

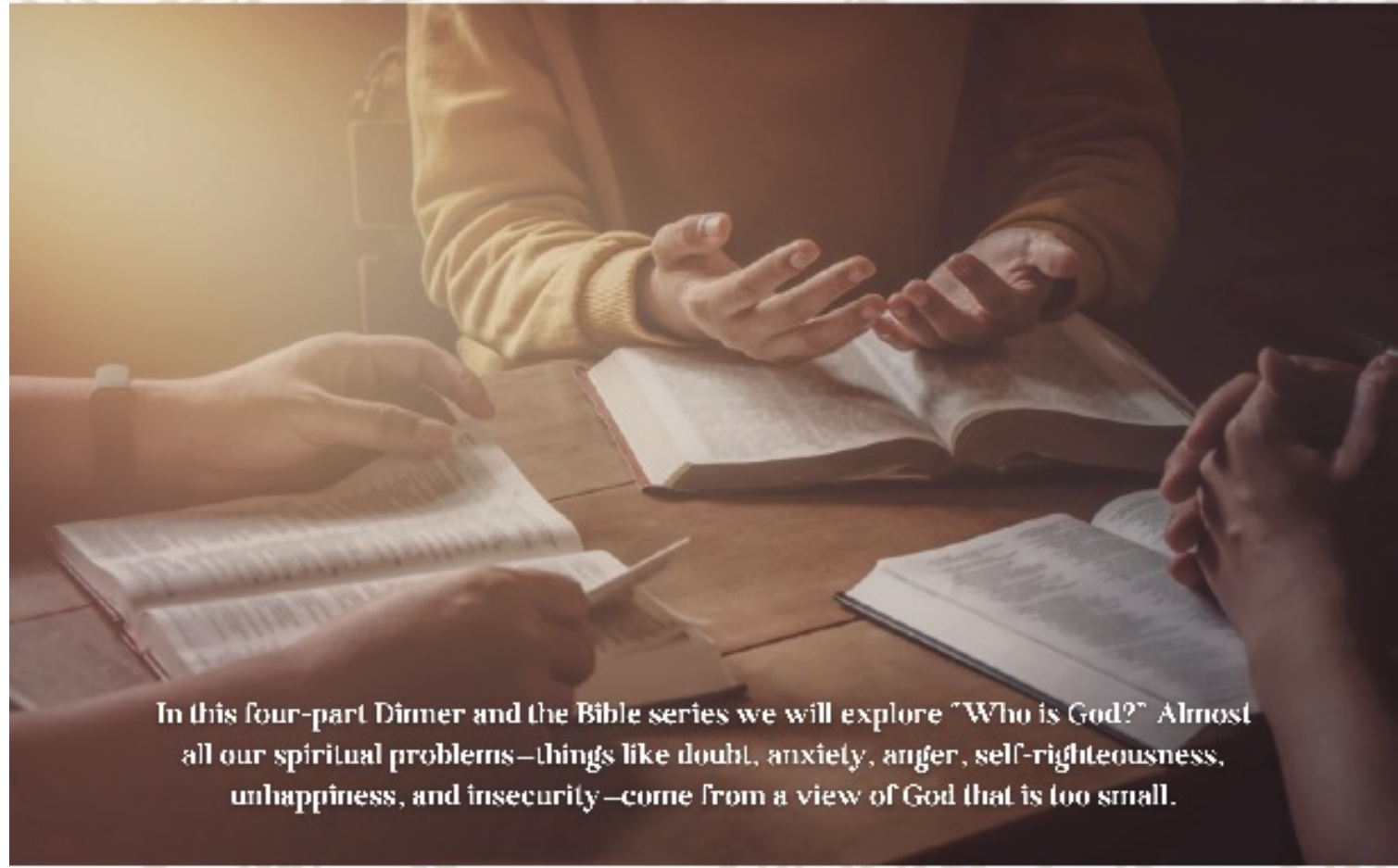
Who is God?

(Part 2 God's Sovereignty)

- Emmanuel Episcopal Church - Wakefield

Dinner and The Bible

Join us as we renew our minds in Jesus and find rest for our weary and burdened souls.



In this four-part Dinner and the Bible series we will explore "Who is God?" Almost all our spiritual problems—things like doubt, anxiety, anger, self-righteousness, unhappiness, and insecurity—come from a view of God that is too small.

Opening Prayer – Brett



Wrong Views of God's Sovereignty

Our view of God is too small and too human

- Our circumstances are hidden from God or too complicated for God to unravel and fix
- We are unworthy of God's attention
- An infinite God cannot be concerned about us
- God has not noticed our sins or those of others since his justice is delayed
- Our prayers are disregarded and unanswered.

