

# The Sovereignty of God #4

by Ernest C. Reisinger

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*God's sovereignty works in conjunction with human free will to bring about His purposes, and it is not a matter of compulsion or coercion.*

**Duration:** 42:27

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Acts 27:25, Romans 8:28

**Topics:** "Sovereignty"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of divine sovereignty and how it is portrayed in the Bible. He uses examples from Psalm 93 and Daniel 4 to illustrate the meaning and message of God's sovereignty. The preacher emphasizes that while God's sovereignty is evident in the events that unfold, human actions are not forced or compelled, but rather necessary. He also mentions a song about hornets being sent by God to bring about a desired outcome, highlighting the difference between necessity and compulsion. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the belief in God's sovereignty, even if it is difficult to fully understand or reconcile with human actions.

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## Transcript

Suppose if I had a text tonight, this is not so much a textual sermon tonight, and I'm going to be a little tedious and stay close to my notes, and we will be looking at two passages of scripture by way of illustration, but we've been considering the great and glorious doctrines of the sovereignty of God that is so plainly and vividly set forth in the holy scriptures, and in our first study we considered the meaning and message of divine sovereignty using Psalm 93 as our study, and then we considered Daniel 4 where we looked at the proud atheistic monarch, what his attitude towards the sovereignty of God was, and we saw how in that chapter we saw the application of God's sovereignty both in judgment and in mercy, and then the last time, Sunday morning, we looked at the mystery of sovereignty in respect to providence. Tonight we want to consider a little further looking into the mystery of God's sovereignty, and especially as it relates to the antinomies in the Bible. I'll talk about that word later, but we'll look at that word later.

If you don't have that word in your vocabulary tonight, you're going to learn a new word. If you don't learn anything else, you're going to know what an antinomy is, and I say I'm going to be a little tedious. Let me just read two verses as a springboard for our thoughts.

I'll take up where Mr. Carnes left off in Philippians 2. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and

trembling, for it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Maybe I should say, talk a little bit about what is a mystery. What is a mystery? Let me explain what I mean by that so we'll both be on the same foundation as we go along.

A mystery is what the Bible teaches to be a fact, but which is beyond our understanding. When we know something to be true because the Bible says it's true, and yet we don't know how it could be true. We know it's true because the Bible says it's true, but we don't know how it could be true.

Of course, Christmas time is a good time for one of those examples. We wouldn't have a better example because you've got to be a fool or a Christian to believe, to really believe the Christmas story. Well, so much for what that is.

Our Christian fathers used the word when referring to God as incomprehensible in referring to God. That is, God is above our mind. We can't take in all that's true about God, though we know it to be true because it's in the Bible.

For example, I don't know how he continues to be sovereign Lord of all, when at the same time we make free decisions all the time. But I know that that's true, that he's sovereign overall. I know it because the Bible teaches that to be true.

But it does not mean that God is knocked off of his throne or out of control when we make free decisions. It doesn't mean that at all. The scriptures do not undertake to even explain a mystery.

They leave them unexplained, and there are a lot of them. Now, there's a difference between the difficulties in the Bible and mysteries. Sometimes you may have difficulty with a passage, and later on in your life some preacher, some Sunday school teacher, some book will open up that passage to you, and that difficulty is removed.

Mysteries cannot, without new revelations, be understood or explained, without new revelations. And the Bible does not take it on itself to explain them, but it does set them forth. A young fellow said to an old preacher once, talking in regard to the Trinity, he said, I will not believe anything I can't understand.

And the old preacher politely said, your creed will be the shortest one I know of. And that's about right. Well, I was going to deal with the mystery of God in respect to the scriptures, how it's human writings and it's divine writing.

But I'm going to pass over that, and I'll tell you what, if you're interested in that, you get Pastor Fisher's Sunday school lessons. I don't know how long ago it was, about a year. It's about a year on that subject.

I would suggest that you get them. They were most vivid and clear on that thing. So I'm not going to touch that.

But I do want to deal with a little bit about the mystery of the sovereignty of God in respect to saving faith. It is our faith. We must have faith.

