

There is Only One True Sovereign

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In the world today—I did a little bit of research—there are fifty-eight dictatorships, in various countries around the world, that I could determine. The most notable ones, as we know, are Russia—Vladimir Putin, in China—Xi Jinping, in Iran—Ali Khamenei, North Korea—Kim Jong-Un, and in our own hemisphere in Venezuela—Nicolas Maduro. These are all dictatorships. Most of the fifty-eight are in Asia, Central Africa or the Middle East. The thing I want to mention is, to us in the modern Western world—in the democracies of the Western world—we do not understand the concept of sovereignty. sovereignty as far as the head of a country is concerned.

We often have a fuzzy idea of what the term “sovereignty” is when related to the Head of a nation. The definition of sovereignty means, *supreme in power or authority*. This is where the leader of a country has “the power of life and death” over the people. We’re not familiar with that, we didn’t grow up with that. If you’re any kind of student of history, you know that King Henry VIII of England had his second wife Anne Boleyn, behead in 1536 after she fell out of favor with him, so that he could go marry somebody else—*the power of life and death*.

In a democracy such as ours, no one person has supreme authority; that is by design. We have checks and balances to prevent that. Some of them appear to be eroding these days, but we do have constitutional checks and balances to prevent that. We have three branches of government: Legislative, Judicial and Executive. If people obey the constitution, they check and balance one another so as to prevent a dictatorship from taking control. However, many historical Heads of nations were sovereign, *supreme in power and authority*. Life and death authority and they have expended—if you study history at all—these sovereign heads of states or nations, expended great efforts to hold onto their sovereignty; to hold onto their power.

That, of course, is aided by the fact that human nature being what it is, generally wants a strong leader. Human nature wants a strong leader to keep them safe and provide for them. To let them go on about their business and have this leader provide and protect them. Ancient Israel was a perfect example of that. This is all by way of introduction, so let’s go to 1 Samuel 8:4. Samuel was a judge of Israel, and we are breaking into an account of his life. This happened approximately 1037 B.C.

1 Samuel 8:4 *Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,*

5) And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. (KJV)

They wanted to be like everybody else.

6) But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD.

7) *And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. (KJV)*

They wanted somebody they could look at and see.

8) *According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.*

9) *Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them. (KJV)*

Now Samuel tells them what it's going to be like. He tells them the downside of wanting a king.

10) *And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king.*

11) *And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: [notice the next three words because they keep occurring in this account] He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots.*

12) *And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.*

13) *And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.*

14) *And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.*

15) *And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.*

16) *And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work.*

17) *He will take the tenth of your sheep: [here's the key] and ye shall be his servants. (KJV)*

Samuel is telling the people: "You want a king? This king will be your sovereign. He will be supreme in power and authority and you will be his servants. You won't be Yehovah's servants any longer—you've rejected Yehovah. You're going to be the servants of this sovereign king that you want so badly."

18) *And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; [here's the key] and the LORD will not hear you in that day.*

19) *Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; (KJV)*

Verse 20) out of the NIV.

20) *Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles." (NIV)*

So, we see here, and we know this, that Israel rejected Yehovah's spiritual rule. They wanted a strong leader who they could see and so began the Kings of Israel and then later the Kings of Judah. Today, we cannot comprehend—we have no experience—of what it would be like to be under a king. That's just a foreign concept to us. Especially a king who is sovereign and has absolute life and death power over us, if we were in that situation. We can't comprehend that—it's difficult for us. Let's learn from King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Let's go to Daniel 2 but let's read it from the standpoint of a subject of Nebuchadnezzar to try and get an idea of what it's like to be under a king who has *life and death power*, who is sovereign, who is supreme. Daniel 2 and we'll read the account from the New King James.

Daniel 2:1 *Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was so troubled that his sleep left him. (NKJV)*

The second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign equates to 604-603 B.C. 605 was his first year. Of course, in Daniel 2, Daniel tells him both the dream—what it was— and what it meant. Notice verse 48, as a result of that.

48) Then the king promoted Daniel and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and chief administrator over all the wise men of Babylon. (NKJV)

Notice what Daniel did, he petitioned the king and was then able to set—with the king's permission—three young boys, in their late teens, early twenties and who were given new Babylonian names.