Our unbelief is a withering sickness that ultimately destroys faith, joy, comfort, peace, and healing

Passage from Isaiah 40:27-31

“Why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, ‘My way is hidden from the Lord, and my cause is disregarded by my God?’ Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not grow tired or weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint; He increases the strength of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength”



Our aim for this series

- Restore our sense of God's majesty ...
 1. Renew our minds
 2. Transform our thoughts about God
 3. Stir us to think of God's incomprehensible majesty
 4. Grow our faith in the one God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

PART 2

The Sovereignty of God

1. What is the Sovereignty of God?
2. Questions – The Hidden & Revealed
3. Meditate on God's Sovereignty
4. God's Sovereignty on Display
5. Implications of God's Sovereignty for us
6. Closing Prayer (All)
7. Conversation for those who want to stay



What is the sovereignty of God?

- **Webster's definition of sovereign**

Superlative in quality and possessed of supreme power. Supreme of the most exalted kind, paramount in having undisputed ascendancy, absolute and unlimited in extent, and independent enjoying autonomy.

- **Biblical definitions of God's sovereignty**

1. "God has in himself the absolute supreme power and authority to freely and perfectly control everything in His entire creation (including mankind made in his image), for the purpose of bringing glory to himself."
2. "Our all-wise, all-knowing almighty God reigns beyond our comprehension to freely bring about a plan beyond our ability to alter, hinder, or stop."

What is the sovereignty of God? (2)

God's sovereignty exercises all his divine attributes, but three are essential.

- **Omniscience.** God knows everything. If there is one datum of knowledge, he doesn't know, then he is not sovereign, since that one piece of information could thwart God's purpose
- **Omnipotence.** God has all power. If one atom is floating around the universe outside of God's control, he is not sovereign, as that one atom could stop God's sovereign plan
- **Independence.** God must be totally free to do whatever he wants, when he wants, where he wants, with whom he wants, and how he wants, otherwise his purpose might be thwarted

What is the sovereignty of God? (3)

QUESTIONS – The Hidden & Revealed

God's sovereignty over everything is clearly established in the Bible, but with this truth comes two questions.

1. If God is sovereign, why does evil exist?
2. If God is sovereign, how do people exercise free choice?

What is the sovereignty of God? (4)

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

Aquinas said, *“Evil is always and only a defect in some respect to some extent; evil can have no essence of its own.”*

- Evil is a privation of good.
- We don't know a complete answer for God allowing evil to exist, but evil does occur in carefully restricted areas of God's creation
- We do know that In God's goodness and wisdom, he has permitted evil to exist for his purpose
- His purpose is to glorify himself as he redeems and heals us from the effects of evil

What is the sovereignty of God? (5)

God's Sovereignty and Man's Will

Tozer says, "God has sovereignly decreed that man should be free to exercise moral choice, and man from the beginning has fulfilled that decree by making his choice between good and evil. When [a person] chooses to do evil, it does not countermand God's sovereignty but rather fulfills it in as much as God did not decide which choice [the person] would make, but rather [the person] had a limited and temporary freedom to make it." God is all-knowing, almighty, and free to accomplish his plan and achieve his purpose even when allowing humans (and angels) a limited freedom to make choices."

A close-up photograph of a hand reaching upwards, palm facing up, towards a bright sun. The sun is positioned in the upper right corner, creating a strong lens flare and illuminating the hand. In the background, a faint rainbow is visible against a hazy sky. The overall mood is one of hope and reaching towards the divine.

God is
Sovereign over
All Things



God's Sovereignty on Display

1. Esther
2. King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4)
3. Habakkuk
4. **Joseph (Genesis 37-50)**
5. **Job**

God's Sovereignty on Display -- Joseph



He said to them,
“Hear this dream that
I have dreamed:
Behold, we were
binding sheaves in the
field, and behold, my
sheaf arose and stood
upright. And behold,
your sheaves gathered
around it and bowed
down to my sheaf.”
Genesis 37:6–7.



“And they took him
and threw him into a
pit. The pit was empty;
there was no water in
it. Then they sat down
to eat. And looking up
they saw a caravan of
Ishmaelites coming
from Gilead.”
Ge 37:24–25.

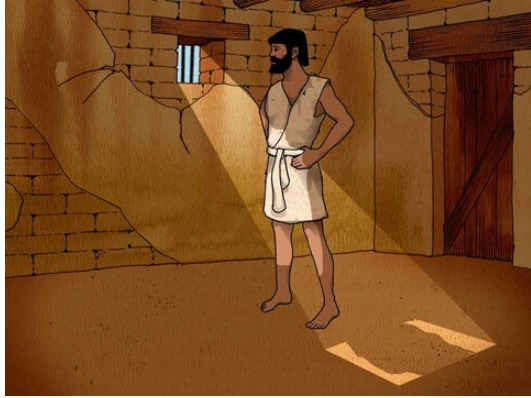


“The Lord was with
Joseph, and he became a
successful man, and he
was in the house of his
Egyptian master. His
master saw that the Lord
was with him and that
the Lord caused all that
he did to succeed in his
hands.”
Genesis 39:2–3.



“How then can I do
this great
wickedness and sin
against God?” And
as she spoke to
Joseph day after
day, he would not
listen to her, to lie
beside her or to be
with her.”
Genesis 39:9–10.

