

Attributes of God (Series 2): The Sovereignty of God

by A.W. Tozer

A.W. Tozer explores the sovereignty of God, emphasizing His absolute control and the relationship between divine authority and human free will.

Duration: 50:31

Scripture: Deuteronomy 4:39, Deuteronomy 32:39-40, Luke 24:18-21, Luke 24:30-31, Acts 9:5, Revelation 4:3, Revelation 14:4

Topics: "Attributes of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by recounting the story of Jesus appearing to his disciples after his resurrection. The disciples were initially discouraged and disheartened, but when Jesus spoke to them and broke bread, they realized it was him. This miraculous event filled their hearts with joy and they recognized that God had triumphed over death. The preacher then uses the analogy of a ship to explain that while we have freedom in our lives, ultimately God determines our course from birth to death. He urges the congregation to be quick to obey God's commandments and asks for forgiveness for their slowness and unbelief. The sermon concludes with the preacher reading various passages from the Bible that emphasize God's sovereignty and power.

Transcript

...tonight, which is very difficult to give. I need all the help I can get. Turn that rheostat up till she rings.

Whoever is in control of the loudspeaker. But it's very difficult to give, because the devil doesn't like to hear it, so I want you to let me pray for a minute. We'll have God purge the devil out.

Now, Lord, thou art risen from the dead. Thou art seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. All power has been given unto thee in heaven and in earth.

And we come now to pray together that thou wilt go through this congregation like a healing wind. And we pray be an antidote to the devil's poison, and drive him, we pray, from our presence, that we may have no hindrance from him, that the word of the Lord may go forth and run and be glorified and redound to the high praise of the Godhead. And we pray that thou wilt help us, thy people.

O Lord, we are slow to hear, we are slow to remember, we are quick to forget, we are stodgy and stiff. Help us, Lord, we pray, that we may run in the way of thy commandments and be quick to obey thee. Forgive our slowness, forgive our unbelief, forgive our sluggishness, forgive, we pray thee, the half-dead state we are in.

Cleanse and deliver. May we hear from thee tonight, and may we go out of here with our faith having gone way up the mountain. And may we look down on what we formerly looked up to.

Help thy servant as I try to speak, and all of us as we hear, for Christ's sake. Amen. Now tonight I have a number of texts which I'll read, and they are found in various parts of the scriptures, various sections.

I have this passage, Deuteronomy 4.39, Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord, he is God in heaven above, and upon earth beneath, there is none else. Deuteronomy 32.39.40, See now that I, even I, am he. There is no God with me.

I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal. Neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven and say, I live forever.

Job 12.9-10, 16, 17, 33, 13. Who knoweth not in all this, these, that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this, in whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind. With him is strength and wisdom.

The deceived and the deceiver are his. He leadeth counsellors away, spoiled, and maketh the judges fools. Why dost thou strive against him? For he giveth not account of any of his matters.

Jeremiah 18.6, For as of Israel cannot I do with you as this potter, saith the Lord, behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel. Daniel 4.3, and 35. How great are his signs, and how mighty are his wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and his dominion is from generation to generation.

And all inhabitants of the earth are refuted as nothing. And he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. And none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? M1.3, The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.

The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. Now I am to speak tonight on the sovereignty of God. To say that God is sovereign is to say that he is supreme over all things.

To say that God is sovereign is to say that there is no one above him, that he is absolute Lord over creation. It is to say that his lordship over creation means that there is nothing out of control, there is nothing that God hasn't foreseen and foreplanned and has in full control. It means that even the wrath of man must ultimately praise God, and the remainder of wrath God will restrain.

It means that every creature in earth and in heaven and in hell must ultimately bow the knee and own that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Now, God's sovereignty is God's absolute freedom. Let's really begin there, for there is where the sermon begins.

That God's sovereignty is his absolute freedom to do all that he wills to do. God's sovereignty does not mean that he can do anything, but it means that he can do anything that he wills to do. And the

sovereignty of God and the will of God are bound up together so that God can do what he wills to do.

The sovereignty of God does not mean that God can lie, for God does not will to lie. God is truth, and therefore God cannot lie, for he wills not to lie. God cannot break a promise, because to break a promise would be to violate his nature, and God does not will to violate his nature.

