

# The Attributes of God - Part 2b

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## RIGHTEOUS RIGHTEOUSNESS

**Righteousness** is the character or quality of being right or just” and was formerly spelled “rightwiseness,” which clearly expresses the meaning. God is totally righteous because He is totally as He should be. The righteousness of God could be succinctly stated as that which is all that God is, all that He commands, all that He demands, all that He approves, all that He provides through Christ in the gospel (Ro 1:16, 17-note). God is always righteous and His righteousness causes Him to always think and do what is right or act in perfect goodness in relation to His creation. He will always do what is right. God’s justice, love & mercy must be harmonized with His righteousness which cannot be compromised. As an attribute of God it is united with His holiness as being essential in His nature (Ps 11:7, Jn 17:25) The book of Romans emphasizes the **righteousness of God** and shows that God is righteous in His dealings with both sinners and believers. The righteousness of God is the starting point and the theme of the gospel message. God’s righteousness, rejected by sinning humanity, was perfectly fulfilled by Christ incarnate. It is imputed to the sinner who repents and believes in the Lord Jesus, and will be manifested in practical ways in the life of the Christian. The righteousness of God in one sense it speaks of God’s holy hatred of sin. In the early 1500s, Martin Luther sat in the tower of the Black Cloister, Wittenberg, reading (Ro 1:17-note). That expression ‘righteousness of God’ was like a thunderbolt in my heart,” Luther later wrote. “I hated Paul with all my heart when I read that the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel.” Luther saw God’s righteousness as an unassailable obstacle to eternal life for he was deeply aware of his own sinfulness, and he knew because of it he was unacceptable to a righteous God. Therefore, as he read this verse he was seized with despair. But the second connotation of righteousness in (Ro 1:17-note): speaks of Christ’s perfect righteousness, which is imputed to the account of the believing sinner (Ro 4:24note). When Luther understood this sense of the righteousness provided by God through the righteousness imputed on a believing sinner’s account, he finally grasped the true meaning of the gospel, and this discovery set ablaze the Protestant Reformation.

## RELATED RESOURCES

## GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

- [What God Is Like](#) by J. Hampton Keathley III
- Righteous by C H Spurgeon
- [The Righteousness of God](#) by Bob Deffinbaugh, Th.M.

### SELF-EXISTENT (ASEITY)

Have you ever been around a child who asks the probing question "Daddy (Mommy), who made God?" This is a good question but one which is not easy to explain to a child. The answer of course is that God did not need to be made because He has always been, and as you can see the attribute of self-existence is closely related to His eternity and His self-sustenance (self-sustaining). Stated another way, God is not dependent upon anything else for existence but has eternally existed without any external or prior cause. God is the essence of life and the unending Source of self-sustenance.

The noun **aseity** (Latin derivation - **a** = from + **se** = oneself) literally means from oneself and so being from oneself and in philosophy describes that which has its existence derived from itself, having no other source.

**The Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics and Philosophy of Religion** says that **aseity** is...

The divine property of being completely independent of everything distinct from God himself. Everything other than God depends on God, but God depends on nothing besides himself. (Evans, C. S. Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Religion. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press)

God does not depend on any source for His existence and exists independently of any cause. God is fully capable of existing in isolation should He so choose. His self-existence is seen in the Name by which He revealed Himself -- Yahweh (See study of Jehovah), the One Who is the **I am that I am** (Ex 3:14-notes) God's self-existence is a profound mystery that cannot be understood by finite man but is a truth that renews our mind giving us comfort, assurance and stability. He is our self-existent sure, steadfast, stable Rock. God exists independently of all things and thus will always be there for His people. This truth undergirds the exhortation to believers to let our "character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said,

"I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," (He 13:5-note).

In Acts Paul alludes to God's self-existence (and self-sufficiency) explaining to the intellectually curious but divinely foolish pagan Athenians...

For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' What therefore you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.<sup>24</sup> "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;<sup>25</sup> neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things. (Acts 17:23, 24, 25)

The psalmist speaks to God's **self-existence** declaring...

Before the mountains were born, Or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God. (Psalm 90:2) (See also Eternal)

**Spurgeon commenting on this passage writes:** Before the mountains were brought forth. Before those elder giants had struggled forth from nature's womb, as her dread firstborn, the Lord was glorious and self sufficient. Mountains to him, though hoar with the snows of ages, are but new born babes, young things whose birth was but yesterday, mere novelties of an hour.

Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world. Here too the allusion is to a birth. Earth was born but the other day, and her solid land was delivered from the flood but a short while ago.

Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God, or, "thou art, O God." God was, when nothing else was. He was God when the earth was not a world but a chaos, when mountains were not upheaved, and the generation of the heavens and the earth had not commenced. In this Eternal One there is a safe abode for the successive generations of men. If God himself were of yesterday, he would not be a suitable refuge for mortal men; if he could change and cease to be God he would be but an uncertain dwelling place for his people. The eternal existence of God is here mentioned to set forth, by contrast, the brevity of human life.

**Other Scriptures** which allude to God's self-existence include Ps 102:25, 26, 27; Isa 40:28, 29, 30, 31; Jn 5:26; Re 4:10

**Spurgeon** writes that

Whatever the attributes of God were of old, that they are now; and of each of them we may sing "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen."

**J I Packer** writes that...

God is self-existent, God has always been... Our Maker exists in an eternal, self-sustaining, necessary way, - necessary, that is, in the sense that God does not have it in Him to go out of existence, just as we do not have it in us to live forever. We necessarily age and die, because it is our present nature to do that; God necessarily continues forever unchanged, because it is His eternal nature to do that. This is one of many contrasts between creature and Creator... God's self existence is basic truth. At the outset of his presentation of the unknown God to the Athenian idolaters, Paul explained that this God, the world's Creator, "is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else" (Acts 17:23, 24, 25). Sacrifices offered to idols, in today's tribal religions as in ancient Athens, are thought of as somehow keeping the god going, but the Creator (the I AM) needs no such support system. The word aseity, meaning that he has life in himself and draws his unending energy from Himself (a se in Latin means "from himself"), was coined by theologians to express this truth, which the Bible makes clear. ([J. I. Packer Concise Theology](#)) ([See limited preview of this book in Google Books -Concise Theology](#)) (As an aside, there are a number of books available on theology but many are "deeper" than most individuals would desire to explore. J I Packer's book on the other hand is sound but succinct and therefore highly recommended if you are looking for a basic book on theology.)

**Ryrie** writes that...

God's eternity and self-existence are interrelated concepts. Some theologies use the word **aseity** to denote self-existence; i.e., God depends **a se**, on Himself. If God exists endlessly, then He never came into existence nor was He ever caused to come into existence. He is endlessly self-existent... God's eternity is reflected in Psalm 90:2, "from everlasting to everlasting," and in Genesis 21:33, where El Olam, the Everlasting God, comes from an original form that means "the God of eternity."

Question. What is God's relation to the succession of events? As an eternal Being He sees the past and the future as clearly as the present; further, He must see them as including succession of events, and yet He is in no way bound by that succession. An illustration of this is found in the heavenly scene in Revelation 6:9, 10, 11 where the Lord answered the question of the martyrs concerning how long it would be before they were avenged by telling them to wait until certain events had transpired on earth.

A ramification. A comforting ramification of God's eternity is the confidence that God has never, nor will He ever, cease to exist; therefore His sustaining, providential control of all things and events is assured. (Ryrie, C. C. Basic Theology : Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press) (Notice how the interrelationship of God's attributes [here we see - eternity, self-existence, self-sustenance, providence, etc] makes it difficult at times to discuss them from our limited human perspective which seeks to enumerate them to help understand the inscrutable God. And ultimately that is the conclusion a study of God's attributes should end - with the firm conviction that God worthy to be worshiped because of Who He is in all His manifold, intimately related characteristics. Job who had an up close, personal encounter with God rightly declared...

Behold, these are the fringes (GWT - "glimpses", NIV = "outer fringes", KJV = "parts of", YLT = "borders", of His ways; And how faint a word we hear of Him! But His mighty thunder, who can understand? (Job 26:14).

**Comment:** In other words, our eyes and ears and glorified senses have yet to see our awesome God in His full orbed splendor and majesty. How much knowledge of God yet remains beyond what we can see and hear and comprehend in the Scriptures. In a sense, what we can know now are only glimpses of God, providing merely a whisper of His presence and power. Recall Job's conclusion to mind the next time you consider carrying out a pre-meditated willful sin against this awesome God. And if you are not yet a believer, fall on your knees and cry out for His gift of repentance and faith in the perfect sacrificial Lamb of God, Who despite possessing every divine attribute, emptied Himself and died on an old rugged cross that He Himself had even created... and He did it all for you, dear reader.

Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved... (Acts 16:31, cp Ro 10:9, 10-notes)

**Paul Enns** writes that...

God's self-existence means "He has the ground of His existence in Himself...God is independent in His Being, but also... He is independent in everything else; in His virtues, decrees, works, and... causes everything to depend on Him." Ex 3:14 emphasizes His self existence in His identification, "I AM WHO I AM." The verb to be emphasizes He has continual existence in Himself. John 5:26 further stresses that the Father has life in Himself. An unborn child is dependent on its mother for life; animals are dependent on their surroundings for life; trees and plants are dependent on sun and rain for life; every living thing is dependent on someone or something else but God is independent and existent in Himself (Da 5:23; Acts 17:28). (Enns, P. P. *The Moody Handbook of Theology*. Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press)

**Thomas Oden** adds that...

To say that God is uncreated or self-existent (or self-subsistent) means simply that God is without origin, that God is the only ground of God's being, and that there is no cause prior to God (Tho. Aq., ST I Q7, 8, 1, pp. 30 ff.). This insight arises necessarily out of the awareness that if any effects exist at all, then there must be causes, and consequently some reality must ultimately be uncaused, or have the cause in itself (i.e., such a being must exist in itself, requiring no antecedent cause). This supreme being has not at some point in time become the Supreme Being, but simply is, and has never been otherwise. This underived being whose nature is to be, the Hebrews called Yahweh ("I am Who I am," Ex 3:14) and Teutonic languages have called God. God has no cause external to God, and this is precisely what makes God God, and not something else (Hilary, On Trin. I.5, NPNF 2 IX, pp. 41 f.). Since God is uncaused, it is better not to speak of God as self-caused, which, ironically, might seem to imply that before God "willed" it, God did not exist. God does not come into being because God wills it. Rather, being is eternally necessary and essential to God's nature and essence, and God's willing is an expression of God's being (John of Damascus, OF I.9, NPNF 2 IX, p. 12; Tho. Aq., ST I Q19, 1, pp. 103 ff.; Calvin, Inst. 3.20 ff.). (Oden, T. C. *The Living God : Systematic Theology*, vol. I).

**Swindoll** in his discussion of God's Name in Ex 3:13, 14, 15 explains that...

The words "I am," translate the first-person form of the verb *hāyâ*, "to be." The meaning is that God is the **self-existent One**. As Ronald Allen states, "He exists dependent upon nothing or no one excepting His own will." The words "I am" refer not to God's static being but to His active existence. He is actively involved with humanity, responding to their needs and revealing His person. He exists not only for His own sake, but also for the sake of His people. God's active involvement is made evident by the very context of the passage. "So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land" (3:8). When God said "I am," He was referring to His active, life-giving existence. As Walther Eichrodt commented, the words "I am" mean that God is "really and truly present, ready to help and to act." (Swindoll, C. R., & Zuck, R. B. *Understanding Christian theology*. Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson Publishers)

**James Montgomery Boice** has the following discussion of "I Am Who I Am"

Since the Bible is a unity we could answer these questions by starting at any point in the biblical revelation. We could begin with Revelation 22:21 as well as with Genesis 1:1. But there is no better starting point than God's revelation of himself to Moses at the burning bush. Moses, the great leader of Israel, had long been aware of the true God, for he had been born into a godly family. Still, when God said that he would send him to Egypt and through him deliver the people of Israel, Moses responded, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" We are told that God then answered Moses by saying, "I AM WHO I AM... Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you'" (Ex. 3:13-14).

"I AM WHO I AM." The name is linked with the ancient name for God, Jehovah. But it is more than a name. It is a descriptive name, pointing to all that God is in himself. In particular, it shows him to be the One who is entirely **self-existent, self-sufficient** and **eternal**.

These are abstract concepts, of course. But they are important, for these attributes more than any others set God apart from his creation and reveal him as being what he is in himself. God is perfect in all his attributes. But there are some attributes that we, his creatures, share. For instance, God is perfect in his love. Yet by his grace we also love. He is all wise; but we also possess a measure of wisdom. He is all powerful; and we exercise a limited power. It is not like that in regard to God's self-existence, self-sufficiency and eternity, however. He alone possesses those characteristics. He exists in and of himself; we do not. He is entirely self-sufficient; we are not. He is eternal; we are newcomers on the scene.

**Self-existence** means that God has no origins and consequently is answerable to no one. Matthew Henry says, "The greatest and best man in the world must say, By the grace of God I am what I am; but God says absolutely — and it is more than any creature, man or angel, can say — I am that I am."<sup>1</sup> So God has no origins; his existence does not depend on anybody.

**Self-existence** is a hard concept for us to grapple with for it means that God as he is in himself is unknowable. Everything that we see, smell, hear, taste or touch has origins. We can hardly think in any other category. Anything we observe must have a cause adequate to explain it. We seek for such causes. Cause and effect is even the basis for the belief in God possessed by those who, nevertheless, don't truly know him. Such individuals believe in God, not because they have had a personal experience of him or because they have discovered God in Scripture, but only because they infer his existence. "Everything comes from something; consequently, there must be a great something that stands behind everything." Cause and effect point to God, but — and this is the issue — they point to a God who is beyond understanding, indeed to one who is beyond us in every way. They indicate that God cannot be known and evaluated like other things can.

