



# God's Sovereignty and Evangelism

Our Role in His Mission



## Memory Verse

*"How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?...So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."*

**ROMANS 10:14,17**



## Discussion starter:

- What about the person who never hears the Gospel? Can they be saved some other way?

*"A man's religion may well be suspected when he is content to go to heaven alone."—J.C. RYLE*

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## Review of Sovereignty

God's sovereignty is the exercise of His absolute control over all things as Creator, whereby He causes or allows everything (including man's choices) to work together to accomplish His purposes. This sovereignty involves the continuous preservation and providence of God in the physical, mental, and moral realms of life. In summary, we can say that:

- A. God does what He pleases with His creation. (*Psalm 115:3*)
- B. All things, caused or allowed, are under His control. (*Isaiah 45:7*)
- C. Nothing continues to exist without His preservation. (*Hebrews 1:3*)
- D. Nothing happens outside His providential control.

## An important truth to understand before beginning:

This subject is one of great difficulty because it is what is called an **antinomy**. An antinomy is *an apparent incompatibility between two truths*. An antinomy exists when a pair of principles stands side by side, seemingly *irreconcilable*, yet both *undeniable*. There are sufficient biblical reasons for believing each of them. Each rest on clear and solid evidence, but it is a mystery how they fit together.

## How Does God's Sovereignty Relate to Evangelism?

### Key questions to consider:

- A. If God is in control of all things, why should we evangelize?
- B. How much control does God exercise in a person's salvation?
- C. If God exercises all control, what is man's responsibility?

### Since God is sovereign in salvation, why should we evangelize?

#### A. Evangelism is a part of God's revealed will for His people to obey.

- **Matthew 28:18-20**—<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

**B. Evangelism is an integral part of God's plan to save people.**

- **Romans 10:14, 17**—*"How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?...So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."*

**C. There is an urgency upon man to repent because he is headed toward eternal condemnation.**

- **Luke 13:5**—*"I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."*

**D. The promises of the Gospel are true.**

- **Romans 10:13**—*"for, WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED."*
- **Matthew 11:28**—*"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."*
- **1 Timothy 1:15a**—*"It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners..."*

**What do we know that helps us in this antinomy of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility?**

**A. God desires all men—from among the elect—of every background, culture, and race to be saved.**

- **2 Peter 3:9**—*"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."*
- **1 Timothy 2:3-4**—*"This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."*

**B. God does not elect anyone for hell.**

- **Romans 8:29**—*"For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren."*

**C. God does not delight in the perishing of anyone.**

- **Ezekiel 18:23, 32**—*"Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked,' declares the Lord GOD, 'rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?...For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,' declares the Lord GOD. 'Therefore, repent and live.'"*

## What do we not know that makes this antinomy a mystery?

1. Who the elect are
  2. When people will come to Christ
  3. If a person has hardened his heart beyond the point of redemption
- **Deuteronomy 29:29**—“The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law.”

Review 3.1

### Question 1 of 1

What are the four reasons we should evangelize?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.



## Undeniable Truths in God’s Sovereignty and Evangelism

### A. God controls who comes to Him and when each person comes.

1. Read John 6:44. Is it possible for a person to come to God on his own? Why not?  
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2. Why is it impossible for man to come to God on His own, according to Ephesians 2:1?  
(See also Romans 3:10-11) \_\_\_\_\_
3. According to John 6:37, who will eventually come to Christ for salvation?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What are those, who come to Christ, called? Read John 15:16. (See also Ephesians 1:4; Titus 1:1; Romans 8:29; Matthew 24:22, 24) \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the basis of this calling? (Read Ephesians 1:5, 9, 11)  
\_\_\_\_\_

The undeniable truth of God’s sovereignty in evangelism is clear. God gives faith (*Ephesians 2:8-9*), God grants repentance (*Romans 2:4; Acts 5:31*), and God makes it possible for man to come by an effectual calling (*Romans 8:29-30*). God elects—according to His divine prerogative and foreknowledge—those who come to Christ for salvation. However, this second truth is undeniable as well in evangelism.

**B. Man is responsible for his choice to come to Christ.** (Read Romans 1:18- 26; 14:12)

1. According to these verses, who is the call for salvation given to?
  - John 7:37: \_\_\_\_\_
  - John 6:40: \_\_\_\_\_
  - John 3:16: \_\_\_\_\_
2. According to John 6:37, what did Jesus say of the person who comes to Him?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Are the people who do not come to Christ prevented because they are not elected? (Read John 5:40)  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. According to John 3:19-20, why don't people come to Christ for salvation?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. If a person does not come to Christ for salvation, what is his fate? (Read John 8:24)  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Discussion:** Are there any excuses that man can give for not trusting Christ for salvation?

Man can give many excuses for not trusting in Christ. However, they are all illegitimate. Romans 1:20 tells us that God has given in creation what is called general revelation of Himself. In creation, God has given a natural theology of His divine attributes and eternal power, which guards man from worshiping the creature over the Creator. This natural theology is not enough to save man, but along with the laws of conscience (Romans 2:14-15), it prevents him from bowing to idols. General revelation leads to the special revelation of God's way of salvation in His Son.