Therefore it is silly to say that God can do anything, but it is scriptural to say that God can do anything he wills to do. And it means that God is absolutely free so that no one can compel him, and no one can hinder him, and nobody can stop him. It means that God has freedom to do as he pleases, always, everywhere and forever.

Now, if there is anybody in the wide world of sinful men that should be restful and peaceful in an hour like this, it should be Christians except for the burden the Holy Ghost puts on them. There is a burden which the Holy Ghost puts on us, and that is another matter. That is the burden that the Holy Ghost put on Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, and Paul when he wept, and other Saints when they prayed under the almighty anointing and burden of the Holy Ghost.

That is one thing. It is quite another thing to be under the burden of worry and apprehension. Christians should not be under the burden of apprehension and worry because they are the children of God that is free, always free, that has not one rope on him, not one chain on him, not one hindrance anywhere upon him, because he is absolutely sovereign.

And that God can always do as he pleases, and he can do as he pleases anywhere, and he can do as he pleases all the time and forever. It means that God is free to carry out his eternal purposes to their conclusions. I have believed this since I first became a Christian.

I fell into the hands of good teachers when I became a Christian, and they taught me this, and I have believed it with increasing joy ever since that God is absolutely free to carry out his eternal purposes to their conclusions. God does not play by ear, God does not doodle and follow whatever happens to come into his mind or let one idea suggest another. God works according to the plans which he purposed in Christ Jesus before Adam walked in the garden, before there was a sun or a moon or a star or a galaxy, before there was an angel before the throne or a seraphim with burning wings and burning voice.

God planned because God is God, and as I have said already, has lived our tomorrows and carries time in his bosom, and God is carrying out his eternal purposes. Now, you may be perfectly sure of that. However, the prophetic teachers may change their mind, or however, theology, what they call contemporary theology.

Brother, what a name! Contemporary theology is whatever ideas some over-bright young chap sitting looking through his thick glasses in a seminary class may decide is the right thing to believe. God Almighty has already given us his theology, and I don't give a snap of my finger for contemporary theology. I believe in theology which is contemporary, surely, but it is also as ancient as the throne of God and is eternal as the eternities to come.

And we Christians belong in this. We are in this mighty river being carried along by the sovereign purposes of God, and the sovereignty of God involves all authority and all power. Now, I think you can see instantly that nobody could be sovereign anywhere that didn't have power to effect his will, and nobody could be sovereign who didn't have authority to exercise his power.

A king, or a queen, or a president, or anybody that rules over men or governs men in any measure must have authority to govern, and then he must have power to make good on his authority. He cannot stand up and say, Now do this, please, if you feel like doing it, do it. He says, Do it, and then he has an army and a navy and an air force and a police force back of him.

He has authority to command and power to carry out his commands, and God has to have both of these. I can't conceive of a God who has power and no authority. Samson was a man who had power but no authority and didn't know what to do with it.

There are men who have authority but no power. The United Nations is a pathetic example of authority without power. They have authority but they have no power.

In the Congo now we see an example. They'll stand up and say, Now we order you to do this and that. And the Congolese laugh and say, You and who else? And do as they please.

Authority without power to carry out that authority is a joke. And power without authority puts a man where he can't do anything. But God Almighty, to be sovereign, must have authority and power.

We've already seen in previous sermons that God has all the power there is, that God is infinite in his perfection, and one of his perfections is his absolute power, that is, his omnipotence. God is omnipotent and has all the power there is. Now the next question is, Has God the authority? I think it's rather foolish even to discuss it.

It's an absurdity even to bring the subject of God's authority up. Can anyone imagine God having to request permission? Can anybody imagine the great God Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, having to send in a memo somewhere to a higher authority and ask if I might please roll this star over there, or if I might please do something with this galaxy yonder? God Almighty doesn't apply to anybody. Can you imagine him applying to a higher authority? To whom could God apply, I want to ask you? Who is higher than the highest? And who was there that was before he was? And who is mightier than the Almighty? And whose position dates back before the eternal beginnings? At whose throne would God kneel, I want to ask you for authority.

Where would God go and say, please come and help me? Please come and help me because I'm in trouble and I'm doing pretty well, but I need some extra power. When would the great God Almighty apply to anybody for power? No, my brother. God Almighty says there is no one greater.