A. W. Tozer has noted that this is one reason why philosophy and science have not always been friendly toward the idea of God. These disciplines are dedicated to the task of accounting for things as we know them and are therefore impatient with anything that refuses to give an account of itself. Philosophers and scientists will admit that there is much they don't know. But it is another thing to admit that there is something they can never know completely and which, in fact, they don't even have techniques for discovering. To discover God, scientists may attempt to bring God down to their level, defining him as "natural law," "evolution" or some such principle. But still God eludes them. There is more to God than any such concepts can delineate.

Perhaps, too, this is why even Bible-believing people seem to spend so little time thinking about God's person and character. Tozer writes,

Few of us have let our hearts gaze in wonder at the I AM, the self-existent Self back of which no creature can think. Such thoughts are too painful for us. We prefer to think where it will do more good — about how to build a better mousetrap, for instance, or how to make two blades of grass grow where one grew before. And for this we are now paying a too heavy price in the secularization of our religion and the decay of our inner lives. ([A W Tozer Knowledge Of The Holy](#))

God's self-existence means that he is not answerable to us or to anybody, and we don't like that. We want God to give an account of himself, to defend his actions. Although he sometimes explains things to us, he doesn't have to and often he does not. God doesn't have to explain himself to anybody. ([The True God](#))

## **RELATED RESOURCES GOD'S SELF-EXISTENCE (ASEITY)**

- [What God Is Like](#) by J. Hampton Keathley III
- [Attributes of God - Where Did God Come From? The Self Existence of God - by Dr S Lewis Johnson- Recommended Resource](#) - includes Mp3, This is only one study out of over 100 in depth lectures by Dr Johnson on Systematic Theology including studies of the doctrines of God, Christ, the Spirit, Prayer, Salvation, etc. ([click for this extensive list](#))
- [Is There a Supreme Being? or the Existence of God](#) by Dr S Lewis Johnson
- [Self Existence of God](#) by J I Packer
- [The Self-Existence of God](#) by A.W. Tozer
- [The Being of God](#) by Thomas Watson
- [The Independence or Self Existence of God](#) by D. H. Kuiper
- [Divine Aseity and Apologetics](#) by John M. Frame (MS Word Document)

## **SELF-SUFFICIENT**

"If I were hungry, I would not tell thee." (Ps 50:12)

**Swindoll** writes that...

God has self-sufficient life. He is not dependent on anyone or anything outside of Himself for the sustenance of

His Being. He was, is, and always shall be. He exists, and immutably so. The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2). Christ is life (John 14:6), and so is the Spirit. Both can impart and sustain life in others without diminishing themselves...

God's self-sufficiency, an incommunicable attribute, reminds us that He is totally independent of everyone and everything. Certain people may be called self-sufficient, but finite humans are always totally dependent on God for absolutely everything including their next breath (Job 12:10; Acts 17:25). These incommunicable characteristics are unique to God. So God does not ask us to possess, develop, imitate, or express His incommunicable attributes. But He does expect us to grow in knowledge of Him, which includes learning about His incommunicable attributes...

Our all-sufficient God assures us that if we take care of His spiritual purposes such as the pursuit of sanctification (Heb. 12:14), He will provide for all our needs—from daily food and clothes to our deepest feelings of inadequacy (Matt. 6:25–34; Phil. 4:6–7). We gain this conviction through a right belief about God's attributes which undergird His sufficiency for us. Tozer recognized this fact when he wrote,

"The man who comes to a right belief about God is relieved of ten thousand temporal problems, for he sees at once that these have to do with matters which at the most cannot concern him for very long."

(Swindoll, C. R., & Zuck, R. B. *Understanding Christian Theology*. Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson Publishers)

**Spurgeon** commenting on this verse writes

"Strange conception, a hungry God! Yet if such an absurd ideal could be truth, and if the Lord hungered for meat, he would not ask it of men. He could provide for himself out of his own possessions; he would not turn suppliant to his own creatures. Even under the grossest ideal of God, faith in outward ceremonies is ridiculous. Do men fancy that the Lord needs banners, and music, and incense, and fine linen? If he did, the stars would emblazon his standard, the winds and the waves become his orchestra, ten thousand times ten thousand flowers would breathe forth perfume, the snow should be his alb, the rainbow his girdle, the clouds of light his mantle. O fools and slow of heart, ye worship ye know not what! For the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. What can he need who is owner of all things and able to create as he wills? Thus overwhelmingly does the Lord pour forth his arguments upon formalists."

## RELATED RESOURCES SELF SUFFICIENCY

- [The self-sufficiency Of God](#) by A.W. Tozer
- [Of the Sufficiency and Perfection of God](#) by John Gill

## SOVEREIGN SOVEREIGNTY

**Sovereignty** is defined by Webster's as supreme power especially over a body politic. It describes freedom from external control or of other controlling influences. God is the ultimate authority in every sphere and place. It follows that all creation is subject to Him and that all creation is answerable to Him. As an aside, what verb do you see in the word sovereign? "Reign" of course, and this verb captures the essence of this divine attribute. Our God Reigns!

[Our God Reigns](#)

by Leonard Smith

How lovely on the mountains are the feet of Him  
Who brings good news, good news;  
Announcing peace, proclaiming news of happiness:  
Our God reigns, our God reigns!

*Refrain*

*Our God reigns!*

*Our God reigns!*

*Our God reigns!*  
*Our God reigns!*

He had no stately form, He had no majesty  
That we should be drawn to Him.  
He was despised and we took no account of Him.  
Our God reigns, our God reigns!

*Refrain*

It was our sin and guilt that bruised and wounded Him.  
It was our sin that brought Him down.  
When we like sheep had gone astray our Shepherd came  
And on His shoulders bore our shame.

*Refrain*

Meek as a lamb that's led out to the slaughterhouse,  
Dumb as a sheep before its shearer,  
His life ran down upon the ground like pouring rain  
That we might be born again.

*Refrain*

Out from the tomb He came with grace and majesty;  
He is alive, He is alive.  
God loves us so, see here His hands, His feet, His side  
Yes we know, He is alive.

The 1828 Edition of Webster's defines **Sovereign** as

Supreme in power; possessing supreme dominion; as a sovereign ruler of the universe. Supreme; superior to all others; chief. God is the sovereign good of all who love and obey him. Supremely efficacious; superior to all others; predominant; effectual; as a sovereign remedy."

Easton's Bible Dictionary says **Sovereignty** is God's

absolute right to do all things according to his own good pleasure (Da 4:25, 35; Ro 9:15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23; 1Ti 6:15; Re 4:11).

New Unger's Bible Dictionary says that regarding the **Sovereignty** of God, that

He is under no external restraint whatsoever. He is the Supreme Dispenser of all events. All forms of existence are within the scope of His dominion. And yet this is not to be viewed in any such way as to abridge the reality of the moral freedom of God's responsible creatures or to make men anything else than the arbiters of their own eternal destinies. God has seen fit to create beings with the power of choice between good and evil. He rules over them in justice and wisdom and grace. ([Unger, M. F., Harrison, R. K., Vos, H. F., Barber, C. J., & Unger, M. F. The New Unger's Bible Dictionary. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**The Sovereignty of God** A. W. Pink. Here is an excerpt to encourage you to read the entire topic:

The sovereignty of God may be defined as the exercise of His supremacy... Being infinitely elevated above the highest creature, He is the Most High, Lord of "heaven and earth. Subject to none, influenced by none, absolutely independent; God does as He pleases, only as He pleases, always as He pleases. None can thwart Him, none can hinder Him. So His own Word expressly declares: "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Is 46:10); "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand" (Da 4:35-note). Divine sovereignty means that God is God in fact, as well as in name, that He is on the Throne of the universe, directing all things, working all things "after the counsel of His own will" (Ep 1:11-note).

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**ILLUSTRATION** OF God's sovereign control. A two-year-old child in a stroller was rapidly turning his little steering wheel to the right, but he was going to the left, nonetheless. His direction was not determined by him, but by his mother; his steering wheel was not connected to anything that mattered. (From - When You've Been Wronged: Moving From Bitterness to Forgiveness by Erwin W.



**Question: "What does it mean that God is sovereign?"**

**Answer:** God's sovereignty is one of the most important principles in Christian theology, as well as one of its most hotly debated. Whether or not God is actually sovereign is usually not a topic of debate; all mainstream Christian sects agree that God is preeminent in power and authority. God's sovereignty is a natural consequence of His omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence. What's subject to disagreement is to what extent God applies His sovereignty—specifically, how much control He exerts over the wills of men. When we speak of the sovereignty of God, we mean He rules the universe, but then the debate begins over when and where His control is direct and when it is indirect.

God is described in the Bible as all-powerful and all-knowing (Psalm 147:5), outside of time (Exodus 3:14; Psalm 90:2), and responsible for the creation of everything (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1). These divine traits set the minimum boundary for God's sovereign control in the universe, which is to say that nothing in the universe occurs without God's permission. God has the power and knowledge to prevent anything He chooses to prevent, so anything that does happen must, at the very least, be "allowed" by God.

At the same time, the Bible describes God as offering humanity choices (Deuteronomy 30:15–19), holding them personally responsible for their sins (Exodus 20:5), and being unhappy with some of their actions (Numbers 25:3). The fact that sin exists at all proves that not all things that occur are the direct actions of God, who is holy. The reality of human volition (and human accountability) sets the maximum boundary for God's sovereign control over the universe, which is to say there is a point at which God chooses to allow things that He does not directly cause.

The fact that God is sovereign essentially means that He has the power, wisdom, and authority to do anything He chooses within His creation. Whether or not He actually exerts that level of control in any given circumstance is actually a completely different question. Often, the concept of divine sovereignty is oversimplified. We tend to assume that, if God is not directly, overtly, purposefully driving some event, then He is somehow not sovereign. The cartoon version of sovereignty depicts a God who must do anything that He can do, or else He is not truly sovereign.

Of course, such a cartoonish view of God's sovereignty is logically false. If a man were to put an ant in a bowl, the "sovereignty" of the man over the ant is not in doubt. The ant may try to crawl out, and the man may not want this to happen. But the man is not forced to crush the ant, drown it, or pick it up. The man, for reasons of his own, may choose to let the ant crawl away, but the man is still in control. There is a difference between allowing the ant to leave the bowl and helplessly watching as it escapes. The cartoon version of God's sovereignty implies that, if the man is not actively holding the ant inside the bowl, then he must be unable to keep it in there at all.

The illustration of the man and the ant is at least a vague parallel to God's sovereignty over mankind. God has the ability to do anything, to take action and intervene in any situation, but He often chooses to act indirectly or to allow certain things for reasons of His own. His will is furthered in any case. God's "sovereignty" means that He is absolute in authority and unrestricted in His supremacy. Everything that happens is, at the very least, the result of God's permissive will. This holds true even if certain specific things are not what He would prefer. The right of God to allow mankind's free choices is just as necessary for true sovereignty as His ability to enact His will, wherever and however He chooses. ([What does it mean that God is sovereign?](#))

**Also from Gotquestions:**

- [How do God's sovereignty and humanity's free will work together in salvation? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How does God's sovereignty work together with free will? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How does the sovereignty of God impact my everyday life? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is sovereign grace? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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**Mark Hitchcock tells the following story...**

Our God Reigns - Ray Stedman, noted pastor and author, once traveled to England to speak at a Bible conference. The church sanctuary was filled with people eager to hear this well-known teacher. The service began with singing and praise to the Lord. One of the songs was the chorus "Our God Reigns."

Stedman, seated on the platform next to the pastor, glanced down at the song sheet and began to smile. Then he started to laugh. The words on the song sheet had been mistyped. The congregation was belting out "Our



God Resigns."

That's one of those funny-but-painful stories, isn't it? Sometimes we look at the world around us and conclude that God must have *resigned* and is no longer seated on His throne, ruling the nations.

We need to remind ourselves that God is indeed enthroned in heaven, reigning over all. And we must never forget that God is still on His throne, ruling over the nations of the world.

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**John MacDuff...**

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD - All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?" Da 4:35

How blessed that elementary truth- "The Lord reigns!" To know that there is no chance or accident with God- that He decrees the fall of a sparrow- the destruction of an atom- the annihilation of a world!

The Almighty is not like Baal, "asleep." "He that keeps Israel" can never for a moment "slumber." Man proposes; but God disposes. "You have done it," is the history of every event, past, present, and to come. His purposes none can change- His counsels none can resist.

Believer, how cheering to know that all that befalls you, is thus ordered in the eternal purpose of a Covenant God! Every minute circumstance of your lot- appointing the bounds of your habitation- meting out every drop in the cup of life- arranging what by you is called its "vicissitudes"-decreeing all its trials; and at last, as the great Proprietor of life, revoking the lease of existence when its allotted term has expired!

How it should keep the mind from its guilty proneness to brood and fret over second causes, were this grand but simple truth ever realized- that all that befalls us are integral parts in a stupendous plan of wisdom- that there is no crossing or thwarting the designs and dealings of God; none can say, "What are you doing?" All ought to say, "He does all things well."

