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Sovereignty of God

The world is going through one of the greatest crises. People are not able to understand what is going on, and especially how to respond to this. Many of you might be holding on to the promise in Psalm 91 which says that “No plague shall come near your tent” but you might have that thought in your head which asks “What if it is God’s will for me to be infected?”. That thought can affect your prayer, faith and confidence in God. Today I want to address that,

Take a few minutes and try to answer this question “Do you think that whatever happens is happening according to Gods will”, or “Do you think that God is controlling the virus as in, who it will attack, and who it will not attack.” If you said that God is controlling the virus, and you believe he controls who is being attacked and who is not, you believe in a certain version of what is called the sovereignty of God.

When people say “God is sovereign” what they mean is that God absolutely controls everything which happens in the universe. Like one renowned theologian said “Right now at this moment, if there is a speck of dust falling from the ceiling to the ground. That is planned and controlled by God, for His glory” That means even the trajectory of the fall, the coordinates, the time at which it fell, was planned and controlled by God for that His glory will be revealed. This doctrine has been infused into our lives, more in the last few decades and it has been wrecking havoc in our relationship with God.

There is another version of sovereignty which is also being passed around and that says that God controls everything and that he has his hands on every single thing on earth. They say that either God initiates it, or the devil asks God permission to do it and He gives the devil permission to do it, and hence whatever is happening to your life is God’s will. It is no different from the other definition. In both definitions, we see that God is responsible, and everything which happens is what God wanted to happen.

This doctrine of sovereignty finds its way in many of our conversations and social media memes and posts. And honestly, it is confusing. We say “God knows what He is doing”, “if it is God’s will, it will happen”, “God is powerful and can stop this right now”, and naturally we raise plenty of questions. I remember, a few years ago, I was talking to my friend and telling him that “it was not God’s will for him to be sick”, and then he asked me “But God allowed it right?”. I started to get confused because “How can something happen if God stopped it” and so it should be that God allowed it, and that went against what I was saying. Like I said, it is a very confusing topic and people have doubts about this topic. A lot of believers say this because that is what they have heard from the churches and Bible studies.

I believe it is a high time we address this topic, or else it will grow into doubts in every area of our life as a believer. When I was in Europe, there was this lady who was on a wheelchair and I remember the whole church was praying for this lady; the Pastor prophesied and said that “God tells me that this lady will get up from that wheelchair”, and everyone was saying “Hallelujah”, and singing songs in faith believing that she is healed. But then, she did not get healed, and the same people who said that it was God’s will, started to say that “It was God’s sovereign will for the person to not get healed”. It’s so easy for us to jump from one boat to another. I believe its time for us to make up our mind. Like one Pastor correctly put

it, religion has caused us to be “schizophrenics”. If you think it is God’s will to heal, stick with that, if you believe it is not God’s will to be healed, stick with that. But pick a side.

Let’s look into sovereignty in detail.

We saw that when people say that God is sovereign, it means that God decreed for things to be this way. It would mean that God created Lucifer the devil to be that way, and every sin was orchestrated by God to serve His purposes. The original sin was orchestrated and even this coronavirus is orchestrated, allowed or decreed and controlled by God to serve His purpose.

But God did not know everything. This is seen in verses like Gen 22:12 that says “Now I know” which was when God found that Abraham loved him more than Isaac. Why did God test Abraham if He already knew? Jer 31:44 says that he will not remember our sins. So, if God cannot do that, why would he say that? In Jer 32:35, it says “Nor did it enter my mind”. In Isa 5:4, it says God expected the vineyard to yield grapes but instead it yielded sour grapes. There are plenty more things in the Bible which shows us that.

God did not even plan the specifics of how Jesus would be born on earth. Yes, he would be born of a virgin, and that he would come to save the world, but all the plans about his birth and death, were after the original sin, and not before that. There are only a few verses in the Bible that talk about what happened before the foundations of the earth, and it is mentioned in 1 Pet 1:20 about Jesus. It says that “He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world but was manifest in these last times for you” (NKJV). God foreordained Jesus, or prepared Jesus before the foundations of the world, why? Because everything depended on that one choice of man, and what Adam would choose at the garden of Eden. He did not know what he would choose, and hence he prepared for the possibility of Adam eating from the tree. I can give further proof on this. Rev 13:8 it says, “All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” Notice that it says, “he was slain FROM the foundations of the world”. “he was foreordained before the foundations of the earth and slain from the foundations of the earth. What happened in between? Adam chose to eat from the tree.

