

HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

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It has been said that if God is absolutely Sovereign, controlling all things which take place (including the activities of angels, devils and people), then it can not be said that man is *responsible* for all that he does. After all, can we not then say, "God made me do it!" Somehow, so some say, we must teach that God relinquishes part of His Sovereignty in order to maintain the responsibility of man. The argument is as old as creation itself. After the fall of Adam into sin, when God confronted him, Adam declared, "The woman *whom thou gavest to be with me*, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat" (Genesis 3:12). What was Adam saying? He pleaded his innocence and pointed his finger at God. God is Sovereign; He gave Eve to Adam. So he, Adam, could hardly be considered responsible. But the argument does not 'hold water' with God. He carries out the curse of death because of this sin of Adam. God held Adam fully responsible. And so it always is. God determines and governs all things in the lives of moral, rational creatures, yet man is fully responsible for his actions.

Scripture also gives examples of this. Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave into Egypt but later, when they asked his forgiveness, Joseph said, "As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (Genesis 50:20). God determined the very actions of Joseph's brothers for which they themselves were guilty, as they confessed. God's purpose was good - yet the brothers were judged guilty of terrible sin.

The ultimate example of God's Sovereignty is seen in the crucifixion. Peter said at Pentecost (Acts 2:23), "Him, being delivered *by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Both the crucifixion *and the manner of it* were determined by God but that did not excuse the crucifiers. It was their *wicked hands* that accomplished the terrible deed. They were fully responsible. Do we fully understand how God absolutely determines and guides all things while at the same time holding man responsible? Perhaps not - but Scripture teaches it and by faith we must believe it.

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America, repealed those laws. But God is not mocked. One result is AIDS – spreading disease and death, not only amongst the sodomites, but inevitably further afield. Similar arguments might be made about abortion. The unborn are murdered and, with an ageing population, the politicians are now beginning to wonder who are going to support the elderly. And so we might go on – with unmarried mothers etc. But by now the bankruptcy of liberal humanism is surely becoming obvious, so doubtless the point is, or should be, taken. Unfortunately, unbelieving man is not yet prepared to go back and start unwinding all the evil notions in Church and State that have been imposed on us in the last hundred years.

Our position, then, as Christians is this: God exists. He has made a Revelation of Himself to us in Scripture. Inevitably unregenerate man, who is in rebellion against God, will reject that Revelation. *"The fool has said in his heart: There is no God."* But there is – and He has spoken. Our wisdom, then, is to live *"by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."*

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Scripture comes to us with its command (NB. not an offer), "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). None can plead before God that he is not responsible for his actions because God is Sovereign. The command still comes with all its force to us today. He who does not repent and believe shall be damned but all those who do believe shall be saved (Mark 16:16). In the great Judgment Day Jesus Himself shall say so.

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objective of travelling to other planets.

The main message of the Gospel is summarised by the Apostle Paul: "GOD... now commandeth all men everywhere to REPENT: because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30–31).

Salvation is to be found only in the *Lord Jesus Christ*: "...the FATHER sent the SON to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4:14), and it is He who will be the *Judge*: "The FATHER... hath committed all judgment unto the SON" (John 5:22).