We dare not venture, with presumptuous gaze, to penetrate into "those secret things which belong unto the Lord our God." In all that is fitted, in the consideration of this august theme of the Divine Decrees, to impart encouragement and consolation, let us rejoice; in all that is mysterious and incomprehensible, let us with childlike reverence exclaim, "Oh, what a wonderful God we have! How great are his riches and wisdom and knowledge! How impossible it is for us to understand his decisions and his methods! For who can know what the Lord is thinking? Who knows enough to be his counselor? And who could ever give him so much that he would have to pay it back? For everything comes from him; everything exists by his power and is intended for his glory. To him be glory evermore. Amen!"

The contemplation of the Sovereignty of God, formed subject-matter of rejoicing to the Savior himself in His humiliation- " Even so, Father, for so it seems good in Your sight!" And what supplied material for comfort and joy to an Almighty Sufferer, may well dry the tears and soothe the pangs of His suffering people. Oh, how sinners may magnify their God by a calm submission to His will; by seeing no hand but One in their trials; in giving or taking: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.!" "Who knows not all in these, that the hand of the Lord has wrought this?"

Til Death the weary spirit free,  
My God has said, 'Tis good for thee,  
To walk in faith, end not by sight.  
Take it on trust a little while,  
Soon shall you read the mystery right,  
In the fall sunshine of His smile!

Will it not further help to the breathing of the prayer, "Your will be done," when I think, in connection with the Sovereignty of God, of the grand end of His immutable decrees- it is, "His own glory." "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things." What more can I desire? "All things." -God's glory and my own good! "I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety." Psalm 4:8 (From - [THE NIGHT WATCHES](#) by John MacDuff)

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**Pastor Ray Pritchard** writes...

I'd like to begin by talking about the problem of spiritual indigestion. That's a brand-new term that I learned this week after reading a chapter written by Dr. J. Grant Howard, who taught for many years at Western Conservative Baptist Seminary in Portland, Oregon. Dr. Howard says that spiritual indigestion happens when we take in more than we understand. It's a common problem in conservative churches where we often measure growth by knowledge. We read books, we listen to tapes and to Christian radio and TV, go to Bible studies, and we love to listen to good preaching. We are, he says, overfed and undernourished at the same time.

What happens when we get a case of spiritual indigestion? The pressure builds up and we sound forth with a doctrinal burp! That's the sudden release of a lot of hot air surrounded by noxious fumes. It happens when we take in but don't digest the truth, when we listen but never let the truth change our lives.

God's Sovereignty is a truth that touches all of life. It is a truth meant to be digested so it becomes a part of our very being. We begin with the word itself. The word "sovereign" is both a noun and verb. As a verb it means "to rule," and as a noun it means "king" or "master" or "absolute ruler." To say that God is sovereign means God is in Charge of the Entire Universe All the Time. In the words of the Westminster Confession of Faith, "He ordains whatsoever comes to pass."

Sovereignty: What It Is and What - Let's begin by acknowledging that this is not a popular doctrine. You don't hear many sermons on this subject in most churches. And most of us would rather hear about love and grace.

It's also a very humbling doctrine. Sovereignty reminds us that God is God and we are not. When we think we're ready to advise God on how to run the universe, he just looks at us and says, "How many stripes do you have on your sleeve?" It's like a person who visits my house and starts to criticize things. He doesn't like the color of the wallpaper, he doesn't like the decorations, he doesn't like the way the purple moosehead hangs over the kitchen table. Once he is finished with his criticism, only one comment is appropriate. "Mister, whose name is on the title deed to this house? When you start paying the bills around here, you get a vote on the decorating. Until then, feel free to say nothing." That's what sovereignty does. It puts us in the place where we feel free to say nothing about the way God runs the universe.

This is also an exalting doctrine because it gives us a very big God. Many years ago J. B. Phillips wrote the classic book *Your God Is Too Small*. That's a case where the title told the whole story. Many of us have a problem because our God is too small. But if you ever understand that God is sovereign over the entire universe, you'll never have a small God again.

This is also a mysterious doctrine because it brings us face to face with the problem of evil and free will. If God is sovereign, why is there evil in the universe? If man has free will, how can God be sovereign? Christians have debated these questions for centuries. Suffice it to say that God is sovereign and you are truly responsible for all the choices you make. Often we won't understand how they work together, but they do.

Again, this is a clarifying doctrine. It teaches us that there is no such thing as luck, chance, fate or coincidence. You can have God or chance, but you can't have both. When a cowboy applied for health insurance, the agent routinely asked if he had had any accidents during the previous year. The cowboy replied, "No. But I was bitten by a rattlesnake, and a horse kicked me in the ribs. That laid me up for a while." The agent said, "Weren't those accidents?" "No," replied the cowboy, "They did it on purpose." The cowboy realized that there are no such things as "accidents." How about you, Christian? Do you believe that some things catch God by surprise? In the words of a good friend, "God is too sovereign to be lucky."

Finally, this is an empowering doctrine. If you believe God is sovereign, no mere human can intimidate you. You'll respect authority but you won't cringe before it. What gave David the courage to go down into the Elah Valley and face that giant Goliath? He said, "I come to you in the name of the God of Israel, the Lord of hosts?" David had a God so big that Goliath was like a midget to him. (Read Pastor Pritchard's entire message and see also his series of 16 messages on [Our Awesome God](#)) (See also other mentions of [God's sovereignty](#))

#### List of sermons by Dr Pritchard that relate to God's Sovereignty

- [When the Foundations are Destroyed](#) Psalm 11 In times like these, we need a fresh view of God and a long view of history.
- [Three Things to Remember When Hard Times Hit](#) James 1:16-18 Our hope doesn't depend on the fickle sway of circumstances but on the solid rock called God.
- [Questions for God](#) Habakkuk 1:12-2:4 God's plan and yours are often not the same.
- [How Many Will Be Saved?](#) Luke 13:22-29 If our theology leads us to write off the majority of the human race as a hopeless

cause, then perhaps we need to check our theology with the Bible.

- [Can You Trust God With the Details of Your Life?](#) Genesis 50:20 The question is not "Can you?" but "Will you?"
- [Are You Satisfied With God?](#) Genesis 45 Nothing is ever wasted. Everything "fits" somewhere.
- [Do You Want to be Set Free?](#) Genesis 44-45 If we will face the truth about ourselves, we can be set free.
- [Are You Willing to Face Your Past?](#) Genesis 42-43 You can't erase a guilty conscience.
- [How Big is Your God?](#) Genesis 41 If your God isn't bigger than your problems, maybe you need to trade him in for the God of the Bible.
- [Do You Know Why You Were Born?](#) Genesis 37 God accomplishes his purposes for us even when we are clueless about the big picture.

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**C H Spurgeon** summarized God's sovereignty in his introductory remarks to his sermon on [Divine Sovereignty](#)...

There is no attribute more comforting to His children than that of God's Sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe trials, they believe that Sovereignty has ordained their afflictions, that Sovereignty overrules them, and that Sovereignty will sanctify them all. There is nothing for which the children ought more earnestly to contend than the doctrine of their Master over all creation—the Kingship of God over all the works of His own hands—the Throne of God and His right to sit upon that Throne. On the other hand, there is no doctrine more hated by worldings, no truth of which they have made such a football, as the great, stupendous, but yet most certain doctrine of the Sovereignty of the infinite Jehovah. Men will allow God to be everywhere except on His throne. They will allow Him to be in His workshop to fashion worlds and make stars. They will allow Him to be in His almonry to dispense His alms and bestow His bounties. They will allow Him to sustain the earth and bear up the pillars thereof, or light the lamps of heaven, or rule the waves of the ever-moving ocean; but when God ascends His throne, His creatures then gnash their teeth. And we proclaim an enthroned God, and His right to do as He wills with His own, to dispose of His creatures as He thinks well, without consulting them in the matter; then it is that we are hissed and execrated, and then it is that men turn a deaf ear to us, for God on His throne is not the God they love. But it is God upon the throne that we love to preach. It is God upon His throne whom we trust. ([Divine Sovereignty - Sermon on Matthew 20:15](#))

## Spurgeon on Sovereignty

[See 1300 links that relate to the word Sovereign as used by C H Spurgeon](#)

Sin is sovereign until sovereign grace dethrones it.

There is within our nature that which would send the best saint to hell if sovereign grace did not prevent.

Sovereign grace can make strangers into sons.

We are too insignificant to be of any great importance in God's vast universe; He can do either with us or without us, and our presence or absence will not disarrange His plans.

If the disposal of the lot is the Lord's, whose is the arrangement of our whole life?

Alterations and afterthoughts belong to short-sighted beings who meet with unexpected events which operate upon them to change their minds, but the Lord who sees everything from the beginning has no such reason for shifting his ground.

Not so much as a solitary particle of spray ever breaks rank, or violates the command of the Lord of sea and land, neither do the awful cataracts and terrific floods revolt from his sway.

Our life is made up of trifles, and if we had a God only for the great things, and not for the little things, we should be miserable indeed.

We are called in Scripture "a temple"—a holy temple in the Lord. But shall any one assert that the stones of the edifice were their own architect? Shall it be said that the stones of the building in which we are now assembled cut themselves into their present shape, and then spontaneously came together, and piled this spacious edifice? Should any one assert such a foolish thing, we should be disposed to doubt his sanity; much more may we suspect the spiritual sanity of any man who would venture to affirm that the great temple of the church of God designed and erected itself. No: we believe that God the Father was the architect, sketched the plan, supplies the materials, and will complete the work. Shall it also be said that those who are redeemed redeemed themselves? that slaves of Satan break their own fetters? Then why was a Redeemer needed at all?

When God appointeth none disappointeth.

God has a plan, depend upon it: it were an insult to the supreme intellect if we supposed that he worked at random, without plan or method. To some of us it is a truth which we never doubt, that God has one boundless purpose which embraces all things, both things which he permits and things which he ordains. Without for a moment denying the freedom of the human will, we still believe that the supreme wisdom foresees also the curious twistings of human will, and overrules all for his own ends.

He has fixed the hour of our entrance into rest, and it can neither be postponed by skill of physician nor hastened by malice of foe.

If the Lord hath done it, questions are out of the question; and truly the Lord has done it. There may be a secondary agent, there probably is; the devil himself may be that secondary agent, yet the Lord hath done it.

Nebuchadnezzar was about to carry the Jews away from the land which flowed with milk and honey to his own far distant country; but the prophet consoled himself with the reflection that, whatever Nebuchadnezzar meant to do, he was only the instrument in the hands of God for the accomplishment of the divine purpose. He proposed, but God disposed.

Opposition to divine sovereignty is essentially atheism. Men have no objection to a god who is really no God; I mean, by this, a god who shall be the subject of their caprice, who shall be a lackey to their will, who shall be under their control,—they have no objection to such a being as that; but a God who speaks, and it is done, who commands, and it stands fast, a God who has no respect for their persons, but doeth as he wills among the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of this lower world, such a God as this they cannot endure.

If you could have chosen your own circumstances and condition in life, you could not have made so wise a choice as God has made for you.

The right to punishment is the only right we can now claim upon the footing of justice. Henceforth we are simply in the hands of God awaiting his sentence. He may, if he wills, save the entire human race; if it pleaseth him, he may save none. If so he wills, he may make this man a monument of mercy, and leave his neighbour to reap the due reward of his works. This is what God has a right to do, and he claims his sovereign prerogative.

No doctrine in the whole Word of God has more excited the hatred of mankind than the truth of the absolute sovereignty of God.

Observe, then, three rights which belong to God,—as Creator; as Judge, having the right to punish the guilty; and as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, having the right to pardon sinners, and to do it without in the slightest degree violating his justice.

That God rules men as a builder rules his stones and timber, is the idea of idiots, but that he leaves them men, in full possession of their freedom, and yet achieves the purposes of his grace, is the truth.

### **R B Kuiper relates God's Sovereignty to two ropes...**

I liken them to two ropes going through two holes in the ceiling and over a pulley above. If I wish to support myself by them, I must cling to them both. If I cling only to one and not the other, I go down. I read the many teachings of the Bible regarding God's election, predestination, his chosen, and so on, I read also the many teachings regarding, 'whosoever will may come' and urging people to exercise their responsibility as human beings. These seeming contradictions cannot be reconciled by the puny human mind. With childlike faith, I cling to both ropes, fully confident that in eternity I will see that both strands of truth are, after all, of one piece."

Comment: All natural analogies of course are imperfect in attempting to define any of God's perfect attributes. That said, Kuiper's illustration brings to mind a row boat - unless both oars (God's sovereignty, Man's responsibility) are effectively engaged in the endeavor, the rowing is ineffective.

**Martin Manser on the sovereignty of God** - The fact that God is free and able to do all that he wills; that he reigns over all creation and that his will is the final cause of all things. This is often expressed in the language of kingship.