Shadrach—the Babylonian name, his Hebrew name was Hananiah.
Meshach, his Hebrew name was Mishael.
Abed-Nego, his Hebrew name was Azariah.

It's interesting Abed-Nego means servant of Nebo. That is the same god that Nebuchadnezzar was named for. So obviously Nebuchadnezzar had named these three men at the petition of Daniel, to let them come to work for him. He set them over the affairs of the province of Babylon, but Daniel sat in the gate of the king. We see here, we have three young Hebrew men, former slaves, brought from the Promised Land up into Babylon. They are in their late teens; early twenties and they are foreigners set over the bureaucrats in Babylon. It doesn't take a genius to figure out that—how would you like to have been a Babylonian bureaucrat and have three young men, foreigners, in their late teens, early twenties be promoted over you and be your boss. That would not set well with most people. Jealousy and resentment would later come into play.

Now we'll start Daniel 3 but before we do, we need to talk about the Septuagint translation. Just some background, because it comes into play with the timing of what we're going to read in Daniel 3. After the destruction of the temple which occurred eighteen or nineteen years later, after what we read in Daniel 2, the Jews were scattered. Over time, most of them transitioned over from reading Hebrew to reading Greek. The Septuagint is a translation of the Old Testament into Greek. It was commissioned by Ptolemy, the king of Egypt back in the 3rd century B.C. If you

remember your history, the library in Alexandria, Egypt at that time was the biggest, single, repository of knowledge on the face of the earth. Ptolemy commissioned this translation, not because he was dedicated to the truth, but because he was dedicated to knowledge. He had that translation commissioned and tradition says—this is Jewish tradition, so it could well be true—that King Ptolemy gathered seventy-two elders together, placed them in seventy-two separate chambers without revealing to them what he was doing—remember he was a sovereign king too. He entered into each one’s separate chamber and room and said,

“Write for me the Torah of Moses, your teacher”.

He did that independently without allowing them to collaborate. Jewish tradition tells us that Yehovah put it in the minds of each translator to translate identically. So, they translated, then compared the seventy-two different versions and they were identical.

With that background, the Septuagint says of Daniel 3:1, “In his eighteenth year”. The King James does not say that. The eighteenth year would be 587 B.C. If the Septuagint is correct—you can argue that it is or isn’t—it would make sense that there was a sixteen-year gap between Daniel 2 and 3. So by the start of Daniel 3, Daniel and these three young men, all foreigners, would have been running the capital city for sixteen years and the province for sixteen years. As we start Daniel 3, keep that thought in your mind about what’s going to happen.

Daniel 3:1 *Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. [Therefore, it had a 10:1 ration of height to width] He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. (KJV)*

Nebuchadnezzar by this time, if it had been sixteen years, he has clearly forgotten the lessons that he learned in Daniel 2, that it is Yehovah who determines kings. Not through Nebuchadnezzar’s might but God Almighty’s might. His arrogant attitude makes more sense if chapter 3 was sixteen years later, he had time to forget. He had time for his vanity and pride to come to the forefront.

We don’t know for sure—the Bible doesn’t tell us—what this image was. The word *image* is an Aramaic word and is Strong’s #6755 and it just means “an idolatrous symbol”. An Israeli cubit is about eighteen inches, and a Babylonian cubit is about twenty inches. Regardless of which one you use; the image was somewhere between ninety and 100 feet tall. It was only nine to ten feet wide. Very long, very tall, very narrow. It’s a 10:1 ration and that’s about right for an obelisk. We’ve seen the Washington monument, it’s very narrow and very tall—that’s an obelisk. The human body, the ratio is 4:1—width left to right versus height. If it was an image of Nebuchadnezzar which, knowing his vanity, it probably was, it must have been an image of him on a pedestal. It could well have been a forty-foot statue of Nebuchadnezzar on a sixty-foot pedestal. Either way, it was quite imposing. 100 feet high out in the middle of the plains, of gold and shining in the sun—quite imposing.