God did not know what Adam was about to do, and hence he had prepared Jesus and foreordained him before the foundations of the world, and after that, as soon as Adam sinned against God, God decided that I am going to send my son and He will die, and he is as good as slain from now onwards, because God cannot lie. When did God say that? In Genesis 3:15 it says that “And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.” You see a similar situation when Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac, God stops him (Gen 22:12). And then in verse 13, it says Abraham looked behind and saw a ram. This is a picture of how God prepared Jesus for us, beforehand, waiting to see what decision Adam took at the garden, just like he waited to see what Abraham would do.

God did not even plan the entire genealogy. He planned it to include Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and not everyone who finally ended up in the list, was because God ordained it. Because when you look into the genealogy of Jesus, you see Ruth and Bathsheba. Now, Ruth was a Moabite, who was born from Moab, who was born from an incestuous relationship between Lot and his daughter. Bathsheba was someone else’s wife whom David possessed through adultery and murder, If God had planned this, that would mean God planned incest, adultery and murder from the very beginning.

Also, there is a moral issue as well here. I have heard people say that it was God’s will that their daughter was raped and killed. My friend said that when her pregnant friend lost a child a few months into their pregnancy, the Pastor said, it was God’s plan. It’s hard for people then to love God. Because you never know when God is going to kill your child, because it is his plan? Many people have turned away from the Lord because of this doctrine. If every little hurt, the death, the words, the divorces, the rapes, suicides and every little thing in your family was either caused by me or I gave permission for that, there is not even a single person who would be listening right now, who would like me, and understandably so. There wouldn’t be any judicial system in a civilized world that would let me live, if I was in charge of every mayhem, destruction, pain and suffering in this world. And yet, this is what religion is presenting of God- that God controls everything. It is hard to love God when you define the sovereignty of God this way. It would mean he was pretending in every conversation, toying with us in

every way. It is impossible for you to believe that God is a good God.

Many of our songs are reflective of what we think of God, and it really irritates me. When I hear songs which say "I am coming and going to worship you even if you put me in hell". I am going to love you even if you hate me. I don't want anything from you, but can you please come to me. Please don't let go of me. All these songs malign God in so many ways. For us to really understand how it feels like, imagine your child going on stage in front of a huge crowd saying "Dad, even if you burn my arm, I will love you. If you close the door with my hand stuck in between the door, I will write that I love you with that blood, because all that matters to me is you. I am not here for anything you have to give me but for you to be near me. Please don't leave me. I am desperate for you". Now think about a passive bystander who hears that. What picture do you think they will get about you? You will get arrested by child services. We paint a picture that we are so loving, and God is not loving. Yet, the Bible says that we love him because God loved us first (1 John 4:19). We are unable to love God without God loving us first. I am not saying that we should love God because he does something for us, but let's be real. We get hurt if God does not keep his promise, but praise God, God always keeps his promise. We are unhappy if God put us in the fire, but praise God, God rescued us from the fire. Some of these songs really get me.

Jesus never taught us that whatever happens on earth is God's will. When He prayed in Matt 6:10, he said, "May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven". If it's God's will that is being done on earth, why is Jesus praying this prayer? Isn't it a clear sign that God's will is not being done on earth? The epistles never say that whatever happens is God's will. Paul mentions in 1 Cor 11:32 that says, "But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world." If God knew everything about the person from the very beginning, why is he intervening to change the end outcome? The truth is like Paul says in Rom 8:28 that God works all things work together for good. God uses every situation and tries to bring good out of it. He uses our stupidity, our sins and everything to bring some good out of it.

It pains God when people perish. The Bible says in 1 Tim. 2:4 that he wants everyone to be saved. If God is controlling everything, why is everyone not saved? Also, in 2 Pet. 3:9 says "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." It cannot get clearer than this. It absolutely pains God that people are perishing, and he did not plan for their destruction.

What about healing?

Do you know that today a lot of people say when a person is not healed that "it was not God's will for the person to be not healed"? During Jesus's ministry, many times in the Bible, it is mentioned that Jesus healed everyone who had gathered there. So, do you mean to say that not everyone over there was appointed by God to die of sickness? Also, we see Jesus in the gospels, the disciples in the New testament casting out demons, healing every disease and bringing healing everywhere they went. If it was God's plan for someone out there to be sovereignly sick wouldn't it mean that they were using the authority of Jesus against God? Remember what Jesus said in Mark 3:24, that a kingdom divided against itself shall not stand. Also, look into the pool of Bethesda, an angel would go up and stir the water, and WHOEVER entered first would be healed. It was not like someone was "holding back" people who were not God's plan from jumping in. In Mark 9 and Matthew 17 we see the incident where a person brings his demon possessed child to the disciples and the disciples were unable to heal the boy. If it was today, we would say that it was God's sovereign plan or will for the boy to not be healed.

