

## THEOLOGY PROPER (47)

### (Incommunicable Attribute #9) - Simplicity.

This is the attribute of God, which is philosophical in nature, which is implied in the Scriptures, although not specially stated. Many theologians consider this attribute to be very important.

**This attribute basically means that God is always simply and fully God. He cannot be divided into parts, He does not consist of parts, nor are there separate ingredients that comprise and form God is “always...what He is.” He is always fully and simply God.**

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer described simplicity this way: "By this term it is indicated that the divine Being is uncompounded, incomplex and indivisible."(Vol.1, p.213)

Dr. Louis Berkhof described simplicity this way: "When we speak of the simplicity of God, we use the term to describe the state or quality of being simple, the condition of being free from division into parts, and therefore from compositeness. It means that God is not composite and is not susceptible of division in any sense of the word"(p.62)

Dr. Charles Ryrie described simplicity this way "The attribute of simplicity means that God is not a composite or compounded being. ...He is not divisible or composed of parts of multiple substances."(p.43)

As we have previously stated, Scripture does not explicitly state this attribute, but it does imply One such passage of Scripture would be **I Timothy 1:17**. In this verse certain Attributes of God are in a simple, manner, named in the verse is always God. God will always be these things and cannot ever be divided into less than He is. These attributes are not detached portions of His Being, which when compounded compose God, for God is always fully and simply God. This attribute is practical in several ways:

- 1) It guarantees that God will always be who He is.
- 2) It guarantees that God will never be any less than He is.
- 3) It guarantees that God will always act and react as fully God.
- 4) It guarantees that God will always be absolutely perfect in everything
- 5) It guarantees that God will always be fully God.

### (Incommunicable Attribute #10) - Sovereignty.

Some theologians do not include this as an attribute of God, however, it certainly is one described in the Bible and it certainly is one that is incommunicable. **This means that God is supreme ruler of and over all things (Ps.103;19; I Cor.8:6)**. As Dr. Berkhof states: "He rules all things...so as to secure the accomplishment of the divine purpose." (p.175) God does what He pleases (Ps.115:3) and purposes (Is.14:27). God carries out His will in everything (Dan.4:35). One cannot begin to accurately grasp the true concept of God until one has some perspective of the fact that He is the sovereign God. It is this very quality that leads one to properly worship God (i.e.Rev.4: 11).

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Sovereignty, in an absolute sense, is certainly a quality and characteristic found only in God. It can be classified as an incommunicable attribute, for no other being possesses it. No other being has the ability to always accomplish his purpose and actually ordain and control what takes place. Only God has this quality, only God is sovereign. As Dr. Paul Enns writes: "With reference to God, it means that God is the supreme ruler and authority, that He ordains whatever comes to pass, and that His divine purpose is always accomplished." (p.647)

The Bible is filled with passages which testify of this attribute of God:

1) Ex.4:21 - God is sovereign ruler of a man's heart.

Arthur Pink said: "God has access to the hearts of all men and He softens or hardens them according to his sovereign purpose." C.I. Scofield said of this: "In the course of the narrative of the context with Pharaoh, The LORD is spoken of in nine instances as hardening Pharaoh's heart, whereas Pharaoh himself is in three instances said to have hardened his own heart. In five reverences it is stated, without indicating the cause, that Pharaoh's heart was hardened. The Hebrew uses three different words to tell the condition of Pharaoh's heart. These words indicate obstinacy. God permitted the wicked nature of Pharaoh to be manifested and then, in subduing Pharaoh's opposition, God revealed His sovereign majesty." (Note #7, p.92) One might ask why would God harden Pharaoh's heart? Romans 9:17 says to display His power and name. God is the only Being who is a sovereign ruler over a man's heart. He can make a man's heart tender of hard, open or closed.

2) Job 38:1-38 – God is sovereign ruler over all creation.

3) Job 38:39-41:34 – God is sovereign ruler of all animals. (Also Ps.50:10-11)

4) Job 42:4 – God is sovereign ruler over all things and all purposes

5) Prov.16:1 – God is sovereign ruler over a man's words.

6) Prov.16:4 - God is sovereign ruler of the wicked. Including plans-Gen.20:6; 37:18/50:20; II Chron.20:5-6; Micah 4:11-12; Rev.17:17

7) Prov.16:9 – God is sovereign ruler of a man's steps and circumstances in life (Gen.45:8).

8) Prov.16:33 – God is sovereign ruler over every decision (John 19:10-11).

9) Prov.21:1 – God is sovereign over a leader's heart (Dan.1:9).

10) Prov.21:31 – God is sovereign over every victory and defeat (Is.46:10-11). God does expect us to prepare, but victory or defeat are determined by Him.

11) Ecc.7:14 – God is sovereign over prosperity and adversity. We should all be thankful for what God has given us and not be jealous over what God has given to others.

12) Job 14:5 – God is sovereign over every person's life (I Sam.2:6-8).

13) Is.45:7 – God is sovereign over peace and calamity (Hos.9:15-17; Amos 3:6)

14) Rom.9:14-24 – god is sovereign over who is saved and over who isn't saved.

These are just a few of the many texts that refer to God's attribute of Sovereignty. This was beautifully expressed by King David who said: "Thine, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine. Thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all." (II Chron.29: 11)

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This attribute of God's sovereignty is meaningful to us in several ways:

1. It should cause us to stand in awe of God and in a true fear of God.
2. It should cause us to want to obey and please God.
3. It should cause us to realize all things are controlled by His sovereignty.
4. It should cause us to praise and worship God, for He alone is deserving of praise and worship.
5. It should cause us to be totally humbled and amazed at our salvation.
6. It should enable us to Cope with any situation or hardship, knowing God is sovereign.

One question that has always come into play when it comes to the sovereignty of God is "**How does the sovereignty of God relate or connect to the of man?**" In a pure theological sense, the matter of man's will as it relates to God's sovereignty falls under the categories of Anthropology- the doctrine of man and Soteriology- the doctrine of salvation. It is under these doctrinal studies where the most in-depth analysis will take place. However, recognizing that good students of the Bible have questioning minds, it seems fitting to somewhat expose ourselves to key matters that pertain to the issue:

**Question #1-** What do we mean by the term "sovereignty of God?"

When we say "God is sovereign", we are saying **God is the supreme ruler over everything.** Arthur Pink said it well when he said: "The sovereignty of God. What do we mean by this expression? We mean the supremacy of God, the Kingship of God, the Godhead of God. To say God is Sovereign is to declare that He is the Most High, doing according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of earth, so that none can stay His hand or say unto Him what doest Thou? (Dan.4:35) To say that God is sovereign is to declare that He is the Almighty, the Possessor of all power in heaven and earth, so that none can defeat His counsels, thwart His purpose, or resist His will (Ps. 1 '15:3) ...Such is the God of the Bible"(Arthur Pink, The Sovereignty of God, p.19)

**Question #2-** Does God reveal in the Bible that He is sovereign over all things and has all power to do whatever He wants, whenever He wants, including control man and rule over and over rule man's will?

If we are honest with the Bible, the answer must be an immediate and emphatic Yes! Without making any apologies, or even any lengthy explanations, God clearly reveals that He is the Sovereign God, who can and does do whatever He wants (i.e. Ps.103:19; Job 42:2; Prov.21:1; Rom.9:15-16; Dan.4:35\*).

**Question #3-** What do we mean by the phrase "Will of man"?

It is generally accepted that when we use the words "will of man" we are referring to one's ability to make a voluntary choice. A voluntary choice naturally presupposes the accepting of one thing and the refusing of another thing.