The fact is—let’s view it from people who are used to a democracy and not a dictatorship of life and death authority—Nebuchadnezzar didn’t have to ask anybody to build this statue. He didn’t have to go to a congress and get monetary allocations

to do this. He just did it because he could do whatever he wanted, regardless of the cost, because he was supreme. He could order his subjects to worship this statue any time, any manner and in any place he could choose. They had to comply, as we will see, on pain of death. About the best analogy we could draw today would be the dictator of North Korea, Kim Jong-Un, he is sovereign in Korea. He wants an ICBM or a host of ICBMs with nuclear weapons on them, that is exactly what he will have. Even though tens of thousands of North Koreans will starve to make that happen. The money goes to the weapons of war and not to feed his people. That is just a fact and that is exactly what is happening in the world today. So, Nebuchadnezzar didn't have to go to any committee to get this statue built.

2) And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps [the King James Version says "princes"], the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. (NKJV)

Verse 3, they all arrive at the foot of this image.

*4) Then a herald cried aloud: "To you [all the people there, of all the provinces] it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages,
5) that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music [it was probably like an anthem that was composed and would be played at that time], you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up;
6) and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace." (NKJV)*

Today, it would be like in North Korea if their dictator is standing on a podium and everybody is clapping and there is one out there booing. He wouldn't last very long. In Nebuchadnezzar's time, if you didn't bow down and worship, you are going to pay with your life. The point is, Nebuchadnezzar had the power of life and death over his subjects. They had to do exactly what he commanded on pain of death. He was sovereign, absolutely supreme.

*7) So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, and lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.
8) Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews. (NKJV)*

The Tanakh translation says, "*Chaldeans, seizing the occasion, certain Chaldeans came forward to slander the Jews*".

9) They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, "O king, live forever! (NKJV)

A little sucking up to the king was going on.

10) *You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image;*
11) *and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. (NKJV)*

Here's the key, in verse 12.

12) *There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.” (NKJV)*

If the Septuagint is correct, for about the sixteen years they had been under the rule of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, they have had plenty of time to chafe in jealousy about being under these foreign kids, now probably in their late twenties.

13) *Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. (NKJV)*

Back then of course, your life or your death could depend on the mood of the sovereign at any given moment at the time. If the sovereign was angry, you could lose your life. That's a foreign concept to us.

13 continued) *So they brought these men before the king.*
14) *Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? (NKJV)*

Nebuchadnezzar was obviously feeling his sovereignty—his absolute power—was being challenged—challenged by Jewish slaves. He could say,

“Look what I've done for you, look at what I've given you—and now you oppose me?”

I'm sure that was going through his mind. As I said, he even named Abed-Nego after his god. So, he must have had some feeling or affection for these three. In verse 15, he offers them a way out.

15) *Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?” (NKJV)*

Again, he had forgotten the lesson of Daniel 2. He would soon find out who this God is. The furnace used in those days was most likely the one that was used for smelting or refining metal. Babylon had that technology. Iron oxide becomes metallic at 1250 degrees—that is a hot furnace. With that in mind, verse 16.

16) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. (NKJV)

Now we see in verse 17 a prime example of absolute faith. If you ever feel your faith is wavering, go to verse 17 and read it.

17) If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us ... (NKJV)

Notice they say *able* to deliver us, they did not say *will* deliver us. They knew that Yehovah was their Sovereign and could decide whatever He wanted to decide for their long term good. They were ready to accept their Sovereign's will. They were not ready to accept Nebuchadnezzar's will as sovereign over Babylon.

17 continued) ... from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. (NKJV)

He will deliver them one way or another; through death or through the sparing their lives. It's interesting that they acknowledged Nebuchadnezzar as king, as they obeyed him as far as they could, up to the point where it violated their Sovereign's rule and commandments. Verse 18 is a perfect example of hope. While verse 17 is a perfect example of faith.

18) But if not, [if we have to pay with our lives] let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up." (NKJV)

So the young men clearly knew that Yehovah could save them. They did not know if He would save them.

19) Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. (NKJV)

The Revised English Bible says, "*His face became distorted with anger*".

19 continued) ... He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated.

20) And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace.

21) Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

22) Therefore, because the king's command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.

23) And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. (NKJV)

Here we have a picture of absolute human authority. Absolute human sovereignty, which again is a foreign concept to us today in the Western world. But if we lived in

North Korea, it would be a part of our everyday lives. Historically, if you look at the kings of Israel, kings of England, kings of France, czars of Russian, emperors, dictators, potentates, have been sovereign over the people under them. Today, as we see, we do indeed have dictators and potentates that are sovereign, who have life and death in their hands, over the people under them. They can do whatever they wish. That's a foreign concept to us.