We trust. We believe. We respond to the invitations of Christ, and we're responsible of how we respond to the invitations of Christ, invitations of the gospel.

If those who respond favorably, they are saved. If they respond unfavorably, they are damned. Your mind may want to say, surely it's our faith, truly our faith.

And that's right. Then how could God be sovereign Lord and give us the faith? He's on the throne and he brings faith to it. Well, the answer is, his sovereignty, as revealed in the Bible, is of such a kind that there's really no problem here at all.

An action can be truly ours, and God is still sovereign in ruling and in overruling. And in this case, God is sovereign in working in our hearts in respect to faith. God is sovereign in working in our hearts to move us to a saving response.

And apart from his Spirit working within our hearts, we never, never, never, never would be willing to make a saving response. And on the other hand, men's actions are their own. If faith is wrought in our hearts by divine operation, it doesn't hinder it being truly your faith.

If repentance is given by Christ, it is still you who really repent, if you have. Faith is produced in our hearts by his Spirit, but we do the believing, we do the repenting. He may produce actions, but the actions are our actions.

This cannot be altered, and it cannot be disguised. It's just what the Bible teaches, exactly that. Whether men act good or bad, their actions are their own.

We are left under divine influence and full possession of all that is necessary to moral agency. God's sovereign operation does not take away the power of understanding. God's sovereign operation doesn't take away the faculty of conscience or the capacity of will, freely, in view of our motives.

There are three things essential to moral agency. First one is this, understanding. To comprehend the nature of an action, you have to understand.

Conscience is another. To appreciate its moral quality and will, apprehend the motives freely, most chosen freely, what we shall do or what we shall not do. But none of these things take away or hinder, are hindered in their operation by God's operation.

You are a moral agent, and you act are truly yours. This must be admitted in sovereign efficiency. It must be admitted that it's consistent with human freedom and activity.

Otherwise, men could have no holiness. It wouldn't be their holiness. It would be God's holiness.

Men could have no sin because it would be God's sin. And that's why it's important that we must admit that sovereignty, that sovereign efficiency is consistent with human agency. You see, and I know this is not so much for your heart tonight, it's going to be a little bit for your head, but it's in the Bible and a lot of people are very confused here when we preach on sovereignty and that doctrine that we love so much.

You see, necessity in human action, necessity is different than compulsion. If God works in us to will and to do, as we read from this passage, then there is a necessity that we should will and we should do. But we are not compelled to will or to do.

The act must be, the act must be, however man will, he acts freely, he's free, he's left to act freely and exercise matters of choice. I remember hearing, I'll try to illustrate that a little bit, I remember hearing an old country preacher once, he was singing a hillbilly song and picking his guitar. And I'm sure that that dear old fellow didn't realize what good theology he was singing in that song.

It's called the Hornet Song. And I'll give it to you, you'll see my point, that it's not compulsory, that there's a difference between necessity and compulsory. When the Canaanites hardened their heart against God and grieved him because of their sin, God sent along hornets to bring them to time and to help his people to win.

If a nest of five hornets were left loose in this room and all the creatures were left to go free, you wouldn't need urging to make yourself scarce, you just want to get out, don't you see? You wouldn't, you wouldn't, that wouldn't be compulsory, you'd just go. They would not lay hold, this is the hornet, they would not lay hold of you by force of their strength and throw you out the window, oh no. They would not compel you to go against your will, they'd just make you willing to go.

When Jonah was sent to the work of the Lord and the outlook was not very bright, he had never done such a hard thing before, so he backed off and ran out from the fight. Now the Lord sent a great fish to swallow him up, the story I'm sure you all know. He did not compel him to go against his will, but he just made him willing to go.

And the course goes like this, God does not compel us to go, oh no, he never compels us to go, he does not compel us to go against our will, but he just makes us willing to go. Now, we have that in such text as no man can come to me except the Father which sent me, draw him. We have it in such blessed text as Psalm 65 verse 4, blessed is the man whom thou chooseth and causes to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts and be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even his holy temple.