God is free to do all he wills

Psalm 135:6 See also Psalm 115:3; Isaiah 46:10; Daniel 4:35; Romans 9:19-21

God is able to do whatever he wills

Luke 1:37 Gabriel speaking to Mary. See also Job 42:2; Matthew 19:26; Ephesians 3:20

God cannot be successfully opposed

Job 42:2 From Job's prayer of submission and repentance. See also 1 Samuel 2:10; 2 Chronicles 20:6; Job 9:12; Ecclesiastes 7:13; Isaiah 43:13; Isaiah 45:9-10; Acts 5:39

God rules and reigns

He is King

Psalm 29:10 See also 1 Chronicles 16:31; Psalm 47:2; Isaiah 6:5; Isaiah 43:15; Jeremiah 10:7,10; Zechariah 14:9; 1 Timothy 1:17; Timothy 6:15; Revelation 15:3; Revelation 19:6

He is Lord of heaven and earth

Deuteronomy 4:39 See also Genesis 24:3; Deuteronomy 10:14; Joshua 2:11; 1 Chronicles 29:11; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 121:2; Psalm 134:3; Luke 10:21; Acts 17:24

His throne is a symbol of his sovereignty

Exodus 17:16; Psalm 45:6; Psalm 93:2; Psalm 123:1; Isaiah 6:1 Isaiah's commission; Isaiah 66:1; Jeremiah 49:38; Lamentations 5:19; Ezekiel 1:26; Daniel 7:9 Daniel's dream; Matthew 5:34; Matthew 19:28 Jesus Christ teaches his disciples about things to come; Acts 7:49; Hebrews 1:8; Hebrews 8:1; Hebrews 12:2; Revelation 4:2; Revelation 20:11

God's sovereignty extends over all things

He is sovereign over creation

Revelation 4:11 See also Psalm 93:1; Isaiah 40:22; Isaiah 41:18-19

He is sovereign over human life

1 Chronicles 29:12 Part of David's prayer on the occasion of gifts being brought to the temple. See also 2 Chronicles 25:8; Luke 1:51-53; Acts 18:21; James 4:15

He is sovereign over the minutest details of life

Matthew 10:29-30 pp Luke 12:6-7

He is sovereign in electing his people

Ephesians 1:11 See also Romans 8:29; Romans 9:11,18

He is sovereign in the life and salvation of his people

1 Corinthians 1:30 See also Jeremiah 18:6; 1 Corinthians 12:11; Philippians 2:13; James 1:18

He is sovereign over the sufferings of believers

Philippians 1:29; 1 Peter 3:17

He is sovereign over world history

Proverbs 21:1 See also Exodus 9:16; Psalm 22:28; Jeremiah 18:7-10; Daniel 4:35

God is sovereign over all other gods and over demonic forces

God is supreme over all gods

Psalm 95:3 "gods" are part of the created order and subject to God's sovereignty. See also Exodus 18:11; Deuteronomy 10:17; 1 Chronicles 16:26; Psalm 96:5; Daniel 2:47; Colossians 1:16

Satan is defeated through God's sovereign purposes at work in Jesus Christ

Colossians 2:15 See also John 12:31; Romans 16:20; 2 Thessalonians 2:8; Hebrews 2:14; 2 Peter 2:4; 1 John 3:8; Jude 6; Revelation 12:7-10

[\(The Sovereignty of God in Dictionary of Bible Themes interesting resource\)](#)

## The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook writes that sovereignty is...

used to describe the fact that God is the supreme ruler of everything. God created the world and all that is in it. He sustains the entire created order in existence. He guides the affairs of human beings and nations. He providentially interacts with all that takes place. He works for the good of the world and finally will bring all things to a satisfactory conclusion. Because He is God, He has the absolute right to work His will. Sometimes sovereignty is misunderstood to mean that God forces His will on people and that we are not free to choose. That is false. God's sovereignty includes the free choices of human beings. What makes God's sovereignty effective is that His will is ultimately done—sometimes along with, sometimes in spite of our free choices.

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**J I Packer** - I do not intend to spend any time at all proving to you the general truth that God is sovereign in His world. There is no need; for I know that, if you are a Christian, you believe this already. How do I know that? Because I know that, if you are a Christian, you *pray*; and the recognition of God's sovereignty, is the basis of your prayers. In prayer, you ask for things and give thanks for things. Why? Because you recognize that God is the author and source of all the good that you have had already and all the good that you hope for in the future. This is the fundamental philosophy of Christian prayer. The prayer of a Christian is not an attempt to force God's hand, but a humble acknowledgment of helplessness and dependence. When we are on our knees, we know that it is not we who control the world; it is not in our power, therefore, to supply our needs by our own independent efforts. Every good thing that we desire for ourselves and for others, must be sought from God, and will come, if it comes at all, as a gift from His hands. If this is true even of our daily bread (and the Lord's Prayer teaches us that it is), much more is it true of spiritual benefits. This is all luminously clear to us when we are actually praying, whatever we may be betrayed into saying in argument afterwards. In effect, therefore, *what we do every time we pray, is to confess our own impotence and God's sovereignty*. The very fact that a Christian prays is thus proof positive that he believes in the Lordship of his God. (**Read full article [Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility](#)**) -

## SCRIPTURES ON SOVEREIGNTY

For the greatest benefit from the following Scriptures, read the text, not passively but instead consciously and actively "interrogating" the text (interrogate with the 5W'S & H), making a list in your life journal of what the Spirit of Christ (Ro 8:9-note) teaches you (1Jn 2:27, Jn 14:26, 16:13) about God and about man. Obey any instructions or commands you encounter, as you allow the Holy Spirit to renew your mind and to "cultivate faithfulness" (NAS, Ps 37:3-[see note](#)). Then praise Him for graciously teaching you these profitable, eternal truths (cp 2Ti 3:16, 17-notes).

1Sa 2:2, 3, 1Sa 2:6-8; Job 42:2; Ps 50:1, Ps 103:19; Ps 115:3; Ps 135:6; Da 4:31, 32, Da 4:35; Isa 46:9, 10; Isa 14:24, 27; Isa 40:15, 25; Isa 43:13; Eph 1:11, 1Ti 6:15

**God's sovereignty overrules every calamity.** Let's take a brief look at His sovereignty over historical events. Did you know that two great leaders, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and President Franklin Roosevelt, almost died before the World War II began? In December 1931, Churchill was struck by a car as he crossed Fifth Avenue in New York City. In Miami in December 1933, an assassin's bullet barely missed Roosevelt and killed the man standing beside him. Both leaders survived and contributed mightily to the defeat of Hitler. Why did they survive to lead their nations in this time of crisis? Because God was in control back then and He is still in control. God is sovereign over nations causing their leaders to rise and to fall (Da 2:21; 4:32, 33, 34, 35; 5:21). The prophet Habakkuk complained that it didn't seem right for God to use wicked Babylon to discipline Israel, but God assured him that this did not mean evil would triumph. God was in control and would one day bring about perfect justice

"Is it not indeed from the LORD of hosts That peoples toil for fire, And nations grow weary for nothing? For the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea. (Hab 2:13, 14).

Dear brother or sister in Christ, rest assured that your times are also in the omnipotent, omniscient God's hands. No matter what may happen in this world, He is always in control!

### **[This Is My Father's World](#)**—

(Beautiful Vocal Version by Fernando Ortega)

Oh, let me ne'er forget  
That though the wrong seems oft so strong,"  
God is the Ruler yet.  
--M D Babcock

**[The Most High Rules](#) from [The Joy of Knowing God](#) Action To Take:** Think of something in your life at the present time that

disturbs you deeply, over which you have no control. Now consciously bow to God's sovereignty in that area of your life and ask Him what Christlike qualities He wants to build into your life through that situation.

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If anything in this world is the result of chance then God is not sovereign over all. Wilson Benton

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Our sovereign God never lets so much as a shadow fall across our lives without intending it to be for his glory and our good. John Blanchard

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If God were less than sovereign, man would be less than responsible. Since God is absolutely sovereign, man is wholly responsible to him. R. B. Kuiper

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The essence of true religion is spontaneity, the sovereign movings of the Holy Spirit upon and in the free spirit of redeemed man. A. W. Tozer

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Our duty is found in the revealed will of God in the Scriptures. Our trust must be in the sovereign will of God, as he works in the ordinary circumstances of our daily lives for our good and for his glory. Jerry Bridges

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The true minister is not one by his own choice but by the sovereign commission of God. A. W. Tozer

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The main reason why we should study the Bible is because it is our duty. God is our Sovereign, it is his Word, and he commands that we study it. R. C. Sproul

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The kingdom of God does not exist because of your effort or mine. It exists because God reigns. Our part is to enter this kingdom and bring our life under his sovereign will. T. Z. Koo

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**A sovereign Protector I have,**  
Unseen, yet for ever at hand,  
Unchangeably faithful to save,  
Almighty to rule and command.  
He smiles, and my comforts abound;  
His grace as the dew shall descend;  
And walls of salvation surround  
The soul he delights to defend.  
Augustus M Toplady

## RELATED RESOURCES

### GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

- The Sovereignty of God by A. W. Pink
- [Sovereignty of God](#) - Gordon Clark
- Sovereign by C H Spurgeon
- [The Sovereignty of God by Joseph Irons](#)
- [What God Is Like](#) by J. Hampton Keathley III
- [How Much Does God Control?](#) Excellent 33 page booklet from Radio Bible Class/Discovery House Publishing
- [The Sovereignty of God](#) by A. W. Tozer
- [The Sovereignty Of God](#) by David Legge
- [The Sovereignty of God in History](#) by [Bob Deffinbaugh, Th.M.](#)
- [The Sovereignty of God in Salvation - \(Romans 9:1-24\)](#) by [Bob Deffinbaugh, Th.M.](#)
- [Whatever Happened To God?](#) by James Montgomery Boice - He laments that many in the church have lost a sense of Who God is because they have virtually no appreciation for His attributes (He discusses sovereignty and holiness of God)
- [The Providence Of God](#) by Thomas Watson (scroll down)



## From Jerry Bridges

- [The Sovereignty Of God](#)
- [The Sovereignty of God's Providence](#) [The Sovereignty of God's Providence](#) - written - Note: *This was a teaching Jerry was presenting in the months leading up to his fatal heart attack in March, 2016.*
- [God and Natural Disasters](#)
- [The Sovereignty of God: 1996 National Conference](#); [Download](#)

## From John Piper on the Sovereignty of God

- [When the Bible Blows Your Mind](#)
- [The Absolute Sovereignty of God](#)
- [All Things for Good. Part 1](#)
- [All Things for Good. Part 2](#)
- [The Great Work of the Only Wise God](#)
- [If the Lord Wills](#)
- [The Pleasure of God in All That He Does](#)
- [Ruth: Sweet and Bitter Providence](#)
- [Sustained by Sovereign Grace—Forever](#)
- [Well-Timed Help](#)
- [Is God Less Glorious Because He Ordained That Evil Be?](#)
- [How Does a Sovereign God Love?](#)
- [The Sovereignty of God and Prayer](#)
- [Being Loved and Being Hated](#)
- [A Service of Sorrow, Self-Humbling, and Steady Hope in Our Savior and King, Jesus Christ: A Response to the Attack on the World Trade Center](#)
- [God Does Not Repent Like a Man](#)
- [Righteous Job and the Rock Star](#)
- [Job: Reverent in Suffering](#)
- [Endings Are For Gratitude, Beginnings Are For Faith](#)
- [God Can Turn This Around](#)
- [Terrorism, Justice, and Loving Our Enemies](#)
- [Why I Do Not Say: "God Did Not Cause the Calamity but He Can Use It For Good"](#)
- [I am The Lord, and Besides Me There Is No Savior](#)
- [From Wonder to Witness](#)
- [God Glorified in Good Resolves](#)

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## In Praise Of Sovereignty ([See other Our Daily Bread devotionals related to sovereignty](#))

Read: Psalm 103:15-22

The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all. —Psalm 103:19

In James Fenimore Cooper's book *The Last of the Mohicans*, we become acquainted with a character named David Gamut. He is a devout Christian who delights in setting the Psalms to music and singing them no matter what circumstances life brings his way. Gamut believes that God can be trusted in crisis as well as in good times. He lives a life in praise of God's sovereignty—His supreme power, authority, and control over the world.

The Bible tells us about another David, a flesh-and-blood person who was no stranger to unpredictable life circumstances and who loved to respond to God in praise: King David of Israel. He saw the giant Goliath fall by his sling, he was chased by the murderous King Saul, and he watched the nation of Israel rally under his own leadership. Yet in all these situations, David took time to write and sing psalms of praise to his sovereign God. For example, he wrote, "The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all" (Ps. 103:19). David understood that in all circumstances we can worship and thank God for His care and control.

What are you experiencing today? A time of blessing or of testing? In any event, remember David's example, and sing praises to God for His rule in our lives. - Dennis Fisher

Lord, shape my life as only You can,

Guiding each day by Your loving plan;  
Take what You need and give what You will;  
My life is Yours to use and to fill. —Branon

Praise the Lord! Praise Him according to His excellent greatness! —Psalm 150:1-2

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## God Still Reigns

Read: Daniel 4:28-37 | Bible in a Year: 2 Kings 7-9; John 1:1-28

The Most High rules in the kingdom of men. —Daniel 4:17

There's a story from the Eastern Roman Empire of a Christian monk who was horrified by the wickedness of the emperor. He prayed to God and asked, "Why did You allow that evil man to become emperor?" God replied, "Because I couldn't find anyone worse!"

Daniel saw wicked kings reign over God's people in Babylon. It must have been extremely frustrating. In time, the Lord dethroned each proud king, but He replaced them with others just as evil.

King Nebuchadnezzar, for example, exalted himself until God caused him to live like an animal for 7 years. When he regained his mind, he praised God as the one true Ruler (Dan. 4:28-37). But the cycle of evil monarchs continued. Belshazzar, Nebuchadnezzar's descendant, mocked God and used the sacred goblets from the temple in Jerusalem during a drunken orgy (5:2-4).

We must remember that history is God's story. He reigns when the politicians we vote for get into office, and He reigns when those we oppose get elected. God is sovereign over the rulers of this world (Dan. 4:17). We can trust Him to do what is right because His "works are truth, and His ways justice" (v.37). By Haddon W. Robinson

The Most High still rules over kingdoms of men,  
He gives the control to whomever He will;  
All people must bow to His sovereign plan,  
And know that His purposes He will fulfill. —Hess

The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord. —Proverbs 21:1

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## Behind The Throne

Read: Esther 1

[God] changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings. —Daniel 2:21

During my lifetime I have seen evil men rise to political and military power, make colossal blunders, and pass off the scene. Even good leaders leave a record that includes mistakes and weaknesses.

