Justice and Sovereignty

Perfections of God Imaged by His People

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Lord of the Nations, LLC
Omaha, NE
LordoftheNations.com
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Justice and Sovereignty

Righteousness-justice
In the Hebrew Old Testament and in the Greek New Testament the same word groups are translated both righteous and just, or righteousness and justice. Righteousness-justice is a forensic term, applying to “the sphere of law and the courtroom, the sphere in which one advocates or defends behavior.”¹ The terms are used pervasively throughout Scripture.²

Definition of God’s perfection of righteousness: “God always acts in accordance with what is right and is himself the final standard of what is right.”³

The Lord (Yehovah), in Himself, is righteous-just (Dt 32:4; Ex 9:27; Gn 18:25; Ezr 9:15; Ne 9:8; Job 37:23; Pss 4:1; 7:9, 11; 11:7; 89:14; 92:15; 119:137, 142; 129:4; 145:17; Is 5:16; 30:18; 45:21; Jer 12:1; La 1:18; Dn 4:37; 9:7, 14; Zp 3:5; Jn 17:25; Ro 3:5; 2 Th 1:5–7; 2 Tim 4:8; 1 Jn 2:29; 3:7; Rv 15:3; 16:5, 7; 19:2, 11). Many of these verses

² The English words “righteous”/“righteousness” occur 586 times in the NJKV; “justice” occurs 186 times; “justify”/“justifies”/“justified”/“justification” occur 56 times; “just” (in the sense of righteous) occurs at least 59 times, for a total of 887 times.
³ Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 203. “The main idea of divine righteousness is that God acts according to a perfect internal standard of right and wrong” (John M. Frame, The Doctrine of God, 446).
depict God’s judgments as righteous-just. Indeed, “The LORD is a God of justice” (Is 30:18).

In the New Testament the Lord Jesus Christ is called “the Righteous/Just” One (Ac 3:14; 7:52; 22:14; 1 Jn 2:1; cf. Mt 27:19, 24) and the righteous Judge (2 Tim 4:8). This attests to His deity.

One of God’s redemptive, **covenant names** is “the Lord Our Righteousness” (Yahweh-**tsidqenuw**, Jer 23:6; 33:16).

God’s righteousness-justice is infinite, eternal (Ps 119:142), and unchangeable. It is the **original**, the **standard** that **defines** righteousness-justice. There is no abstract principle of justice, which is external to God or above God, to which He must conform (contra ancient Greek and Roman thought and Arminianism). Therefore, “Whatever conforms to God’s moral character is right” (Ro 9:20–21; Job 40:2, 8).4

Because the Lord is righteous, He speaks righteousness-justice (Ps 119:123; Is 45:19). In particular, the righteous-just God revealed His standard for righteousness-justice by giving His righteous-just **law** (Ne 9:13; Is 33:22; Ja 4:12; Heb 2:2; Mt 23:23). His law is not arbitrary; it is based on His own nature (Lv 19:1; 1 Pt 1:15–16; Mt 5:48). His law, which is summarized in the Ten Commandments, is the standard for right behavior. God describes this law as: His/My law (Ro 7:22, 25; 8:7; 1 Cor 7:19); “perfect...right...pure” (Ps 19:7–8); “spiritual”5 (Ro 7:14); “holy, righteous, and good” (Ro 7:12, 16;

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5 πνευματικός should not be translated “spiritual.” It denotes “from the [Holy] Spirit” (πνεῦμα) or “directly related to the [Holy] Spirit’s activity” (Gordon D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994], 28–32, 666f). Thus God’s law is “spiritual” in that it is revealed by God who is spirit; it was
cf. 1 Tim 1:8; Dt 4:8; Ps 119:138); “the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth” (Ro 2:20). Psalm 119 repeatedly praises God for His righteous law-word (7, 40, 62, 106, 123, 137, 138, 142, 144, 160, 164, 172). Because God and His law are righteous, God hates lawlessness (ἀνομία), but loves righteousness-justice (Pss 11:7; 33:5; 37:28; 99:4; Is 61:8; Mt 7:23; 13:41–42; Heb 1:9 quoting Ps 45:7).

God’s righteousness-justice is particularly seen in His providential governing of the world (Pss 9:7–8; 45:6; 89:14; 97:2), including His judgments within history against unrighteous individuals, families, cities, nations, empires, churches, and the entire world.6 “The LORD is righteous in all His ways” (Ps 145:17; cf. Ho 14:9). The theme of God’s righteousness-justice is particularly developed in Psalms, Proverbs, and the Old Testament Prophets.

The ministry of the Messiah—including judging—is characterized by righteousness-justice (Jer 23:5, 15; Zc 9:9; Is 9:7; 11:3–5; 42:1–4; Ps 72:1–4, 12–14; Jn 5:30; Heb 1:8–9; Rv 19:11). This will also be true at the eschatological judgment at the end of history (Ac 17:31), when “the Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom...those who practice lawlessness” and throw them into hell (Mt 13:41–42; cf. 7:23).

Justice in divine punishment of sin and in salvation

“There is an eternal, unchangeable requirement in the holiness and justice of God that sin be paid for.”7 All unrighteousness merits God’s punishment: “The soul who sins shall die” (Ezk 18:4, 20; cf. 

7 Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, 575.
Ro 6:23). “The primary purpose of the punishment of sin is the maintenance of right and justice.”

Retributive justice is often referred to in Scripture as God’s (judicial) “wrath” (Mt 3:7; Jn 3:36; Ro 1:18, 32; 2:5, 8–9; 3:5; 5:9; 9:22; 12:19; 1 Th 2:16; 2 Th 1:8; Heb 3:11; 4:3; Rv 6:16–17; 11:18; 14:10, 19; 15:1, 7; 16:1, 19; 19:15).

Who has sinned, and, therefore, who must be punished? “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Ro 3:23); and “there is none righteous, no, not one” (Ro 3:10; Ps 143:2). God—“by no means clearing the guilty” (Ex 34:7)—“will not justify [acquit] the wicked” (Ex 23:7) (e.g., us!). So, how can this righteous God forgive anyone?

God’s perfect righteousness is manifest in the substitutionary death of the God-man on the cross (Ro 3:25–26). (Christ’s death was not merely an example that we should lay down our lives for one another!) The gospel is a revelation of God’s righteousness (Ro 1:17; 3:17–26; 2 Cor 3:9 “the ministry of righteousness”; Gn 15:6). God’s righteousness is the principle of the salvation of God’s people, “the attribute by virtue of which God vindicates [justifies/acquits] the righteous and raises them to a position of honor and well-being.”

Thus, for the believer, God’s righteousness is “a righteousness of vindication, and a righteousness of salvation.”

Christ “suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (1 Pt 3:18). God “made Him [Christ] who knew no

sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor 5:21; cf. Is 53:11). Christ Jesus became for us...righteousness (1 Cor 1:30). Indeed, He was raised from the dead for our justification (Ro 4:25). God justifies (declares “not guilty”) His elect in Christ (Ro 8:30, 33). Believers have been “justified by His blood” (Ro 5:9). In this way God “justifies the ungodly[!], his faith is accounted for righteousness” (Ro 4:5).

Christ’s regenerated and justified believers are described as “the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph 4:24).

In sum, God is the “God of my righteousness” (Ps 4:1).

**Believers must live righteously-justly**

Believers are not only justified (i.e., acquitted, declared righteous) by God, on the ground of Christ’s substitutionary death. Being a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), true believers live righteously (Ps 15:1–2; Pr 21:15; Is 1:17; Mc 6:8; 1 Jn 2:29; 3:7). (This involves progressive sanctification—not justification.) Those who do not live righteously are not God’s children, but are children of the devil (1 Jn 2:29; 3:10). Believers must present to God the members of his/her physical body as “instruments of righteousness” (Ro 6:13). “The righteous requirement of the law...[is being] fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (Ro 8:4). The book of Revelation depicts Christ’s church as “arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints” (Rv 19:8). Receiving “abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness” enables the believer to “reign in life” through

Jesus Christ (Ro 5:17). Through faith the great men and women of the Old Testament “subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises…” (Heb 11:33).

Righteous living, which includes confessing our sins, is central to the believer maintaining close fellowship with God: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn 1:9).

