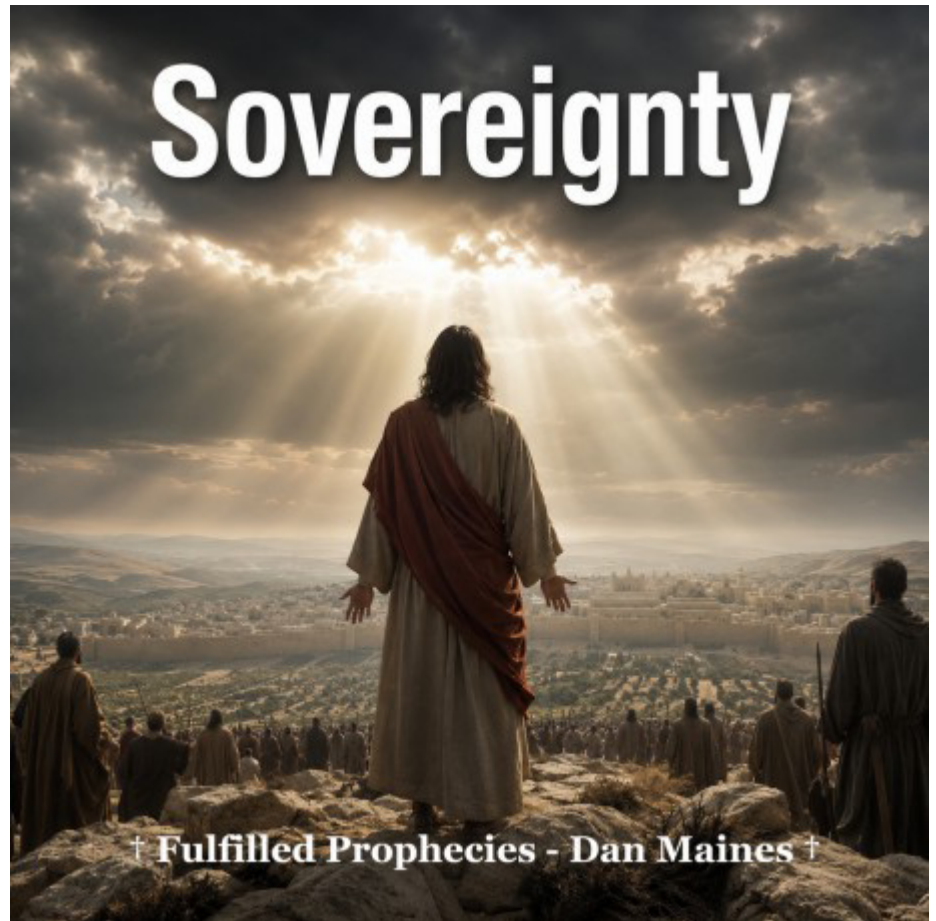


Fulfilled Prophecies

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Sovereignty



By Dan Maines

Sovereignty

Introduction

† The sovereignty of God means that God is the supreme ruler over His creation. No power is above Him, no human authority can overthrow His purpose, and nothing can remove Him from His throne (Psalm 103:19; Daniel 4:35).

† God's sovereignty doesn't mean that human choices are imaginary or meaningless. Scripture repeatedly holds human beings responsible for what they choose while also showing that God's purpose can't ultimately be defeated (Acts 2:23; Acts

4:27-28).

† God's sovereignty should give believers confidence rather than fear. We're not living in a universe abandoned by its Creator. God remains King, Christ reigns, and His redemptive purpose has been accomplished in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:25; Ephesians 1:20-23).

† The fulfilled perspective makes this especially powerful. We aren't waiting for Christ to someday receive His kingdom. Christ has been exalted, His enemies were judged as promised, and His kingdom continues under His sovereign reign (Daniel 7:13-14; Hebrews 12:28).

Psalm 103:19

The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, And His sovereignty rules over all.

† God's throne isn't established by human permission. His authority doesn't rise and fall according to governments, elections, armies, economies, or nations. His kingdom rules over all (Psalm 47:7-8).

† This doesn't say that everything people do is morally approved by God. Human beings can rebel against God's revealed will, but their rebellion can never remove God from His position as sovereign King (Psalm 2:1-6).

† This is where our confidence begins. God's sovereignty isn't something He gains when circumstances improve. He already reigns, even when circumstances appear completely out of control (Isaiah 46:9-10).