Any definition of God's sovereignty that allows evil to exist as a part of His will and purpose is an IMMORAL definition of sovereignty. If you look into the definition of sovereignty you will see it says when used as a noun it means "a monarch, or a person who has supreme power or authority" and when used as an adjective it means "supreme", "greatest in degree". All these are true. I believe God is supreme and has the highest power or authority and he is the greatest in degree. There is nothing above him, and nothing higher than him. But he did not allow evil to exist as part of his plan.

So, what is going on? Why is everything happening the way it is? The devil is responsible for all the evil in the world. In John 10:10 the Bible says that "the devil comes ONLY to steal, kill and destroy". In that very chapter, Jesus calls the devil a thief, and a thief does not ask for permission. That is why he is a thief. In fact, throughout the Bible, you see God saying, "Don't do this, or else you will die". He doesn't want

you to die. But the devil is always searching for ways to attack every person on the planet.

We talked about this briefly, but God decided to give man free will, and that means God would not know what Man was going to decide. This is a huge problem for some people. How can God not know something? However, let me ask you, when Jesus came on earth, as a baby, the Bible says that He grew in wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52). Can you imagine, the God of all universe, the second person in the Trinity as a baby. That would mean that he was like any other baby. He had to learn how to talk, he had to be taught the Torah. He had to be fed, washed, bathed. He wasn't speaking perfect Hebrew saying "How art thou, Woman" when he came out of the womb. Can you imagine that? If you can accept that God chose to come as a human and not know but rather grow in wisdom and stature, why would he have a problem in creating human actions independent of his knowledge.

The reason why evil entered the world was because Lucifer chose freely to rebel against God. Moreover, at the garden of Eden, Adam chose against God by using his free will to choose against God. But then, God was surprised when he said, "What have you done !!"

He decided to let it be that way, because that is the only way by which love could be proven. Love requires the existence of free will. You need to have the free will to choose God, in order for God to know whether you really love him. That is why God told Abraham "Now I know that you love me more than your son Isaac". He will not violate anybody's free will. A lot of people say that in Psalm 139, it says that God knew what the thoughts of man were. I believe God knows what our thoughts are. However, it is different from saying God knows what our thoughts will be in the very next moment. He may be able to estimate it so well, but still God does not know for sure what it is going to be, as we have the authority over our will.

Many people say that every decision of man is because of some reason, and that let's say if we have to choose between a red ball and a black ball, that is because we have a certain reason, and that man cannot choose without a preference. I think you might believe me, as I have a Ph.D in Statistical sciences, that we can make truly random choices, but that is a much deeper study on Probability and randomness. People can take truly random decisions. Anyone who says that humans are predictable, just needs to look at a toddler. It's so hard to predict the behavior of a baby.

Like I said, God knows whatever we think, because it is an electrical impulse, and God can see that. However, whatever we are going to think tomorrow, hasn't happened yet, and God will not know that. God has given us authority over our will, and for him to force us to do something is to violate our authority.

God always respects the authority that he gives us. To explain this further, think about the Garden of Eden. If you read Genesis, we see that the devil came as a serpent. Why do you think so? He could have come as the devil himself, and Adam would have not recognized the devil. But the devil came as a serpent because ON EARTH, the serpent had more authority than the devil. In fact, a worm had more authority on earth than the devil. But Romans 6:16 says that you become slaves to whoever you obey, and then when Adam obeyed the devil, he became slaves to sin, or to the devil. The devil received authority over the earth. He started creating all ruckus and pain, and murder and everything after that. It started getting bad. The Bible says that soon, the Lord regretted making the world (Gen 6). It just took 6 chapters in Genesis and God regretted (Here is another proof that God didn't plan everything, because God would not regret otherwise). But then why didn't God destroy Satan straightaway. He couldn't! Think about this. God gave authority over the earth to man, and man gave the authority to the devil. Now if God goes and destroys the devil, Satan can say "who are you to question me, this man gave me his authority by his own will" and man himself cannot escape from this situation as well. SO what did God do, God in the very beginning declared that there will be someone coming in the future that will crush the devil's heel (Gen 3:15). He prepared Jesus. But if Jesus would come the very next day, who would kill him? Jesus' death was needed for the atonement. Hence God prepared a group of people whom he called Israel as his people so that, he could give the law to them, prepare them and eventually have Jesus born to a virgin. If there was no law, there would hardly be any person on earth, or any who would be living according to the law. Evil would be rampant. Because there was law and commandments, at the time of Jesus to come, there was a virgin, and Jesus was born of a virgin. However, to reach to that point of Jesus, there was incest, adultery and a lot of things that happened which God did not plan. That is why we see that in the genealogy. Whatever the devil planned for evil, God turned it to good.