In a dictatorship, where the head is sovereign, there are no human rights. There are people in the United States who demand their rights all the time. For this subject or that subject or some other issues—they demand their rights. In a dictatorship, there are no rights. The only rights that the people have are what the sovereign decides to grant to them; it's entirely up to him. Thankfully these human sovereigns have a limited life span. After ruling for forty-three years, Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 B.C. Therefore, the sovereignty of a human rule is limited to the length of their life. Therefore, in a universal sense, humans cannot be truly sovereign because they have a limited life span; their government has a limited span. If their life goes away, their sovereignty goes away. All of this is leading to the title.

There is Only One True Sovereign

That Sovereign is not a human. We're going to explore this concept through three points.

1. The eternal Being we know as Yehovah, which is His name—the Father, the Almighty, the Most High—He is THE Sovereign.

The only Sovereign. Let's see that out of His very Word in Isaiah 43:8.

Isaiah 43:8 *Bring forth the blind people that have eyes [He must be talking spiritually and not physically], and the deaf that have ears.*

9) *Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth.*

10) *Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. (KJV)*

We know today that the name Yehovah means, *I have always been, I will always be and I am right now.* That's His name. What He is saying here is, since *I have always been*—you show Me somebody who was before Me—and since *I will always be*—you show Me somebody who is eternal—one of your people who is eternal who is going to live after Me. Obviously, they couldn't do that.

11) *I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no savior. (KJV)*

I am the Savior. Verse 12) *is out of the NIV.*

12) *I have revealed and saved and proclaimed— I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "that I am God.*

13) *Yes, and from ancient days I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?" (NIV)*

When Yehovah acts, who is there who can reverse that? Nebuchadnezzar couldn't reverse that. Our potentates and dictates today can't reverse that. Now let's go to two chapters further back in the book, Isaiah 45:7. Yehovah is speaking. The Bible shows clearly that God Almighty, the Most High God, the Father, Yehovah is *THE* Sovereign.

Isaiah 45:7 *I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create calamity; I, the LORD, do all these things.* (NKJV)

Continuing in verse 18)

18) *For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: "I am the LORD, and there is no other. (NKJV)*

There's no other God Who is supreme, Who is sovereign. He is saying:

"I was here in the beginning, I have never had a beginning, I will never have an end; I am Sovereign."

Now let's go to John 17 and see His Son came to this earth and He says the same thing. John 17 is breaking into the account of Christ's last night on this earth and He is praying to His Father.

John 17:1 *These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said [He's praying to His Father, God Almighty, Yehovah], Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:
2) As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. (KJV)*

In verse 3 He says what eternal life is.

3) *And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God [sovereign, supreme], and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. (KJV)*

Here we see the Son calls His Father the only true God. Now let's go to Chapter 10 verse 29. He's referring to His sheep that His Father gave Him, as the Good Shepherd. This is the parable of the sheepfold. We're just going to read this one verse. Christ is speaking.

John 10:29 *My Father, which gave them [meaning His sheep, as the Good Shepherd] me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. (KJV)*

The Son recognizes His Father, the Almighty, Yehovah, the Most High, as greater than all. Did the apostles follow through with that concept, with that notion, with that

idea? Let's go to Ephesians 4:6 and see what Paul has to say and what he emphasizes.

Ephesians 4:6 *One God and Father of all, who is above all [remember this is after Christ had risen to the right hand of God the Father], and through all, and in you all. (KJV)*

He is saying that the Father is sovereign. Paul understood that. Closing out point one, we see our Father, Yehovah, God Almighty, the Most High God is sovereign, which means supreme in power and authority.

Let's go to the second point.

2. The only other eternal Being, which is Jesus Christ, acknowledged His Father as Sovereign.

Ruler over all, supreme in power and authority.

To develop this point, let's first ask the question: Does Christ have a God? Does Christ worship a God? Let's go to John 20:17. We're breaking into the account where Christ has been resurrected, Mary is at the tomb and we know that account. He reveals Himself to her and notice what He says.