The first chapter of Esther shows us the pride of King Ahasuerus, head of the mighty Persian Empire. He hosted an elaborate festival designed to display his riches and splendor. After 7 days of partying, the king gave orders to his servants to bring Vashti, his queen, before the revelers so they could see her great beauty. But Queen Vashti refused to come, humiliating the great king of Persia (vv.12-18).

Ahasuerus was furious and sought counsel from the wise men of his kingdom. They advised him to remove Vashti as queen and "give her royal position to another who is better than she" (v.19). God used these unusual events to place a Jewish girl in a strategic position to preserve His people from destruction.

God's name is not mentioned in the entire book of Esther, but the message in chapter 1 comes through loud and clear: God can bring good out of everything, even when flawed and mistake-prone humans are involved. He is the real power behind the throne. By Herbert Vander Lugt

We comprehend Him not,  
Yet earth and heaven tell,  
God sits as sovereign on the throne,  
And ruleth all things well. —Gerhardt

The most powerful ruler is but a pawn in the hand of the King of kings.

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We have access unto the Father (Eph. 2:18). Though He is sovereign, we can still approach Him as a child does a father (Luke 11:11–13, Rom. 8:15).

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[\(Play wonderful vocal version\)](#)

God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm.  
    Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never-failing skill  
He treasures up His bright designs,  
And works His sovereign will.  
    Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take,  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy, and shall break  
In blessing on your head.  
    Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust Him for His grace  
Behind a frowning providence  
He hides a smiling face.  
    His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will the flower.  
    Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan His work in vain:  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain.  
    Olney Hymns, William Cowper

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**God's Work** - God's sovereign working out of his purposes in the affairs of nations and in individual lives. God predestines those who are saved (Rom. 8:28–29; Eph. 1:4–5). He does not stand on the sidelines, a helpless spectator (so to speak), until we, with our repentance and conversion, give him permission to do something. Unless our names were written “in the book of life from the creation of the world—(Rev. 17:8) we would not even make the motion of turning from sin. Predestination means that our salvation, from first to last, is God's work. See also Election. The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook, Walter A. Elwell, Editor, (Harold Shaw Publ., Wheaton, IL; 1984), p. 354

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**Her Fiancé Drowned** - A young woman named Anne Steele had encountered one trial and disappointment after another. Being a devout Christian, she continuously sought to praise God—even in sorrow. She was engaged to be married, and had looked forward to her wedding day with eagerness. The big day finally arrived and so did the guests—but the groom was missing. After about an hour of waiting, a messenger brought the tragic news that Anne's fiancé had drowned. The sudden shock was almost too much for her, but after a while she regained her spiritual composure. Later Anne Steele penned the song that is still found in many hymnbooks:

Father, whate'er of earthly bliss Thy sovereign will denies,  
Accepted at Thy throne of grace, let this petition rise:  
Give me a calm, a thankful heart, from every murmur free!  
The blessings of Thy grace impart, and make me live to Thee.

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I am not sent a pilgrim here,  
My heart with earth to fill;  
But I am here God's grace to learn,  
And serve God's sovereign will.

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**The Good And The Bad**

Read: Jonah 4

The Lord God prepared a plant [for] shade . . . [and] a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered. —Jonah 4:6-7

The story of the rebellious prophet Jonah shows us how God desires to use both blessings and trials to challenge us and change us for the better. Five times in the book of Jonah it says that the Lord prepared circumstances for him—both good and bad.

In Jonah 1:4 we read that the Lord sent a storm. It says He “sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea.” After the mariners discovered that Jonah was the reason for this storm, they threw him overboard (1:15). Then God “prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah” to save him from drowning (1:17).

Later in the book we read that “the Lord God prepared a plant” to shade Jonah (4:6). Then we see that God prepared a worm to kill the vine as well as a scorching wind and sun to beat down upon him (4:7-9). These circumstances were used to reveal Jonah’s rebellious attitude. Only after that revelation could God directly confront Jonah’s heart problem.

As we face different situations, we should remember that God is sovereign over both the blessings and the troubles that come our way. He desires to use everything to build our character (James 1:1-5). He uses both good and bad to transform us and guide us on our journey.

The Maker of the universe  
Knows every need of man,  
And made provision for that need  
According to His plan. —Crane

The Lord gives and takes away. Blessed be the Lord.

By Dennis Fisher

## TRANSCENDENT

**Transcendent** is defined by the modern Webster's dictionary

"as exceeding usual limits; extending or lying beyond the limits of ordinary experience."

The more Bibliocentric 1828 Webster's Dictionary defines **transcendent** as

Very excellent; superior or supreme in excellence; surpassing others; as transcendent worth; transcendent valor. Cloth'd with transcendent brightness. Transcendental quantities, among geometricians, are indeterminate ones, or such as cannot be expressed or fixed to any constant equation."

**Transcendence** is a theological term referring to the relation of God to creation. God is **“other,” “different” from** His creation. He is independent and different from His creatures (Is 55:8, 9). He is higher than and surpasses in every respect His creation. He is beyond it and not limited by it or to it. This simple understanding of this awesome attribute makes it all the more humbling & praiseworthy that His transcendence never removes Him from intimate involvement in His peoples’ lives. Remember that our transcendent God is also the omnipresent God & is never farther than a prayer away.

God’s **transcendence** and immanence (see below) are both affirmed in Ephesians where Paul writes that there is...

one God and Father of all Who is over all and through all and in all. (Ep 4:6-note)

**Transcendence** is the attribute of God in which He is described as distinct from His Creation while **immanence** is the idea that the creation is forever dependent on God, and He is always involved in it. Wayne Grudem writes the following in regard to God's **immanence**...

God is also very much involved in creation, for it is continually dependent on Him for its existence and its functioning. The technical term used to speak of God’s involvement in creation is the word **immanent** meaning “remaining in” creation. The God of the Bible is no abstract deity removed from, and uninterested in his creation. The Bible is the story of God’s involvement with his creation, and particularly the people in it. Job affirms that even the animals and plants depend on God: “In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind” (Job 12:10). In the New Testament, Paul affirms that God “gives to all men life and breath and everything” and that “in him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:25, 28). Indeed, in

Christ "all things hold together" (Col 1:17-note), and he is continually "upholding the universe by his word of power" (He 1:3-note)...

**Deism** generally holds that God created the universe and is far greater than the universe (God is "**transcendent**"). Some deists also agree that God has moral standards and will ultimately hold people accountable on a day of judgment. But they deny God's present involvement in the world, thus leaving no place for his **immanence** in the created order. Rather, God is viewed as a divine clock maker who wound up the "clock" of creation at the beginning but then left it to run on its own.

While deism does affirm God's **transcendence** in some ways, it denies almost the entire history of the Bible, which is the history of God's active involvement in the world. Many "lukewarm" or nominal Christians today are, in effect, practical deists, since they live lives almost totally devoid of genuine prayer, worship, fear of God, or moment-by-moment trust in God to care for needs that arise. ([Grudem, W: Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine. IVP; Zondervan, 1994](#))

**The Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms** says that **immanence** is...

The idea that God is present in, close to and involved with creation. Unlike **pantheism**, which teaches that God and the world are one or that God is the "soul" (animating principle) of the world, Christian theology teaches that God is constantly involved with creation without actually becoming exhausted by creation or ceasing to be divine in any way.

Read [Ps 139](#) and you will observe that David readily accepted the the apparent "paradox" (to our finite minds) of a **transcendent** God Who is also **near**. He acknowledged God as One who fills the entire universe, yet saw the Lord as constantly, pervasively present with His servants. God is **NEAR**, observing every act, conscious of our every thought. God is **TRANSCENDENT**, far above the highest heaven. Yet God is also totally present in the saint's "here and now", giving each of us His undivided attention! What an awesome God we are privileged to worship & serve.

God is in all and over all. Nothing has an independent existence that transcends Him, not even Truth or Love. God is the ultimate value. He does not set, for example, the standard of righteousness; He is the standard of righteousness.

#### **What happens when man loses sight of God's Transcendence?**

"The problem that arises in a view of the world that is tacitly closed to any transcendent reality is that if suffering occurs it must be resolved in this life. That means it must be (1) justified by the conviction that everyone gets what he or she deserves, (2) justified on the basis of some compensation within life or (3) denied as unreal and illusory. Those three responses are **nontranscendent religious options**, as well as explanations within a secular world view." (A. J. Conyers, *The Eclipse of Heaven*. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois)

**Transcendence** - The attribute of God that refers to being wholly and distinctly separate from creation (although always actively involved in and with it as well). The declaration that God is transcendent means that God is "above" the world and comes to creation from "beyond." During the medieval era God's transcendence was especially emphasized, as is evident in the architecture of the great gothic cathedrals with their high, arched ceilings that lift one's gaze upward. (Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms.)

**Transcendence** - That which is higher than or surpasses other things. What is transcendent is thus relative to what is transcended. God is conceived by traditional theologians as being transcendent with respect to the created universe, meaning that he is outside the universe and that no part of the universe is identical to him or a part of him. To think of God as transcendent with respect to time is to conceive him as timeless. Immanuel Kant believed that God was transcendent in the sense of being beyond the possibility of any human experience. Theologians have usually balanced an emphasis on God's transcendence with an emphasis on God's immanence within the created world as embodied in his knowledge of and action within that world. In the twentieth century some process theologians and feminist theologians criticized the claim that God is transcendent in favor of a view that sees God and the world as intimately united. (Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Religion)

**Hampton Keathley** writes that...

As **Transcendent** God is independent of, above, and distinct from this universe; He is outside, above, and before this time-space universe. This is seen from the name Yahweh by which God revealed Himself to Israel in the Old Testament. Most scholars suggest the basic meaning of this name is "I Am that I Am," which would stress God's transcendent independence and existence (Ex 3:14). God's transcendence is also expressed in the following passages:

Isa 46:8 Remember this, and be assured; Recall it to mind, you transgressors. 9 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, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure';

Ps 115:3 But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases.

As **Immanent** God pervades and sustains the universe, yet He is always distinct from it. He is everywhere, yet not in everything. He is personally and intimately involved, yet distinct.

Pr 5:21 For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, And He watches all his paths.

Ps 33:13 The LORD looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men; 14 From His dwelling place He looks out On all the inhabitants of the earth.

Ro 11:34 For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? 35 Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? 36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Though He is the only true God and the transcendent sovereign, He is involved as the King and Redeemer, and as our derivation—"from Him," our dynamic—"through Him," and our destination—"to Him are all things." ([What God Is Like](#) by J. Hampton Keathley III)

**John MacArthur** has an interesting comment on the **transcendence of Jesus** in John chapter 1...

And His [transcendence](#) is indicated in Jn 1:51..."And He said to him," still talking to Nathanael who was indicating his belief, of course, Jesus says you're going to see greater things than these. "Truly, truly I say to you, you shall see the heavens open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." Wow, what He is saying is you're about to experience what it's like to be with someone who is transcendent. The point is this, that I am going to give you access to heaven, that through Me heaven is going to come down and earth is going to go up. I am going...I am the Mediator between God and man, that's essentially what He's saying...You're going to see heaven open wide, just like sort of parallel to Jacob's ladder, you remember, by which he could go up and come down. Jesus says, "I am the ladder (**Ed**: See excerpt below for more explanation), I am transcendent, I transcend this world, I open heaven and on Me angels come and go." This is not just another man. "I am the one who has opened heaven to man. I am the one who as the Son of Man brought down the righteousness, brought down glory, brought down salvation and will lift up sinners to the very throne of God. I am the one who literally has broken open the veil, as it were, and given sinners access to the Holy of Holies. I am the one who brings God and man together." He's [transcendent](#). Free access to the Father, open angelic ministry, is now available and the angels, according to Hebrews 1:14 are sent for the ministry that they have toward the saints. Heaven is opened. Heaven is near to us. Heaven is as accessible to us as a prayer, isn't it? In fact, it's even more accessible than that when you realize heaven has opened and God has come down and dwells in us. God is ours and we are His. That's why I love that hymn, "[I am His and He is mine.](#)" The holy angels are His, the holy angels are ours. The ladder from earth to heaven is the Son of Man and He gives us access and communion and fellowship. This is [transcendence](#). (Excerpt from his sermon on Luke 4:14-15 [From the Wilderness to Galilee: Jesus' Judean Ministry](#))

Excerpt from Dr MacArthur's sermon on John 1:38-51 [The Balance of Salvation](#) for more explanation on "**I am the ladder**" --- Dr MacArthur says on Jn 1:51 "now hang on to this one. "He saith unto him, Verily, verily I say unto you, hereafter you shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." Now commentators have had a field day with that verse. Let me see if I can reduce it to a simple concept in just a matter of seconds. Listen. That comes out of Genesis 28, now hang on to this, this is very important. In Genesis 28 Jacob saw a ladder, remember it? And Jacob saw a ladder going from earth to heaven and angels going up and down the ladder and Jacob was dreaming of a day...now watch this...dreaming of a day when man would have access to God. You see, that's what that ladder represented, from earth to heaven and angels were ministering to that ladder to keep it open, to keep it available, to keep it working so that man could go to God. And Jacob was dreaming of that day. Do you know who that ladder is? The Son of Man, look at it, what does it say? You shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending not upon a ladder but upon what? On a man. You know what He was saying to Nathanael? He was saying, "Nathanael, it's wonderful that you know I'm omniscient, but let Me tell you something better, you now have permanent open access to God through Me." Isn't that a beautiful thought? "I am that golden ladder." And you say, "What are the angels doing there?" Who ministered to Christ? Who ministered to Him after His temptation, through His life? The angels did. Who ministers to God? The angels. Who ministers to us? The angels. That's a busy place, you see them up and down, up and down. He says, "Nathanael, it's good that

you appreciate My omniscience, but wait a minute, I want to show you that you have open access to heaven."