So, at the time when Jesus was on earth, it was the right time because God was waiting all those years for the prophecies he had spoken through many prophets to be fulfilled. In the meantime, the devil was wrecking havoc all over the world. He did not realize what God was about to do, because if he did, he wouldn't have killed Jesus. He thought he was being victorious when he killed Jesus, but he didn't realize that God had given the law of atonement to the Israelites, and prepared a way out for whoever that believes in him. So again whatever the devil planned for evil, God turned it to good.

Jesus won the victory, and paid the sins of each and every person, including those who are to be born. The payment is done. Again, after the payment was done, he did not force anyone to choose him, but rather till today he waits for everyone to willfully accept him as their personal Savior. He waits and waits hoping that everyone will come to repentance. By default, those who have not accepted Jesus as their savior, has not accepted the payment and hence they are still slaves to sin, and those who accepted Jesus are his children. That is the situation of the world today. There are children of the world, who are controlled by the world, and they are controlled by the devil to be used for his purposes. Then, there are children of God who are on earth.

He is painfully waiting so that more people will come into repentance, and at this period of time he is not judging the world. But there will be a period of time in the future, during the last week of Daniel's 70 weeks when he will judge the world. In John 3:17 and John 12:47, Jesus said "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." And that is the reason why, he is not ending the devil straightaway. If before Jesus, he did not end the devil right away because we gave the keys to the devil, and he waited till Jesus's death to be the atonement of sin and bought us with that price and rescued us. After Jesus, it is because he is being patient so that everyone will accept him, and no one would perish.

Hence there are two things which you can see here, in the light of the Coronavirus. Firstly, God is not responsible for everything which is happening on earth. He is working all things together for his will. Like when Jesus died, the devil killed him, but God worked it together for his will. When Stephen died, the church scattered, but God worked it together for his will by having many people preach the gospel all over the world. It wasn't God who got Stephen killed, but the devil, but God used it for the good and furtherance of the gospel. Unless you see this, you will not realize who the real enemy is. You will not know whom your fight is against. Have you noticed that the ministries in which great miracles happen always believe that God is good and the devil is responsible for every evil thing on earth Think about it. In poor countries, people don't think much about theology and they just know that God is good, and we see tremendous miracles, because they have faith in this good God. However, amongst people and ministries who believe this theology, you do not see many miracles, and very rarely, because this understanding of sovereignty usually distorts faith. Every time you pray for a sick person, you cannot say that you have faith, but only that you have hope. You have no assurance in hope because you are not sure if it is God's will for the person to be sick or to be healed. This is what Jesus meant when he said in Mark 7:13 that you are "making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down".

It does not mean that every believer who has died of sickness was not actually a believer. They were, but the traditions and philosophies of man made the word of God of no effect. Make no mistake, the devil is always trying to attack, and you have plenty of promises in the Bible to stand against it. The Bible says in Eph 6:16 that we need to take the shield of faith to stand against every fiery dart of the evil one. Just because someone who was a famous evangelist passed away, does not mean that God did not keep his promise, or that it was God's will. It only means that the devil did point number 2 in his agenda, which is to KILL. He did that. But our responsibility as believers is to say as mentioned in Psalm 91:7, thousands may fall at your side, and ten thousand all around you, but it shall not come near you. The people who were affected were David's colleagues in war, and yet David is confident that it will not come near him. He is not hoping but he is believing, and he makes his stand clear in the very beginning- "He who is in the shelter of the most high shall say of the Lord. My refuge and my fortress and my God in whom I trust".

We need to realize who we are in Christ. We are the body of Christ. We are the body of Jesus. How did Jesus heal and fight against the plans of the devil? By using authority and faith in the promises of God. You can keep crying till you are blinded with tears, but if Christ used the authority to stop the plans of the devil, we as His body are supposed to, as well. God will not command from heaven, because he needs a

body to operate. And the body He has, IS US. So, when you say, God can stop this NOW, it is so true, but he uses HIS CHURCH to stop this.

I want to end this study by saying something which the Lord told me a few weeks ago. During this coronavirus pandemic, you will see many believers being affected, and your faith will be tested. Doubts will enter your mind. But remember, God is good, and it is the devil who is attacking the people of God. He knows that his time is short, and he is trying to attack believers, If you want to know how to increase your faith, look into the video which I posted on how to increase your faith. If you want to know how to stand in authority look into the video "The authority every believer has against the Coronavirus". Once you understand it is the devil, you and I can stand in authority against the devil and command the devil to stop it in the name of Jesus, because we are the body of Christ.

