

Free Will, Predestination and God's Sovereignty Assignment

Name _____ Instructor _____ Date _____

Read each passage below with this question in mind: Do individuals freely choose to be saved or does God predestine (determine in advance) who will be saved?

Matthew 23:37; Luke 7:30; John 6:35; John 6:44,65; Acts 13:48; Romans 9:14-18;
1 Timothy 2:4; 1 Peter 2:8; 2 Peter 3:9; Jude 1:4

After reading these passages, check the box that *most closely* matches your position:

People freely choose their salvation. God determines in advance who will be saved.

In the box below, cite three scriptures from the list provided that support your position. Explain HOW each text supports your position.

Scripture	HOW does this passage support your position?

In the next box, select two scriptures that seem to contradict your position. How does each text seem to contradict your perspective? How could this passage be interpreted so that it doesn't contradict your view?

Passage	HOW does this passage seem to contradict your position?	How could this passage be interpreted so that it doesn't contradict your position?

God's Sovereignty and the Book of Daniel

Daniel was deported to Babylon as a boy in 605 BC. He spent the rest of his life there as a statesman and prophet, serving the Babylonian and Medo-Persian governments. Daniel identifies himself as the author of the book (see 9:2 and 10:2) and Jesus corroborates this claim in Matthew 24:15.

Daniel wrote against background of turmoil. In 605 BC, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, defeated Pharaoh Necco at the Battle of Carchamesh. Nebuchadnezzar's victory resulted in upheaval in the Middle East as power shifted from Egypt to Babylon. Instead of experiencing God's miraculous deliverance, in 597 BC & 587 BC, the Jews were subjugated and deported out of the Promised Land.

We can only imagine how the Jewish prisoners felt as they were marched out of the land God gave them and east toward Babylon. As they entered the greatest city of the ancient world, they must have wondered, "where is God?" To them it probably looked like the Babylonian empire (and not God's promise to Abraham) was going to last forever.

It was in this time of hardship that God gives a series of visions to Daniel. Daniel wove these visions into a narrative of events that occurred during his life to produce what we have today as the book of Daniel.

In this assignment, you will explore Daniel's emphasis on God's sovereignty. God's sovereignty describes his ongoing relationship with his creation. When we say God is sovereign, we mean that he owns, rules, and sustains the creation. Sovereignty also means that God is active in accomplishing his purposes. Daniel's emphasis on God's command over human history can be seen from the way his book is organized:

Chapter 1 (in Hebrew):

Daniel and his friends are taken captive by the Babylonians, but God elevates them to high positions (1:9,17).

Chapters 2-7 (in Aramaic):

God reveals to Daniel his plan for the nations of the world.

Chapters 8-12 (in Hebrew):

God reveals to Daniel his plan for the nation of Israel.

Daniel tells his readers that "The Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men" (5:21) and his visions reveal a sovereign God who is carrying out his purposes in history. The ultimate expression of God's sovereignty will be the triumph of his kingdom over all others (7:11, 26-27; 8:25; 9:27; 11:45; 12:13; cf. Revelation 11:15).

Read the first 5 chapters of Daniel. In the columns provided (see the next page), note any passages that describe God's sovereignty over human affairs. Write the chapter and verse(s) you are citing on the left, and describe HOW God influences human affairs on the right. A few examples are provided in italics.

Passage	HOW does God influence human affairs?
<i>Daniel 1:2</i>	<i>The Lord delivered Jehoiakim, king of Judah, into Nebuchadnezzar's hands.</i>
<i>2:37</i>	<i>God gave Nebuchadnezzar his kingdom, power, strength, and glory and has made him ruler.</i>