

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

1. Despite the variety of events in the history of the Jewish people, as these are noted in the record of Jesus' genealogy, God was silently working to bring His Messiah into the world (1:1-17).
2. Despite the real perplexities of Joseph about his beloved Mary, God was taking care of Jesus by providing Him a legal father and protection for His mother. Despite human experience of a virgin birth, God chose this method to come into the world, so that in the human Jesus, we learn what it means to have "God with us" (1:18-25).
3. Despite the clever planning of a murderous king, God rescued Jesus from harm and furnished sufficient funds for an extended sojourn in Egypt by gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh (2:1-21).
4. God will severely judge an unrepentant Israel, notwithstanding her claims to physical descent from Abraham, unless she embraces "the Lord" for whom John prepared the way (3:1-12).
5. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus underscored again and again "the Fatherhood of God" and His Fatherly care. (Cf. 5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 4, 6, 8, 14, 15, 18, 26, 32; 7:11.) Despite the terror of the persecutions which would tempt Christians to close themselves up in monastic seclusion, their purpose must be to glorify their Father who watches over their most secret thought and cares for their most fundamental needs.
6. The Mission of the Twelve is born in prayer to "the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (9:38). It is His field for which He is responsible and into whose service we pray He will raise up laborers. Despite the temptations to deny everything because of the terrors of the persecutions, God watches over His creation and will bless with victory all who proclaim His Word, although He may not intervene to halt those who would kill the body (10:26-31). He will not forget even the smallest help given His people (10:40-42).
7. Notwithstanding the incomprehension encountered by Jesus among His own people, God's sovereign decision to reveal Himself and His will in precisely the way Jesus had followed was gratefully accepted by Jesus (11:25-27). God's design actually worked and was being realized by Jesus' works. The sovereign Lord of heaven and earth is not forced to bow before those who believe themselves lords of the world ("the wise and understanding") (11:25).
8. It is God who can guarantee that all the sacrifices of Christ and

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His people will only result in life lived at its best (16:24-28). Life belongs to God, and only He can transform it. All that Jesus demands becomes comprehensible, if seen as obedience to God who by resurrection defeats our death, even as He did it for Jesus (16:21).

9. It is God who speaks from heaven, confirming Jesus' ministry, notwithstanding what all human judgment must pronounce a failure in His mission and procedure and results (17:5). Success, in God's view, must be obtained at the cross, both by Jesus and by each single disciple.
10. With God all things are possible, even the damnation of men despite their wealth and the saving of those who sacrifice all they possess for Jesus' sake, and who would be considered "poor" in human judgment (19:23-30).
11. The absolute Lordship of God is manifest in His free gift of grace to those whom He wishes to bless, regardless of the apparent unworthiness of these latter (20:1-16). Rather than measure the recompense on the basis of one's achievements, Jesus reaffirms that everything depends upon the free choice and mercy of God.
12. The sovereignty of God is underlined in the Parables of the Vineyard and the Marriage Feast, in that the owner of the vineyard can (and should) put the former share-farmers to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants, and in that the king can rightfully send his troops to destroy the murderers of his messengers, burn their city, and replace them with just anyone who would come. But, even so, all must conform to his terms for remaining in his grace (21:33—22:14).
13. Jesus' quotation of Zechariah 13:7 points to God as the Ruler of history and who does everything according to His plan for man's salvation, even if this is not the kind of Messianism that man would design (26:31, 32).
14. Even in the attitude of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (26:36-46) we see the theme of human weakness in the presence of the will of God that must be carried out to the utmost. Temptation to give in is something that continually hangs over man, and only God can furnish him the strength to endure it.
15. The Garden arrest must take place "according to the Scriptures," because God, who ordered these events and is back of the Scriptures, is the final, real Actor in every event (26:56).
16. After Jesus' victory and receiving universal authority, He promises

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His people that, while they carry out His mission on earth, He will be with them until the end of the age. This means that His people are those disciples who are determined to follow the same path He did, confiding only in the blessing of God (Christ), sure that they will never be alone, since He, the sovereign God in Christ, is always guarding them (28:16-20).

17. The sovereignty of God is seen in the picture of Jesus as the Man over whom God had been watching even before His birth and had foreseen and prepared for every part of His life. This is especially emphasized in His fulfilment of prophecies. Among Matthew's at least forty formal quotations of the Old Testament, the following are expressly cited as being particularly indicative of God's preparation for and care of Jesus even before His appearance on earth:

MATTHEW	OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGE
1:23	Isa. 7:14
2:6	Mic. 5:2
2:15	Hos. 11:1 (cf. Exod. 4:22)
2:23	"prophets" Isa. 52:13—53:12; Ps. 22; Isa. 11:1?
3:3	Isa. 40:3
4:4	Deut. 8:3
4:7	Deut. 6:16
4:10	Deut. 6:13
4:15, 16	Isa. 9:1, 2
8:17	Isa. 53:4
11:10	Mal. 3:1
12:18-21	Isa. 42:1-4
21:5	Zech. 9:9
21:13b	Jer. 7:11
21:16	Ps. 8:2 (LXX 8:3)
21:42	Ps. 118:22, 23
22:44	Ps. 110:1
23:38, 39	Ps. 118:26; Jer. 22:5
24:29-31	Isa. 13:10; Ezek. 32:7; Joel 2:10; 2:31; 3:15; Isa. 34:4b; Hag. 2:6, 21; Zech. 12:10, 12; Dan. 7:13, 14; Isa. 27:13; Deut. 30:4; Zech. 2:6
26:31	Zech. 13:7
26:64	Ps. 110:1; Dan. 7:13, 14
27:9, 10	Zech. 11:12, 13; Jer. 32:6-15
27:46	Ps. 22:1