Notice, blessed is the man whom thou chooseth and causes to approach unto thee. No one ever comes to God and comes to Christ against their will, no one ever gets saved against their will, he just made them willing to go. Now this encouraging truth, this is why I'm laboring it a bit tonight, this encouraging truth doesn't leave men and women and boys and girls passive or inert, the very opposite takes place.

The spirit does not kill man or regard him as a tin can or a piece of wood or a robot, no, no. The spirit graciously, powerfully takes possession of the man and it lays hold of his whole being for all eternity. The spirit does not annihilate men's power, but renews his powerlessness.

The spirit does not destroy man's will, but frees it from sin. The spirit does not stifle or obliterate man's conscience, but sets them free from darkness and regenerates and recreates the man entirely, entirely, renewing him by grace and by power and causes him to love and consecrate himself to God most freely, most freely. If you would all stand up and give a testimony tonight, it would be one person that says, I got saved against my will.

He just made you willing to go. Well, the Bible underscores this truth in many, many places, but I want to underscore it by two very good illustrations found in the scriptures where we see this sovereignty working and responsibility working side by side. Now there's many, many places, probably one of the best is Joseph in Egypt, but I'm not going to use that tonight.

And I'd like you to turn, please, to keep you awake. Turn, please, in your Bible to first Samuel chapter nine, first Samuel chapter nine. And I want to look at, uh, first of all, just take a minute to look at verse versus 15 and 16 to see what's supposed to take place.

This is a case. This is the case where, uh, Saul was to become king and Saul was to come to Samuel, who was going to anoint him and so on. Saul had to get to Samuel.

Now, if you notice what this verse says in verse 15 of chapter nine, first Samuel verse chapter nine, verse 15. Now the Lord told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul's coming saying, and this is what the Lord said tomorrow about this time, I will send you a man out of the land of Benjamin and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over all the people of Israel. And he may save my people out of the land of the listings for, I have looked upon my people because they cry unto me.

Now get the picture. He said, tomorrow, I'm going to send a man. That man happens to want to be sold.

It comes in tomorrow, Samuel, Saul is going to come to you by the name of now. The question is, did God sovereignly force him to take him bodily or by the hair of his head or carry him there by the wind or compel him to go against his will? No, no. I want you to see how he induced by a succession of the most natural circumstances possible.

When you look, what did he do? If you read the whole chapter, if you turn, you'll see in verse, verse three, that his father, kiss with his father, his father, uh, uh, animals got away. The, the animals of his father had strayed away in verse three and they were sent out to seek him. And he said, now take one of my servants.

He said to Saul, his son, verse three, take one of my servants with thee and arrive and go seek these animals, these assets. And he took an old first, if you follow the context, he took the old faithful servant and they went everywhere looking for them. And Saul wanted to give up.

And at last, after considerable wandering through these, for these animals, and they became, they got close to the residence of Samuel. Now these are, this is God working out these natural, these, these consequences are the succession of events. God's working them out and Samuel isn't going against his will.

Or I mean, Saul isn't going against his will. And suddenly it occurred to this old, this, this old servant of his, he said, there's a man who lives here. Look at verse six.

He said, there's a man. He said, he said to him, behold, now there is in this city, a man of God. He is an honorable man.

All that he saith comes surely to pass. Now let's go further. Perhaps he can show us our way that we should go to get to retrieve the, the animals.

Well, you see it's natural circumstances. There lives a man in this hill and he's a strange man. Well, his acts.

Now, if you look carefully at this context, you'll see he acts on the natural suggestion. He acts on natural suggestion. He goes and here was necessity of action and yet perfectly free, perfectly freedom, successive of actions, perfect freedom in motive, which led to it.

But the prophecy had to be fulfilled. And if no prophecy had been made, the reference wouldn't matter, but there was a prophecy made. There's a man going to come to you tomorrow.

He might've said, well, I won't go. I don't think I'll go, but he wanted to go. And he did go.

This is a perfect example of God, sovereign God, bringing to pass an event which came to pass because he planned it. And yet we see human action, bringing it to pass, not forced, not forced, not compelled. We

see necessity, but not compulsion, necessity, but not compulsion.