God requires righteous-just dealings in business and finance, including using only just weights and just measures (Lv 19:35–37; Dt 25:13–16; Ezk 45:9–12; Pr 11:1; 16:11; 20:10, 23; Ho 12:7; Am 8:5; Mc 6:10–11; cf. Is 1:22). Unjust weights and measures “are an abomination to the LORD,” who is the God of righteousness and truth (Pr 11:1; 20:10, 23; cf. Mc 6:10). The people who use unjust weights and measures: “behave unrighteously” (Dt 25:16); practice “injustice” (Lv 19:35); and “are an abomination to the LORD your God” (Dt 25:16).

God commands civil magistrates to rule justly. Judges must impartially “justify [acquit] the righteous and condemn the

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wicked” (Dt 25:1; Pr 17:15). Even individual citizens must promote justice in court (Ex 23:2; 20:16; Am 5:15; Zc 8:9; 9:16).

In a humanistic state, “justice” means upholding the interests of the state. Fines and other punishments are paid to the state; there is no restitution made to the individual who was actually wronged. The unrighteous cannot tolerate the righteous (Ps 37:12, 14, 32; Pr 29:27; Gn 19:9; Ro 1:32; Ac 3:14–15; 7:52).¹⁴ When the unrighteous rule, the righteous suffer (Pr 29:2; 2 Pt 2:7–8; Mt 23:34; Ac 7:52; cf. Ezk 9:4).¹⁵ God curses civil magistrates who pervert justice (Dt 27:19; Is 10:1–2).¹⁶ When justice-righteousness and truth are driven from a city or nation, God’s judgment is not far behind (Is 59:14–15; Jer 5:1; Am 5:7).

Justice is an important component of morality. Justice above all is the way in which the grace and love of God are maintained and made to triumph. Those who, with [early church heretic] Marcion [died c. 160], assume that justice and grace are antithetical to each other deny the connection between the moral order and the order of justice and do not understand the majesty and glory of the law.¹⁷

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¹⁴ “There is not a square inch of ground in heaven or on earth or under the earth in which there is peace between Christ and Satan. ... It is of the nature of the conflict between Christ and Satan to be all-comprehensive” (Cornelius Van Til, *Essays on Christian Education* [Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1979], 27). “Not a square inch of ground belongs to him [Satan] and not a square inch of ground will be his at the end of the war” (Cornelius Van Til, *The God of Hope: Essays and Addresses*, chap. 3 “Our Present Task”).

¹⁵ “In a wicked land either the state will judge us for loyalty to Christ, or Christ will judge us for loyalty to the state” (R.C. Sproul, Jr. on Facebook).

¹⁶ Regarding “woe” as a prophetic curse see Robert E. Fugate, “‘Woe’ in the Bible.” Cf. idem., *Biblical Imprecations* (Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 2007), 20 n 45.

God rewards the righteous

Because of His righteousness (Pss 89:16; 143:11), God rewards the righteous—even on earth (Pr 11:31)—rescuing them from their oppressors and blessing them in innumerable ways (Pss 34:15–22; 37:18; 85:10–13; 146:8; Pr 10:24–25, 30; 11:8, 21, 31 and throughout chapters 10 and 11; 13:22; 15:29; 1 Pt 3:12), such as:

- forgiveness of sins (Ps 51:4ff; 1 Jn 1:9);
- unmovable, everlasting foundation (Pr 10:25, 30);
- delivered from troubles (Pss 34:17, 19; 37:39; Pr 11:8) and their posterity delivered (Pr 11:21);
- enemies condemned and killed (Ps 34:21);
- blessing their home (Pr 3:33);
- always having adequate provision (Ps 37:25)—even the wealth of the wicked (Pr 13:22);
- answered prayer (Pr 15:29; 1 Pt 3:12); given what they desire (Pr 10:24);
- healing (Ps 146:8);
- clear direction (Pr 4:18);
- inherit the earth (Ps 37:29, 9, 11, 22, 34; Is 60:21);
- shine “like the stars forever and ever” (Dn 12:3; cf. Mt 13:43).

Although believers do not, in themselves, merit God’s covenant blessings and eternal rewards (Lk 17:10; Ro 11:35; 1 Cor 4:7), since believers are in Christ, God’s remunerative (rewarding) justice pours out these gracious blessings upon them (2 Cor 1:20; 8:9; 9:8).

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18 In Ps 37 the words “righteous”/“righteousness” occur in verses 6, 16, 17, 21, 25, 29, 30, 32, 39; “just”/“justice” occur in verses 6, 12, 28, 30, for a total of 13 occurrences. Cf. “upright” (vv. 14, 18, 37) and “blameless” (v. 37).
Because the righteous-just Judge is also omnipotent, justice must ultimately prevail throughout the universe.

In sum, “In the sense of fairness, God treats all creatures in righteousness. He never violates his standards of conduct. But in the active, redemptive sense, God’s righteousness saves only those who are righteous by faith. And like his holiness...his righteousness is both fearsome and loving, both a forbidding transcendence and a redemptive immanence.”

Applications
1. Present the members of your body “as instruments of righteousness to God” (Ro 6:13).
2. Confess your sins, for God “is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn 1:9).
3. “Put on the breastplate of righteousness” to be victorious in spiritual warfare (Eph 6:14; cf. 2 Cor 6:7).
4. Receiving “abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness,” God is calling you to “reign in life through...Jesus Christ” (Ro 5:17).
5. Learn God’s just law and hold fast to it, as our only standard for righteousness-justice (Dt 4:8; Ps 119:138; Ro 7:12; 2 Tim 3:15–

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20 To reign we need to stand in Christ’s victory, grace, and power, faithfully, wisely, and thankfully exercising that dominion to which God has called us that day, bringing glory to God in everything we do.
for righteousness has nothing in common with lawlessness (2 Cor 6:14). This requires humility (Ps 25:9).


7. Promote righteousness-justice in every sphere of society—including business, financial, and civil governments (Am 5:15, 24).

8. Intercede for God to bring justice into unjust situations (Lk 18:1–8; Psalms). Pray imprecatory prayers from Scripture.22

9. Praise God for His justice, and hope in it (Pss 9:4; 19:9; 36:6; 97:2; 101:1; 119).

Sovereignty (freedom): God is the Lord who reigns

God’s perfection of sovereignty or absolute freedom is succinctly depicted in two verses from the Psalms: God “does whatever He pleases” (Ps 115:3); and “Whatever the LORD pleases He does, in heaven and in earth” (Ps 135:6).

“Very simply defined, sovereignty means a monopoly of power and law.”

Terminology

God’s sovereignty or absolute freedom is expressed in various ways in the Bible.

- **The term Lord.** “In the Bible, the word for sovereign is always translated as lord: Adonai in the Hebrew, and kyrios [κύριος] in the Greek. Thus the most common term for God in the Old Testament is lord or sovereign, and the most used designation for Jesus in the New is also lord, which is also used to refer to God the Father. The term in Scripture means owner, the one possessing dominion and rule, authority and power.”

- **King.** Because God’s sovereignty denotes the Lord who reigns, it is often expressed in the metaphor of kingship (Pss 47:2–3, 7–8; 95:3–5) and the kingdom of God (1 Ch 29:11–12; Pss 22:28; 103:19; 145:11–13).

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23 Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Roots of Reconstruction*, 90f. Elsewhere Rushdoony asserts that “the original meaning of ‘tyrant’ is one who rules without God and His law” (489).

24 Rousas J. Rushdoony, *Sovereignty* (Vallecito, CA: Chalcedon/Ross House Books, 2007), 1f (bold added). The term δοῦλος (slave, bondservant) is used for both Christian leaders and for all believers (the latter in Lk 2:29; Ac 2:18; 4:29; 1 Cor 7:22b; Eph 6:6; 1 Pt 2:16; Rv 1:1; 2:20; 7:3; 19:2, 5; 22:3, 6; cf. 6:11). The corresponding verb δουλεύω is also applied to all believers (Ro 7:6; 12:11; 14:18; Gal 5:13; Col 3:24; 1 Th 1:9; cf. Eph 6:7).
• God’s will, purpose, or pleasure. God’s sovereignty is also expressed in references to His (decretive\(^{25}\)) will (Dn 4:35; Mt 10:29; Ro 9:15–20; 1 Cor 12:11; Eph 1:1, 5, 9, 11; Heb 2:4; Ja 4:13–15; Rv 4:11), His eternal purpose (Eph 1:9, 11; 3:11), what He pleases (Pss 115:3; 135:6; 1 Cor 12:18), or His pleasure (Is 46:10; Eph 1:5).\(^{26}\) God’s sovereign, purposeful will is the final cause of all things (Eph 1:11).\(^{27}\)

• Election and predestination, which involve God’s free choices and His determined purposes and plans—especially in the sovereign dispensing of His love and grace in man’s salvation (Ac 2:23; 4:28; 13:48; Ro 8:29–30; 9:15–16, 22–23; Eph 1:4–5, 11; 2 Tim 1:9; cf. Ac 17:26).