[What does it mean that God is transcendent?](#) from Gotquestions.org (recommended resource)...

**Answer:** To transcend means "to exist above and independent from; to rise above, surpass, succeed." By this definition, God is the only truly transcendent Being. The "LORD God Almighty" (in Hebrew, *El Shaddai*) created all things on the earth, beneath the earth and in the heavens above, yet He exists above and independent from them. All things are upheld by His mighty power (Hebrews 1:3), yet He is upheld by Himself alone. The whole universe exists in Him and for Him that He may receive glory, honor and praise.

Being transcendent, God is both the unknown and unknowable, yet God continually seeks to reveal Himself to His creation, i.e., the unknown seeks to be known. Here is a paradox. Being transcendent, God is the incomprehensible Creator existing outside of space and time and thus is unknowable and unsearchable. Neither by an act of our will nor by our own reasoning can we possibly come to understand God or experience Him personally. God wants us to seek to know Him, yet how can the finite possibly know and understand the infinite when our minds and thoughts are so far beneath His (Isaiah 55:8-9)? Romans 11:33-36 says, "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him is the glory forever!"

Another aspect of God's transcendent nature that places Him beyond the reach of His creation is His holiness and His righteousness. Because of man's proclivity to sin and his desire for wickedness, he is denied the right to enter God's presence. God has no choice but to turn His face away from us like He did with Moses when he asked to see God's glory. God told Moses, "You cannot see my face, for no one may see my face and live" (Exodus 33:20). To see the fullness of the glory of God would be too much for any human to bear; it would break the earthen vessel in pieces. The full revelation of God is therefore reserved for the future, when all things will be seen as they are, and men will be in a condition to receive them.

The prophet Isaiah realized the necessity of God remaining aloof from His creation: "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away. No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and made us waste away because of our sins" (Isaiah 64:6-7). A transcendent God must turn His face away, for He is forced by His very righteousness and holiness to keep Himself separate from anything or anyone sinful, impure, unclean or less than perfect. However, besides being transcendent, God also possesses immanence (nearness), and it is in His immanence that God chooses to draw near to His creation.

This, too, is a paradox. "Am I only a God nearby," declares the LORD, "and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the LORD. "Do I not fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD" (Jeremiah 23:23-24). God's transcendent nature strives to keep Him distant and remote from His creation both in space and time, yet on the other hand, His immanent nature works to draw Him near to His creation and to sustain the universe. God's love for His creation is so great that we see His immanence overshadowing His transcendence. This becomes clear in His incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, as He breaks through the barrier of sin and separation to draw all mankind back into a close, personal relationship. We see God not only choosing to draw near to His creation but to personally come into the hearts and minds of His people through the indwelling power of His Holy Spirit. This is the miracle of God's transcendence.

## RELATED RESOURCES TRANSCENDENCE

- Transcendent by C H Spurgeon
- [What God Is Like](#) by J. Hampton Keathley III
- [The Divine Transcendence](#) by A.W. TOZER
- [The Power Of God](#) by David Legge
- [God Transcendent](#) by David Legge



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God is the definition of truth; He is absolutely true, and all truth accords with God's actions. God is all that He as God should be and that His word and revelation are completely reliable. He is absolutely dependable, without falseness of any kind. God's plan, principles, and promises are completely reliable, accurate, real, and factual. God is real not imaginary, vain and empty like the idols of the pagans, who represent a so-called god of their own vain imagination. Truth can be depended upon and does not fail, change, or disappoint and so practically God's promises are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus and His word cannot fail or disappoint. The practical aspect of God's unchanging truthfulness is that we can stand on His promises with full assurance of faith no matter how we feel, no matter how dire our circumstances. We can trust and rest on this great attribute of God, forever and forever. Amen. And since God is truth, He desires that those who would give a proper opinion of Him also be truthful in the words and deeds. (Ro 12:9). Scriptures on God is truth: Ex 34:6; Nu 23:19; Ps 19:9; 91:4; 100:5; 146:6; Isa 25:1; 65:16 Da 4:37; Mic7:20; Jn 17:17; 2 Cor 1:20; Rev 16:7.

Jesus proclaimed, "I am the truth" (Jn 14:6). His word to mankind is absolutely reliable and can be trusted implicitly. It means He will never renege on any promise He has made.

**Lewis Sperry Chafer** writes that "Truth" is

"the character of God is in view when He is called the God of Truth. He not only advances and confirms that which is true, but in faithfulness abides by His promise, and executes every threat or warning He has made. Apart from the element of truth in God there would be no certainty whatsoever in this life, and men would wander on in comfortless perplexity not knowing whence they came or whither they are going. Without truth in God, a revelation is only a mockery. On the contrary, as asserted in the Bible, "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Ro3:4). Though men deceive, the veracity of God can never be questioned to the slightest degree. Truth in God is surety that what He has disclosed is according to the nature of things and that His disclosures may be depended upon with plenary certainty. This certainty characterizes alike every revelation from God by whatever means." (Bibliotheca Sacra: Vol. 96, Page 14-16, 1939)

## RELATED RESOURCES THE TRUTH OF GOD

- Truthful by C H Spurgeon
- [What God Is Like](#) by J. Hampton Keathley III
- [The Truth of God](#) by Bob Deffinbaugh
- [The Truth of God](#) by Thomas Watson (Scroll down)
- [Of the Veracity of God](#) by John Gill
- [Let God Be True!](#) from [The Joy of Knowing God](#) **Action To Take:** How much time do you give to reading and studying the Bible in an average week? If you have not already done so, build into your daily schedule some time to spend in God's Word. Examine your life prayerfully for possible areas of dishonesty, then determine before God to correct them.

## WISE, WISDOM

**Wisdom** strikes many in the modern world as an "abstract" idea, one which is difficult to define practically. Biblical wisdom however is to the contrary imminently practical, representing in its essence the practical skill for living successfully. Wisdom is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding. As discussed below God Alone is the Source of this quality of wisdom, quite different from the best wisdom of fallen men.

**James** describes men's wisdom as

"not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing." This wisdom he contrasts the wisdom of God which is "from above (and) is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." (Jas 3:15-18+) This godly wisdom is made available to godless men through the God-Man, Christ Jesus.

**Paul**, in describing the gospel, wrote that

"the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.19 For it is written, "I will destroy the **wisdom** of the wise, And the cleverness of the clever I will set

aside." Where is the **wise** man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the **wisdom** of the world? For since in the **wisdom** of God the world through its wisdom did not come to know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for **wisdom**; but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the **wisdom** of God. Because the foolishness of God is **wisser** than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." (1Cor 1:18-25+)

**Paul** adds that

"we do speak **wisdom** among those who are mature; a **wisdom**, however, not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak **God's wisdom** in a mystery, the hidden **wisdom**, which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the **wisdom** which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;" (1Cor 2:6-8+)

**Paul** goes on to explain to the Colossians that in Christ

"are hidden all the treasures of **wisdom** and knowledge." (Col 2:3+) and now through the gospel, by God's doing believers "are in Christ Jesus, Who became to us **wisdom** from God and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption" (1Cor 1:30+)

And so it is fitting that Paul ended one of his prayers

"to the only **wise** God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen." (Ro 16:27-note)

**Spurgeon** - Our Creator is infinitely good, and his will is love: to submit to one who is "to wise to err, too good to be unkind," should not be hard.

With Paul our eternal chorus will surely be

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the **wisdom** and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." (Ro 11:33-36+)

**The Hebrew word for wisdom** (chakmah) (see in depth sudden of Greek word for wisdom **sophia**)

"represents a manner of thinking and attitude concerning life's experiences; including matters of general interest and basic morality. These concerns relate to prudence in secular affairs, skills in the arts, moral sensitivity, and experience in the ways of the Lord... The wisdom of the Old Testament however, is quite distinct from other ancient world views although the format of wisdom literature is similar to that of other cultures. Reflected in Old Testament wisdom is the teaching of a personal God who is holy and just and who expects those who know him to exhibit his character in the many practical affairs of life. This perfect blend of the revealed will of a holy God with the practical human experiences of life is also distinct from the speculative wisdom of the Greeks. The ethical dynamic of Greek philosophy lay in the intellect; if a person had perfect knowledge he could live the good life (Plato). Knowledge was virtue. The emphasis of Old Testament wisdom was that the human will, in the realm of practical matters, was to be subject to divine causes. Therefore, Hebrew wisdom was not theoretical and speculative, it was practical, based on revealed principles of right and wrong, to be lived out in daily life... **The source of all wisdom is a personal God** Who is holy, righteous, and just. His wisdom is expressed against the background of his omnipotence and omniscience. By His wisdom God numbered the clouds (Job 38:37), founded the earth ("Jehovah by **wisdom** founded the earth. By understanding He established the heavens." Pr 3:19, cf "O Lord, how many are Thy works! In **wisdom** Thou hast made them all, the earth is full of Thy possessions." (Ps 104:24), and made the world (Jer 10:12). **Wisdom**, being found in God, is regarded as a divine attribute (Job 12:13). He alone knows wisdom in its truest sense (Job 28:20, 23). The **wisdom of God** is not found in man's speculation. He alone must provide this wisdom for man's guidance so that man can live the best possible moral and ethical life (Pr 2:6; Job 11:6)." (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, p282-283).

**Daniel a man of high esteem**, who after receiving the answer to Nebuchadnezzar's dream

"answered and said, "Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for **wisdom** and power belong to Him. And it is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives **wisdom** to wise men, and knowledge to men of understanding. It is He who reveals the profound and hidden

things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him." (Da 2:20-22-note).

As noted **God alone possesses wisdom in the absolute sense** for

"with Him are **wisdom** and might. To Him belong counsel and understanding." (Job 12:13).

**God gives His wisdom to those who fear Him** for as the writer of proverbs say

"the fear of the Lord is the beginning of **wisdom**..." (Pr 9:10)

**J. I. Packer** writes in **Knowing God** that

"When the old Reformed theologians dealt with the attributes of God, they used to classify them in two groups: **incommunicable** and **communicable**. In the first group, they put those qualities which highlight God's transcendence and show how vastly different a being He is from us, His creatures. The usual list was—God's independence (self-existence and self-sufficiency); His immutability (entire freedom from change, leading to entire consistency in action); His infinity (freedom from all limits of time and space: that is, His eternity and omnipresence); and His simplicity (the fact that there are in Him no elements that can conflict, so that, unlike us, He cannot be torn in different directions by divergent thoughts and desires). The theologians called these qualities **incommunicable** because they are characteristic of God alone; man, just because he is man and not God, does not and cannot share any of them. In the second group, the theologians lumped together qualities like God's spirituality, freedom and omnipotence, along with all His moral attributes—goodness, truth, holiness, righteousness and so on. What was the principle of classification here? It was this—that when God made man, He communicated to him qualities corresponding to all these... Among these **communicable attributes**, the theologians put **wisdom**. As God is **wise** in Himself, so He imparts **wisdom** to His creatures. The Bible has a great deal to say about the divine gift of wisdom. The first nine chapters of the book of Proverbs are a single sustained exhortation to seek this gift. "Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding... Hold on to instruction, do not let it go; guard it well, for it is your life" (Pr 4:7, 13). Wisdom is personified and made to speak in her own cause: "Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my doors, waiting at my doorway. For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the Lord. But whoever fails to find me harms himself; all who hate me love death" (Pr 8:34, 35, 36). **Where can we find wisdom? What steps must a person take to lay hold of this gift? There are two prerequisites, according to Scripture.**

1. **We must learn to reverence God.** "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps 111:10; Pr 9:10; compare Job 28:28; Pr 1:7; 15:33). Not till we have become humble and teachable, standing in awe of God's holiness and sovereignty ("the great and awesome God," Neh 1:5; compare Neh 4:14; 9:32; Deut 7:21; 10:17; Ps 99:3; Jer 20:11), acknowledging our own littleness, distrusting our own thoughts and willing to have our minds turned upside down, can **divine wisdom** become ours. It is to be feared that many Christians spend all their lives in too unhumbled and conceited a frame of mind ever to gain wisdom from God at all. Not for nothing does Scripture say, "with the lowly is wisdom" (Pr 11:2 KJV).

2. **We must learn to receive God's word.** Wisdom is divinely wrought in those, and those only, who apply themselves to God's revelation. "Your commands make me wiser than my enemies," declares the psalmist; "I have more insight than all my teachers"—why?—"for I meditate on your statutes" (Ps 119:98, 99). So Paul admonishes the Colossians: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly ... with all wisdom" (Col 3:16). How are we of the twentieth century to do this? By soaking ourselves in the Scriptures, which, as Paul told Timothy (and he had in mind the Old Testament alone!), "are able to make you wise for salvation" through faith in Christ, and to make us "thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2Ti 3:15, 16, 17). Again, it is to be feared that many today who profess to be Christ's never learn wisdom, through failure to attend sufficiently to God's written Word. Cranmer's Prayer Book lectionary (which all Anglicans are meant to follow) will take one through the Old Testament once, and the New Testament twice, every year. William Gouge, the Puritan, read fifteen chapters regularly each day. The late Archdeacon T. C. Hammond used to read right through the Bible once a quarter. How long is it since you read right through the Bible? Do you spend as much time with the Bible each day as you do even with the newspaper? What fools some of us are!—and we remain fools all our lives, simply because we will not take the trouble to do what has to be done to receive the wisdom which is God's free gift.