Now we believe it. We can't put that together. I see it right here.

I believe that's true. Don't you believe that story's true? I hope you do. I'm sure you do.

We believe it, but we can't put it together. We believe it not because we understand it, but because it's in the Bible and it's revealed to us. Now, another most familiar one, I think I preached on this one time here, a long time ago.

Turn to another example, but I want you to get the picture. Saul wants to come to Samuel. All these natural things.

It was necessary that he come, but it wasn't compulsion. Look at Acts chapter 27. We consider another biblical example of this truth.

In the story, at least most of you know, you know it well. We consider another biblical example of the same truth. Paul shipwrecked on his way to Rome.

On that stormy night, an angel stood by Paul. Look at it in verse 22. This is a stormy night.

And now I exhort you to be of good cheer, for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but the ship. There shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but the ship. Verse 23, where there stood by me, that's what Paul was telling the sailors, saying, Fear not, Paul, thou must be brought before Caesar, and, lo, God hath given thee all that sail with thee.

There is a divine prophecy, a promise and a prophecy. Wherefore, verse 25, Sirs, be of good cheer, for I believe God. He didn't understand it, but I believe God that it shall be, even as it was told me.

And here we have the exact same picture. Now there was a, there was a divine prediction. There was a divine prophecy, a divine promise.

God said it, if God said it will be so. It is certain to happen. And if God said it was going to happen, then all the angels in heaven, all the men on earth and all the devils in hell could not keep it from happening if he said it's going to happen.

Now, what did Paul do? Did he say, well, everything's going to be all right. I'll just, we'll just all go to sleep and take it easy and not pay any attention to anything. I'd fatalism.

No, he didn't do that. What did he do? Did he run to fatalism? Well, and say, well, what's going to happen is going to happen, will happen anyhow. No, no, no.

He didn't say, well, let's lie down and go to sleep. He was much awake. And if you read the verses and I'm not going to read them all, you'll see he was much awake.

He kept, he kept an eye observing those gloomy, frightened sailors who were about to jump ship in verse 30. They were, the sailors were about to jump ship. They knew more than the soldiers about, uh, and the prisoners.

On verse 30, and as, as the shipment, as the sailors were about to flee out of the ship, when they were let down, they let down the boats in the sea under the color as though they would have cast anchors. They

were doing it sneakily out of the four ships. Paul and Paul, what did he do? Well, he went and he aroused the captain, the centurion.

He aroused the captain, forming him. Notice in verse 32, informing him of the danger and the plot of some of the sailors who were about to cut off these small boats, these little small boats from the main ship and sneak silently away. What did he say? Verse 31, he said, unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.

God said it. He's working freely. He's doing this freely, even though he's sure.

Now Paul, Paul doesn't, he was not doubting his heavenly father's promise. He was not doubting it at all. Paul's faith was not wavering the fact that he was exercising human responsibility, or was he in any respect compelled.

He was not compelled to have these men stay on the ship. It was certain that the men should be saved. That's a certainty.

God said it. That settled it. It was certain.

And it was, it was in his sovereign plan. It was in his sovereign purpose that they would be saved because it was divinely predicted in the word of God. And yet the certainty depended, so to speak, on the contingency of, of proper use of the means.

All the parties in every case, every party acted freely. The sailors acted freely in their secret, secretly trying to escape. Paul acted freely in finding out their scheme of escape.

The centurions acted freely in cutting away the small boat and disappointing the treacherous attempt to escape. It's very plain that they, that they acted, they all acted freely. And yet the creator's purpose was working out just like it was meant to be.

Now, you don't understand that, and I don't understand that, but it is in the Bible. That's why we're talking about the mystery of sovereignty. So with all the results in all things, so within everything, all the results, they are brought about under divine administration.

And if we admit that they are foreseen, if we admit that they are certain, if we admit that things are determined beforehand, yet those same things can be felt dependent on the contingency of human action. And at the same time, they are free actions. Now here's one of those things that I mentioned in the beginning when I defined the mystery.