• God’s sovereignty is manifest in when, and to whom, He gives revelation of the mystery of His will and purposes (Gal 1:15–16; Eph 1:9, 17; 3:3, 5).

What God’s sovereignty means

God’s sovereignty or freedom means that God is not obligated by anything external to Himself. He is under no rule or law outside of His own nature and will; God is a law unto Himself. God is under no obligation to give an account of His actions to anyone (Dn 4:35; Ro 9:19–20ff; Job 38–41). He alone is the absolute Lord, Master, and King. God wills as He chooses and carries out all that He wills (Pss

\(^{25}\) For the distinction between God’s decretive/secret will and His revealed/prescriptive/legislative will see Robert E. Fugate, “Two Wills in God,” unpublished paper.

\(^{26}\) The freedom of God is not pure indifference, but rational self-determination. God has reasons for willing as He does, which induce Him to choose one end rather than another, and one set of means to accomplish one end in preference to others. There is in each case a prevailing motive, which makes the end chosen and the means selected the most pleasing to Him, though we may not be able to determine what this motive is” (Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941], 78).

No one can restrain His hand (Dn 4:35; Job 11:10; Is 45:9) or thwart His plans,\textsuperscript{28} for “My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure” (Is 46:10). Indeed, Isaiah proclaims a prophetic “Woe to him who strives with his Maker!” (Is 45:9; cf. v. 7; Ps 2).

God’s sovereignty is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable.

The Sovereignty of the God of Scripture is absolute, irresistible, infinite. When we say that God is Sovereign we affirm His right to govern the universe which He has made for His own glory, just as He pleases. We affirm that His right is the right of the Potter over the clay, i.e., that He may mold that clay into whatsoever form He chooses, fashioning out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor. We affirm that He is under no rule or law outside of His own will and nature, that God is a law unto Himself, and that He is under no obligation to give an account of His matters to any.\textsuperscript{29}

God’s sovereignty or freedom interpenetrates all His other attributes. For example, God is sovereign in the exercise of His power, manifesting it when He wills, where He wills, and how He wills (Jn 5:3ff; Lk 4:25–27). God is sovereign in revealing and hiding truth (Mt 11:25–27; Lk 10:21–22). God is also sovereign in the exercise of His love and grace, that is, He savingly loves those whom He chooses (elects) to love; He loves according to His own good pleasure or “free will” (Ro 9:13–18; Eph 1:4–5, 11; cf. Jn 1:13).

\textsuperscript{28} J.I. Packer, *Concise Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993), 33.

(Deserved grace is a contradiction of terms. God’s grace can only be sovereign grace because God is absolutely sovereign.)

As Creator and Lord, God possesses the right of the potter over the clay; thus He may mold that clay into whatever form He chooses, even fashioning out of the same lump of clay one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor (Ro 9:20–23 [cf. vv. 11–19]; Jer 18:1–6; Is 29:16; 45:9).

The triune God is also sovereign over the church, calling men to specific ministries and distributing spiritual gifts as He wills (1 Cor 12:11, 18, 28; Heb 2:4; cf. Ro 12:3, 6; Eph 4:8, 11; cf. Paul called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ “by the will of God”: 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1).

God’s sovereign free will is

the final cause of all things. Everything is derived from it: creation and preservation (Ps 135:6; Jer 18:6; [27:5; Ne 9:6; Ac 17:28; Ro 11:36;] Rv 4:11); [civil] government (Pr 21:1; Dn 4:35); election and reprobation (Ro 9:15–16; Eph 1:[4–5,]11); the sufferings of Christ (Lk 22:42; Ac 2:23 [Ac 4:27–28]); regeneration (Ja 1:18 [Jn 1:13]); satisfaction (Phil 2:13); sufferings of believers (1 Pt 3:17 [1 Sm 3:18; Job 2:10; 1:21]); man’s life and destiny (Ac 18:21; Ro 15:32; Ja 4:15); and even the smallest things of life (Mt 10:29). 30

30 Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 76; based on Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:229. God’s free will includes His works of creation, redemption, and providence. “God’s necessary will includes everything that he must will according to his own nature” (Ex 3:14) (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 212f; cf. Berkhof, 78; Bavinck, 2:233f).
“The assertion of God’s absolute sovereignty in creation, providence, and grace is basic to biblical belief and biblical praise” (Ne 9:6; Rv 4:11; 19:1–7a, 11, 15–16).

Arminians affirm God’s sovereignty, but then covertly retract it by saying that God chose to make every individual person’s “free will” sovereign in the arena of his or her personal salvation. But God cannot give away one of His attributes and still be God. God cannot be sovereign in some areas and not in others; sovereignty is all-encompassing. “God cannot be ‘robbed’ of sovereignty at one point without soon being denied sovereignty at all points.”

To reject the doctrine of God’s sovereignty is to reject the God of the Bible and fail to glorify Him.

How different is the God of the Bible from the God of modern Christendom! The conception of Deity which prevails most widely today, even among those who profess to give heed to the Scriptures, is a miserable caricature, a blasphemous travesty of the Truth. The God of the twentieth century is a helpless, effeminate being who commands the respect of no really thoughtful man. The God of the popular mind is the creation of maudlin [excessive emotional] sentimentality. The

32 J.I. Packer, Concise Theology, 33.
God of many a present-day pulpit is an object of pity rather than of awe-inspiring reverence.\(^{34}\)

**Aspects or facets of God’s sovereignty or lordship**

1. God has absolute and total government (1 Ch 29:11–12; Pss 22:28; 47:2–3, 7–8; 95:3–5; 103:19; 145:11–13; Dn 5:23; Ac 17:28; pervasive occurrences of God saying “I will cause” and “I have caused”); “appoints”/“appointed time” (Dn 5:21; 8:19; 10:1; 11:27, 29, 35). God’s absolute government includes:

- the hearts of rulers (Pr 21:1; Cyrus, King of Persia, ordering the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, 2 Ch 36:22–23 = Ezr 1:1–2,\(^{35}\) and Is 44:28–45:1; King David ordering a census, thereby incurring God’s judgment on Israel, 2 Sm 24:1; Pul/Tiglath-Pileser, King of Assyria, invading Israel, 1 Ch 5:26; God hardening Pharaoh’s heart;\(^{36}\) Rehoboam rejecting the advice of the elders of Israel and, consequently, losing ten tribes, 2 Ch 10:15);

- appointing and removing civil rulers (Ro 13:1; Jer 27:5–7; Dn 1:2; 2:21, 37; 4:17, 24–25, 32; 5:18–19, 21, 26–28; 7:4, 6, 14, 25; 8:12; Rv 13:5, 7)—even by their death (1 Ki 22:30, 37);

- giving land to nations (taking it from other nations), setting their geographical boundaries (Ac 17:26; Gn 15:18; Dt 2:5, 9, 12, 19, 24);

\(^{34}\) Arthur W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God*, 19f.

\(^{35}\) With regard to the repetition of these verses, successive prophets wrote the ending to their predecessors’ last book (“colophon principle”; Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Words to You* [Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 2012], 386f).


• causing war (2 Ki 24:2–3; 1 Ch 5:26; 2 Ch 21:16–17; 24:24; 33:11; Is 5:26; 7:18; Rv 6:4, 8);
• not letting enemies attack (Ex 34:24; Ps 105:14–15);
• sending judicial spiritual blindness over a nation (Is 19:14,\(^{38}\) 29:9–10\(^{39}\) and Ro 11:7–8) and bringing various covenant curses;
• imparting knowledge to man (e.g., for his trade, Is 28:24–29; cf. Dt 8:18);\(^{40}\)

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\(^{38}\) Isaiah 19:11–15 is a prophecy against “the internationally famous political wisdom of the Egyptian court” (Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, AB [New York, NY: Doubleday, 2000], 315). “In spite of the Egyptians’ vaunted claims of being the source of true wisdom...Yahweh has rendered their knowledge helpless” (Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah*, OTL [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001], 143). Egypt “seems to have no discernible policy to meet the Assyrian threat and seems to be blind to the rising power of Ethiopia” (John D.W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, WBC [Waco, TX: Word, 1985], 255).