No one greater. I am the first and I am the last, and beside me there is no God. Yea, I know not any.

Now there is a religion, and I studied it some. It is, to my mind, the best of the non-Christian, the non-Revelation religion, those who are not centered around Christ. It's called Zoroastrianism, a long word sometimes called Parthianism.

It's fire worship and sun worship. And they postulate a theological duality. That is, they say that there are two gods, a good one and a bad one.

It's a neat way of getting around things, you know. They say there are two gods, a good one and a bad one. There is Ormuzd and Ahriman.

Now Ormuzd is the good God. He is sometimes called Mazda, and it's from the light that's shining down here now. It's very likely a Mazda light.

They named their electric lights after the old god of light, Mazda. Well, Mazda or Ormuzd, he was the good God and he made everything good. But then there was a rascal of a god named Ahriman, and this Ahriman came along, and everything good God made, Ahriman made something bad.

God made the sunshine and the devil made the snow. Ahriman made the snow. God made love and Ahriman made hate.

God made life and Ahriman made death. So there were two gods, both of them creating. Now God Almighty declares this couldn't be so.

God Almighty declares that he is the sole creator, that he made all things visible and invisible. It tells us in Colossians that Jesus Christ our Lord, that in him were created everything, and God didn't leave anything out when he created them. He said that in Jesus Christ there was created everything in heaven and that are in earth, and visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things and by him all things consist.

In the beginning God made the heaven and earth, and God made the earth and the heaven and all things that are therein. So there was no other creating God. That is one thing that God did not give to anybody else.

God can impart some of his attributes. God can impart the attribute of love, for instance. He can impart the attribute of mercy.

He can impart the attribute of kindness, but he can't impart the attribute that enables him to create. God Almighty is alone the creator. So there are not two gods, there is only one.

But sin is loose in the universe, and this I do not understand. It is called the mystery of iniquity, and it is said that it already works. This mystery of iniquity I do not understand.

I do not know why a holy God could allow to get loose in his world this iniquitous thing, but I know that God contains it, and I know that God's plans took it into account, and I know that when God laid his plans for the foundation of the heaven and the earth and the creation of Adam, I know that God knew about sin and knew about its wild fugitive presence in the universe. He knew it would be here, and so he took it into account. Though this outlaw is now in the heavens, this outlaw sin can no more change the purposes of God or frustrate the plans of God than an outlaw somewhere hiding in the wilds of Canada can prevent the carrying on of the doings of this nation.

Now I come to a little matter here that I want to take up, and I think that I'm the only person that ever thought about this, or anybody ever thought about it before me. He never wrote it down in a book, or if he wrote it down in a book, I never saw the book. And if he ever preached it, I wasn't present when he preached it, and neither was anybody else present that ever told me that he had heard it.

I gave this thought one time in the presence of Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, and he didn't deny it. He smiled. He didn't say he believed it, and he didn't say that he didn't.

And I quote him because, of course, he is one of the great English authorities in theology. But what about man's free will now? Maybe some of you dear people would rather not have your minds troubled about this. Maybe you'd rather just sort of rest.

You would, why do it? Just sort of rest. But if you'd like to have your mind troubled, well, I'd like to trouble it for you because, as I told you, quoting somebody else, that the business of a prophet of God is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comforted. And some of you comforted people need to be afflicted.

And one of the first ways to afflict you is to get to thinking about divine things. Now, here's the matter of man's free will and God's sovereignty. God's sovereignty means that he's in control of everything and that he planned everything from the beginning.

Man's free will means that he can, any time he wants to, make any choice he pleases, and thus inapparently defy the purposes of God and will against the will of God. Now, how are we going to figure it out? Well, down the years, two divisions of the church have stood up. One has said, I believe in the sovereignty of God, and I believe that God planned everything from the beginning, and that God ordered that some would be saved and some wouldn't, and that Christ died for those who would be saved, but he didn't die for the others who wouldn't be saved.

Now, that's actually what certain people believe, following John Calvin. Then on the other side, way over on the other side, there are those who say Christ died for all, and I believe it, and that man is free to make his choice. But those who teach the sovereignty of God in this exclusive way say that if man is free to make a choice, then God isn't sovereign.