So church, it is not the will of God which is going on right now. It is not the will of God to see believers or unbelievers die in sin, because every unbeliever that is dying is lost forever. It is not God's will for you to suffer in sickness. Any person, be it believer, pastor, leader, televangelist, is vulnerable to the devil's attack if you nullify the word of God through traditions and human philosophies. So share this video as much as you can, and talk to people about this, make sure you know what you are sharing, because the Church needs to stand as one against our enemy the devil. Remember, what Mark 16:17-18 says

"And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."
(Mark 16:17-18)

Sovereignty Based on Free Will



So, how does God's sovereignty look like? Everyone agrees that God is sovereign, but the only problem is that many disagree on the extent. God is sovereign, but how sovereign is he?

Let's go back to the beginning. At some point, God wanted to create, everything. Man, angels, heavens, earth and everything. The reason for him to create was out of his love, not that he was yearning for love, but He wanted TO love, every single human. In theology, it is often

known as the cosmological argument, or the first cause. God's first cause was not to bring glory to Himself. He had all the glory. His first cause wasn't to be loved, He was in absolute perfection of love in the trinity. The first cause was TO Love, because 1 John 4:8 says. God is love.

As He creates humans, he decides to create them with free will, which meant that they could choose whatever they wanted to, absolutely anything without God's interference. It meant that God wouldn't know what they were about to choose, and it was because God wanted it that way. Now, for many this seems impossible. How can God not know something. However, let me ask you, when Jesus came on earth, as a baby, the Bible says that He grew in wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52). Can you imagine, the God of all universe, the second person in the Trinity as a baby. That would mean that he was like any other baby. He had to learn how to talk, he had to be taught the Torah. He had to be fed, washed, bathed. He wasn't speaking perfect Hebrew saying "How art thou, Woman" when he came out of the womb. Can you imagine that? We know that is what happened, if you can accept that God chose to come as a human and not know but rather grow in wisdom and stature, why would he have a problem in creating human actions independent of his knowledge.

When God created earth, he created earth in such a way that He wanted the best for mankind. He did not even say "worship me" "worship me", but in fact that relationship between Adam-Eve and God was what God always wanted. God didn't know what Adam was going to choose and He was genuinely asking "Adam, where are you?" God was genuinely hurt, and hence every reaction, every emotion, God felt was genuine.

Now, many of you absolute sovereignty preachers might have many questions, but I will answer one now to go to my next subtopic. Wayne Grudem asks a very genuine question. He asks "How does God keep things in complete control?". To answer that, its people. God is dependent on people to do His plans on earth. After Adam sinned, You see God choosing people, out of no reason, so that His plan, His salvation plan will be done. You see an active God who is working with all his might till the salvation plan will come to pass. You see him selecting Abraham, who had no qualifications to be selected. He was an idol worshipper, for God's sake. He selected Jacob, and many other people who had absolutely no qualifications to be saved for the sake of His plan. What was His plan? His plan was to make sure that Jesus would be able to come into Israel, and die for the sins of all mankind. That was His priority from day one. He wanted to save mankind. That is the reason why He said His plan from the very beginning. Like I said in the very beginning, evil was working as man had given the authority to the devil. The devil was polluting the world in every way, while God kept sending his people to keep the acts of the devil in check. You always see God using people. God cannot just come and do things on earth, as only a human or something that was supposed to be on earth can be on earth. That is why the devil had to come as a serpent. Originally a worm has more authority than the devil on earth, but after humans gave the authority to the devil, the devil started to do his acts on earth.

The devil started making the whole world evil and according to his plan, but God started preparing a nation for him, Israel, through his plan.

Finally, God caught the devil unaware by sending Jesus and when He died for our sins at the cross, and finally paying for our sins at the cross. This was his plan all along. The devil had no idea and if he did, he wouldn't have killed Jesus. But after the victory at the cross, the devil is still around but under the authority of the people. That is why Jesus said in Matt 12:28, when I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. So basically, if it was in the beginning a people named Israel moving according to the plan of God, led by God, through chosen people for God's plan, after Jesus, its replica of Jesus all around, in us, to control things and make sure that the "will of God be done on earth as it is in heaven". So, the COVID is not in God's plan. God's plan was never to harm people. In the OT, you see God as being strict because the very event of Jesus's coming and dying for the sins at the cross of Calvary dependent on these people, and yet they were complaining and all that. However, in the new testament, God has paid for the sins of all of humanity, and they go to hell only because they are not ready to accept the payment. Jesus said he did not come to judge but to judge the world in John 12:47 and John 3:17.