The “perverse spirit” (NKJV)/“spirit of confusion” (ESV, NRSV)/“spirit of distortion” (NASB) probably operated through Egypt’s priestly caste, producing “false counsels and hopes” (Carl F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, (reprint: Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), *Isaiah*, 1:361). “The folly therefore which characterized Egypt did not come about in the ‘natural course of events,’ nor was it accidental, but resulted from a direct supernatural judicial action pronounced [by Yehovah] against the nation. As a result of this spirit Egypt will be led astray in all its work, namely, its economic procedure, daily business, and occupation” (E.J. Young, *Isaiah*, 3 vols. [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969], 2:30). Cf. 1 Ki 22:19–23; 2 Th 2:11.

Note that confusion/stumbling is one of the curses of the law (Lv 26:36–37; Dt 28:29; 32:35); a blessing of the law included God bringing such judicial confusion upon enemies (Ex 23:27; Dt 7:23; cf. Robert E. Fugate, “Confuse and Divide Enemies to Destroy Each Other,” unpublished paper).

\(^{39}\) “The ultimate cause was God Himself, who in His sovereign good pleasure had decreed that the nation should persist in blindness and spiritual drunkenness” (E.J. Young, *Isaiah*, 2:316)—as prophesied in Is 6:9–11. “When men are blind, and especially in things so plain and obvious, we perceive his [God’s] righteous judgment” (John Calvin, *Isaiah* [reprint: Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1984], 2:320, [http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom14.xviii.i.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom14.xviii.i.html)).

\(^{40}\) This includes general revelation (Ps 19:1–4; Ac 14:15–17; 17:22–31; Ro 1:18–32; 2:14–16), which is God’s revelation of Himself to all persons at all times in all
• causing plants to grow (Job 38:27; Ps 104:14) and feeding animals and birds (Pss 104:27; 147:9; Mt 6:26; Lk 12:24);
• the birth and death of individual animals and birds (Ps 29:9; Mt 10:29–30);
• sending animals for provision (Ex 16:12–13; Nu 11:31–32; Ps 105:41; 1 Ki 17:4, 6) or for judgment (Nu 21:6; 2 Ki 17:25).
• the results of (Biblical) casting lots (Pr 16:33),\(^{41}\) and
• “upholding all things by the word of His power” (Heb 1:3; cf. Col 1:17).

2. God ordained and predestined all things (Ac 15:18; Ro 8:30; 9:8–24; Pr 16:4). (“The state which claims to be sovereign must therefore aim at total control and planning, i.e., the ordination and the predestination of all things by man.”\(^{42}\))

3. God knows all things (Heb 4:13). (The “sovereign” state aims at omniscience through total surveillance.)

4. God owns the earth and all it contains (Ex 9:29; 19:5; Lv 25:23; Dt 10:14; 1 Ch 29:11; Job 41:11; Pss 24:1; 50:12; Dn 4:25; 1 Cor 10:26, 28)—including: land (Lv 25:23); silver and gold (Hg 2:8); animals, fish, and birds (Ps 50:10); and all people (Ps 24:1; Ezk 18:4).

5. God reserves to Himself the right to set the boundaries of man’s rule.

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places through creation, through His providential governing of history, and through man’s mind and conscience (Robert E. Fugate, *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, 40–43).


• God established separate jurisdictions of family, church, and state—each being subordinate to His written Word.43
• God gave Biblical qualifications for church leaders (1 Tim 3:1–13; Tit 1:5–9) and for civil magistrates.44
• God restricts the authority of kings or supreme rulers (Dt 17:14–20; Mt 14:445).46
• God limits civil taxation to the head tax (½ ounce silver annually for each adult male, Ex 30:11–1647) (contra confiscatory taxation in 1 Sm 8:7–18).48
• God punishes civil magistrates who usurp the role of the church (e.g., Saul, 1 Sm 13:8–14; Jeroboam, 1 Ki 12:31–13:5; Uzziah, 2 Ch 26:16–23).49

45 John the Baptizer rebuked Herod Antipas, the tetrarch or King of Galilee and Perea, for his adultery and incest with his brother Philip’s wife, Herodius. John kept telling Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have her” (Mt 14:4 // Mk 6:18; cf. Lk 3:19). “Additional examples include Nathan rebuking King David (2 Sm 12:1–14), an unnamed prophet rebuking King Jeroboam (1 Ki 12:31–13:10), Elijah rebuking King Ahab (1 Ki 18:18; 21:17–26), the priest Azariah rebuking King Uzziah (2 Ch 26:16–23), and Daniel rebuking the pagan Babylonian King Belshazzar (Dn 5:17–28) for violating God’s law” (Robert E. Fugate, Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government, 20).
46 “The meaning of the kingship of God, according to the Bible, is the denial to mankind of the concentration and permanence of power” (Matitiahu Tsevat, “The Biblical Account of the Foundation of the Monarchy in Israel,” 91; cited by Bill T. Arnold, 1 & 2 Samuel, NIV Application Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003], 150).
47 Robert E. Fugate, Toward a Theology of Taxation (Omaha, NE: Lord of the Nations, 2009), 54f.
48 Robert E. Fugate, Toward a Theology of Taxation. For a discussion of 1 Samuel 8 see pp. 15–23.
49 God rejects Erastianism/Prelacy, in which the state controls the church and the church is a department of the state. This was the case in: Eastern Orthodoxy of
6. God reserves to Himself the authority to:

- determine law (Ja 4:12 “one Lawgiver”; Is 33:22 Judge, Lawgiver, King; 1 Ch 28:7),50
- define justice/righteousness (Heb 2:2; 1 Ch 22:13);51 and
- regulate courts (Is 33:22; Gn 18:25; Dt 1:16–18; 33:21; 2 Ch 19:6–7).52

Scripture is God’s sovereign law-Word that rules over us
Because God is sovereign—possessing all authority and power, and being the absolute Source of law and ethics—God’s Word53

the Byzantine Empire (emperor was head both of state and church, i.e., a caesaropapist); England; and Germany (Robert E. Fugate, *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government*, 109).

51 In the New King James version, there are at least 45 occurrences of the phrase “evil in the sight of the Lord” in the books of Judges, 1 & 2 Kings, and 2 Chronicles (along with 4 occurrences elsewhere). There are 18 occurrences of the phrase “right in the sight of the Lord” in the books of Deuteronomy, 2 Kings, and 2 Chronicles. Slight variations of wording add up to 82 occurrences of “in the sight of the Lord” in the entire Bible. These phrases describe God’s value judgments on the behavior of specific individuals (especially the kings of Israel and Judah)—value judgments based on God’s objective standard of righteousness-justice, not man’s standard.
53 The term “word of God” includes three forms of the revelations of God: (1) the Logos, the eternal Son of God, is the personal Word of God (Jn 1:1, 14; 1 Jn 1:1–2; Rv 19:13); (2) the revelatory messages that came from God, i.e., the Law on Mount Sinai, the “word of the Lord” spoken through the OT prophets, and the oral preaching and teaching by Christ and the Apostles before the NT was completed; (3) the Scriptures, the God-breathed written Word of God (Jn 10:35; Ro 9:6; etc.; cf. Ps 119).
possesses His absolute authority and power, and it functions as our supreme source of law and ethics. God’s Word is His law-Word. It reveals His prescriptive or legislative will.

We possess God’s living, unalterable words in the Bible. In our study of bibliology, we learned that Scripture is the product of God’s creative breath (2 Tim 3:16), and that it contains God’s very words. The Scriptures are “the sum total of the revelations of God which were infallibly recorded in a God-breathed, written form, designed to be the permanent deposit of divine truth and the permanent rule of faith and life to the universal Church.”54 “The Bible is: (1) the Word of God written; (2) the criterion of truth; (3) the rule of faith and life; and (4) a means or channel of God’s grace.”55 Consequently, “Scripture, in some measure, shares some of God’s own characteristics.”56 Thus it is quite proper to say that the sovereign God sovereignly rules over us through His written Word, which is the sovereign rule, the ultimate authority, over our faith and life.

