

## False Teachings about False Teachings Part 2

By Wayne Vasilenko

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In “Part One” of this series, I pointed out the fact that there have always been “False Teachers” when it comes to the Word of God, and that they will increase in number as we come to what we call, “The End Times.” While instructed as Christians to be on the alert for false teachings, I have found in my own experience, the problem we face is, “How we discern the False Teachings from the True Teachings in the Word of God?” The simple response is, “What does the Word of God say,” and this is, in my opinion, where the real problem resides! There are so many opinions on what the Bible says, but is it really “that hard” for the average Christian to discern the meaning of Scripture? Some would say, “Yes it takes years of study,” but is that true? A long time ago, a pastor of a small church I was attending at the time, taught me a very simple, yet profound way to study scripture. He said, “When you read a passage from God’s Word, ask yourself, What does it say – What does it mean – and What does it mean to me?” While this simple formula has brought much clarity throughout the years, it has also cast suspicion of some of the teachings I have heard, even those coming from some very popular and learned Bible teachers! While many will start comparing how many “Degrees” one theologian might have compared to another, the simple formula remains most effective, “What does it say, what does it mean, and what does it mean to me!” I stated the following in the start of this series: “From the beginning, I had personally felt that God would not give us His Word in such a way that only a select few would be able to understand it.” I continue to stand by that statement. Nevertheless, when you go back to the time of the Pharisees and Sadducees, didn’t people back then depend on these “Religious Leaders?” After all, these people devoted their entire lives to studying the scriptures, searching them for the “True meaning of the Word of God,” just as we depend on Pastors and Bible Teachers today. How did that work out back then; and how is it working out now?

It is very interesting to me that when Jesus chose his first disciples, there were none of the “Religious Leaders” among them! Most, as far as we know, were common fishermen, ordinary people like you and me. In fact, in most of the recorded exchanges between Jesus and the religious leaders it showed that He looked upon most of them with contempt! How could it be that Jesus, also called Emanuel, (God with Us) would be at odds with the most learned and religious people on the planet at the time? After all, these were people totally focused on God and righteousness! This question begs for an answer, not only back then, but even today! To get a better idea of what Jesus thought of the religious leaders, I challenge you to read Matthew Chapter 23, then, compare what He said about them to many of the religious leaders and teachers of our times. By doing this, I think you will see, things have not changed much as many modern religious people deserve equal or even harsher criticism. Why do you suppose that prior to the “Reformation,” people were sometimes put to death for even possessing a copy of the scriptures? The religious leaders did not want the common people to know the truth, because religion gave them power over the people! So it is today as certain people with their degrees and doctorates, claim to have superior insight to “Truth,” when in reality, it all boils down to the fact that *Truth is Truth*, no matter how one might try to twist it to justify their own beliefs, interpretations, or feelings! All this being said; how do people manipulate scripture today to substantiate their own conclusions and beliefs?

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There are many ways by which this takes place today; the most common is simply taking things out of context. Another way is by utilizing radical terminology, which I will illustrate by examining the word “Sovereign” used by many modern theologians. What does this word mean and how is it used, or perhaps misused when talking about God and the Bible? This is perhaps the most misunderstood word and concept, and one of the most dangerous for various reasons, which I will attempt to explain. See the following definitions of the word Sovereignty.

### **Sovereignty** Definitions From The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, 4th Edition

- *n.* Supremacy of authority or rule as exercised by a sovereign or sovereign state.
- *n.* Royal rank, authority, or power.

### **from Wiktionary, Creative Commons Attribution/Share-Alike License**

- *n.* Supreme authority over all things.
- *n.* The liberty to decide one's thoughts and actions.

Let it be clear, I do not question or debate the “Supreme Authority of God” as defined above, for God is indeed the creator of the universe, the ultimate power in the universe, and His power is limitless. I am sure most people agree with me so far. Here is the irony of this subject... Even though the majority of people agree that God is sovereign (as defined above), they more often than not, immediately distort the meaning. They go on to say that because God is ultimately in control, therefore He **personally** controls everything! An interesting fact is that the actual word “Sovereignty,” up until more recent times, was used most extensively in only one translation of the Bible, the NIV; it is not found in the King James Bible! Nevertheless, the issue and modern debate about the sovereignty of God has caused many serious misunderstandings about the true nature of God. Some of these misunderstandings have actually turned people away from God! What are some of these misunderstandings? For example, as I have already mentioned, many people will tell you that nothing happens outside of God's will. This sounds logical to most people; after all, the one who created the universe has to be in ultimate control of everything that happens in it – Right? Well, Yes and No... Yes, god is ultimately in control of everything, but does that mean every detail of everything that happens is directly controlled by a decree from God? Some churches apply this theory of God controlling everything to a person's salvation as well; they teach that God calls whom He pleases to repentance (and there are verses to back that up). They go on to say that, if God does not call you to salvation it will not happen! In other words, they are implying that God "Predestines" who will be saved and who will not be saved. If this is so, how can we explain the following passage?

