



# Cherreguine Bible Doctrine Ministries

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## THE DIVINE DECREE & THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

From the beginning of His public ministry to its end Jesus Christ's message concerns "the kingdom of God" (Mark 1:15; Acts 1:3). After the resurrection Christ claims "all authority in heaven and earth" (Matthew 28:18), and the ascended Christ is exalted "far above all rule and authority, power, and dominion" (Ephesians 1:19-21; Philippians 2:9-11; I Corinthians 15:24-28; Revelation 5:9-14).

Hence the earliest Christian confession was simply: "Jesus is Lord" (Romans 10:9). The gospel itself displays God's sovereignty; it is "the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16), and "to those whom God has called" Christ is "the power of God" (I Corinthians 1:24; Ephesians 1:18-22). The authority of Scripture is also an expression of the sovereignty of God since all Scripture is "God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16). That is why "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35) and the very reason everything in it will be fulfilled and accomplished (Matthew 5:18; Luke 24:44).

The "sovereignty" of God is one of the transmissible attributes; "sovereignty" expresses an inherent characteristic of God, and a distinction is sometimes made between "sovereign will" and "sovereign power." God's sovereign will and power are not arbitrary, despotic, or deterministic; His sovereignty is characterized by His justice and holiness as well as by His other attributes.

Divine sovereignty and human responsibility are paradoxical and beyond human comprehension. Divine sovereignty and human sovereignty are certainly contradictory, but divine sovereignty and human responsibility are not. God uses human means in history to accomplish His purposes, yet such means do not involve coercion. God effectuates His will even through sinful, disobedient human actions (Genesis 45:5, 7-8; 50:19-20). The crucifixion of Jesus Christ, certainly the most heinous crime in history, occurred within the boundaries of "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," for the crucifiers did what God's "power and will" had decided beforehand what should happen (John 19:11).

The Christian who is being renewed in the image of God and progressing in sanctification should again exercise dominion over creation as God's vicegerent in promoting the kingdom of God in human history to the glory of the Sovereign Lord (Genesis 1:28).

**Volitional responsibility** is the relation to a free moral agent has to a decision or act for which the agent is answerable, accountable, or personally responsible. The counterpart to responsibility is negative volition□, which is the decision, or act is chargeable, attributable, or imputable to the agent.

Assumed here in both cases are a law imposing an obligation and a sanction enforcing the obligation. A sanction is a promise of reward and the threat of punishment. The lawbreaker

deserves the punishment, and the law keeper is entitled to the reward because of merit, or the right of payment.

The responsibility or culpability, are particularly concerned with the extent to which a decision or act owes its origin to an agent's will guided by reason. Responsibility for a bad act is called guilt. There is no corresponding designation of responsibility for a good act. This is probably accounted for by the fact that responsibility is more often associated with acts of wrongdoing than right doing.