Because if a man can make a choice that God doesn't like, then God's not having his way. Well, you know, I figured that out one time. And if, I don't know, I guess the pastor's getting ready for the baptism service, but he's the theologian of the Pope here, and he'll straighten me out on this.

But you know how I figured this out, and I'd like to give it to you, and I'd like to give you this thought and see what you think of it. Now, God's sovereignty means absolute freedom, doesn't it? It means God's absolutely free to do anything he wants to do or wills to do anywhere, anytime, forever. That's what it means.

And man's free will means that man can make any choice he wants to make, even if he makes a choice against the will of God. And there's where you'll lock horns, and the theologians like two deer out in the woods, lock horns and wall around until they both die. Now, I refuse to get caught on either horn of that dilemma that changed the figure, I absolutely refuse, because here's what I see.

I see that God Almighty is sovereign. He is free to do as he pleases. And among the things he pleased to do was give me freedom to do what I please.

And when I do what I please, I am fulfilling the will of God, not controverting it, for God has in his sovereignty, sovereignly given me freedom to make a free choice. And even if the choice I make is not the one God would have made for me, his sovereignty is fulfilled in my making the choice, and I can make the choice because God said the great sovereign God, who is completely free, said to me, now in my sovereign freedom, I bestow a little bit of freedom on you. Now choose ye this day with whom you will serve.

Be good or be bad at your own pleasure. Follow me or don't follow me. Come on or go back.

Go to heaven or go to hell. That's in your lap, and you've got to make your choice. Now the sovereign God put that in my lap and said, this is yours and you must make that choice.

And when I make a choice, I'm fulfilling his sovereignty in that he sovereignly willed that I should be free to make a choice. But if I choose to go to hell, it's not what his love would have chosen, but it does not controvert nor cancel out his sovereignty. Therefore I can take John Calvin in this hand and Joseph Erminious and Jacob Erminious in the other hand and walk down the street.

Neither one of them would walk with me, I'm sure, because John Calvin would say I was too Armenian and Erminious would say I was too Calvinistic. But I'm happy in the middle. I believe in the sovereignty of God and I believe in the freedom of man.

I believe that God's free to do as he pleases and I believe that in a limited sense he has made man free to do as he pleases within a certain framework, but not a very big one. After all, you're not free to do very many things. You're free to make moral choices.

You're free to decide the color of your necktie and what food you'll have and whom you'll marry, if she's agreed. And you're free to do a few things, but you're not free to do many. But the things you are free to do are gifts from the God who is utterly free.

Therefore anything I do and make a choice, I'm fulfilling the freedom God gave me and therefore I'm fulfilling God's sovereignty in carrying it out. Now, my brother and sister, I got a little illustration here which I made up. And I think that it'll give you some light on what I'm talking about.

Suppose that a ship leaves New York City bound for Liverpool, England. And let us suppose that that ship has, say, a thousand passengers on board, a great big ship, Queen Mary or the United States or Queen Elizabeth, some of the big ships. And they're going to take a nice easy journey and enjoy, have the passengers enjoy the trip.

And somebody there is an authority, and he carries papers. And those papers say, you are to bring this ship into the harbor in Liverpool. All right, when they leave New York and wave to the people on the shore, the next stop's Liverpool.

That's it. But out there on the ocean, pretty soon they'll lose sight of the Statue of Liberty and they haven't come yet in sight of the English coast. So there they are floating around on the ocean.

What do they do? Do they all feel bound? Are they all in chains? Is everybody in chains and the captain walking around with a stick keeping them in? No. The officers of the ship say, now here's a shuffleboard court and there's a tennis court and there's a swimming pool and over here you can look at pictures, over there you can listen to music. They're perfectly free to roam around as they please over the deck of the ship.

But they're not free to change the course of that ship. It's going to Liverpool, whatever they do. They can jump off if they want to, but if they stay on board, they're going to Liverpool.

Nobody can change that, yet they're perfectly free within the confines of that ship. So you and I have our little lives. We are born and God says, now I've launched you on the sea.

And I've launched you on the sea from the sea of birth and you're going to go into the little port we call death. In the meantime, you're free. Romp around all you will, only remember you're going to answer when you get over there.