From the beginning of the universe till now, you will see that God meant no harm to people, but his goal was to save all. He died for everyone's sins at the cross, hoping that everyone would be saved. We see this heart of God in other verses like Eze. 18:23, 32; 33:11, John 3:16,17, 1 Tim. 4:10, Titus 2:11, 2 Pet. 3:9. In all these verses you see God saying that it is not his will for even a single person to be lost.

Any person who goes to hell, is not because Jesus didn't die for their sin, but because they are not willing to accept the payment. And again, God cannot go against anyone's free will. Not even to make them accept him. It's their own free choice. Do you still believe that this loving God brought Coronavirus on the earth? Do you think it was God's plan for your child to die. The Bible says in John 10:10, that the thief comes ONLY to steal, kill and destroy but I came that they may have life abundantly. James 1:17 says that every perfect gift comes from above. It does not say that every gift that God sends is perfect. But says every perfect gift is from above, which means that anything which is a gift, that is from God. The fact that you are alive today is a gift from God, and the devil is a liar.

When you see things this way, you see God as a righteous judge. At the end, it should not be surprising that in heaven, that there will not be even a single soul who will say that God was unfair. This is seen in Rev. 5:13-14,

And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."
And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped

Moreover, It also shows us that it was God's plan from the very beginning to bring peace on earth through his people. It has been God's plan from the very beginning. If you remain silent and keep saying that "God has a plan", you are not doing anything to stop evil on earth. Remember what I said in the previous video. Believers shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover. Why do you think God gave that blessing to us? To bring healing to the whole earth. Remember what God told Abraham? I will bless you so that you will be a blessing to the whole earth. Dear brother and sister, if you are waiting for your church leader or someone to say that it is the devil and we need to stand against it, it might not happen soon, but read the Bible and see for yourself what is happening there.

Objections to Sovereignty Based on Free Will

Now, there might be plenty of objections and questions to my previous video on Sovereignty. Here is my favourite part- which is to take questions on this topic. Usually if somebody tries to debate me, I don't like to debate a person, mainly because if they are coming with the idea that if they are wrong, they are ready to change, fine. But more often than not, its not about that, and it often sours friendships. So I would say that you can check if what I said is true, by yourself, and I will try to explain every objection to this.

One of the first objections that I have received about this is what God says in Psalm 139.

What about Psalm 139

"O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, And are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, But behold, O Lord, You know it altogether."

First of all, nowhere does these verses say that God knows what you can do. It says in the beginning, you have searched me and known me. Then, it says you know my sitting down and my rising up. It does not say you know if I am going to sit down or rise up. It says you know my sitting down and rising up, Then, you understand my thought afar off. Which is still fine. Every thought is an electrical impulse in your brain,

if you have thought about something, God can see it, because it has happened. That is different from saying that on this particular day at this particular time, you will think this. You comprehend my path and my lying down. You are acquainted with all my ways. Though that would have seen to be the closest to absolute sovereignty, it still isn't. The Bible says in Psalm 103:7 that He showed His ways to Moses. Does that mean that Moses knows everything that God is going to do. Now, it just means that he knows what you and I are like. That is because he has a loving and amazing deep affection towards us.

Continuing on this, it is possible for someone to make a fairly good prediction about us humans. Let's have a closer look at free will. How much free is our will physically. There are things which I can think, but I am not free to do. Let's say I want to touch the surface of Neptune, will it be possible. At this time, with this body it is impossible even though that is my will. So there are things which are physically impossible, even though I have a free will. What about things which I don't know about. Obviously, the things which I don't know about, I cannot do anything about it. Adam had the free will to drive a car from Eden to Vancouver but there was no car back then and he didn't know about gas, electricity, and I know about it more. So even though it was available, he did not know the options. So free will for any person is practice, is not as free as you think, and at any given time, there are only few things I can do. I am talking right now, and you can fairly predict what I am going to do. I am going to stay on topic, wear the same clothes and behave the same way you have been seeing me to be. SO you can make fairly good predictions. I have a Ph. D in Statistical Sciences and we did prediction models, and when a statistician says that we are kind of predictable in our will, we are. But still, it is impossible to predict accurately all the time. So when the Psalmist says, there is not a word in my tongue, but you know it altogether, it means that God knows you and me so well, that even though there is no word in my mouth, and because he knows us so well, he is able to predict what we are to say. It is not about sovereignty of God over your thoughts.