Here's one of those things. Because the Bible says it's so, we believe it's so. Because, not because we understand it, because it's beyond our understanding.

Some men are not willing to let God know some things that they don't know. And this is why I'm calling these messages, this message particularly, the mystery of sovereignty. What the Bible teaches as a fact, but which is beyond our understanding.

And the old preacher was right. And if you only believe what you can understand, you'll have a short creed. The Bible is full of acts and actions of divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

In fact, that's what it's all about. The acts and actions of God and the acts and actions of men. That's the whole Bible.

I'm not suggesting that this is an easy topic to discuss, but it's an important one. And it's important to know what you don't know. It's not only important to know what you know, but it's important to know what you don't know.

All theological topics have pitfalls, have certain pitfalls. God's truth is never quite what we would, what maybe men would expect, like to have it. And this present subject is a very, is one of the most treacherous ones.

This is because in thinking through, we have to deal with, in thinking through these things, we have to deal with an antinomy in biblical revelation. Now I'm going to explain that tonight. If you don't get anything else, I want you to get this, what an antinomy is.

It's very important. It's too much for our finite minds to understand these things, but I want to give you an, I want to explain to you, what is an antinomy tonight? The Bible has many antinomies and we better know what it is. What is an antinomy in Bible revelation? Well, I'm going to give you the definition from a shorter dictionary that defines it as such.

A contradiction between conclusions, not a contradiction of facts, a contradiction between conclusions which seem equally logical, equally reasonable, and necessary. Now that does not hold, that definition is good, but it doesn't hold good for theological purpose. This definition is not quite accurate.

It's accurate for other conditions, but it's not quite accurate for theological purposes, and I'll tell you why. We must say the appearance of a contradiction. The appearance of a contradiction.

It's not a contradiction, it's an appearance of contradiction. It only appears to us because we do not have the infinite knowledge of God. It is therefore not a real contradiction, though to us it may look like a contradiction.

In biblical revelation, we must define antinomy as the apparent incompatibility between two apparent truths. An antinomy exists when two truths, we know they're both true, and when we look at them separately, when you look at the Bible, suppose you were looking at passages that had to do with human responsibility, you would have a bit of trouble. And I hope after these weeks when you look at those passages that have to do with divine sovereignty, you don't have a bit of trouble.

It's when you try to put those two truths together where you get into real, real problems. Now, an antinomy, by the way, not only the Bible has antinomies, there's antinomies in science. For instance, physics, there's an antinomy.

Now, in this sense, those who study the subject of light, they're light. They have sufficient, sufficient evidence to show that light consists in waves. And there's just as much cogent evidence to show that light is particles.

And when you look at those two things by themselves, you can prove that light is waves, you can prove that light is particles, but you can't bring that together. You can't put that together. So it's not only religion and Christianity and the Bible that have antinomies, there are others.

It's not apparent, it's not apparent how light can be both waves and particles, but there's enough evidence there that you can't rule it out. Well, let me say another thing about an antinomy. An antinomy is not a paradox.

A paradox is a figure of speech, a play on words. It's a form of statement that seems quite, it's a form of stating something that seems quite opposite in its ideas. Many truths in the Bible, talking about the Christian light, can express, be expressed by paradoxes.

Let me give you an example. Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 6, there's various things. He says, sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.

Having all things, yet possessing nothing. Well, that's double talk. That's not an antinomy.

That can be explained. That can be explained. That's a paradox.

And again, another place he says, when I am weak, then I am strong. That's double talk. See, the point of a paradox, however, it seems to be a contradiction, but it's not a contradiction in fact.

It's a contradiction in words. An antinomy is an apparent contradiction of fact, not words. It's just the way you say it.

The contradiction in the paradox is verbal, and that same can be expressed in non-parabolic form. You can express the same things in non-parabolic form. In other words, we can always dispense or explain a paradox, but you cannot explain an antinomy.

Example, when Paul says sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, his sorrow was in the circumstances that he was in. But he had joy in the Lord, in his heart. See, he was sorrowful about the circumstances, but he was rejoicing with joy.