However, Scripture is more than God’s sovereign authority that rules in the lives of individual believers and in Christ’s church. John Calvin described the Bible as “God’s scepter” by which He rules His universe.57 J. Gresham Machen added, “It is the charter upon which

54 Robert E. Fugate, The Bible: God’s Words to You, 308, 341; idem., God’s Revelation, 86f.
56 Robert E. Fugate, The Bible: God’s Words to You, 711f.
all human liberty depends.”

Johannes Vos observed that in whatever nations the Bible has been freely circulated and believed, those “nations have gained liberty, enlightenment, justice, and prosperity.” In light of these facts, what will happen to any nation that rejects the applicability of the Bible to society (i.e., to civil law, judicial system, monetary system, medical practice, public education, counseling, etc.)?

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58 John Gresham Machen, *God Transcendent*, ed. Ned B. Stonehouse (1949; repr., Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1982), 120. R.J. Rushdoony demonstrates that where there is no transcendental law and power in a separate and omnipotent being, then power has a wholly immanent and immediate source in a state, group, or person, and it is beyond appeal. The state becomes the saving power and the source of law; it becomes the priestly agency of its own total power and the manifest power of its divinity. Such a state becomes god walking on the earth [Hegel], and its every tyranny is identified as liberty, because being and meaning are both identifiable in terms of the state. Since it is held that there is no law beyond the state, meaning is what the state defines, and liberty is what the state provides. In this faith, for man to be free means to be in the state. More than that, for man to be, he must be a member of the state, for being is one and continuous, and salvation is a metaphysical unification of all being (*The One and the Many* [Fairfax, VA: Thoburn, 1978], 60f).

Christians opposing the application of the Bible to the state and to culture

Sadly, large segments of Bible-believing Christians oppose and prohibit the application of the Bible to the state and to culture, for example:

- Lutherans—two-kingdom theology;
- Pietists—spiritual vs. secular/worldly;⁶⁰
- Dispensationalists—the church is the spiritual people of God with a spiritual destiny; God’s earthly kingdom (which comes with the second coming of Christ) is for God’s earthly people, the Jews (e.g., Protestant-Thomist Norman Geisler);

(Note: All three of these views are based upon a platonic, spirit vs. matter dualism); and

- Many contemporary Reformed scholars, such as:
  - Meredith Kline—intrusionist ethics (virtually a Reformed type of dispensationalism);⁶¹

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⁶⁰ See Robert E. Fugate, “A Summary of Crucial Errors of Pietism,” available at http://www.lordofthenations.com/free-downloads. In declaring, “My kingdom is not of this world...My kingdom is not from here” (Jn 18:36), Jesus is asserting that His kingdom or rule does not have an earthly origin or an earthly source of authority; rather, it comes from His Father in Heaven. Jesus’ statement should not be misconstrued to mean that His kingdom is not active in this world, or has nothing to do with this world, or is not ruling over this world (Mt 28:18). Additionally, neither Jesus (Jn 8:23; 17:14; cf. 3:31), nor His disciples are “of this world” (Jn 15:19; 17:14, 16)—but they certainly were active in the world, were overcoming the world (Jn 16:33; 1 Jn 5:4–5), and were transforming the world (Ac 17:6).

⁶¹ Key problem areas in Kline’s system include: (1) the sharp distinction between “life-norms” and “faith-norms” (resulting in the Old Testament not being part of the “canon” or “life-norms” of the Christian community, since it is the covenant document for the Mosaic Covenant, not the new covenant); (2) the assertion that the Noahic Covenant teaches a religiously-neutral state (as a non-holy
Herman Dooyeweerd—principled pluralism / sphere sovereignty / cosmonomic philosophy; and Reformed scholars reverting to the Lutheran two-kingdom theory (e.g., Michael Horton, R. Scott Clark, David Van Drunen).

In denying the applicability of the Bible to society, these Christians assert that culture is to be governed by “natural law” and “common grace.” But if God rules through His law-Word, then to denounce the applicability of God’s Word to culture is, in practice, to deny God’s sovereignty! Thus many Presbyterian scholars, who


62 Dooyeweerd’s principled pluralism/sphere sovereignty postulates 15 irreducible law-spheres. The Bible is irrelevant to 14 of the 15 spheres! Consequently, the Bible cannot provide any principles for ethics, civil government, economics, science, art, etc. The Bible only deals with matters of faith. Natural revelation, common grace, and natural law must govern all other aspects of life and culture.

For critiques by Gordon Clark, Frame, Nash, Rushdoony, etc. see Robert E. Fugate, “Herman Dooyeweerd,” unpublished paper.

63 John M. Frame, The Escondido Theology critiques Reformed scholars Meredith Kline, Michael Horton, R. Scott Clark, David Van Drunen, Darryl Hart, and Jason Stellman.
vociferously assert the sovereignty of God, in their practice, deny the sovereignty of God. To deny absolute, universal sovereignty to God by denying the applicability of His law-Word to certain spheres of life implicitly promotes polytheism (cf. 1 Ki 20:23–24, 28 gods of the hills/planes/valleys).  

**Sovereignty inescapable**

Sovereignty is an inescapable concept. When people reject the sovereignty of the triune God (Ro 1:18–19, 32; Ps 2:1–3; Lk 19:14), they transfer sovereignty somewhere else, such as to:

- the individual (e.g.: the philosophical ethics of egoism; political libertarianism);
- the state—whether as a collective entity (e.g., democracy), an oligarchical elite group (e.g., Senate, Parliament, Supreme Court, scientific technocrats, UN), or an individual, all-powerful dictator;
- the church (e.g., the Roman Catholic Church with its infallible pope); or
- some abstract, impersonal concept (e.g.: ancient Greek Fate; Hegel’s Absolute Mind; New Age divinized nature or karma; or Hindu Brahman).

**God’s sovereignty—even as expressed in election and foreordination/predestination—does not negate human responsibility and accountability**  

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64 The plagues in Egypt were against her gods (Ex 12:12; Nu 33:4) that ruled various spheres (John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament*, rev., [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994], 85).
65 No one has ever demonstrated that the concept of responsibility is in any way dependent on a prior state of free will (Gordon H. Clark, “God and Evil,” *Religion,* 25
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PEOPLE EVENTS</th>
<th>DIVINE FOREORDINATION</th>
<th>HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judas(^{66})</td>
<td>“Jesus knew from the beginning...who would betray Him” (Jn 6:64) “the Son of Man goes as it has been determined” (Lk 22:22). // “just as it is written” (Mt 26:24 // Mk 14:21). “none of them is lost except the son of perdition, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled” (Jn 17:12; cf. 13:18).</td>
<td>“but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born” (Mk 14:21 // Mt 26:24 // Lk 22:22).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish and Roman leaders</td>
<td>“against Your holy Servant Jesus...Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and</td>
<td>“Rulers of the people and elders of Israel...whom you</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Reason and Revelation*, 194–224; chapter five was reprinted as a separate book, *God and Evil: The Problem Solved*).

| Men/people of Israel | “delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God” (Ac 2:23). “against Your holy Servant Jesus...Herod” (Ac 13:27, 29). | “crucified...rejected by you” (Ac 4:8, 10–11). “whom you murdered by hanging on a tree” (Ac 5:30). “the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers” (Ac 7:52). |
and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done” (Ac 4:27–28).

“you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses” (Ac 3:14–15).

“the Judeans, who killed both the Lord Jesus and their own prophets...and they do not please God and are contrary to all men...as always to fill up the measure of their sins; but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost” (1 Th 2:14b–16).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salvation (including calling, repentance, faith, sanctification)</th>
<th>“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him. ... No one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father” (Jn 6:44, 65).</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. ... If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink” (Jn 6:37; 7:37).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Come to Me, all you who labor and are</td>
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hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight” (Mt 11:25–27; cf. Lk 10:21–22; Mt 16:17).

“It has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given” (Mt 13:11).

“if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will” (2 Tim 2:25–26).

“As many as had been appointed to eternal life believed” (Ac 13:48; cf. 16:14).

heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Mt 11:28).

“Our eyes they have closed” (Mt 13:15).

“God...commands all men everywhere to repent” (Ac 17:30).

