

John 3:19 "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

Roman 11:1 "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid..."

James 1:13 "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man"

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# GOD'S

## SOVEREIGNTY & *Man's Responsibility*

Isaiah 46:8-10 "Remember this, and shew yourselves men: bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors. Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

Our God is The **SOVEREIGN GOD!** And because He is sovereign, we should seek to glorify Him and honor Him all the more. We do not worship, praise and thank Him enough because we don't know Him enough. God is in control!

When you don't know the power of God and that He is in control, it will affect how you praise Him, how you trust Him, and how you see Him in operation in your life. He is **GOD ALMIGHTY**, and yet, there is a man-side to this truth.

The sovereignty of God does not dismiss man's responsibility. To our human mind this is hard to comprehend because we often think that if God is in control, then He is responsible and I am off the hook for my actions, thoughts and deeds. Even Romans 10:20-21 reveals two truths that seem to contradict one another: the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. "But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me."

Verse 20 of Romans 10 emphasizes God's sovereignty in salvation. God acts sovereignly (independently) of man in salvation. God gives His grace to men who do not seek or ask for it. In fact, no sinner

has ever acted before God or without God at any time (see John 6:44; John 15:16).

You would think that God would be looking to save people who were looking for Him, but God has been looking for people even when they are not looking for Him. You will never see God making the second move for He is Alpha & Omega! He is the Author & Finisher! He is the Initiator and we are the reactor. God has drawn us and given to us the desire to go after Him.

Looking at verse Romans 10:21 we find "But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people". This passage emphasizes man's responsibility in salvation. Man is seen as rejecting God's invitation for salvation. And this is how God is able to be in control of all things, yet hold man responsible for His actions (see John 16:8-9; John 5:40).

So if man has responsibility for his actions, is God really sovereign? Is He drawing us or are we coming to Him for salvation? Man may think that he is the one choosing but John 15:16 shows us that "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you."



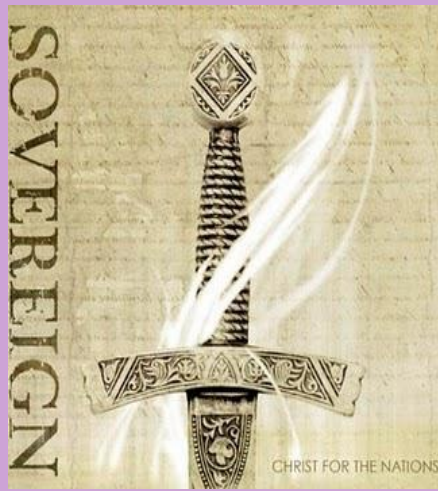
You didn't decide to be on God's side. God was not waiting for man to pick Him to be on his team. **GOD CHOSE YOU!** God is ordaining your success. He is declaring that you will bring forth fruit, and your fruit will remain. God is not guessing you will be fruitful. He's not just hoping you will be successful. No, God is ordaining your fruitfulness!

You have to remind yourself that God is sovereign and He is not scared of anything that He has made (see Isaiah 46:8-10). He is not doing what you want Him to do; He is doing what HE wants to do for His. He is God and there is no one else that can declare your end from the beginning.



## AM I RESPONSIBLE OR NOT?

*Mens rea* is a Latin word for "guilty mind". In criminal law, there must be an *actus reus* "guilty act" accompanied by a *mens rea* (guilty mind or intent) in order for someone to be responsible. By law there can be no criminal liability to a person who acted without mental fault. The reason God holds sinners responsible is not because they are **unable** to be saved without Him, it is because they are **unwilling** to be saved (see Romans 10:20; John 3:19-20; Acts 2:22-23). If a man sins, it is solely his fault, not God's. James 1:13 "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man". God, in His sovereignty, merely directs men in courses that are agreeable to their own hearts. Proverbs 16:9 "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps." Therefore, men are responsible for their **intents** even when their actions are of the Lord's choosing! God is judging the actions and the heart of man. It may not matter necessarily what you do, but it does matter what you think.



# GOD'S SIDE & MAN'S SIDE

**John 3:18-20** "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd."

Sinners hate doing good and hate the light so this is why man is held responsible. Man will do what he purposes in his heart to do, but ultimately God is Sovereign! Sinners love doing evil so this is what makes them wicked. Man was not able to save himself so Christ had to die for the ungodly Romans 5:6 "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

Man likes to say that since God is sovereign, it is He who is making me act this way. But James 1:13-14 lets us know that we are responsible "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."

God takes what your intentions are and directs your actions. God directs and actions and not hearts. When God touches your heart He makes it brand new because it is already evil. He doesn't direct

people contrary to their heart. Man always acts according to what his heart is telling him to do.

Not only will God direct your paths according to your heart, but He will also use anything to teach you to make the right choices (even the devil). I Timothy 1:18-19 lets us know that "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme."

Notice that God will use evil or the devil to teach people not to act according to their wicked heart. And this is further confirmation that God is sovereign, but we are responsible.

So you may ask, **am I really responsible for what I do? Am I responsible for what**

**happened to me at the hands of others?** Sinners are responsible for doing all that they can do (see Deuteronomy 22:24). According to the Law in the Old Testament, any woman who failed to cry for help while being assaulted was considered guilty. Although she had no power to deliver herself, it was in her power to cry. Consequently, guilt was removed if she cried (see Deuteronomy 22:26-27).

If a guard leaves his post at the time of an attack, it is considered treason. To see a house on fire and give no warning, it can be considered arson. In baseball, a batter is awarded first base IF when he is hit by a pitch that he tried to avoid. Similarly, every sinner is responsible for calling upon the name of the Lord for help Romans 10:13 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." God is going to judge us for what we didn't even try to do. We try to put it all on God to do, but we are responsible doing what we can, not for defending ourselves.

## STAY ON THE SHIP GOD IS IN CONTROL



God gives you credit for crying out to Him for help, but you have to do all that you can. Even if you are hit from your blindside, you have to at least try to get out of the way. We like to use the excuse "I'm only human", but you get no credit from God for this.

God expects that our hearts and our intentions are right. We have to have a willing mind an obedient heart to do what we can do.

There is a God-side of things and a man-side of things. In Acts 27:22-25, we can see the providence of God in decreeing that Paul and those who sailed with him, would be saved! However, we also see where man was held responsible to obey (Acts:27:31). Although they could not save themselves, they were expected to submit to the means of God's deliverance.

While it may be true that things do not happen *because* of what we do, it is equally true that things do not happen *in spite* of what we do. God will never take away your responsibility. God has a destiny for us, one that the enemy cannot stop, but we have a responsibility to stay on the ship no matter what God allows to happen. He is Sovereign.



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