What about the people God selected and the others whom God rejected especially the ones in Romans 9:13?

In effect, people who ask this question are trying to understand why God would reject people in the very beginning and select people in the very beginning. SO, doesn't that mean that God is sovereign and using people for his purposes.

Let's take each of the cases. Firstly, Isaac and Ishmael. Isaac was the chosen one, and part of God's plan according to Gen 21:12. God said even though Ishmael was born before Isaac, Isaac will be chosen. But contrary to what many people think, it was not like God rejected Ishmael and offered salvation to Isaac. If you look into Gen 17:20, God says "I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation." and God was with the boy (Gen. 21:20) and he prospered. See, it does not say that God did not consider Ishmael. He was not used in God's plan for salvation that culminated in Jesus.

Also, lets look into the big one, Romans 9:10-13. It clearly says that God loved Jacob and Esau he hated. I understand the word "hate" is a strong word. But you know where else, this word (G3404) was used? It was used in Luke 14:26 when Jesus said "If any man come to me, and hate G3404 not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." So just as Jesus did not mean hatred like that, Paul did not mean hatred like that either. It is comparative love of Jacob to be higher than that of Esau, but again for God's purpose in salvation.

Jacob was chosen for the passing on of the patriarchal blessings which would eventually be a roadmap for Christ. Also, in Rom 9:21, when Paul says "Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?" It doesn't say that Esau was prepared for destruction, but rather it says common use. Jacob was the one for special use, i.e., the plan of salvation, and Esau for common use.

What about the election of Pharaoh?

The case of Pharaoh is a contentious case, where he was hardened by God. However, though he was “raised up for this”, he wasn’t chosen for this. It seems more likely that God had seen him from time ago. He was the one who was ruling over Israel after all, and under whom Israel was going through tremendous persecution. I believe that God saw him and raised him to the position where he was Pharaoh and hardened his heart, so that he would be able to show Him who “I AM WHO I AM” really is. But God didn’t harden his heart in the beginning. It was only hardened later, after Pharaoh had rejected many of Moses’s pleas to free the Israelites.

The Golden Chain

So this easily takes us to the Golden chain in Rom 8:25-29 where it says “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”

First of all, like we discussed earlier, this is not for the sake of salvation but for the Lord’s purpose. Verse 24 ends “for those who are called according to his purpose” and then it continues “for”. It says definitely that God selected some people, but there was a purpose for this election. It says that those whom he justified he glorified. It is true that there were people chosen to be glorified for the purpose. It is clear from these verses that he selected all these people. Let’s pause there.

In fact, there are only few things which are about the time before the foundations of the earth, before even man was created. At the time when God was in the plan of creating man, this verse says that he foreknew certain people, or did he? In fact the word used for “foreknew” is the same as the word used in 1 Pet 1:20 which says “He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1 Pet 1:20). So was Jesus foreknown? The translators obviously got confused. If Jesus wasn’t foreknown, and foreordained, how can the people whom are mentioned here be foreknown. They cant be. The word foreknown in Greek, is the word προᾶγνωσκει which also means to foreknow in the sense of foreordain.

In addition to all of this, we already established that there is no foreknowledge, as it would mean God created things to behave that way or it would mean that things are cyclical. So interestingly he foreordained people. What happened? He not only foreordained people but he foreordained Jesus.

There is another verse that details on what happened before the foundations of the earth. In Eph 1:3-6 it says that those who were in Christ were called and predestined for adoption as sons. Imagine this, there is no one but Christ, but God has foreordained some people and has also foreordained Christ, but notice this, it says that they were called in Christ. So that means he is talking about a set of people in Christ. God set Jesus and predestined everyone in him for adoption as sons, even though no-one was in Him at that point. SO at the time of our salvation, we are added IN HIM. We abide in Him and He in us as per (John 15:4, and 1 John 4:13). We are also hidden in Christ (Col 3:13). Now those who are in Christ are elected as well, under which election, the election of Christ. So are we the elect absolutely. In fact, in Acts, everyone who believes become the elect” So now it is not because of the election that they believe but when they do, they will be part of that election. It was a masterstroke of high proportions.

What about the Old Testament folks God had prepared. I believe they were the Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and so forth whom God had elected beforehand for his purpose and predestined to the image of His Son Jesus. Why did they have to be elected? Because for them to be a part of Gods plan and to believe in Gods plan for them, they had to be elected, and if not, they wouldn’t be able to be used by God. Because, Paul says in Rom 11:7 that Israel did not obtained what they were seeking but on the other hand those who were chosen obtained it. Romans 9:27 says that they were not able to receive it because they did not pursue it by faith. SO that means only the elect had faith and be part of Israel.