“Repent, and believe in the gospel” (Mk 1:15).

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household” (Ac 16:31).

“work out your own salvation with fear
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>spiritual gifts and ministries (including miracles, healings, deliverances)</th>
<th>“…for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Phil 2:13b; cf. Col 1:29b). God’s preservation of the saints.67</th>
<th>and trembling…” (Phil 2:13a; cf. Col 1:29a). The perseverance of the believer in faith and obedience to the end.68</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. … God has appointed these in the church…” (1 Cor 12:18, 28). The resurrected Lord Jesus “gave gifts…He Himself gave some to be…” (Eph 4:8, 11) The Holy “Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills” (1 Cor 12:11). “God also bearing witness both with</td>
<td>“If a man aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task” (1 Tim 3:1 conflating NJKV and ESV). “Desire earnestly the best gifts. … Desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. … Desire earnestly to</td>
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signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will” (Heb 2:4).

“God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. ... Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them*” (Ro 12:3, 6).

“...as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Ac 2:4).

...Jesus commanded Peter, “Come...” (Mt 14:29).

Jesus gave the twelve disciples “power [du,namij] and authority [evxousi,a] over all demons” (Lk 9:1) “to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease” (Mt 10:1).

“they...began to speak with other tongues...” (Ac 2:4).

“command me to come to You on the water. ... when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water” (Mt 14:28–29).

“Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons” (Mt 10:8 Majority Text).
“...the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs” (Mk 16:20).

“God has dealt to each one a measure of faith” (Ro 12:3).

“...They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat” (Mt 14:16 // Mk 6:37 // Lk 9:13; cf. “to test” Philip, Jn 6:6).

“They went out and preached everywhere...” (Mk 16:20).

“If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes” (Mk 9:23; cf. 11:22–24; 16:17–18; Jn 14:12).

| all things | God “works all things according to the counsel of His will” (Eph 1:11). | God will judge every man and angel regarding all their: deeds (Ro 2:6; 2 Cor 5:10; Rv 20:12–13; 22:12; Ec 12:14); thoughts and motives (Ro 2:16; 1 Cor 4:5); spoken words (Mt 12:36–37). |
R.J. Rushdoony quotes

“Sovereignty is an attribute of God alone, not of man nor the state. God alone is Lord or Sovereign over all things; over state, school, family, vocations, society and all things else.”69

“To talk about sovereignty is to talk about our god; this god can be the state, ourselves, or the God of Scripture. Whatever our god is, there too is sovereignty, authority, morality, and ultimacy.”70

A sovereign state decrees (in its own way), “Thou shalt have no other gods before me,’ and it seeks to destroy all who stand in the way of its claim to total sovereignty.”71

“A sovereign [ruler] is not under law because he is the source of law; this is the premise of the modern state.”72

“In the modern world, sovereignty or lordship has ceased to be the attribute of God and has become the attribute of either man or the state, or shared by both. Even those theologians who talk much about God’s sovereignty tend to limit it to salvation, the church, and theology, which means in effect to deny God’s sovereignty. ... The Sovereign or Lord is the source of government, law, and taxation.”73

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70 Rousas J. Rushdoony, The Roots of Reconstruction, 493.
71 Rousas J. Rushdoony, The Roots of Reconstruction, 495.
72 Rousas J. Rushdoony, Sovereignty, 467.
73 Rousas J. Rushdoony, The Roots of Reconstruction, 89, 98.
“The state which claims to be sovereign must therefore aim at total control and planning, i.e., the ordination and the predestination of all things by man.”

“For a theologian to discuss the doctrine of God without dealing with the usurpations of humanistic civil governments and schools is to deny God. It is impossible to discuss the doctrine of God in an ecclesiastical vacuum. God is not a mere Idea, after the Greeks.”

“Religions which deny the sovereignty of their ‘god’ become polytheistic. It is logically impossible to ascribe sovereignty to any being other than God and still retain a god in one’s system. The transfer of sovereignty to the state means that law-making and lordship are transferred to the state. The power to make laws is the power to declare things to be good and evil. … To acknowledge the sovereignty of and predestination by the triune God is to deny the sovereignty of the state and predestination (i.e., total planning and control) by the state. Sovereignty and predestination are exclusive attributes. If God is the Lord, if there is no god but God, then neither man nor the state can be the sovereign or lord. If essential and ultimate determination, planning, and control belong to God alone, then no man nor state can assume such a prerogative unto itself. Men and nations then must acknowledge God’s sovereignty, and men and nations must seek to know their place and calling in God’s plan.”

“To limit the jurisdiction of the God of Scripture to the soul of man and to the church is to deny Him. … [Such] theology allows the state to be sovereign or lord, it offers no resistance to statist controls. …

74 Rousas J. Rushdoony, The Roots of Reconstruction, 489.
76 Rousas J. Rushdoony, The Roots of Reconstruction, 180f.
[It] is implicit polytheism. ... To claim neutrality for any realm is to deny God created it, and to posit neutrality is to cease to be a Christian. ... [It] proclaims the death of God, because a limited God ceases to be God.”77

Regarding the law of Rome: “Two rival doctrines of sovereignty and law were at war with one another, the sovereignty of God and His law versus the sovereignty of man, the state, and man-made law. From the days of Rome to the present, history has been witness to this continuing battle. In any system of thought, the sovereign is the law-maker and thus the de facto god. Sovereignty, or lordship, and law-making are inseparable. The power to make laws is a manifestation of ultimacy and sovereignty in a society and over a society. It is a religious fact, and it manifests the god of that system. ... Any study of the history of the West which is separated from theology is an exercise in evasion and futility. To chronicle events is not to understand history. ... The law of God speaks from beyond history to judge and govern all within history.”78

“Totalitarianism begins with the belief that human sovereignty or state sovereignty exists. ... If the state is sovereign or lord, man has no rights nor freedom as against the state.”79 “Because today the sovereignty of God is denied, the sovereignty of man and the state is affirmed.”80

“The alternative to the sovereignty, government, and providence of the triune God is in practice the sovereignty, government, and providence of church, state, or some agency of man. It means

77 Rousas J. Rushdoony, The Roots of Reconstruction, 183f.
79 Rousas J. Rushdoony, Sovereignty, 4, 5.
80 Rousas J. Rushdoony, The Roots of Reconstruction, 701.
freedom from God for the slavery of sin and rebellion. The man who is in revolt against God’s reign will soon be the slave, not only of sin, but of apostate institutions, churches, states, families, men, women, and children. For such a slave, freedom is intolerable. ... To affirm the sovereignty of God means to deny the sovereignty, government, and providence of man, the state, the church, and all other man-made agencies. Their only role is to obey God as defined by God’s word. All else is usurpation and sin.”

Summary

The doctrine of God’s Sovereignty then is no mere metaphysical dogma which is devoid of practical value, but is one that is calculated to produce a powerful effect upon Christian character and the daily walk. The doctrine of God’s Sovereignty lies at the foundation of Christian theology, and in importance is perhaps second only to the Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures. It is the center of gravity in the system of Christian truth: the sun around which all the lesser orbs are grouped. It is the golden milestone to which every highway of knowledge leads and from which they all radiate. It is the cord upon which all other doctrines are strung like so many pearls, holding them in place and giving them unity. It is the plumbline by which every creed needs to be measured, the balance in which every human dogma must be weighed. It is designed as the sheet-anchor for our souls amid the storms of life. The doctrine of God’s Sovereignty is a Divine cordial to refresh our spirits. It is designed and adapted to mold the affections of the heart and to give a right direction to conduct. It produces gratitude in prosperity and patience in adversity. It affords comfort for the

81 Rousas J. Rushdoony, Systematic Theology, 1:211, 213.
present and a sense of security respecting the unknown future. It is, and it does all, and much more than we have just said because it ascribes to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the glory which is His due, and places the creature in his proper place before Him—in the dust.\(^8^2\)

What does it mean then to believe in sovereignty, government, and providence as a Christian? It means that my life and being are under the sovereignty and government of the all-wise and most holy Trinity, whose ordering, preserving, and government of all things is for His own purpose and glory, and that my only joy and purpose is to acknowledge that sovereign, governing providence, and to rest in its sufficiency. It means that, in every area of life, I must acknowledge and establish rule, law, and authority only in terms of His law-word and in faithfulness to His Kingship.\(^8^3\)

“Satan’s greatest deception is to persuade us that we do not need to acknowledge the sovereignty of God. As with Adam and Eve, he continues to deceive human beings regarding God’s authority,” to bolster his own usurpatory authority.\(^8^4\)

Applications\(^8^5\)

1. The doctrine of God’s sovereignty dethrones man (the creature) and exalts the triune God (the Creator) as absolute Lord, thereby: destroying the idolatry of man as god (Gn 3:5);
destroying humanism (i.e., the false religion of man being the center of all things); and humbling man’s pride.