Be free. And so we throw our shoulders about and throw our weight around and we demand and declare that we can do as we please and we boast about our freedom. All right, we got a little freedom.

All right, we have it. But remember, you can't change God Almighty's course. And God has said that they that follow Jesus Christ and believe on him shall be saved and they that refuse to be shall be damned and that's settled and eternally sovereignly settled.

But you and I have freedom in the meantime. We can do anything we want to do and while most people do pay little attention, but we're going to answer for that sometime according to the sovereign will of God. Now God has certain plans that he's going to carry out, certain plans.

And I want to talk to you a little bit about those plans which God is going to carry out and show you what they are. Now God has his way in the whirlwind and the storm, the scripture says, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. Now when God is carrying on his plans, he's moving in a certain direction.

And when the enemy comes along, you're exercising his little freedom which God has given him to be an enemy of God. And he intersects the will and purpose of God, then there's trouble. As long as everything goes smoothly, everything goes smoothly.

As long as we move in the will of God, there is no jar. But when we get out of the will of God, then there's trouble, always trouble on our hands. One time God made the creation, the heaven and the earth, and then there was a mysterious hiatus in there, a gap, a gap that we don't understand.

And that gap came between Genesis 1.1 and Genesis 1.2 when darkness was upon the face of the deep and the spirit of God moved on the face of the waters. What had happened in there? Something had happened. The angels had fallen, or the demons that we now know had fallen.

There had come a great fall from the heavenly places. Perhaps it was Satan or some of Satan's legions had felled and brought darkness upon the world. And God Almighty moved up out of that darkness, and the spirit of God brooded upon the face of the waters, and God said, Let there be light, and there was light.

And God began a work of recreation, and he recreated the earth and put man upon it and started things all over again. And when the fall had come and it looked as if man was lost forever, Satan, I think Milton was right in his Paradise Lost, when he pictured Satan as saying, I think that I can do God more harm by injuring his human race than I can by trying to injure him. And so he gave up the idea of taking heaven by military storm, and he came to the garden and there he tempted the woman, and the race was fallen.

And it looked as if God's plans once more had been contraverted, and that God could not now carry on his plan to fill his world with a people made after his own image. But I heard a Southern preacher say one time that the first Adam was a wheel spinning on an axle, and he said when the wheel was spinning and flew off the axle, God put the other Adam, the second Adam on, the last Adam on, and he's right. And so when the first Adam fell, the second Adam stepped in.

In fact, he had been in the plan of God from the beginning of creation. God had his way in the whirlwind and the storm and made the clouds of history to be the dust of his feet. And when Israel was down in

Egypt, God wanted to take them out of Egypt and take them back into the promised land again.

But Egypt, exercising its little authority which God had allowed it to have, said, We will not let you go. And God said, Let my people go. And then came the clouds and the dust of God's feet and the ten terrible plagues when God struck down out of heaven at the ten gods of Egypt, lice and flies and the rest of it.

And when it was all over, there was a dead one in every home in Egypt, and Israel was free, singing her 15th chapter of Exodus, free on the other side of the river. And the hosts of peril were all dead men. Now, brother, when history goes along with God, all is well.

When history goes contrary to the ways of God, then there is storm and flood and fire. But when it's over, God has his way in the world. Look when Jesus Christ, our Lord, was born.

I don't know how much our Lord Jesus weighed. Let's guess he weighed eight pounds. I suppose eight, maybe seven to nine.

I would think he would be an average-sized baby boy. All right. Suppose he weighed nine pounds, eight pounds.

There he was, a little eight-pound boy. Couldn't hold his head up. His mother had to hold his head up for him.

Couldn't speak, had no teeth, and I suppose very little hair. A poor, helpless little lad. If they'd let him alone, even for a little time, he'd have cried a while and then died.

Helplessness was there, helplessness, the helplessness of a baby. Did you ever take a tiny new baby in your arms and notice how that it just droops over you? It has no strength at all, no power. It can kick a little, but it has no strength.

He hadn't been born very long when Herod sent over to find out where he should be born in order that he might slay all babies and find him and kill him. And he gave the order that the baby should be slain. And this tiny little piece of humanity, so small, he had to be nursed to sleep on his mother's bosom.