Joy in God, and joy in the hope of Christ, and so on. So he was truly sorrowing in one sense, and rejoicing in another sense. That can be explained.

This is often combined in his experience. So then I could say that a paradox is merely a matter of how we use words, kind of like trick speech, but it does not imply even an appearance of a contradiction in the facts. It's not in the facts, it's in the words.

Well, a person at the end of receiving a paradox, he must maybe sometimes be a little patient in unraveling it and studying the thought. Otherwise, it would seem like double talk to him. But my main point is this, that a paradox can be explained.

A paradox is words, how we say it. Not in the facts. An antinomy is in the facts.

It is a fact that God is sovereign. It is a fact that man is 100% responsible. Antinomy is something quite different.

Well, what should we do with antinomies in biblical revelation? Well, accept it for what it is, be willing to wait until you get to heaven to get it cleared up. Because you're not going to get it cleared up by some book or some theologian or some preacher. The antinomy, you're going to have to wait to get cleared up until you get to heaven.

To explain it is beyond our limited mind and our understanding. We don't see how these two sets of facts can be put together. And the truth of it is, they can't be put together.

The particular antinomy we're considering is apparent opposition and divine sovereignty and opposition, I mean, opposite of human responsibility. They're both, this is very important, they're both 100% true. Some weeks ago, Pastor Fisher used a quote from one of the old divines, and I'm going to quote it again.

It was a great old Anglican preacher who said, the truth does not lie in the center, that is bringing these two facts together. The truth does not lie in the center, or at the one extreme, but at the two extremes. That's a statement that set me free from this awful agony that I had with the Bible over this responsibility and sovereignty.

You see, here's the preacher, and he sees that the Bible teaches that God is 100% sovereign. And he also sees that the Bible teaches that man is 100% responsible. He says, I can't get this together, it's so dangerous.

Well, I'll water down this sovereignty of God a little bit. I don't want to be so strong with my people on preaching the sovereignty of God, so I'll preach of God as something a little less than sovereign. Well, then he doesn't have the God of the Bible.

Or he says, I see that this Bible teaches the responsibility of man, but that's a little bit of conflict with the sovereignty of God, so I'll water down preaching that man's 100% responsible because I can't bring it together. Well, the net result of that is this. He does not have the God of the Bible, or he doesn't have the man of the Bible.

And that's why you might say, well, why is he talking about these things? Well, it has to do with sovereignty, and that's been our general subject. That's why I'm talking about it. I wish I had a coin.

I forgot to put a coin in my pocket. I remember how somebody illustrated it to me one time. They took a coin, and they put up heads, because I really fought this stuff.

Believe me. They put up heads, and they said, now let this, you'll have to imagine I have a coin, will you? They put up the heads, and they said, let the heads be the sovereignty of God, and they put the tails around, and they said, let the tails represent the responsibility of man. So they took the coin, and he said to me, I held up the head, like that, and he said, what do you see? I said, responsibility, the sovereignty of God.

He said, how much? I said, all of it, a hundred percent. He turned it around the other side, and he said, what do you see now? I said, well, by your illustration, I see the responsibility of man. He said, how much? A hundred percent, that's all I see.

And then he put it like this, sideways, and he said, now what do you see? And I didn't see either. And when preachers, or teachers, or parents play with these two things by trying to bring them together, they're going to wind up just like that. And that's why I'm laboring a little bit tonight, and being a little tedious on the point.

They are both true, but it's not that, since they're both true, and we can't get it together, we got to water them down, because then you don't have the God of the Bible. Well, I like that quote. The truth does not lie in the center, nor at the one extreme, but at the two extremes.

And what does that mean? I have a lawyer in my congregation down in the Keys, and he used to tell me that I contradict myself. He said, you know, you preach, in the first part of the sermon, you're preaching about the sovereignty of God. He said, in the last half of the sermon, you seem like you deny that, and you start appealing to these people.

Now, the problem with him was, he had a legal mind, and he couldn't put that together, and so he said, I'm contradicting myself. No, I'm not contradicting myself. That's an antinomy.

That's an antinomy. That's why I want you to know where it is. Well, you see, we cannot take in all that's true about God and his ways with men.