Daniel 4:35

All the inhabitants of the earth are of no account, But He does according to His will among the army of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can fend off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'

† Nebuchadnezzar learned something every earthly ruler eventually discovers, human authority is temporary, but God's authority is absolute. No king, empire, or government can place itself above Him (Daniel 4:34, 37).

† God's sovereignty means His ultimate purpose can't be canceled. People may resist Him, reject Him, and act contrary to His commands, but they can't overthrow what God has determined to accomplish (Isaiah 14:24, 27).

† This distinction matters. Scripture doesn't teach that every sinful act expresses God's moral approval. It teaches that even human rebellion can't finally frustrate God's redemptive purpose (Genesis 50:20).

Isaiah 46:9-10

Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My plan will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';

† God doesn't discover history as it unfolds. He declares His purpose and brings His counsel to completion. What God promises isn't left hanging indefinitely (Isaiah 55:10-11).

† This is extremely important when studying prophecy. If God gave a prophecy with an appointed time, His sovereignty guaranteed that He would accomplish what He promised within the framework He revealed (Habakkuk 2:2-3).

† Fulfilled prophecy is therefore evidence of God's sovereignty. God promised judgment, redemption, covenant fulfillment, and the establishment of Christ's kingdom, and His word didn't fail (Luke 21:20-22, 32-33).

Acts 2:22-23

Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a Man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know - this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

† The cross gives us one of Scripture's clearest pictures of divine sovereignty and human responsibility existing together. Jesus was delivered according to God's predetermined plan,

yet the people who crucified Him were still called lawless and responsible for their actions (Acts 3:13-15).

† God didn't approve of their hatred, betrayal, injustice, or murder. Yet their sinful actions couldn't prevent God's redemptive purpose. God used what wicked people intended for evil within His greater plan of salvation (Acts 4:27-28).

† If God's purpose couldn't be defeated at the cross, we shouldn't imagine that His purpose can be defeated by the circumstances surrounding our lives. This doesn't make every painful event good, but it means evil doesn't get the final word (Romans 8:28).

Romans 9:20-21

On the contrary, who are you, you foolish person, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? Or does the potter not have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one object for honorable use, and another for common use?

† Paul reminds us that God is the Creator and we are His creation. We don't sit above God as His judges. God isn't accountable to creation as though creation were sovereign over Him (Isaiah 45:9).

† The potter has authority over the clay. This picture emphasizes God's right to accomplish His covenant purpose according to His wisdom rather than according to human expectations (Romans 9:6-18).

† Romans 9 is deeply connected with God's historical purpose involving Israel, the promise, and the inclusion of the Gentiles. God's covenant plan wasn't defeated by unbelief. His promise reached its intended fulfillment in Christ (Romans 9:24-26; Galatians 3:16, 28-29).

Ephesians 1:20-22

which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the

one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and made Him head over all things to the church,

† Jesus isn't waiting to become King. The Father raised Him from the dead and seated Him above every rule, authority, power, and dominion. Christ's sovereignty is a present reality (Colossians 1:13-18).

† This changes how we view the kingdom. We aren't waiting for Jesus to leave a defeated position and begin reigning someday. The New Testament announced His exaltation and enthronement as accomplished realities (Acts 2:32-36).

† Christ is Head over all things to His church. Our security isn't based upon earthly kingdoms remaining stable. It's based upon the authority of the risen and reigning Christ (Hebrews 1:3, 8).

Hebrews 12:28

Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let's show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

† The kingdom believers received can't be shaken.

Governments can collapse, nations can disappear, economies can fail, and human institutions can change, but Christ's kingdom remains (Hebrews 12:26-27).

† This is one of the great consequences of God's sovereignty. Our hope isn't attached to the survival of a particular earthly system. Our hope is anchored in the unshakable kingdom of God (Colossians 1:13).

† Fulfilled eschatology doesn't leave us with an empty world after prophecy was fulfilled. It leaves us living under the victorious reign of Christ, participating in a kingdom that Scripture says can't be shaken (Revelation 11:15).

Revelation 11:15

Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever."

† Revelation presents the victory of God's kingdom as the

fulfillment of His covenant purpose. The sovereign God wasn't attempting to establish His reign and hoping history would cooperate. He brought His declared purpose to completion (Revelation 10:7).