Here God Almighty allowed in the irony of history, God allowed this tiny baby Jesus to be arrayed against the whole Roman Empire. But who won? Before many decades had gone by, the Roman Empire went down into dust and disgrace. But the baby Jesus grew to manhood and was crucified and rose again from the dead, and God raised him and seated him up yonder.

And the baby that once stood opposed to the Roman Empire now looks down upon an empire that doesn't exist anymore. I remember back in the days of Stalin and before it around Stalin's takeover, they were then saying, and you could buy the books anywhere in the States, they were saying, that bearded God, we'll pull him out of the sky. And the God who had looked down upon chaos and said, let there be light, and the God who had looked down upon Egypt and said, let my people go, and the God who had looked down upon a Roman Empire and said, you can't slay my son, but had allowed the empire to slay itself, that God looked down quietly upon the Sphinx they called Stalin and heard him say, we'll pull that bearded God out of the sky.

But that great God Almighty still in his sky, I saw, says in the book of Revelation, how I love this passage in the book of Revelation, beautiful to me, beautiful it is. I don't have to know all that it means, but it says,

after this I looked and behold, a door was opened in heaven and the first voice which I heard was as were of a trumpet talking with me, which said, come up hither and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit and behold, a throne was set in heaven.

A throne was set in heaven. Stalin is dead and they've pickled him and put him on display in the Kremlin. And they can go there and see him lying alongside of Lenin where one of these times pudgy Mr. K will be lying, looking up and not seeing anything.

There they will be, what a trio they will make lying there, the ones who are going to pull the bearded God out of the sky, but the God who makes the whirlwinds of history to be the dust of his feet will look in a fitting smile upon three of the worst men that ever lived in the world. But God is still on his throne. And I saw a throne was set in heaven and one sat on the throne.

He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone and there was a rainbow round about the throne. Rainbows don't go clear around, they only go halfway. Have you ever noticed that? A rainbow starts here, arches around, stops there.

But this rainbow started here and went clear around, made a full circle. Though God were saying, the green emerald rainbow, meaning immortality and endlessness, circles my throne, no one can destroy him. And at Jesus' death again, this time it looked more terrible than it had at the first, for he had lived his life on earth among men.

He was 33 years old now, and the time came when he should have been king over Israel. So the people thought, will Thou at this time give the kingdom to Israel now? Then they took him out there and nailed him on the cross. I heard a Welsh preacher say one time, and I think he's right, I heard him say that those disciples never believed that anybody could nail Jesus on the tree.

He said, when Judas's chariot sold Jesus, he never believed that Jesus could die. When Peter forsook Jesus, he never believed that Jesus could die. I believe he's right.

They believed that this man, this wondrous man that could still the waves, that could heal the sick and cast out the devil to make the blind to see, they believed that this could not die. Or if he died, they believed he would rise again in my majesty and be king over Israel. So there he lay, now hung for a little while on the cross.

They came and took him down with great sadness and tears. They wrapped him up in his burial robes and they put the ointments in to try to give him some kind of embalming, and laid him in Joseph's new tomb. A few days later, two men, Cleopas and his friend, walked alone on the road to Emmaus.

And as they walked, a man arrived beside them. He said to them, why do you look so sad? And why are your voices so low? Why do you seem so depressed? They said, you must be a stranger in Jerusalem. I'm paraphrasing now, but here's what they said in effect.

Don't you know that a great prophet arose and we believed he was the son of God? We didn't believe he could die. Or if he died, we believed he would rise. Now this is the third day and nothing's happened.

All our hopes have caved in. There's nothing but bleak discouragement before us. Then he began to talk to them.

And when he talked to them, he made as if he would go by and they said, come on back and go in. And they went in. When he broke the bread, they saw the nail that had been in his hand.

And they looked at each other and he disappeared from their sight. They leaped to their feet and said, did not our hearts burn? God Almighty had come down and had done the wonderful miracle of all miracles. He had raised a man that had died from the grave and had glorified him.

So the sovereign God had had his way and the whirlwind and the storm again. Now my friends, we are shaping up to a period in history, the like of which there has never been since Jesus Christ and the Roman empire stood opposed one to the other. And the God who lived back there lives now.

And I have no fear, no doubt, and I can sleep restfully because I believe that God has his plans laid and will carry them out. Now what are the plans of God? Well, God's promises to Abraham and Israel. God made them and God will carry them out.

