

Is God Sovereign?

My intent with this post is not to open a theological can of worms. I am certainly not the final voice on all things theological. I do want to make a very important point regarding theology, however: The sovereignty of God does not mean He controls everything that takes place on earth. This should be obvious, but a religious mindset permeates the church (and many unbelievers, as well) that says God is in control of everything that occurs on earth.

The obvious negative connotations of this are dealt with through beliefs and statements such as, “there must be a reason;” “everything happens for a reason;” “all things work together for good;” “well, God is in control;” “nothing happens unless He allows it;” and so on. These statements and beliefs bring a degree of comfort to people, causing them to insert a sense of purpose into their pain. I understand this. However, problems, pain, loss, and difficulties don’t have to be allowed by God in order for Him to make them serve us. And the fact that He uses bad events doesn’t mean He is behind them.

God did not put sinful motives into the hearts of Joseph’s brothers causing them to sell him into slavery. He did, however, have the ability and sovereign power to use their evil, turning it into good. Yahweh did not put into the heart of King Saul to falsely accuse and persecute David. No part of this was caused by God, yet He did have a plan to use it for David’s good. The cave of Adullam, David’s home through much of that season, became his classroom and writing chamber. He wrote many of the Psalms from that cave, psalms that have touched hundreds of millions of people.

God does not have to cause it, to use it.

The word sovereign actually means “the greatest in power and authority.” This is obviously true of God—He is sovereign. The word does NOT mean “in control of everything.” The Bible is filled with actions that occurred that were not God’s will, nor did He “allow” them. God “allowing” everything on earth is only true in the sense that He allows humans to possess a free will—we have the power of choice. I once heard the great Foursquare Pastor, Jack Hayford, say regarding this topic, “God is sovereign, but in His sovereignty, He has limited Himself.” He also said, “The quest of Jesus Christ on the earth is greatly crippled by wrong notions of the sovereignty of God.”

(To be continued.)