

SOVEREIGNTY ✓

GOD REIGNS

At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation.

DANIEL 4:34

✚ The assertion of God's absolute sovereignty in creation, providence, and grace is basic to biblical belief and biblical praise. The vision of God on the throne—that is, ruling—recurs (1 Kings 22:19; Isa. 6:1; Ezek. 1:26; Dan. 7:9; Rev. 4:2; cf. Pss. 11:4; 45:6; 47:8-9; Heb. 12:2; Rev. 3:21); and we are constantly told in explicit terms that the LORD (Yahweh) reigns as king, exercising dominion over great and tiny things alike (Exod. 15:18; Pss. 47; 93; 96:10; 97; 99:1-5; 146:10; Prov. 16:33; 21:1; Isa. 24:23; 52:7; Dan. 4:34-35; 5:21-28; 6:26; Matt. 10:29-31). God's dominion is total: he wills as he chooses and carries out all that he wills, and none can stay his hand or thwart his plans.

That God's rational creatures, angelic and human, have free agency (power of personal decision as to what they shall do) is clear in Scripture throughout; we would not be

moral beings, answerable to God the judge, were it not so, nor would it then be possible to distinguish, as Scripture does, between the bad purposes of human agents and the good purposes of God, who sovereignly overrules human action as a planned means to his own goals (Gen. 50:20; Acts 2:23; 13:26-39). Yet the fact of free agency confronts us with mystery, inasmuch as God's control over our free, self-determined activities is as complete as it is over anything else, and how this can be we do not know. Regularly, however, God exercises his sovereignty by letting things take their course, rather than by miraculous intrusions of a disruptive sort.

In Psalm 93 the fact of God's sovereign rule is said to

- (a) guarantee the stability of the world against all the forces of chaos (v. 1b-4),
- (b) confirm the trustworthiness of all God's utterances and directives (v. 5a), and
- (c) call for the homage of holiness on the part of his people (v. 5b). The whole psalm expresses joy, hope, and confidence in God, and no wonder. We shall do well to take its teaching to heart.