John 20:17 *Jesus [He's been resurrected, He is standing in front of Mary] saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, [very important] I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. (KJV)*

It couldn't be clearer. Trinitarians have a hard time with this. Binitarians have a hard time with this. Did Paul know who Christ's God was? He who was educated in the highest manner of the Pharisees—let's go to Ephesians 1:17 and see what Paul has to say about the matter. Paul knew who Christ's God was. He knew Who was Sovereign, Who was supreme. Paul is very clear on this and yet many Christian denominations are very confused about this.

Ephesians 1:17 *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: (KJV)*

So, who is the God of Jesus Christ? It's the Father and all His glory. Did Peter know that? Let's go to 1 Peter 1:3 and see if Peter understood that? That Christ's God was the Father—was Yehovah. Peter confirms what we just read that Paul had written.

1 Peter 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ... (KJV)*

It couldn't be clearer. One scripture here answering the question, does Christ have a God? Let's go to Revelation 1:4 out of the New King James.

Revelation 1:4 *John, to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come [that's part of the meaning of Yehovah], and from the seven Spirits who are before His [this one Who is and Who was] throne ... (KJV)*

That could only be the Father's throne, because verse 5:

5) and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. (KJV)

He will be King of kings and Lord of lords, of the earth.

*5 continued) ... To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,
6) and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (KJV)*

The scriptures plainly tell us that Christ had a God. His God was His Father, Yehovah, the Almighty, the Most High. Notice two scriptures that were written after Christ ascended to the right hand of His Father, to see where He is today and how that relationship is today. Let's go to 1 Corinthians 8:6 out of the International Standard Version; it's clearer than the other translations, at least to me. Notice what he says.

1 Corinthians 8:6 *... yet for us there is only one God, the Father [this is after Christ has already been resurrected and sitting on the right hand of His Father's throne], from whom everything came into being and for whom we live. And there is only one Lord, Jesus the Messiah, through whom everything came into being and through whom we live. (ISV)*

We see, with Christ sitting on the Father's right hand, the Father being in absolute sovereignty, absolute supremacy, Paul is telling all of us and the Corinthians church, there is only one God—the Father. Now look at chapter 11:3. Paul again is writing and saying he wants to expand that knowledge.

1 Corinthians 11:3 *But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. (KJV)*

At that moment, when that was written, Christ was sitting on the right hand of His Father, Christ acknowledged that His Father was greater than all. We see here that the Son of God willingly acknowledged that His Father was sovereign, was supreme in power and authority. That closes out the second point.

Now we get to the nitty gritty of living today, in today's world, knowing that the Father is sovereign and His only begotten son is sitting right beside Him, they share the same nature, they have the same goals, they live together—this is what blows our minds in viewing the world as we do today—they have lived an eternity in perfect harmony, in perfect unity. They have lived an eternity as in companionship and love and friendship and a Father/Son relationship; they have lived that way for an eternity.

3. We can trust the Father's sovereignty because His nature is love.

In a human sovereign, there can be no trust—absolutely no trust. Let's go to Psalm 146:3. We are told absolutely who we should trust and who we should not trust. We are told elsewhere in the Bible, *trust no man*. We could go through several scriptures but just for time's sake, we'll use this one.

Psalm 146:3 *Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. (NIV)*

Human beings can maybe save us or postpone a physical death, because we are all going to die anyway. They may through their temporary sovereignty, postpone our death, but they cannot save. You see, with a human sovereign, they are variable depending on his health on a given day or time. What his mood is for a given day or a given time. Or his personality variables on a given day or a given time. There are many historical examples where a subject came to a sovereign and he was in a bad mood and just said "Off to the dungeon with you, off with your head"—because of the variability of a human. We can't trust a human sovereign because of their very humanity. We can trust in our Father's sovereignty. Why? Because He loves us and His love knows no bounds. His very nature is love. Let's go to 1 John 4:16. The key component I guess you could say—it's hard to find physical words—of our Father's nature, is "love". We're going to see in this verse that the word "the", the Greek word "ho" has been omitted again, several times in this verse because it messes up trinitarian thought.