And I can settle on that. God said to Abraham that you're going to have this land. And he said to Israel that you're going to, that you're going to the house of Jacob.

He's going to reign over the house of Jacob forever. And I believe that God will fulfill his promises to Abraham and Israel. And I don't think that there'll be any possibility of stopping God from doing it.

God has also decreed that a ransom company should be called and glorified. Right after the second world war, our missionaries began to, to, to sound the blue now. And they began to say, we only have so many more years left yet for missionary activity.

And young people that were felt called to the mission field didn't go because they said, what's the use of getting ready for the mission field? Because it looks as if the doors were closing one after the other, closing tight. But you can be absolutely certain, my brother, that the God who is free to do everything he wants to do and is perfectly free anywhere, all the time to do everything he wills to do, and who wills to do everything he's purposed to do, will carry out his purposes. And one of his purposes is that he shall bring out a ransom people from every tongue and people and tribe and nation and color and race and ethnic origin around the world.

And he shall make them to be like his holy son. They shall be the bride of his son and they shall walk down the streets, leaning on the arm of the beloved. And Jesus Christ, the son of God, shall introduce them to the father ransomed and redeemed and purified.

For they were virgins and they walked with the lamb and they were clean. I believe in this. I don't believe that Protestant divisions, and I don't believe that the totalitarian authoritarianism of the Roman church, and I don't believe all the sects and false isms that are abroad everywhere, I don't believe they'll change the purpose of God, nor stop God, nor hinder him.

God will have his way in the whirlwind and the storm, and he'll make the clouds the dust of his feet. God has declared that sinners shall be cleansed out of the earth, and he's purposed it, that they shall be cleansed out of the earth. The sinners are pretty deeply entrenched now, so deeply entrenched.

In the United States there is a group, a group of people of a certain racial origin, and they're organized from coast to coast and from the Canadian border to the Mexican border. And they're so well organized that they have crime under their control to a point where not even the president can oppose them, and

where authorities can't oppose them, and where the FBI can't oppose them. They try and they do their best, but they don't succeed.

And if they do arrest them, some Supreme Court turns them loose on insufficient evidence. You've been reading about it. Sin is pretty well entrenched in the world, organized like a cancer that's gone to work on the body of a man.

I've heard them said, heard them say of a certain man who has a cancer at the base of his neck, and it's gone down into his spinal cord, and it's gone down into his throat, and it's gone up into his head, and it's gone everywhere, and its roots are everywhere like an octopus. Of course, that man didn't last long. Unless the sovereign God is running his world, this human race couldn't last long.

The cancer of iniquity, like some vile disease, has its roots down everywhere. God says that he's going to cleanse sinners out of the earth, and there shall be a new heaven and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. God has ordained the sinners.

The earth shall be renovated, I say, and sinners shall be cleansed away. Now, nothing can stop God. Nobody can stop God.

No unforeseen circumstance can stop God. Somebody says, yes, but just a minute. God means well, and God's powerful, and God has authority, but some unforeseen circumstance may derail his train.

Why, there are no unforeseen circumstances. When you start out and walk a block, there are unseen circumstances. A black cat may run in front of you.

A policeman may call you aside. You may drop dead. A car may run on the sidewalk and break a leg.

You can't tell. Unforeseen circumstances are everywhere around you and me, but God knows none. For the sovereign God knows nothing about unforeseen circumstances.

He has seen the end from the beginning, and he needs not ask what's in a man. He knows every man. So there can be no unforeseen circumstances, and then there can be no accidents.

And why? Because God's wisdom prevents an accident. You start driving down the highway. You're only doing forty miles an hour, but a tire blows, and you turn over in the ditch.

Somebody made that tire and didn't quite know how to make it, and they didn't hang together right. I used to make tires when I was a kid in my teens in the rubber factories in Akron, Ohio. And I know some of the workmanship we put into them, it's the one they didn't blow out for to get out of the factory.

But the wisdom, God Almighty's wisdom never has a blowout anywhere. God Almighty knows what he's doing, and he's utterly wise, and there can be no accidents. Nobody can countermand an order.

