

Ways of God 3

The ways of God are Sovereign. Read Daniel 2:20-21. We all come to a place in our life when we realize that God is God and we are not. It is a humbling experience to know that we are dependent and very limited, but it also very reassuring to know that a loving and good God is in control of all things.

When Daniel was a young man, he was ordered to Babylon where he was given a new name, trained in the ways of Babylon, and ordered to serve in the king's palace. How could the king of Babylon do that? He was sovereign over all the nations he had conquered. He had the authority to give orders. Just as the king had sovereign rites over the territory, God has sovereign rites over all His creation. That is a difficult concept for us in modern western society. In the ancient world, the leader of a group of people was often a law unto himself. His word was the final say in all things. For man to have such power often results in terror and injustice because that is the nature of man. For God to have that power is a wonderful thing, because His nature is love and justice. Do you live with understanding that God is sovereign over your life?

The king of Babylon ordered the wise men to eat a certain diet that was forbidden by God's law. Though the king was sovereign, Daniel and his friends wanted to obey the Supreme Sovereign. They asked for and received permission on a test basis. Not only were they better physically than the other wise men, but they were wiser too. (Daniel 1:20) When we are faithful to the most Sovereign, He blesses us in ways that people can see His faithfulness.

All through the book of Daniel we see the sovereign king find that God is sovereign over all. Daniel knew that whatever situations he found himself in, whether demanded to know the dream of the king, in a pit with lions, or interpreting the writing of the finger of God, God had placed him in those situations for God's glory. He knew that God would be faithful to use Him because God is sovereign over all. Do you have that mindset? How should that affect your attitude toward your current situation? And those to come?

Hear how E.Y. Mullins, theologian and writer described God. "The holy and loving God has a right to be sovereign." "When we say God is supreme we mean that there is no being above or beyond Him, and that, in His nature and power, and in the qualities of His being, none other can be conceived of superior to Him."

God is sovereign over all power and all people. Everything He created exists at His command. He expects us to acknowledge that wonderful fact and realize that it is so. When a young person dies, we often think of it as the triumph of evil over good, as if the life was snatched out of God's hands. There is evil, but God is sovereign – period. We can never know what would have happened had the person lived. Sometimes the death of a believer is a more powerful witness than their life. Stewart Payne, a famous golfer said in an interview that all he wanted was to either live completely for God on earth, or go to live with Him in heaven. He had a vision

of the love of God. It was not long after that the small plane that was flying him to a tournament crashed killing all aboard. His funeral presented the gospel to millions!

Our Sovereign instructs us. He has given us His word that reveals His plan for us and for all mankind. His Spirit teaches us in the way we should go. It warns us when we are being deceived by man, as we saw in the sermon this week. Read Isaiah 50:4-7. In Isaiah 50, Isaiah was learning to trust in God's sovereign instruction even when people were trying to take his life.

Our Sovereign sustains us. He describes Himself as our Shepherd. A human shepherd might not find sufficient pasture or be able to defend his flock, but God is unlimited in resource and power. He will sustain us through this life. We can count on Him to see us through and provide for us because He is the Great Shepherd.

He is Sovereign over all His creation. (Psalm 33:6-7) Unlike earthly sovereigns who take something from others, God is sovereign because it all came from Him. Everything exists at His command. (Hebrews 1:3; 11:3) His intention in creating us was that we serve Him in a loving relationship. See Ephesians 1:4-8. He could command fish into nets, storms to cease, and deformity to be made whole. He can do anything He pleases with His creation.

Because God is sovereign, we should never worry. Our worry is an expression of doubt. We doubt that God is great enough to deal with our situation. We make decisions based on the presence or absence of money. We look to practicalities as if God needed us to make sure the assets were available to Him. When we worry, we are not believing in the sovereignty of God, or we doubt the goodness of His character. (Matthew 6:25;33-34)

When we know God is reigning over our circumstances we can walk through them with peace. That peace in the midst of the storm can be a testimony to those who are watching, not about us, but about how wonderful our God is. Knowing He is present in the circumstances causes us to look at it in a whole different light.

When we give, especially when it hurts to give, we are recognizing that God is sovereign over all. Like the widow with the two mites, we are loving God with our all, recognizing that He is the One that meets our needs.

What is the difference between looking to self and looking to the Sovereign One?
Read Isaiah 50:10-11

If God rules over all things, how much should we worry? Does that mean nothing will seem difficult or scary? Was Daniel wise or foolhardy when he disobeyed the command and prayed?

How does the fact that God is Sovereign affect our giving and stewardship of things?

Pray for a deeper understanding that the ways of God are sovereign.