**How is God's Omniscience (knows all things) compared to the Wisdom of God?** In M H Smith's Systematic Theology we read that

"Along with omniscience God is said to be all-wise. The distinction between knowledge and **wisdom** is

recognized in most languages. They are rooted in different capacities of the soul. The source of knowledge is study; of **wisdom**, discernment. Knowledge is discursive, **wisdom** intuitive. Knowledge is theoretical; **wisdom** practical, teleological; it makes knowledge subservient to an end. Knowledge is a matter of the mind apart from the will; **wisdom** is a matter of the mind made subservient to the will."

Louis Goldberg sums up the practical aspects of this divine attribute

"Wisdom for man is not only to make one humanly wise, but also to lead him to fear the Lord, for this is the beginning of all wisdom (Job 28:28). True wisdom for man involves knowing the Holy One. So, men are to listen to the wisdom of God with attentive ears (Pr 2:2). In fact, inner happiness only comes when man attains this wisdom (Pr 3:13) through a strenuous search (Pr 2:4), which is actually a search for God himself (Pr 2:5). Skeptics will never find this wisdom and will never know the full meaning of life (Pr 14:6, 7, 8f). In the great poem of Job 28 wisdom in this special biblical sense is practically defined as trust in God and the avoidance of sin." (TWOT, p284)

#### **Treasures of Wisdom from The Joy of Knowing God Action To Take:**

What difficulties are you presently facing? Ask God for wisdom in handling them. Measure your words and actions by the sevenfold standard of divine wisdom revealed in James 3:17. If you have doubt about whether you are operating by man's wisdom or God's wisdom in any one of the seven, ask other members of your family what they think, then prayerfully consider their advice.

**J I Packer** says that...

God's wisdom is seen in His works of creation, preservation and redemption: it is His choice of His own glory as His goal (Ps 46:10; Isa. 42:8; 48:11), and His decision to achieve it first by creating a marvelous variety of things and people (Ps. 104:24; Pr 3:19, 20), second by kindly providences of all sorts (Ps 145:13, 14, 15, 16; Acts 14:17), and third by the redemptive "wisdom" of "Christ crucified" (1Co 1:18-2:16) and the resultant world church (Ep 3:10). (From J. I. Packer Concise Theology)

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**John MacDuff...**

**THE WISDOM OF GOD** - "His understanding is infinite." Psalm 147:5

How baffling often are God's dispensations! The more we attempt to fathom their mystery, the more are we driven to rest in the best earthly solution- "Your judgments are a great deep!" But where sense says, "All these things are against me," faith has a different verdict- "All things are working together for good." This is the province of faith, confidently to lean on the arm of God, and to say, "The Lord is righteous in all His ways." We speak of God "foreseeing." There is no such thing. The past, present, and future are with Him all alike. He sees the end from the beginning. We can discern but a short way, and that short way through a false and distorted medium. In a piece of earthly mechanism we seldom can discover beauty in the incomplete structure. The mightiest works of science, while in progress, are often a chaos of confusion. It is only when finished, we can admire the relation and adjustment of every part to the whole. So also with the mechanism of God's moral administration. At present, how much mystery! But, when in the light of eternity we come to contemplate the completion of the mighty plan, how shall we be brought to own and exclaim, "The works of the Lord are right."

But patience! there may come a time,  
When these dull ears shall scan aright  
Strains that out-ring earth's drowsy chime,  
As Heaven outshines the taper's light!

Believer, are the dealings of your God at present wearing a mysterious aspect to you? Are you about to enter some dark cloud, exclaiming, "Verily You are a God that hides Yourself"? Do you "fear to enter the cloud"? Take courage! It will be with you, as with the disciples on their Mount of Transfiguration; unexpected glimpses of heavenly glory- unlooked-for tokens of the Savior's presence and love await you! If your Lord leads you into the cloud, follow Him. If He "constrains you to get into the ship," obey Him. The cloud will burst in blessings. The ship will conduct you (it may be over a stormy sea) to a quiet haven at last. It is only the surface of the ocean that is rough. All beneath is a deep calm, and in every threatening wave there is a "needs-be!"

Oh! trust Him, who is emphatically "The Wisdom of God." He is your Counselor- combining the infinite knowledge of God with the experience and sympathy of man. He thus, pre-eminently, 'knows His client's case.' He is pledged to use the discipline most wisely suited for each.

O You whose wisdom guides my way.  
Though now it seem severe.  
Forbid my unbelief to say,  
'There is no wisdom here.'  
Lord, If You bend my spirit low,  
Love only I shall see  
The very hand that strikes the blow  
Was wounded once for me.

Under the blessed persuasion, that a day of disclosures is at hand, when, "in Your light, I shall see light," I will trust the wisdom I cannot trace; and repeat, each night, as the shadows of evening gather around me, until the nights of earth's ignorance vanish before, the breaking of an eternal day— "I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety." Psalm 4:8

"I lie awake thinking of you, meditating on you through the night watches." —Psalm 63:6 (From [THE NIGHT WATCHES](#) by John MacDuff)

## WISDOM OF GOD R A TORREY

Is one of his attributes

- 1 Samuel 2:3; Job 9:4

DESCRIBED AS

- Perfect Job 36:4; 37:16
- Mighty Job 36:5
- Universal Job 28:24; Daniel 2:22; Acts 15:18
- Infinite Psalm 147:5; Romans 11:33
- Unsearchable Isaiah 40:28; Romans 11:33
- Wonderful Psalm 139:6
- Beyond human comprehension Psalm 139:6
- Incomparable Isaiah 44:7; Jeremiah 10:7
- Underived Job 21:22; Isaiah 40:14
- The gospel contains treasures of 1 Corinthians 2:7
- Wisdom of saints is derived from Ezra 7:25
- All human wisdom derived from Daniel 2:1
- Saints ascribe to him Daniel 2:20

EXHIBITED IN

- His works Job 37:16; Psalm 104:24; 136:5; Proverbs 3:19; Jeremiah 10:12
- His counsels Isaiah 28:29; Jeremiah 32:19
- His foreshadowing events Isaiah 42:9; 46:10
- Redemption 1 Corinthians 1:24; Ephesians 1:8; 3:10
- Searching the heart 1 Chronicles 28:9; Revelation 2:23
- Understanding the thoughts 1 Chronicles 28:9; Psalm 139:2

EXHIBITED IN KNOWING

- The heart Psalm 44:21; Proverbs 15:11; Luke 16:15
- The actions Job 34:21; Psalm 139:2,3
- The words Psalm 139:4
- His saints 2 Samuel 7:20; 2 Timothy 2:19
- The way of saints Job 23:10; Psalm 1:6

- The want of saints Deuteronomy 2:7; Matthew 6:8
- The afflictions of saints Exodus 3:7; Psalm 142:3
- The infirmities of saints Psalm 103:14
- The minutest matters Matthew 10:29,30
- The most secret things Matthew 6:18
- The time of judgment Matthew 24:36
- The wicked Nehemiah 9:10; Job 11:11
- The works, &c of the wicked Isaiah 66:18

Nothing is concealed from Psalm 139:12

The wicked question Psalm 73:11; Isaiah 47:10

Should be magnified Romans 16:27; Jude 1:25

## RELATED RESOURCES

### WISDOM OF GOD

- Charles Buck Dictionary [Wisdom of God](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Wisdom of God](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Wisdom of God](#)
- McClintock Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature - [Wisdom of God](#)
- [Attributes of God - The Wisdom of God, part 1 - by Dr S Lewis Johnson- and The Knowledge and Wisdom of God, part 2 - Recommended Resource](#) - includes Mp3, Pdf or MS Word document. This is only one study out of over 100 in depth lectures by Dr Johnson on Systematic Theology including studies of the doctrines of God, Christ, the Spirit, Prayer, Salvation, etc. ([click for this extensive list](#))
- [The Wisdom of God](#) by [Bob Deffinbaugh, Th.M.](#)
- [The Wisdom of God](#) by Stephen Charnock
- [The Wisdom of God](#) by Thomas Watson (Scroll down)
- [Of the Wisdom of God](#) by John Gill
- [The Wisdom of God - Mp3](#) by Jerry Bridges
- [The Wisdom of God](#) by A. W. Tozer
- [What is godly wisdom? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is wisdom? What is the difference between wisdom and knowledge? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why is wisdom referred to as a she in Proverbs? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I tap into the wisdom of God? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How can I get wisdom from God? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How is the fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why are both wisdom and foolishness pictured as women in Proverbs? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is wisdom literature? | GotQuestions.org](#)

## WRATH OR ANGER

**Wrath** is "the personal manifestation of God's holy, moral character in judgment against sin. Wrath is neither an impersonal process nor irrational and fitful like anger. It is in no way vindictive or malicious. It is holy indignation—God's anger directed against sin. God's wrath is an expression of His holy love. If God is not a God of wrath, His love is no more than frail, worthless sentimentality; the concept of mercy is meaningless; and the Cross was a cruel and unnecessary experience for His Son." (Nelson's new illustrated Bible dictionary. Nashville: T. Nelson) (See also [Holman Bible Dictionary](#))

Paul addressing even "religious" readers who may not be truly regenerate warns that

"because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up **wrath** for yourself in the **day of wrath** and revelation of **the righteous judgment of God**, Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality (note: their deeds don't save them but are external evidence of internal regeneration), eternal life but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, **wrath** and indignation." (Ro 2:5-8 - notes)

**God is glorified in the display of His Wrath** In Romans 9 Paul asks the rhetorical question

"What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?" (Ro 9:22 - note) John MacArthur comments that in this section of Romans Paul

"gives two reasons for, although not a complete explanation of, God's allowing sin to enter and contaminate His universe. The Greek term behind **willing** is much stronger than this English word connotes. The Greek word carries the idea of **determined intent**, not indifferent or helpless acquiescence. **First, Paul says, God determined to allow sin in His creation because it gave Him the opportunity to demonstrate His wrath.** God is glorified in displaying His wrath, just as surely as in displaying His grace, because both of those attributes, along with all the others, comprise His divine nature and character, which are perfectly and permanently self-consistent and are worthy of adoration and worship. Even God's anger, vengeance, and retribution poured out on sinners are glorious, because they display His majestic holiness." ([MacArthur, J: Romans 9-16. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**Pastor Ray Pritchard** has a pithy title for his sermon on God's wrath ([A Forgotten Doctrine: The Wrath of God](#)), explaining that...

Sometimes the title tells the whole story. My sermon today is about the wrath of God. It is truly a forgotten doctrine, even in the evangelical church. I'll dare say that many of you have never heard a sermon on God's wrath—that is, not a full sermon devoted to this one topic. The reasons for this apparent neglect are not hard to find. Most of us would rather hear about love and grace. I know I would rather preach about God's grace. After all, to speak of the wrath of God makes us appear narrow-minded, judgmental, and God help us, fundamentalist. In an enlightened community like Oak Park, those aren't popular adjectives. And on another level, God's wrath is difficult to comprehend, so in some ways, this is a doctrine that is easy to overlook. The thought that nice people we know might someday go to eternal hell is so overwhelming—and so disheartening—that we'd much rather not think about it at all.

**No Need to Apologize** - Many Christians feel as if they have to apologize for this doctrine. Some think it a blemish on God's character. Others think that God's wrath is inconsistent with his love. Perhaps if you brought a friend this morning, you feel you need to say a word of apology after the sermon is over. Please don't! There is no need to apologize for God's Word so long as it is fairly and graciously presented. And I intend to be both fair and gracious in what I have to say.

Let us then consider the words of **J. I. Packer**: The fact is that the subject of divine wrath has become taboo in modern society, and Christians by and large have accepted the taboo and conditioned themselves never to raise the matter (Knowing God, p. 149).

True though these words may be, two facts stare us in the face:

**The Bible says more about wrath than about love.**

**Jesus spoke more about hell than about heaven.**

We may speculate as to the reasons behind those two facts, but no amount of reasoning can change the truth. The Bible is filled with warnings about God's wrath and about eternal judgment. I would not be a faithful pastor if I did not deal with this topic. God has made no secret of his wrath, and neither should we.

**The Meaning of God's Wrath** - Let's begin with a simple definition of wrath as one of God's attributes. It's important to get a proper definition because when we use the word wrath we tend to think of uncontrolled anger. While that may be human wrath, it is far from the truth about God's wrath. Here's a working definition: God's wrath is his settled hostility toward sin in all its various manifestations. To say it is "settled" hostility means that God's holiness cannot and will not coexist with sin in any form whatsoever. God's wrath is his holy hatred of all that is unholy. It is his righteous indignation at everything that is unrighteous.

Please note these distinctions. God's wrath is not ?

**Uncontrollable rage.**

**Vindictive bitterness.**

**God losing his temper.**

In fact, the Bible says in more than one place that God is "slow to anger" (Neh 9:17; Psalm 103:8). God never "loses his temper" the way we do. Wrath is God's "natural" response to sin in the universe. He cannot overlook it, he cannot wink at it, he cannot pretend it is not there.