One of the greatest difficulties, they said, during the war was countermanded orders. You know, they had so many tough generals, General Montgomery and General Alexander and General Eisenhower and General Spock and general this and general nuisance. And these men were busy, and one man would give an order, and another man would countermand it.

That happened, you read their little accounts of it here and there. Some fellow starts somewhere, and somebody else would say, just a minute, I got an order from so-and-so canceling that. Ran in circles, said,

I just got an order from somebody else telling me to do it.

Around they went. But I want to ask you, who can countermand an order given by the great God Almighty? When the sovereign God says, it shall be this way, it's that way, and nobody can change it. Then we can think possibly that God might fail because of weakness.

But the omnipotent God couldn't be weak, because God has all the power there is. H-bombs and cobalt bombs and baby A-bombs and full-grown A-bombs and all the rest of them, they're nothing. They're nothing.

They're marbles. They're toys God plays with. They're nothing.

God in his infinite strength and infinite wisdom and infinite authority and power is having his way in the whirlwind and the storm. That's what sovereign God means. I'll have to hurry and say, what does all this mean to us? It means, my brother, that if you walk out of this church, contrary to the will and way of God, God does not will that you should do it, but he wills that you should be free to do it.

And when you freely choose to walk against the way of God, you choose freely to go on the road to perdition. And there's one thing about heaven and hell. Nobody's in either place by accident.

Hell is populated by people who chose to go there. If they did not choose a destination, they chose the highway. They're there because they love the way that leads to darkness, and they were free to take it because the sovereign God had granted them that much freedom.

And everybody in heaven above is there because he chose to go there. Nobody wakes up and finds himself in heaven by accident and says, I never planned to come here. No.

It says that the rich man died, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, and the poor good man died and went to his own place. He went where he belonged because he belonged there. When Judas died, he went to his own place.

And when Lazarus died, he went to his place, the place that they had chosen. So, my friend, we always remember this, that whoever is not on God's side is on the losing side. Now, this matter of consecration and the deeper life, this matter of obedience to the Lord, we smile and shrug and make it look as if it was something we could do or not do as we please.

My brother, consecration to the will of God is an absolute necessity if you're going to be on God's side. And if you're on God's side, you can't lose, and if you're on the other side, you can't win. There it is, as easy as that.

No matter how nice we may be, how righteous, how much we give to missions, how much we pay up, and how moral we are, if we're opposing God, we can't win. But if we'll surrender and come over on God's side, we can't lose. A man who is with God can't lose because God can't lose.

God is the sovereign God who is having his way in the whirlwind and the storm. And when the storm is over and the whirlwind of history has blown itself out, the God who sat on the throne with a rainbow round about it will still sit on that throne, and beside him will be a ransom company who chose to go his way. Heaven will not be filled with slaves.

There will be no conscripts marching in the armies of heaven. Every man will be there because he exercised his sovereign freedom to choose to believe on Jesus Christ and surrender to the will of God. Ah, why strivest thou against him? A sinner who will not give up his sin, why strivest thou against him? I talked to a young man.

He may be here tonight. I don't remember his name, and I wouldn't use it if I did. But I talked to a man last Sunday night, and he said something to this effect, I can't say yes to God.

I can't say yes. I can't surrender. He was a very fine, likable young man, an intelligent young man, but he couldn't say yes to the winning side, so he was saying yes to the losing side.

If you say yes to God, you can't lose, and if you say no to God, you can't win. Why strivest thou against him? Oh, that's our trouble, mother and sister. It's striving with God.

That's your trouble. You're striving with God. You say, why don't I get filled with the Holy Ghost? You're striving with God.

God wants you to go this way, and you go partway, and then you veer off. There's always a controversy there between you and God. What about you tonight? Are you on God's side, completely holy forever? Everything, your home, your business, your school, your choice of a partner in life, everything, you've chosen Christ's way, because Christ is Lord and Lord is sovereign.

And you know it's foolish to choose any other way. It's folly to try to outsmart God. It's folly to try to fight against him.

Why strivest thou against him? Now, my friends, I'd like to pray for you, and I'd like to ask you, if there are those who would say, I believe in this sovereign Lord and I believe in the right, I have certain right to make choices, and I'm afraid that I haven't been able to say yes to God's will, and I haven't seen how terrible it is to fight against God and to have a controversy with the Almighty. I want you to pray for me.

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