

SMALL GROUP LESSON: THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

The Real God, Part 2

Scripture: Acts 2:22–37

²²“Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

²⁵David said about him: “I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. ²⁶Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope, ²⁷because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay.

²⁸You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.”

²⁹“Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection

of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. ³²God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. ³³Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. ³⁴For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, “The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand ³⁵until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”

³⁶“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” ³⁷When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

THE
REAL
GOD

FOR STUDENTS

DISCUSSION STARTERS

Read through the questions below and pick the ones that would work best for your group. Chances are, you won't need to work through all of them! Ask the questions in your own words—don't feel that you need to read them "as is." And feel free to ask your own questions! Keep the overall objective in mind so that no matter what "path" your conversation takes, you end up driving home the objective.

OBJECTIVE

To help your students understand that God's sovereignty means He rules above everything.

1. WARM UP

- Begin by talking about different kinds of authority and power. What are some positions of authority that influence your life?
(As a group, try to identify at least 10 sources of authority.)
 1. How do they make an impact?
 2. Did you choose to be under this authority or not?
 3. What would life look like without this authority?
- Based on the message, what's your definition of God's sovereignty?

2. SET UP THE PASSAGE

"This week, we are looking at the sovereignty of God, which means that He rules above everything. In our world, there are all kinds of authorities—parents, coaches, teachers, police, bosses, and government leaders. Human authority is limited, but God's authority is unlimited. In today's passage, we are looking at a sermon to the Israelites from Peter, one of Jesus's disciples. His main message concerns God's sovereign plan in Jesus. God promised a savior, and hundreds of years later, he provided the perfect savior in Jesus."

3. CONTEXT QUESTIONS (focus on scripture)

- Read the passage out loud (consider having a different student read it a second time).
- Does anyone have any questions about this passage? Did you find anything confusing or difficult to understand?

Re-read verses 22–24.

- What did the people believe about Jesus based on what they saw him do—his miracles, wonders, and signs?
- What happened according to God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge?
- What does this section specifically teach about Jesus?

Re-read verses 25–28.

- David was the second king of Israel and he wrote more than half of the book of Psalms, a book in the Old Testament that is a collection of songs and prayers. In these verses, what does David say about Jesus?

Re-read verses 29–37.

- In your opinion, why was Peter so confident? What was Peter confident of?
- How does this section illustrate or highlight God's sovereignty and control?

Re-read verses 36–37.

- How did the people respond to Peter's message?

4. APPLICATION QUESTIONS (focus on personal significance)

- Why is it important that God is sovereign and has total control? Wouldn't it be enough if God were mostly in control?
- In your opinion, why do some people find it difficult to believe and trust that God has complete control over everything that happens?
- Take a moment to think about the big picture of your life from the last year: friends, difficulties, changes, things that have stayed the same, opportunities...how have you seen God working?
- If God is really good and sovereign, why do bad things happen to good people? Why do good things happen to bad people?
- If God is sovereign, why did He send His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins? Why not just forgive people without sending Jesus to die?
- For you personally, how can the sovereignty of God be comforting? When you really believe in it, how does this characteristic of God's make a difference in your life?
- In the message, we had three responses to God's sovereignty. Which one was most challenging for you personally and why?

1. Recognize God's power and authority.
2. Accept personal responsibility for your choices.
3. In seasons of pain, trust the God who is always in control.