- It takes away the pride of man being sovereign in his salvation (Eph 2:8–10).

2. The doctrine of God’s sovereignty denounces all false gods and false religions: polytheism, animism, monism, dualism, Satanism, divinized statism, messianic education, etc.

3. The doctrine of God’s sovereignty lays the foundation of man’s mission, which is expressed in the dominion covenant (Gn 1:26–28; Ps 8:4–8) and in the Great Commission (Mt 28:18–20), thereby sanctifying all areas of life. “In every area of life and thought, I must assert the crown rights of Christ the King and bring all things into captivity to Him. ... The theologian who believes in God’s sovereignty, government, and providence must challenge the things which are the humanistic usurpers of God’s honor.”

86 “Lord, I thank thee I am not like those poor presumptuous Calvinists. Lord, I was born with a glorious free-will; I was born with power by which I can turn to thee of myself; I have improved my grace. If everybody had done the same with their grace that I have, they might all have been saved. Lord, I know thou dost not make us willing if we are not willing ourselves. Thou givest grace to everybody; some do not improve it, but I do. There are many that will go to hell as much bought with the blood of Christ as I was; they had as much of the Holy Ghost given to them; they had as good a chance, and were as much blessed as I am. It was not thy grace that made us to differ; I know it did a great deal, still I turned the point; I made use of what was given me, and others did not—that is the difference between me and them” (excerpt from Spurgeon’s Sermons, v. 1, # 52, “Free Will—A Slave”; available at http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0052.php).

87 Rousas J. Rushdoony, Systematic Theology, 1:211f.
4. The doctrine of God’s sovereignty encourages submission to God’s will (Isa 45:9; 64:8; 1 Sm 3:18; 2 Sm 15:26; Job 9:12; 33:13; 40:2).

5. In the midst of all our planning, we must acknowledge that the sovereign God may allow our plans to succeed, or He may alter or overrule our plans (James 4:13–16).

6. The doctrine of God’s sovereignty provides peace, security, and comfort to the believer (Rom 8:28ff; 12:2).

7. The doctrine of God’s sovereignty guarantees the final triumph of good over evil, of truth over falsehood, of the kingdom of God over the kingdom of Satan.

Biblical Worldview Resources  
by Robert E. Fugate, Ph.D.

Hard cover book

The Bible: God’s Words to You is an 863-page, Reformed, presuppositional treatment of the doctrine of Scripture, including: inspiration, inerrancy, Reformation properties of Scripture, illumination by the Holy Spirit, Old and New Testament canon, apocrypha, and textual criticism. One of the unique features of this book is its presentation of the subject of bibliology from the perspective of the Biblical world-and life-view, along with a presuppositional approach to apologetics. The book teaches from Scripture itself, while still providing abundant, choice citations from the best Reformed and evangelical literature. The Bible: God’s Words to You includes a glossary, five appendices, and memory verses. One particularly useful appendix surveys the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy throughout church history, offering a litany of carefully-selected, well-referenced citations.

Endorsed by: Kenneth Gary Talbot, Ph.D., Th.D., Ed.D., J.D.; W. Gary Crampton, Ph.D., Th.D.; Rev. Phillip G. Kayser, Ph.D.

Paperback books

Psycho-Heresy: Christianizing Pagan Psychologies. This 6x9-inch, 337-page paperback examines the question, Can psychological counseling be Christian counseling? The first section presents the Biblical worldview—including a Biblical theory of knowledge (i.e., epistemology) and the impossibility of science arriving at truth (since it is based upon an epistemology of empiricism and probabilistic inductive reasoning). The second section presents key
areas of systematic theology that are appealed to by Christian integrationist counselors (such as the nature of man, and general and special revelation). Since one of the main gurus of the Christian counseling movement adamantly rejects the gospel of “Lordship salvation” (which requires repentance from sin), a Biblical examination of this topic is also included. On this basis of the Biblical worldview and sound systematic theology, the third section examines the roots, teachings, claims, and practices of evangelical integrationist counseling (which attempts to synthesize psychology and the Bible). This examination includes pervasive psychological themes, such as: self-esteem; the meeting of psychological “needs”; the gospel as unconditional and undemanding love; inner healing and self-love as the keys to personal transformation; the healing of memories; and freeing from addictions and codependencies.

Endorsed by: Franklin Ed. Payne, M.D.; Rev. Phillip G. Kayser, Ph.D.

**Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government: Proclaiming the Lordship of Jesus Christ over the Nations.** A 134-page introduction to the subject of civil government, from the perspective of the Biblical worldview. Topics include: What are the jurisdictions of family, church, and state? Can there be a religiously neutral civil government? What is the source of just laws? What are the Biblical qualifications for civil officials? What constitutes a just war? How should Christians resist a tyrannical state? Additional topics include: the idolatry of statism; the relationship between church and state; civil disobedience; eminent domain, etc.

God’s Mandate for Biblical Education. Education can only be understood from the perspective of worldviews. This 6x9-inch, 158-page paperback briefly examines the components of worldviews (particularly epistemology), and then presents the Biblical worldview of education.

Nine arguments (including the absolute lordship of Jesus Christ and covenant faithfulness) are powerfully presented, demonstrating that Biblically-consistent, comprehensive, Christian education is Biblically-mandated for all subjects of study, for all Christian children. This is followed by the six necessary components of Christian education, i.e., Biblically directed: teachers, content, goals, standard, method, and motivations. Foundational presuppositions for a Biblical philosophy of history, language, and science are taught. (Most people are surprised to learn that it is philosophically and logically impossible for science to ever arrive at absolute truth!) Many other questions are answered head-on, such as: Can education ever be religiously neutral? What is the Biblical role of the church and the state in the education of children? Is “classical” Christian education Biblical? (The answers may surprise you!) The differences between the Hebrew and Greek models of education are powerfully presented. In summary, this book does not deal with the well-documented evils in the public schools; neither is it based on the unbiblical philosophy of pragmatism; instead, it provides a hard-hitting ideology of truly Biblical education that is applicable in all cultures, forcing Christians to rethink most contemporary practices. Powerful quotes from Luther,
A.A. Hodge, Machen, and many others are included. *God’s Mandate for Biblical Education* makes an excellent gift for pastors and church libraries.


**God’s Royal Law: Foundation of Moral Order.** This 6x9-inch, 76-page paperback corrects many of the most common misunderstandings regarding God’s law and answers many of the most crucial questions, such as: What are the eight different lexical definitions of the word “law” in the New Testament? Is God’s law inherently opposed to grace, faith, love, and the Spirit? What different purposes does God’s law serve? What three things was God’s law never designed to do? Are the traditional divisions of God’s law (moral, civil, and ceremonial) Biblically justified? How does Christ relate to lawless people? What does the New Testament teach about Old Testament case laws? What is the significance of God writing His law on the hearts of His people in the new covenant?

**Toward a Theology of Taxation.** This 6x9-inch, 116-page paperback pioneers the application of God’s infallible and sufficient Word to the area of taxation. Many areas are explored: What types of taxes are mentioned in Scripture? Does God disapprove of some types of tax? What tax did God institute in Old Testament Israel? What does the prophet Samuel’s warning against a centralized civil government teach about increased taxation? Is the modern concept of taxation as the vehicle for socialistic revolution really Biblical? In what ways does “Pay to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s” limit the civil government? Is a tax revolt Biblical?
Endorsed by: Rev. Phillip G. Kayser, Ph.D.; the appendix was printed in Faith for All of Life.