## What do we need to understand about the sovereignty of God in evangelism?

- A. The sovereignty of God does not affect the *duty* of evangelism.
  - B. The sovereignty of God does not affect the *necessity* of evangelism.
  - C. The sovereignty of God does not affect the *urgency* of evangelism.
  - D. The sovereignty of God does not affect the *responsibility* of the sinner for his reaction to the Gospel.
  - E. The sovereignty of God gives us our only hope in the *success* of evangelism.
- **Romans 8:7**—"because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so."
  - **1 Corinthians 2:14**—"But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."
  - **Ephesians 2:1**—"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins."

## How should God's sovereignty in evangelism affect us?

- A. **It should make us bold.** People's first reaction to the Gospel may simply be a reaction to the light of the Gospel shining on a dark heart, so this should not surprise us. Many times, our obedience in witnessing serves as a link in the chain of a person's salvation.
- **1 Corinthians 3:6**—*"I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth."*
- B. **It should make us patient.** God is in control over when a person comes to Him. This is a secret thing that belongs to the Lord (*Deuteronomy 29:29*). When people do not respond quickly, we can rest in the fact that God is in control and that our labors have not been in vain.
- C. **It should make us prayerful.** We are totally impotent when it comes to saving anyone. Only God saves. Even when it comes to witnessing, Jesus said, *"...apart from Me you can do nothing"* (*John 15:5*). Therefore, we should pray for boldness and the power of the Holy Spirit as we witness.
- **2 Thessalonians 3:1**—*"Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord will spread rapidly and be glorified, just as it did also with you."*
  - **Ephesians 6:19-20**—*"and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak"*



### Application

Skillful application of divine truth for the glory of God

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- How can you see God's absolute sovereignty in your own salvation experience?
  - Describe the responsibility that you felt to respond to God's call for salvation.
  - Has a lack of knowledge of God's sovereignty in evangelism caused you to prematurely give up on someone?

- Are you spiritually conscious of the fact that God desires to use you as a link in the chain of someone's salvation, even today? Or do you see divine appointments applying just to those whom you know well?
- If God prompted your heart today to witness to a stranger, are you prepared and willing to do so? If so, in prayer, express to Him your desire and your commitment to obey. If you are not prepared, ask God to help you trust in His power and sovereignty.



## Serving Under the Sovereignty of God

Serving the Lord when you feel inadequate

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**Principle to practice:** Embrace your inadequacy and trust in His sufficiency. (*2 Corinthians 3:5-6*)

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### Resources:

For further study, see Knight, Marvin R. *The Doctrines of Grace: Unconditional Election*. 2007



# Singing Under God's Sovereignty in Evangelism

Hymns to help you worship

Profile: **FANNY J. CROSBY** (1793-1847)

- American Puritan hymn writer, poet, and missionary worker
- Most prolific hymn writer in history, credited with over 8,000 hymns and Gospel songs
- Blind from birth and joined a group of lobbyists to advocate for education for the blind
- Met the famous gospel composer William J. Kirkpatrick and wrote many hymns with him

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## RESCUE THE PERISHING

Rescue the perishing; care for the dying.  
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave.  
Weep o'er the erring one; lift up the fallen  
Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save.

### REFRAIN

Rescue the perishing; care for the dying.  
Jesus is merciful; Jesus will save!

Tho' they are slighting Him, still He is waiting  
Waiting the penitent child to receive.  
Plead with them earnestly; plead with them gently.  
He will forgive if they only believe.

Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,  
Feelings he buried that grace can restore.  
Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,  
Cords that are broken will vibrate once more.

Rescue the perishing; duty demands it.  
Strength for your labor the Lord will provide.  
Back to the narrow way patiently win them,  
Tell the poor wand'rer a Savior has died.



*Why is it easy for us to lose our passion for sharing the good news of Jesus with the lost?*



*How do these words challenge you when it comes to pointing those within our own lives to Jesus?*

## TAKEAWAY FOR TODAY:

The heart of all believers is to see Jesus save sinners. The second stanza, *"Tho they are slighting Him, still He is waiting,"* reminds us that while some will not respond favorably, Jesus lovingly and patiently stands waiting to receive penitent sinners. Our response to those who, *"are slighting Him,"* is found in the last two lines of the first stanza which says, *"Weep o'er the erring one; lift up the fallen. Tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save."* Ask God to give you the kind of burden that mourns over lost souls that we might lift them up to Him and Him alone who is mighty to save.

## Answer Key

Review 3.1

### Question 1 of 1

4. Evangelism is a part of God's revealed will for His people to obey.
5. Evangelism is an integral part of God's plan to save people.
6. There is an urgency upon man to repent because he is headed toward eternal condemnation.
7. The promises of the Gospel are true.

## Undeniable Truths in God's Sovereignty and Evangelism

### A.

1. no, he must be drawn by God
2. man is dead in his trespasses and sins
3. all whom the Father gives Him
4. the chosen, the elect
5. the kind intention of His will

### B.

1.
  - anyone who is thirsty
  - everyone who beholds the Son
  - whoever believes
2. Jesus will not turn that person away
3. no
4. a fear of exposure to their lives
5. he will die in his sins

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are from the New American Standard Bible: 1960, 1962, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1977, 1995 by the Lockman Foundation.