

## Salvation—The Sovereignty of God

(Salvation is not left to the weakness of sinful man. God manifested His sovereignty in creation and He continues to manifest His sovereignty in providence. Equally, salvation is accomplished according to the sovereign grace of God.)

When the Psalmist declared the folly of the gods of the world and the glory and majesty of the true God of creation and the redeemer of Israel, he said, “But our God *is* in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased,” Psalm 115:3. Also Proverbs 16:4 declares, “The LORD hath made all *things* for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.” If anything is clear as we read the Scriptures, it is that God is sovereign and He has the right to do with His creation as He pleases. Obviously, God is holy, right, and just. Therefore, whatever He does is equally holy, right, and just. He not only will not, but He cannot violate His nature. As A. W. Pink said, “Being infinitely elevated above the highest creature, He is the Most High, Lord of heaven and earth. Subject to none, influenced by none, absolutely independent: God does as He pleases, only as He pleases, always as He pleases. None can thwart Him, none can hinder Him.” *The Attributes of God*, page 32. Modern man does not like the idea that God is sovereign. He wants to place God in a box that limits Him to the designs and plans of man. Because we live in a pluralistic society where there are many different beliefs and philosophies and worship is multiplied, modern man thinks that God is receptive to and operates according to each and all of these different opinions. The Scriptures definitely do not teach this. Listen to a few more passages that declare that God is sovereign. Paul proclaimed to the highest court of Athens: “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; ... And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation,” Acts 17:24, 25. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar, “And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.” And after the Lord finished His will with Nebuchadnezzar, he confessed, “And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom *is* from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed 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?” (Daniel 4:32, 34-35) Isaiah 46:9-10 says, “Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; I *am* God, and *there is* none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” In Ephesians chapter one, God makes it plain that salvation is “according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his *own* will,” Ephesians 1:11. And that salvation was not an afterthought on the part of God but was in His sovereign will and mind, II Timothy 1:9 declares, “Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

It is plain from these passages that God does what He desires and is not hindered by man in accomplishing His will. Salvation was designed and purposed by God before the creation of the world. God did not purpose to make salvation possible; God determined to save. The classic passage of Ephesians 2:8 declares this truth: “For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” This clearly says that salvation is by the grace of God; that it is not of “yourselves”; it is the gift of God. Some will say that the verse states that it is “through faith.” This

is true, but since faith too is a gift of God, and “all men have not faith” (II Thessalonians 3:2), we must conclude that God does not give faith to all men. Often men will cry that such cannot be fair, but the issue is not whether salvation is fair or not. The issue is the justice of God and the Scriptures declare that God is just in all of His works. Deuteronomy 32:4 says, “*He is* the Rock, his work *is* perfect: for all his ways *are* judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right *is* he.” And Psalm 145:17 declares, “The LORD *is* righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.”

Romans chapter nine also addresses this question. The apostle Paul by the inspiration of God addresses the question as to why some Israelites were not saved when God had favored them as a nation for hundreds of years. Paul shows that because a person was born of Abraham or was a child of Isaac it did not guarantee them to be in the covenant of salvation. The Scriptures clearly declare that Jacob and Esau had the same parentage and were twins, but before either of them were born and before either of them had “done any good or evil,” God elected Jacob unto salvation. Furthermore, the Scriptures make it plain that this is not unrighteous on the part of God. Man raises his sinful head and seeks to question God by such an act, but God testified to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” Furthermore the Scriptures declare, “So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.” Some try to object by saying that God is only talking about the Jews in this chapter, but verse twenty-four plainly teaches otherwise: “Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles.” Clearly, salvation is not only by grace, but it is by the sovereign grace of God. God as the Creator has the right to do with His creation as He pleases. And since salvation is by grace, God has the right to bestow that grace on whom He chooses. For those who do not like God exercising His sovereign right and power as He does, they need to seriously consider the divine warning: “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus?”

It is generally taught that God is so loving, kind, and generous that He desires that each and every individual would be saved. This is contrary to the teachings of Jesus. In Matthew 11:20-25, our Lord declared that the cities of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom would have repented if such works were done in them as were done in the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. In other words, God did not “give them a chance to be saved.” And Christ further thanked God for hiding the truth of salvation from some: “I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.” Why did God hide those things from some? “It seemed good” in the sight of God to do so. In other words, it was because of the sovereign acts of Almighty God. Equally, we need to be reminded that God is still hiding the truths from many today. As Paul declared by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit this same truth: “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence,” I Corinthians 1:26-29.

You see, salvation, like all of the acts of God, is first for the honor and glory of God and not for the praise and exaltation of man. Those who are saved and forgiven of their sins are blessed accordingly so that God might have the preeminence, Colossians 1:12-18. If salvation were left to the sinful will of man none would be saved; all mankind would be cast into the lake of fire for their sins. Thanks be unto the sovereign mercy and grace of God! He ordained some to be delivered from this present evil world (Galatians 1:4) and from the wrath to come (Romans 5:9; I Thessalonians 1:10), and made them “accepted in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:6), so that all the praise and honor be bestowed on God and not on sinful man.

The world has the idea that God is love and that this attribute is central to His being. Little do they know that only two times do the Scriptures proclaim that God is love (I John 4:8 and I John 4:16), while God is declared to be holy hundreds of times. Also, the attribute of holiness is the only attribute that is exalted to the third degree. The seraphims in Isaiah chapter six cried “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts.” While the love of God is rich and glorious, the Scriptures never speak of the attribute of love in this way. When speaking of the love of God we never find it stated love, love, love. No. It is the sovereignty of a holy and just God that saves. God not only saves who He wills but He saves how He wills. The Scriptures never teach that God tries to save nor did He make salvation possible—God saves sovereignly. Farewell.