**Wrath is what happens when holiness meets sin!**

**Wrath is what happens when justice meets rebellion!**

**Wrath is what happens when righteousness meets unrighteousness!**



## Wrath is what happens when perfect good meets pure evil!

As long as God is God, he cannot overlook sin. As long as God is God, he cannot stand by indifferently while his creation is destroyed. As long as God is God, he cannot dismiss lightly those who trample his holy will. As long as God is God, he cannot wink when men mock his name. (For the entire sermon by Dr Pritchard see [A Forgotten Doctrine: The Wrath of God](#) - Romans 1:18, 19, 20)

**Baker's Evangelical Dictionary** has this note on the "**Wrath of God**":

God is holy; He totally and completely distances Himself from sin, evil, corruption, and the resultant filth and guilt. He maintains His purity and rejects, fights against, and destroys that which would offend, attack, or undo His holiness and love. Hence, God's anger and wrath must always be seen in relation to His maintaining and defending His attributes of love and holiness, as well as His righteousness and justice. The emotion or passion that moves God to this maintaining and defending is expressed by the terms "displeasure, " "indignation, " "anger, " and "wrath." A consequence of his wrath is vengeance, punishment, and death. ([Wrath of God - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#))

**Ray Stedman** writes that

"It is the job of the prophet to reveal to us the character of God. The prophets unfold for us the divine attributes and each sees God in a different light. As you read through the prophets, therefore, you are seeing one facet after another, flashing like a diamond in the sunlight, of the mighty character and attributes of an eternal God. Now the attribute which the prophet Nahum was given to reveal was God's anger. There is no doctrine quite as repugnant to people today as that of the **anger of God**. This is one doctrine which many would like to forget. There are some who picture God as a kindly gentleman with a merry twinkle in his eye who cannot bear the thought of punishing anyone or judging anyone. Nevertheless, it was Nahum's task to unfold the **anger of God** and in this prophecy the God of Sinai flashes forth in awful fury, a God before whom man must stand silent and trembling. You cannot read this prophecy without sensing something of the solemnity of this tremendous picture of God." Read [Nahum](#) then read Pastor Stedman's full sermon click "[Nahum: The Terrible Wrath of God](#)"

[Slow to Anger](#) from the book "[The Joy of Knowing God](#)" by [Richard L. Strauss](#)

**Action To Take:** List some specific unbelievers whom you would like to see trust Christ as Savior. Then begin to pray that God will give them a sense of His long-suffering and use it to bring them to Himself. Think of some recent occasions when you have been short-tempered with people. Go to them personally, ask their forgiveness, and express to them your desire to become more long-suffering.

From [International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)

**Divine Wrath:** **Wrath** is used with reference to both God and man. When used of God it is to be understood that there is the complete absence of that caprice and unethical quality so prominent in the anger attributed to the gods of the heathen and to man. The **divine wrath** is to be regarded as the natural expression of the **divine nature**, which is **absolute holiness**, manifesting itself against the willful, high-handed, deliberate, inexcusable sin and iniquity of mankind. **God's wrath** is always regarded in the Scripture as the **just, proper, and natural expression of His holiness and righteousness** which must always, under all circumstances, and at all costs be maintained. It is therefore a righteous indignation and compatible with the holy and righteous nature of God (Nu 11:1-10; Dt 29:27; 2Sa 6:7; Isa 5:25; 42:25; Jer 44:6; Ps 79:6). The element of **love** and **compassion** is **always closely connected with God's anger**; if we rightly estimate the divine anger we must unhesitatingly pronounce it to be but the expression and measure of that love (compare Jer 10:24; Eze 23; Am 3:2).

**Divine Wrath Consistent with Love:** Wrath or anger, as pertaining to God, is very much more prominent in the Old Testament than in the New Testament. This is to be accounted for probably because the New Testament magnifies the grace and love of God as contrasted with His wrath; at least love is more prominent than wrath in the revelation and teaching of Christ and His apostles. Nevertheless, it must not be thought that the element of wrath, as a quality of the divine nature, is by any means overlooked in the New Testament because of the prominent place there given to love. On the contrary, the **wrath of God** is intensified because of the more wonderful manifestation of His grace, mercy and love in the gift of His Son Jesus Christ as the Savior of the world. God is not love only: He is also righteous; yea, "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb 12:29); "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb 10:31). No effeminate, sentimental view of the Fatherhood of God or of His mercy and loving-kindness can exclude the manifestation of His just, righteous and holy anger against sin and the sinner because of his transgression (1Pet 1:17; Heb 10:29). **One thing only can save the sinner from the outpouring of God's righteous anger against sin in the day of visitation, namely, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the divinely-appointed Redeemer of the world** (Jn 3:36; Ro 1:16, 17, 18; 5:9). Nor should the sinner think that the postponement or the omission (or seeming omission) of the visitation of God's wrath against sin in the present means the total abolition of it in the future. Postponement is not abolition; indeed, the sinner, who continually rejects

Jesus Christ and the salvation which God has provided in Him, is simply 'treasuring up' wrath for himself "in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who (one day) will render to every man according to his works: ... to them that ... obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, ... wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil" (Ro 2:5, 6, 7, 8, 9; 2Pe 3:10; Re 6:16,17; 16:19; 19:15).

**God's anger while slow, and not easily aroused** (Ps 103:8; Isa 48:9; Jon 4:2; Nah1:3)

- is to be dreaded (Ps 2:12; 76:7; 90:11; Mt 10:28);
- is not to be provoked (Jer 7:19; 1 Cor 10:22);
- when visited, in the present life, should be borne with submission (2Sa 24:17; La 3:39,43; Mic 7:9);
- prayer should be earnestly made for deliverance from it (Ps 39:10; 80:4; Da 9:16; Hab 3:2);
- it should be the means of leading man to repentance (Isa 42:24,25; Jer 4:8).

**Certain specific things are said especially to arouse God's anger:**

- continual provocation (Nu 32:14),
- unbelief (Ps 78:21,22; Heb 3:18,19),
- impenitence (Isa 9:13,14; Ro 2:5),
- apostasy (Heb 10:26,27),
- idolatry (Deut 32:19,20,22; 2 Ki 22:17; Jer 44:3),
- sin in God's people (Ps 89:30-32; Isa 47:6),
- and it is manifested especially against opponents of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Ps 2:2,3,5; 1Th 2:16).

## **NAVES TOPIC ANGER OF GOD**

For the greatest benefit from the following Scriptures, read the text, not passively but instead consciously and actively "interrogating" the text (interrogate with the 5W'S & H), making a list in your life journal of what the Spirit of Christ (Ro 8:9note) teaches you (1Jn 2:27, Jn 14:26, 16:13) about God and about man. Obey any instructions or commands you encounter, as you allow the Holy Spirit to renew your mind and to "cultivate faithfulness" (NAS, Ps 37:3-[see note](#)). Then offer prayers and praise to your Father for graciously teaching you these profitable, eternal truths (cp 2Ti 3:16, 17-notes).

Ex 22:24; 32:10; 33:5; Nu 11:1,10,33; 12:9; 14:11; 16:20,21,45; 25:3,4,11; 32:10,11,13; Dt 6:14,15; 9:13,14,18-20; 32:21,22; Jos 7:1,26; 23:16; Jdg 2:12; 3:8; 10:7; 1Sa 28:18; 2Sa 6:7; 22:8,9; 1Ki 11:9; 16:2-13; 2Ki 13:3; 17:18; 22:13; 23:26; Ps 7:11; 69:24; 74:1; 76:7; 78:21,38,49,50; 85:3; 90:11; 103:8; 106:23,29,32; 110:5; Is 5:25; 9:17,19,21; 12:1; 13:9,13; 30:27; 42:25; 48:9; 57:16,17; 63:3-6; 66:15; Jer 3:12; 4:4,8,26; 7:20; 10:10; 17:4; 21:5,6; 23:20; 25:15, 16, 17,37,38; 30:24; 32:37; 33:5; 36:7; 42:18; 44:6; 51:45; La 2:1,3,6; 4:11; Ezek 5:13,15; 25:14, 15, 16, 17; Da 9:16; Ho 11:9; 13:11; 14:4; Nah 1:2,3,6; Mt 22:7,13; Ro 1:18; 2:5; Ep 5:6; Col 3:6; He 3:11; 4:3; Re 6:16,17; 14:10,11; 15:1,7; 16:19; 19:15

## **TORREY'S TOPIC THE WRATH OF GOD**

- Averted by Christ -Lk 2:11,14; Ro 5:9; 2Cor 5:18; 5:19 Eph 2:14; 2:17 Col 1:20; 1Th 1:10
- Is averted from them that believe -Jn 3:14, 15, 16, 17, 18; Ro 3:25; 5:1
- Is averted upon confession of sin and repentance Job 33:27; 33:28 Ps106:43, 44, 45; Jer 3:12; 3:13 18:7,8;31:18, 19, 20; Joel 2:12, 13, 14; Luke 15:18, 19, 20
- Is slow -Ps 103:8; Isaiah 48:9; Jonah 4:2; Nahum 1:3
- Is righteous -Ps 8:10,11; La 1:18; Ro 2:6,8; 3:5,6; Rev 16:6,7
- The justice of, not to be questioned -Romans 9:18,20,22
- Manifested in terrors -Ex 14:24; Ps 76:6-8; Jer 10:10; La 2:20, 21, 22
- Manifested in judgments and afflictions -Job 21:17;Ps 78:49-51;90:7;Is 9:19;Jer 7:20;Eze 7:19;Heb 3:17
- Cannot be resisted -Job 9:13; 14:13; Ps 76:7; Nah 1:6
- Aggravated by continual provocation -Nu 32:14
- Specially reserved for the day of wrath -Zeph 1:14, 15, 16,17, 18; Mt 25:41; Ro 2:5,8; 2Th 1:8

Re 6:17; 11:18; 19:15

**AGAINST**

- The wicked -Ps 7:11; 21:8,9; Isa 3:8; 13:9; Nah 1:2,3; Ro 1:18; 2:8; Ep 5:6; Col 3:6
- Those who forsake him -Ezra 8:22; Is 1:4
- Unbelief -Ps 78:21,22; He 3:18,19; Jn 3:36
- Impenitence -Ps 7:12; Pr 1:30,31; Isa 9:13,14; Ro 2:5
- Apostasy -He 10:26,27
- Idolatry -Dt 29:20,27,28,32:19,20,22; Jos 23:16; 2Ki 22:17; Ps 78:58,59; Je 44:3
- Sin, in saints -Ps 89:30-32; 90:7-9; 99:8; 102:9,10; Isa 47:6
- Extreme, against those who oppose the gospel -Ps 2:2,3,5; 1Th 2:16
- Folly of provoking -Jer 7:19; 1 Cor 10:22
- To be dreaded -Ps 2:12; 76:7; 90:11; Mt 10:28
- To be deprecated -Ex 32:11; Ps 6:1; 38:1; 74:1,2; Isa 64:9
- Removal of, should be prayed for -Ps 39:10; 79:5; 80:4; Da 9:16; Hab 3:2
- Tempered with mercy to saints -Ps 30:5; Isa26:20; 54:8; 57:15,16; Jer 30:11; Mic7:11
- To be born with submission -2 Sam 24:17; Lam 3:39,43; Micah 7:9
- Should lead to repentance -Isaiah 42:24,25; Jeremiah 4:8

#### EXEMPLIFIED AGAINST

- The old world -Genesis 7:21, 22, 23
- Builders of Babel -Genesis 11:8
- Cities of the plain -Genesis 19:24,25
- Egyptians -Ex7:20; 8:6,16,24; 9:3,9,23; 10:13,22; 12:29; 14:27
- Israelites -Ex 32:35; Nu 11:1,33; 14:40-45; 21:6; 25:9; 2 Sa 24:1,15
- Enemies of Israel -1Samuel 5:6; 7:10
- Nadab, &c -Leviticus 10:2
- The Spies -Numbers 14:37
- Korah, &c -Numbers 16:31,35
- Aaron and Miriam -Numbers 12:9,10
- Five Kings -Joshua 10:25
- Abimelech -Judges 9:56
- Men of Beth-shemesh -1Samuel 6:19
- Saul -1Samuel 31:6
- Uzzah -2Samuel 6:7
- Saul's family -2Samuel 21:1
- Sennacherib -2Kings 19:28,35,37

## RELATED RESOURCES

### WRATH OF GOD

- [The Wrath of God Upon Sinful Man - by Dr S Lewis Johnson](#) - **Recommended Resource** - includes Mp3, Pdf or MS Word document. This is only one study out of over 100 in depth lectures by Dr Johnson on Systematic Theology including studies of the doctrines of God, Christ, the Spirit, Prayer, Salvation, etc. ([click for this extensive list](#))
- See word study of Greek word for wrath - **orge**
- [Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God](#) Jonathan Edwards classic sermon
- [A Forgotten Doctrine: The Wrath of God](#) excellent overview by Dr. Ray Pritchard
- [The Wrath of God](#) by Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones
- The Wrath of God by A. W. Pink
- [The Grapes of Wrath](#) by Richard L. Strauss
- [The Wrath of God](#) by Bob Deffinbaugh, Th.M
- [Dorothy Sayers on Why Hell Is Non-Negotiable](#)

#### Sermons from John Piper

- [The Wrath Of God Against Ungodliness And Unrighteousness I](#)

- [The Wrath of God Against Holding Down the Truth](#)
- [Behold the Kindness and Severity of God \(Part 1\)](#)
- [Behold the Kindness and Severity of God \(Part 2\)](#)
- [Final Judgment: Eternal Life vs. Wrath and Fury](#)
- [God's Wrath: "Vengeance Is Mine, I Will Repay," Says the Lord - Ro 12:19-21](#)
- [Pour Out Your Indignation Upon Them - Psalm 69](#)
- [The Wrath of God Against Holding Down the Truth - Romans 1:18](#)
- [The Wrath of God Against Ungodliness and Unrighteousness - Romans 1:18](#)