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### [2 Peter 3:9 \(KJV\)](#)

<sup>9</sup> **The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance?** (Emphasis mine)

If it is true that God determines who will or will not accept His plan for salvation by decree, we have a problem here. The passage above says that God is *not willing that anyone perishes but that ALL come to repentance!* The question we now have to consider is, "Does everyone accept Jesus as their savior... does everyone come to repentance?" The answer sadly is No. This is a huge problem if we are to believe that nothing happens out of God's will! The "Bottom Line" issue here is whether God desires (and wills) that none perish, or He doesn't! Another controversial issue that comes up in the sovereignty debate is that some say that God will put sickness such as cancer on someone to "teach them a lesson" or get their attention in order bring them into dependence on Him. After all, they say, "God is in control of everything that happens," therefore it is assumed that He can, and does; put sickness on people as well. If this is so and you are a Christian diagnosed with cancer, why then would you go to the doctor? Why would you pray for healing, worse yet, spend your family's entire fortune to pay for the chance of being healed thereby thwarting the will of God for you? Do you not, "as a Christian," always desire to be in God's will? If you believe God would put cancer on you to teach you something for your good, you should be thrilled to be in His will! Just take what comes and hope that eventually God will have mercy on you and heal you if... He decides to! What you could do to warrant such favor is another topic for discussion! Are you beginning to see the problem with this view of Sovereignty? There is an old saying, "Sometimes God has to knock you flat on your back to get you to look up. I used to believe that; however, I now have a hard time believing that a loving God would do that, knowing I wouldn't wish something like that on any of my own children. If your daughter wore excessively short skirts against your will, would you consider sending a rapist after her to "teach her a lesson?" That would get her attention I am sure... Absurd isn't it? So is the thought of God putting cancer on someone to teach him or her, a lesson; or that somehow this would be an act of love on the part of God.

### [James 1:16-17 \(NKJV\)](#)

<sup>16</sup> Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

<sup>17</sup> Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

This verse says to me that Sickness, and any other "Bad Thing" is definitely *not* from God! Although the actual context of this passage is on the subject of temptation, the words "Every good Gift and every perfect gift is from above" would not in my opinion include cancer or rape as brought out in the previous illustrations. As you can tell by now, the Sovereignty issue is a complex issue and it will not be solved in this study. In researching the topic, there were compelling scriptures on both sides of the issue. However, when you keep things in context and consider the "Character of God" and what He did for us in order bring us back into fellowship with him, it seems we all might be missing something within the debate.

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Perhaps through time God (in His Sovereignty) chose to deal with man differently at different times, for different reasons, all the while with the ultimate goal of reconciliation in mind! Think of it like slapping a child on the hand when they are about to touch something they shouldn't. Children learn very quickly that if they are obedient to their parents they are usually rewarded, sometimes with just simple praise from their proud parents or sometimes with a blessing or reward. However, disobedience usually has consequences as well, sometimes involving a "sore bottom." It was their choice what it would be...wrath or blessing. Just as it is our choice to believe or reject the Word and Promises of God when it comes to Healing, Prosperity, or anything else. This is where the arguments against the Word of Faith preachers fall apart. The critics say, "Miracles don't happen anymore!" Well if you believe that miracles do not happen, they will not; at least not for you! However, what does God's Word say?

### **Mark 11:22-24 (NKJV)**

<sup>22</sup> So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. <sup>23</sup> For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. <sup>24</sup> Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive *them*, and you will have *them*."

### **What does it say – What does it mean - What does it mean to me... (and you)?**

As I said before, the Sovereignty Debate is not going to be solved here and now. Take time to pray about this... then decide if these types of debates are worth someone's eternal life; because ultimately, the people observing and listening to us including our debates, will have to make a choice about Jesus and that is the "Bottom Line" of all issues concerning what we believe. I pray that we will lead them towards Jesus and not away from Him through our words, actions, and even the debates we engage in. The Word of Faith critics have their opinions and beliefs. If they do not believe in healing, prosperity, and other miracles, it is obvious that they will never see these things happen... My problem with the critics is that because they personally have no hope of these blessings, why do they insist on destroying the hope of others. The critics claim they are protecting people from having "False Hope." In light of the passage above, what gives the critics the right to determine who, besides themselves, has a right to hope for anything that they choose to hope for? After all... isn't "Faith" a personal issue?

### **Romans 15:13 (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup> Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.