† The judgment coming upon the old covenant world couldn't stop Christ's kingdom. Instead, that judgment publicly demonstrated the truthfulness of Christ's prophetic word and the authority of the reigning King (Matthew 24:30, 34).

† Christ's reign isn't temporary. His kingdom didn't end when Jerusalem fell. The old covenant age reached its appointed conclusion, but the reign of Christ continues without end (Luke 1:32-33).

Historical References

† Josephus recorded the catastrophic destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in AD 70. Although Josephus wasn't writing Christian theology, his history provides an important eyewitness-era record of the judgment that overtook Jerusalem, the very city Jesus had warned would experience devastating judgment (Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Books 5-7).

† Tacitus recorded the Roman campaign against Jerusalem and identified Titus with the final destruction of the city. His Roman historical account independently confirms the first-century setting in which Jerusalem and its temple fell (Tacitus, Histories, Book 5).

† Eusebius connected the destruction of Jerusalem with the judgment that followed the rejection of Christ and recorded the Christian tradition that believers departed from Jerusalem before the catastrophe (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapters 5-7).

† These historical records don't establish God's sovereignty by themselves. Scripture establishes the doctrine. History is valuable because it confirms that the first-century events Jesus and the apostles described occurred in real history.

How It Applies To Us Today

† God's sovereignty means we don't have to live as though

everything depends upon our ability to control the future. We make responsible choices, pray, work, plan, and obey God, while recognizing that God remains above everything we can't control (James 4:13-15).

† When life doesn't happen the way we expected, God's throne hasn't moved. Our circumstances can change overnight, but God's character, faithfulness, and authority haven't changed (Hebrews 13:8).

† Sovereignty doesn't mean we call evil good. It means we know evil can't dethrone God, human rebellion can't overthrow Christ, and suffering can't separate believers from the love of God in Christ (Romans 8:35-39).

† We don't need to fear every political movement, war, government, economic crisis, or rumor about the future as though Christ might lose control of His kingdom. Jesus Christ is already reigning (Ephesians 1:20-22).

† We can live with confidence because fulfilled prophecy demonstrates God's faithfulness. What He promised concerning the end of the old covenant age came to pass, just as Jesus said it would (Luke 21:20-22, 32).

† God's sovereignty should produce humility rather than arrogance, peace rather than panic, worship rather than fear, and faithfulness rather than speculation. We're citizens of an unshakable kingdom under an undefeated King (Hebrews 12:28).

Q & A Appendix

Q: Does God's sovereignty mean God causes or approves every sinful action?

A: No. Scripture distinguishes God's holy character from human sin while showing that sinful human actions can't defeat His ultimate purpose. The crucifixion demonstrates both truths clearly, wicked men acted sinfully and were responsible, while God's predetermined redemptive purpose was accomplished (Acts 2:23; Acts 4:27-28).

Q: If God is sovereign, do human choices still matter?

A: Yes. Scripture commands people to believe, repent, obey, choose wisely, and accept responsibility for their actions. God's sovereignty doesn't erase human responsibility (Acts 17:30; Romans 2:6-8).

Q: Does sovereignty mean everything that happens is good?

A: No. Scripture openly identifies suffering, injustice, persecution, and death as enemies and evils. God's sovereignty means those things can't ultimately overthrow His redemptive purpose (Romans 8:28, 35-39).

Q: Is Jesus sovereign and reigning right now?

A: Yes. Christ was raised, exalted, and seated above every rule, authority, power, and dominion. Scripture doesn't describe Him as waiting to receive authority someday (Ephesians 1:20-22; Acts 2:32-36).

Q: What does fulfilled prophecy teach us about God's sovereignty?

A: It shows that God's prophetic word doesn't fail. Jesus gave His first-century disciples identifiable signs and placed the fulfillment within their generation. Jerusalem's destruction in AD 70 demonstrated that His words were trustworthy (Luke 21:20-22, 32-33).

Q: How should God's sovereignty affect the way we live?

A: We should live with confidence, humility, obedience, and peace. We don't know everything tomorrow will bring, but we know the One who reigns over His kingdom, and we've received a kingdom that can't be shaken (James 4:13-15; Hebrews 12:28).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Psalm 103:19; Daniel 4:35; Isaiah 46:9-10; Acts 2:22-23; Romans 9:20-21; Ephesians 1:20-22; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 11:15

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews, Books 5-7; Tacitus, Histories, Book 5; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapters 5-7

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