

*Jacob's Well***Lesson Title:** Themes in the Psalms—God is Sovereign

**Key Concept:** The Psalms provide an honest reflection of our human nature and the nature God. As King of kings and Lord of lords, our sovereign God rules with supreme authority.

**Scriptures:**

Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from beginning to end, you are God.

(Psalm 90:2 *New Living Translation*)

Our God is in the heavens, and he does as he wishes.

(Psalm 115:3 *New Living Translation*)

How great is our Lord! His power is absolute! His understanding is beyond comprehension!

(Psalm 147:5 *New Living Translation*)

**Context Scriptures:** Psalms 24:1; 29:3–11; 33:6–9; 47:6–9; 50:11–12; 72; 89; 90:2; 93; 96:9–10; 99; 103:19; 115:3; 145–146; 147:5; Job 2:1–6; Romans 11:33; Colossians 1:16; 1Timothy 6:15; Revelation 17:14; 19:15; 21:6

**Lesson Thoughts:**

The Psalms are a collection of songs and poems written to express praise, adoration, supplication, repentance, and thanksgiving to God. One of the major motifs throughout this collection is the sovereignty of God. The whole of Scripture declares this divine attribute of God. But the Psalms have a special focus on the sovereignty of God and its exclusivity to him.

Sovereignty means being the ultimate source of all power, authority, and everything that exists. As King of kings and Lord of lords, God is unlimited, and

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nothing happens outside of God's supreme influence and authority. Terms that define God's sovereignty include: omnipresent (all-present), omniscient (all-knowing) and omnipotent (all-powerful). These terms are spoken of in several of the Psalms and only apply to God. It is God's sovereignty that makes him superior to all other gods and makes him, and him alone, worthy of worship.

The psalmist declares in Psalm 33:6–9 that God has always existed and that everything that exists has its beginning in God. As the creator and maintainer of all things, there has never been a time when God did not exist. The universe and everything in it were created when “the Lord merely spoke” and “breathed the word.” Thus, God exercises all power and control, even over things that are seemingly uncontrollable like the oceans and the stars. Even Satan himself must ask God's permission before he can act (Job 2:1-6). The psalmist concludes by calling all the earth to both exalt and revere God in his sovereignty. Similar descriptions of God's sovereignty echo throughout the Psalms: “The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him” (Psalm 24:1). These descriptions demonstrate that God's sovereignty means he does whatever he wishes, and nothing is impossible for him.

God's sovereignty is an integral part of a disciple's understanding of worship and of living a life that is pleasing to God. Because God is sovereign, we can be confident that he has a perfect plan for each of us. Because God is supreme, we can be confident that he can handle anything and has the final say. Psalm 46:1–3 says, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” God is our source of security, and we can trust him. Even when we face uncertainty, we can trust that God is good, just, and truly sovereign.

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1) If God is omnipotent, why did he give us the ability to disobey him?
- 2) If God is omniscient and omnipresent, why do we need to pray?
- 3) How do we respond to God's sovereignty when we don't like what he does?
- 4) How does understanding God's sovereignty strengthen your faith?

**Next Lesson:** Psalms of Wisdom

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**Notes and Reflections**

- 1) The whole of Scripture declares the sovereign nature of God. Do a study of other passages in Scripture regarding God's sovereignty, beginning with Jeremiah 32:17, Romans 11:33, Colossians 1:16, and Revelation 21:6.
- 2) Read the story of Joseph in Genesis 37–50. How was God sovereign in the details of his life? How is God sovereign in the details of your life?