1 John 4:16 *And we have known and believed the love that [the Greek word "ho" is not translated] [the] God hath to us. [The Greek word "ho" is not translated] [the] God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in [the] God, and [the] God in him. (KJV)*

We see, *the God is*. The English word transliterated *is* is the Greek is Strong's #2076 and is the Greek word *esti*. I am not a grammar person but it's the third person singular, present indicative of #1510. So let's see what word Strong's #1510 is. It is *eimi* (a verb of "existence") and it means, "I exist, I am". The New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance says exactly the same thing. So we see here that love is integral to our Father's very being. Our Father and His Son are the very definition of what love is. Love is their defining character trait and they share that through a common spirit. But their defining character trait is love. How is that manifested? We could spend hours and hours but let's just see one example in the Old Testament about His love for Ancient Israel and leading them to the Promised Land in Deuteronomy 8:15. We know Deuteronomy was written by Moses as he was ending his life and he was looking back on coming out of Egypt and the forty years in the wilderness and giving lessons for Ancient Israel, the people who will live on after he dies. He is describing Yehovah.

Deuteronomy 8:15 *Who [referring to Yehovah] led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;*

16) Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, [what was His purpose of humbling them?] to do thee good at thy latter end; (KJV)

Everything Yehovah did for Israel was for their good. In this specific instance, it was to bring them to the Promised Land to have their own home and their own land which they did not have in slavery in Egypt. He did so because He loved Ancient Israel. He loved the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Now let's go to the New Testament and notice the ultimate expression of His love, it's the most quoted verse probably in the Bible, John 3:16. Again, we can trust our Father's sovereignty because of His love for His children.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world [today that means the converted and the uncovenanted, the Firstfruits and everybody else], that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, [that's the ultimate goal, not to perish in the lake of fire] but have everlasting life. (KJV)*

We see here that this is the ultimate expression of the Father's love; He doesn't have to do this. He could live by Himself with His Son and the angelic hosts and all the created spirit beings and as we would say today, be perfectly fine. But He loves His creation, He loves His children and wants to offer them eternal life. For us to attain eternal life, He must correct us, because He loves us. Not because He hates us, but because He loves us. Let's go to Hebrews 12:9 in the New International Version.

Hebrews 12:9 *Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live!*

10) They [meaning the human fathers] disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. (NIV)

By giving us eternal life in His Kingdom. We can trust our Father's sovereignty because He will always do what is best for us. When we get into a trial and things look grim and we have the tendency to say, "woe is me", or "why me?" But let's go to Romans 8:28 and remind ourselves of a fundamental fact. That no matter what comes our way, God can either cause it or allow it. Think of Job. He caused it or allowed it.

Romans 8:28 *And we know that all things [not some things, not most things] work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. (KJV)*

The Firstfruits are called today. The Firstfruits have an opportunity to love God Almighty with the love that we can have inside us through His very nature. Ultimately, we know the whole world will be in that position down the road. The point is, everything our Father causes, everything He allows to happen to us, is for our good. Nothing slips past Him, it's for our good. In addition to that, we can put our trust in our Father because He never changes. Unlike human beings—we can change our minds. But our Father never changes. Let's go to Malachi 3:6 in the NIV,

a very familiar scripture. There are other scriptures we could use that you can find on your own.

Malachi 3:6 *"I the LORD do not change. [Emphatic statement] So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. (NIV)*

Think about this: What if the Supreme Being decided today to do away with the Ten Commandments? *"We just want to do something new, I'm tired of that. We'll do something new today."*

Or what, if He decided—this would be the scary one—to change His plan of salvation. Just on a whim— *"We're not going to do it this way, we're going to do it this way."*

And all of a sudden, now halfway through our lives, all the rules for the "game" change. Just like you change the rules of baseball or football halfway through the game, and now you have different rules. Our Father, because He is Supreme, could do that, but He won't because He doesn't change. How could we trust in a sovereign that changed the rules of the game every day or every week or every millennium. We couldn't. Because He doesn't change, we can trust Him. We can trust in the sovereignty of our Father because He wants the best for us. Coming from His unlimited love for us and that love will never change, because He will never change.

Notice Christ's trust in His Father in Mark 14:36, just before being betrayed. Think about this. Christ helped create the human body. He had a hand in it. He knew what pain was, because He helped create the nerves and the pain receptors in the brain and He knew what pain would be like. This is out of the NLT.