A Biblical Philosophy of Truth with Contemporary Applications. This 6x9-inch, 98-page paperback begins with an exegetical-theological examination of the subject of truth. The research gleaned is applied to both truth as an attribute of God and to God’s Word being truth. Untruth is examined in human depravity, in Satan and his demons, and in spiritual warfare. Various philosophical perversions of truth are discussed, e.g., modernist, postmodernist, and existentialist. The relationship between truth and liberty in a culture is examined, followed by a Biblical survey of pervasive untruth in times of national apostasy. Then these principles are applied, making applications to expose the rejection of truth in contemporary American culture, including: public image vs. reality; propaganda; fiat currency and fractional reserve banking; lies American Christians believe about the United States (sure to be controversial!); etc. An appendix answers a question debated by theologians: Can intentional deception ever be righteous?

A Theology of Rationality and Logic. This 6x9-inch, 67-page paperback begins by explaining the difference between rationality and rationalism. The book then immediately gets to the heart of the matter, examining the theme of rationality and logic with regard to three foundational areas: God’s thinking, God’s Word, and man as the image of God. In this endeavor various questions are answered, such as, Does God think logically or is God’s thinking trans-rational? and How does the logical law of non-contradiction relate to the Bible? Many people think that a person’s ethics is unrelated to correct reasoning. But, is this what the Bible teaches? Does correct reasoning relate to our obedience to God? Does the
rejection of logic lead to the abandonment of morality? The next section traces the theme of rationality and logic in the realms of philosophy, world religions, and theology. Questions answered include: Which philosophies and religions promote irrationality? What are some examples of bad theology promoting irrationality? Several powerful apologetical questions to ask New Agers and other adherents of irrational religions are included. The last section applies what has been learned to three miscellaneous topics: Can divine miracles be both special revelation and non-propositional? Is Biblical speaking in tongues irrational? and Was Gordon Clark right that Cornelius Van Til promoted irrationalism?

**Biblical Curses: Divine and Demonic.** This 6x9-inch, 74-page paperback unveils the mysterious subject of Biblical curses in a breath not previously seen. Since this subject is foreign to most Western Christians, considerable scholarly documentation is marshalled to elaborate on Scripture passages. The book analyzes both God-empowered curses and demon-empowered curses. Which people did God curse and for what offenses? Were the covenant curses of God’s law only applicable for Biblical Israel, or do they also apply to Gentile nations? Biblical examples of righteous men pronouncing divinely-empowered, prophetic curses against covenant breakers are examined. Are Christians always protected from all evil curses, or can the righteous suffer from curses pronounced by the wicked? Does God’s protection always happen automatically, or do believers have an active role to play in directly resisting curses spoken against them, their family, and their church? Can curses be inadvertently spoken against one’s self, one’s family, others?
Booklets

Antinomianism in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: An Illustration of the Consequences of Rejecting God’s Law. This 32-page booklet describes three types of antinomians (i.e., those rejecting God’s moral law). In these groups we see several similarities with contemporary evangelical Christian thought: a strong rejection of the Old Testament, producing a “New Testament only Christianity”; elements of Greek dualism; charismatics who “follow the Spirit” while rejecting the letter of Scripture; contemplative worship that replaces Bible teaching; pitting God’s law against grace (“all things are lawful”); using the doctrine of grace to foster sexual immorality; no law but love; church tradition trumps God’s law; socialistic communities; sinless perfection; and universal salvation. Ideas have consequences. Antinomianism in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries poignantly illustrates the consequences of rejecting God’s moral law. Contains a bibliography.

Biblical Imprecations: Christians’ Secret Weapon. One of the perplexing ethical and hermeneutical problems facing Biblical scholars, pastors and intercessors, is the imprecatory Psalms, i.e., those Psalms that call or wish for God’s judgment, calamity or curse upon the enemies of God and God’s covenant people. Is it ever appropriate for Christians to pray Biblical imprecatory prayers? Why or why not? If these prayers are ever appropriate, in what circumstances are they to be used and by whom? The text of the imprecatory Psalms is given in an appendix—for convenient use in prayer. This 53-page booklet contains a bibliography.

A Brief History and Critique of Natural Law Theory—Is Natural Law Sufficient to Govern Society? What is “natural law” and why is it so ambiguous? Is nature normative? Where does the Bible command people to govern their societies by natural law? Why is it always necessary to interpret general revelation by the Bible? Should politically active Protestants adopt Roman Catholic natural theology? Is natural law theory logical? Is natural law practical? What are six consequences of basing civil laws on natural law? This 45-page booklet contains a bibliography.

Jealousy, Hatred, and Wrath: The Disregarded Attributes of God. This 43-page study makes a formidable, well-documented case that the attributes or perfections of the triune God—as He has revealed Himself in the Bible—include jealousy (especially toward idolatry), hatred of evil, and just wrath that punishes sinners. This provides a needed correction to the proclivity of fashioning a god after one’s own imagination—a god whose only attribute is love. A bibliography is included.

Justice and Sovereignty: Perfections of God Imaged by His People. This 39-page booklet examines the Biblical teaching regarding God’s attributes of justice and sovereignty and then delves into how God’s people image them individually and how they should be reflected in society. A bibliography is included.

Modernism and Postmodernism: Their History, Beliefs, Cultural Influence—and How to Refute Them. This 54-page booklet presents a Biblical analysis and critique of two crucial intellectual movements that have successively dominated much thinking in the Western world, from the 17th century to the present. The booklet begins by defining modernism and postmodernism and briefly tracing their historical and philosophical roots to the Renaissance.
and especially to the Enlightenment. The key beliefs of modernism and postmodernism are clearly and succinctly summarized. Adopting these key beliefs has had a massive, devastating impact on orthodox Christian theology, on Biblical hermeneutics, and on the entire Western culture. The fundamental points of disagreement between Biblical theism, modernism, and postmodernism are explained. The correlation between postmodernism and Emergent churches is also noted. A powerful, presuppositional rebuttal of modernism and postmodernism demonstrates that neither of them has a coherent worldview that can provide a foundation for knowledge and ethics. After ravaging postmodernism, the Biblical theology of language is taught.

**Some Continuities and Discontinuities between the Older Testament and the Newer Testament.** This 35-page booklet stresses the unity of Scripture and the importance of using the entire Bible. It answers the following questions. How were people saved in the Old Testament? What is the relationship between the Old Testament covenants and the new covenant? Were Old Testament ethics inferior to the ethics of the New Testament? What continues from the Old Testament and what does not continue and why? The hermeneutical question of continuity/discontinuity affects Christian practice in many areas, e.g., church-state relations, civil laws (e.g., capital punishment, abortion), dietary laws, regulations for worship, church polity, keeping the Sabbath, etc. A bibliography is included.

**What Is the Relationship between Christianity and Culture?—Five Historical Views and Their Consequences.** This 37-page study briefly summarizes the five predominant views regarding the relationship between Christianity and culture, which have been held over the last two thousand years, by different branches of the
Christian church. It then presents a compelling Biblical case for the Christ-the-transformer-of-culture view that was taught and practiced by Augustine, John Calvin, most Puritans, Jonathan Edwards, Abraham Kuyper, A.A. Hodge, and others.

Booklet authored by Vonne L. Fugate

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Endorsed by John Eidsmoe, J.D., M.Div.

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Have You Ever Wondered???

- What is the relationship between righteousness and justice?
- What relationship does God’s justice have to man’s culture?
- Does God reward His people on earth for righteous living, and if so, how?
- The Bible doesn’t use the word “sovereignty.” Where is this doctrine taught?
- What does God’s sovereignty mean, and how is it demonstrated in various aspects of life?
- What is the relationship between God’s sovereignty and man’s “free will?”
- In what ways do many Bible-believing Presbyterian professors and pastors deny God’s sovereignty?

About the Author

Robert Fugate, Ph.D., M.Div., has written a variety of teaching materials that have been used by pastors and missionaries in over 60 countries. His book, *The Bible: God’s Words to You*, is a complete textbook on the doctrine of Scripture (bibliology). Other books include: *Key Principles of Biblical Civil Government; Psycho-Heresy: Christianizing Pagan Psychologies*; and *God’s Mandate for Biblical Education*. Robert co-authored the position paper on the Sanctity of Human Life for the International Church Council Project/Coalition on Revival, as well as contributing to their position papers on God’s Law and on Christian Education.

In addition to being an author, Robert has pastored for over twenty years. He mentors pastors, missionary candidates, and young adults in Biblical worldview, presuppositional apologetics, and systematic theology.

Robert and Vonne (his wife of over forty years) are blessed with four godly children (all of whom they home-schooled) and ten grandchildren.