1. There is only one God, and He has all authority – He is sovereign.
2. In His sovereignty, God created man with the ability to choose – free-will.
3. God determines HOW men are saved, and each individual decides WHETHER THEY WILL SUBMIT to God’s decree.