Mark 14:36 *"Abba, Father," he cried out, "everything is possible for you. [Because He is sovereign; He recognized His Father's sovereignty] Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine." (NLT)*

We see the Son's absolute trust in the sovereignty of His Father. He said,

"I don't want to go through this because I know what lies ahead, but I understand that this is part of Your will and we agreed on this, we worked on this plan together and I am facing these horrible hours ahead, but I want Your will to be done and not Mine in this very, very stressful situation".

We see that Christ tells us that trust in our Sovereign also brings peace. Notice what He said shortly before this happened in John 14:27. He's talking to His disciples, He knew He was going to be heading into the garden, He knew He was going to be betrayed and He knew He was going to be praying to His Father about this whole situation.

John 14:27 *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. (KJV)*

In the greatest of trials, we can have peace because we trust in our Father's sovereignty. His nature, His love, whatever He causes or allows to come our way is for the best for us. He never, ever changes. We can see that we can trust in our Father's sovereignty. We can't trust in a human sovereign.

As we conclude now, let's go look at the end of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego. This account tells us who is truly sovereign. Back to Daniel 3:24. This is the lesson on who is sovereign. It's not Nebuchadnezzar, it's not a human being.

Daniel 3:24 *Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king.*

25) He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

26) Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the mouth of the burning fiery furnace, and spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God [it's interesting his tone is changing a bit], come forth, and come hither. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire.

27) And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them.

28) Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. (KJV)

Now Nebuchadnezzar reacts and changes his mind.

29) Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, [here's where his sovereignty comes in] shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. (KJV)

Nebuchadnezzar quickly found out who *THE* Sovereign was, who *THE* God Almighty was. So today, we've seen that the eternal Being who we know as Yehovah, our Father, the Almighty, the Most High God, is sovereign. He is supreme. We've seen that Christ acknowledged His Father as sovereign. We've seen that we can trust in the Father's Sovereignty because His nature is love and He never changes.

As we conclude, let me mention the Midrash. The Midrash is a commentary about Old Testament scripture that began to be written about 400 B.C. It states that Psalm 91 was composed by Moses. The Midrash says that Moses composed Psalm 91 on the day that the building of the Tabernacle was completed. Psalm 91 describes his experience as seeing the Tabernacle from the inside, the very first time. Remember,

coming out of Egypt into a harsh wilderness, Moses and Israel needed a refuge they could trust. They needed a refuge from the pursuing armies, from the harshness of the wilderness and that refuge was Yehovah, who came down to dwell in that very Tabernacle. With that in mind, let's start in Psalm 91:1, Moses is writing.

Psalm 91:1 *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High [that's in His throne, right next to where He is] shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

2) I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. (KJV)

We see here in these two verses that Yehovah, the *Most High* and the *Almighty* are the same *supreme, spirit Being*. People deny that. "Oh that can't happen" but it's true.

3) Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.

4) He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

5) He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

6) Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; (KJV)

Here in the last three years, we've kind of experienced that a bit, haven't we?

6 continued) ... nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.

7) A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.

8) Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. (KJV)

Verse 9 tells us why.

9) Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge [Moses' refuge], even the most High, thy habitation; (KJV)

Yehovah is the Most High.

10) There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

11) For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. (KJV)

Now in verse 14 Yehovah speaks and notice what He says.

14) Because he hath set his love upon me ... (KJV)

The Hebrew word for *set His love upon* means "to cling to in love". Because He clings to me in love.

14 continued) ... therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. (KJV)

His name is Yehovah, we've talked a lot about that recently.

15) He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. (KJV)

When we call upon Yehovah and His name, and we know His name, there is a lot of implication behind that. We all understand that. He has known my name and the implications thereof.

16) With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation. (KJV)

Our Sovereign, who is Yehovah, who is our Father, reveals the requirements to be rescued and saved.

Number one—*is to hold on to the Almighty in love*

Number two— *is to know His name and all that that implies.*

When we stop and think about this, this whole concept of *Who is sovereign*—that our Father is sovereign—we are blessed beyond measure because we have a Sovereign Who can be absolutely trusted unlike worldly dictators and potentates and despots. We have a Sovereign Who does everything for our benefit. Who lives eternally and Who never changes. At this time in our lives, as the world descends into increasing evil, chaos and debauchery, we can depend on a Sovereign Who loves us, Who never changes, in Whom we can absolutely trust and Who has made a place for us in His Kingdom.