God's Sovereignty on Display – Joseph (2)



And Joseph's master took him and put him into the prison, the place where the king's prisoners were ... But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him steadfast love and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper ... And the keeper of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners ... And whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed.
Genesis 39:20–23.

They said to him, "We have had dreams, and there is no one to interpret them." And Joseph said to them, "Do not interpretations belong to God? Please tell them to me."
Genesis 40:8.

Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh, "I remember my offenses today. ... And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said of you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it." 16 Joseph answered Pharaoh, "It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer
Genesis 41:9,15–16.

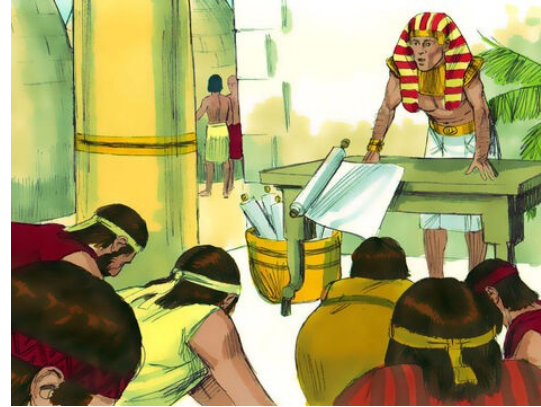
"Since God has shown you all this, there is none so discerning and wise as you are. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall order themselves as you command. Only as regards the throne will I be greater than you."
Genesis 41:32, 39–40.

God's Sovereignty on Display – Joseph (3)



Now Joseph was governor over the land. He was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed themselves before him with their faces to the ground.

Genesis 42:6.



And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life... And God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. 8 So it was not you who sent me here, but God.

Ge 45:5, 7–8.



And God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, “Jacob, Jacob.” And he said, “Here I am.” Then he said, “I am God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. I myself will go down with you to Egypt”

Ge 46:2–4.



“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.”

Genesis 50:20

God's Sovereignty on Display – Joseph (4)

1. **God's sovereignty on display.** Joseph's dreams, the just-in-time arrival of Ishmaelite trader's, Joseph's sale to Pharaoh's officer, Joseph's administrative gifts, Joseph's imprisonment in Pharaoh's prison, the cupbearer's arrival and dream in prison, Pharaoh's dream
2. **God's sovereignty over evil.** God works out his sovereign will through the evil intents of others
3. **God's sovereign purpose (short-term).** To save the lives of many in Egypt and a remnant of Israel
4. **God's sovereign purpose (long-term).** A glimpse of God's overall redemptive plan for all mankind

Hope in a Sovereign God – Job

PROLOGUE

- Job blameless, upright
- God holds court
- Satan accuses
- God permits Satan
- **Wait, what!!??**
- We assume God will answer this

JOB'S COMPLAINT(S)

- I'm innocent so my suffering is not God's justice
- Conclusion. God either does not run the world by His justice, OR God is unjust
- Job reasserts his innocence and demands explanation from God

"FRIENDS ANSWER"

- God is just and he always operates the world according to his Justice
- So, Job must have sinned (bad) for this suffering to happen
- Elihu says that Job is wrong to accuse God of being unjust

Hope in a Sovereign God –Job (2)

GOD'S ANSWER

- Job 38-39. The LORD answers Job
- Job 40. Job commits to silence
- Job 41. God's continuing answer
- Job 42. Job's confession and repentance

God's answer is to say "If you truly know who I am, you should trust me"

Hope in a Sovereign God –Job (3)

Although God never directly answers the reason for Job's suffering, God does remind Job (and us) that

1. Our view is limited and temporal. His view is eternal and universal.
2. Our knowledge and power are limited. His knowledge and power are unlimited.
3. We cannot properly determine justice from our limited vantage point
4. Blameless and upright are those who love God, put God first, over all things
5. He is sovereign over all things, including our suffering

A hand is shown in the lower-left corner, holding a glowing, golden orb. The background is a soft, warm sunset or sunrise with a blurred horizon. The overall mood is peaceful and hopeful.

Implications of God's Sovereignty for Us

- 1. Relieves us from anxiety and worry.** We can trust that God's character is backed up by His ability and those who are His can claim the promise in [Romans 8:28](#)
- 2. Humbles us and restrains our pride.** We are struck by our smallness in knowledge, understanding, power, & strength as we think about God's sovereignty over all things.
- 3. Releases us from fear.** God is always in control of all things. If God is for us, who can be against us. We can release our desire to control everything and everyone.
- 4. Gives us peace in decision-making.** We need not be paralyzed by our decisions. All is not lost with a wrong decision. God is powerful enough to bring about his intended plan for us.
- 5. Presents an opportunity to grow.** God grows our faith when we learn to trust him in times of trouble.

Closing Prayer (Adapted from Romans 11:33-36)

Let us pray...

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable are your judgments and your path beyond tracing out!
For who has known your mind O' God, or who has been your counselor?"

Who has ever given to you that you might repay him?"

For from you and through you and to you are all things.

To you O' God be glory forever and ever. Amen.