Still not able to believe? If it is as the predestination folk say, why did God keep a separate record of “Book of Life”? The Book of Life seems to be a book that is very active and people’s number are added and deleted. However, if it was predestination, it should be a constant book

right?

Couldn't God choose a nation for Himself that was not elected before the foundations of the earth and proceed with the purpose of salvation to all?

No, it would not be possible. This is because only the elect by grace was able to obtain righteousness (Rom. 11:7). Unless God elected, it would be impossible. Since God elected them, they were able to be prophets, leaders, etc. Hence, we have the Old Testament scriptures, paving the way for Jesus. Thus, election was the only solution by which God could provide salvation for all (Rom. 11:7, 28-32). God needed people, and needed them to side with Him for saving everyone (Rom. 9:23-24). This was the main purpose.

Renowned theologian Wayne Grudem does ask some questions about these, which I'd like to answer.

He asks "How can God know the future?" Because, he can control it through his people. For instance, every person has a free will, and even the demonic forces do things that are predictable but not completely known. However, because of that, God out of his wisdom and knowledge is able to make all things work together for good. An example would be when a toddler starts walking, the toddler is highly unpredictable, so what does the parent do, the parent baby proofs the entire apartment. The toddler's actions which are highly unpredictable and in fact in the true sense of the word "free will", is acted on by God who is all powerful, omnipresent and omniscient. You should understand that the devil is no match for God. If it was a one-on-one fight, the devil would be done, on day 1. But God has allowed the devil to do things for a while because of two things. One, he is dependent on Children of God, to stand up, use authority, pray and act, evangelise and do stuff around the world, that's why we are His body. On the other hand, he also wants the other people to be saved as well, but they are still slaves to the devil. He will not judge anyone before the time when he will judge the nations.

How does evil exist in the world if God does not want it? It is because of one and only one thing. Free-will. You see, Satan was not created to be the evil being that he is now. He was an angel and a beautiful angel created holy as the Bible says. However, Satan chose himself to stand against God and to rebel against God and as a result by the nature of his free will he became lost and became evil forever. He influenced the will of Adam and Eve and made them sin as well, and by choice they became spiritually dead and brought physical death upon themselves. This doesn't say that God is not omnipotent. It rather says that God's love is greater than all his attributes. You may ask, why did God put that choice or a free will there.

It was because he wanted us to love him freely, and without any compulsion. True love can be shown only if there is an option to not love, or to disobey. Like Jesus said "if you love me, you will obey my commandments (John 14:15)". So the commandment was not to eat of the fruit of the tree, but He really wanted to know if Adam and Eve loved him. But his heart broke when he found out that they chose the world.

There are some other arguments as well, which are when Job says in Job 2:10 "But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips." Now it seems that Job actually believed that God was the one responsible for the affliction, whereas it was clearly the devil. Moreover, he says in Job 9:24 "if it is not God then who is it?". Clearly, Job was not aware of what was going on. Plus, we are a new creation, we are His children. The Israelites were not His children, Hurting us deliberately is hurting his own body. Remember when the people persecuted the church, Jesus was saying "Why are you persecuting me?"

However, while Paul at times presents Satan as an instrument of discipline in God's hands (1 Corinthians 5: 5; 1 Timothy 1: 20), but is that really God using the devil. You should understand that the devil doesn't need anyone's permission to attack us. He hates us to the core. The fact that we are okay is because the devil cannot attack us. However, in these verses. It gives a picture of the father of the prodigal son who even if it hurt him to the core, allowed the sin to go and squander and live a horrible lifestyle. However, that was never his will. He always hoped that he will learn his lesson, and come back, which is why he waited outside. Did the Father arrange every evil and debauchery for

the son? No. Did he father arrange his food at the pigsty. No, it was natural for the son to encounter these things the moment he stepped out the Fathers care.¹

During my childhood, we never talked about this topic. The only thing I knew was that God is good and that was enough. I remember in 2014, I went through this topic, listened to the renowned theologians R.C. Sproul and John Piper, took notes and tried to understand, and as my understanding increased my love for God faded away. I finally had to stop the study and I decided I'll never look into this topic and just live in ignorance of this topic. But in 2018, God spoke to me strongly for a month in November, and that entire month, I took notes of what was revealed to me and I studied intensely that whole month and compiled what I know today. I later got to know that God had revealed this to many people around the world, and he is raising up people to stand up for such a time as this.

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