And this is especially apropos at Christmas. I really mean it when I say a man's a fool or a Christian to believe what we do about the Christmas, and the reason I say that is because to believe it savingly, to believe it savingly, it must be revealed. Did those wise men who bowed down to that baby, did he look like God to them? He looked like every other baby.

And what Pastor Fisher said this morning, when old Simeon picked that baby up in his arms, did he look like God? He looked like every other baby. Every other baby. How did he know? It was revealed to him by the Spirit of God.

When that baby, when Mary came to Elizabeth, and John the Baptist jumped in her womb, he knew it was Jesus. He knew she was carried by the Spirit of God, men breathe. And we have, that's why Christianity is supernatural.

That's why our churches can be filled with unconverted people, because if Christ has not been revealed to your heart by the Spirit, you can learn this stuff intellectually, you can learn it theologically, you can learn it historically, but if Christ has not been revealed to your heart, this is God's Son, your lost soul. And we believe it not because we understand it. And I said earlier when I talked to arrest our troubled minds, our tear-filled eyes, and our broken hearts, this is the greatest truth, the absolute sovereignty of God.

Again, why tickle your intellect? No, I believe with all my heart that a real church, or as far as that goes, a real Christian life, cannot be built or sustained that does not have some grasp of the biblical truth of God's absolute sovereignty in creation, His sovereignty in redemption, and His sovereignty in providence. If a person doesn't have some grasp of that, there'll be no praise, there'll be no heartfelt joy, and there'll be little Bible-centered, God-centered evangelism. That's why it's important.

It's important for your life. And for those of you who have not been reconciled to God, this is the truth that ought to box you up in a corner, and cause you to see Him who has your destiny in His hands. You see, if God is absolute sovereign, that means He has your destiny in His hands.

And that's a good thing for a sinner to see, because he might, he might, if he believed that, that God is absolutely sovereign, and He has my destiny in His hands. That'll do one or two things. That'll either cause Him to bend His knee, cause Him to do what old Simeon did, I've seen thy salvation, it'll cause Him to call upon God, or it'll make an atheist out of Him.

And I believe that following people who do not believe in the sovereignty of God, if you follow that train long enough, it'll lead to atheism. And the fact is, I believe there's only two positions, if you really think it through. You either believe in God who is absolute sovereign, sovereign again I say, in creation, sovereign in redemption, sovereign in profit, or you'll become an atheist.

And that's why when a sinner gets the right sight of God, when a sinner gets the right sight of God, he always gets the right sight of himself. John Calvin and the Institutes, the very, the Institutes of the Christian religion starts out by saying there are two knowledges necessary for salvation. One is the knowledge of God, and another is the knowledge of self.

And he said, I don't know which gives birth to the other, but no one will ever know himself if he doesn't have a right concept of God. And the concept that I've been setting before you these last two times is that God is absolutely sovereign. A sinner will never get a right sight of himself if he doesn't have some, and he'll never know God if he doesn't know himself, because he won't have any desire to.

We have a hymn. Oh Holy Father, we thank you for this holy season. We thank you that it's a happy season, because truly to be happy, we must, we thank you for this day that we've been together as a church family, for these wonderful, wonderful, that are so rich with your truth, so rich with your message, so rich with Christ our Redeemer.

We pray thee, as they bellow out from this world, all over the world, that many would hear with the ears of their hearts the great truths, the eternal verities that's found in these messages. Help our little children as they sing them to be gripped not only with the tune, but with the message, and may they grow up to love the one who the message is about. Give us a great time this Christmas in our homes.

May we sense your presence. May we sense your power. May we sense your help.

And as we soon will face the new year with unknown roads, unknown paths before us, help us to believe, Lord, that you are the sovereign one who reigns. You're on a throne, and though we do not know the future, we know that you hold the future in your hands. You hold us in your hands.

Give us all the benefits and comfort that should come to us through that truth. To that end, we ask you to dismiss us with your guidance and blessing through Christ our Redeemer. Amen.

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Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/29/SID29975.mp3>

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