

U. Unconditional Election

DEFINITION

Review from introduction class

Unconditional Election

God's election is based upon His sovereignty. His election is His own decision, and is not based on the foreseen response of anyone's faith and repentance. Since human beings cannot choose for themselves, God by His eternal decree has chosen or elected some to be counted as righteous, without any conditions being placed on that election.¹

Unconditional Election

God has, before the creation of the world, selected a portion of humanity to be saved. This election is irrespective of any foreseen merits or faith. It is only according to the good pleasure of His will.²

Unconditional Election

In order to be saved it is necessary for God to initiate salvation – not according to each one's own merit – those whom He will save is effectual from before the foundation of the world. The Calvinist denies the notion of free-will, as well as any idea that God and man works together in synergy in order to accomplish salvation.³

Further Definitions

If God predestined some for salvation, then by default he predestined some to eternal damnation. This is referred to as “reprobation” or “double predestination”. Some Calvinists reject double predestination and believe instead that sinners are simply “left to themselves”.

The “Softer” View of Election - God elects to save some, but He does not elect to damn the rest

Calvinist, R.C. Sproul writes: The Reformed view teaches that God positively or actively intervenes in the lives of the elect to insure their salvation. **The rest of mankind God leaves to themselves.** He does not create unbelief in their hearts. That unbelief is already there. He does not coerce them to sin. They sin by their own choices. In the Calvinist view the decree of election is positive; the decree of reprobation is negative. ... Sproul goes on to describe Hyper-Calvinism's view of double predestination as "The dreadful error that involves God in coercing sin. This does radical violence to the integrity of God's character.⁴

The Harder View—God actively elects some for hell just as He elects some for Heaven.

From John Calvin: The human mind, when it hears this doctrine, cannot restrain its petulance, but

¹ http://www.cfestus.com/books/taylor_calvinism.htm

² <http://www.auburn.edu/~allenkc/openhse/calvinism.html> (Calvinism Critiqued - by a Former Calvinist, Steve Jones)

³

<http://www.christianconversationsnow.com/2011/02/07/r-c-sproul-calvinism/#sthash.173pycOU.dpuf>

⁴ R. C. Sproul, (*Classic Teachings on the Nature of God*), Hendrickson Publishers, , p.234

boils and rages as if aroused by the sound of a trumpet. Many professing a desire to defend the Deity from an insidious charge admit the doctrine of election, but deny that any one is reprobated... This they do ignorantly and childishly, since there could be no election without its opposite reprobation... ..Those therefore whom God passes by he reprobates, and that for no other cause that he is pleased to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestines to his children.⁵

All men are not created for the same end; but some are fore-ordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation. So according as every man was created for the one end or the other, we say, he was elected, that is, predestined to life, or reprobated, that is, predestined to damnation.⁶

Many indeed (thinking to excuse God) own election, and yet deny reprobation; but this is quite silly and childish. For without reprobation, election itself cannot stand; whom God passes by, those he reprobates. It is one and the same thing⁷

Scriptures that speak to the fact that *All Men* may be saved

Unconditional Election carries with it the idea that God has elected some for eternal life, and that He has either elected some for eternal damnation or “leaves them to themselves”.

Regardless of where a particular Calvinist lands on this continuum, the bottom line is that according to Calvinism ONLY the ELECT will be saved...for the non-elect, or reprobated, there is no chance they would ever be able to repent and believe.

Yet Scripture reveals the idea that the offer of salvation is for ALL men. If Unconditional Election were true, then salvation is really NOT for all men - it is only for the elect, and we are left with wondering what all these scriptures mean. And if Unconditional Election were true, then they call into question the character of God.

Calvin believed that only certain sinners of God's choosing would be saved. These scriptures show that God has placed the opportunity before all men.

Titus 2:11 "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath ***appeared*** to all men."

- How is “appeared” used elsewhere in Scripture?
 - Luk 1:76-79 KJV And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; 77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, 78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, 79 ***To give light*** to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.
 - Tit 3:3-7 KJV For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. 4 But after that the kindness and love of God our

⁵ Jean Calvin, John Calvin (*Institutes of the Christian Religion*), Hendrickson Publishers, 2008, , p. 625

⁶ *Calv. Inst., book 3, chapter 21, section 1*

⁷ *Calv. Inst., book 3, chapter 23, section 1*

Saviour toward man ***appeared***, 5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

Romans 10:13 KJV For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Rom 11:32 KJV For God hath concluded them ***all*** in unbelief, that he might have ***mercy upon all***.

2Pe 3:9 KJV The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that ***all*** should come to repentance.

1Ti 2:3-4 KJV For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have ***all*** men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

1Ti 4:10 KJV For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of ***all*** men, specially of those that believe.

1Jn 2:2 KJV And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of ***the whole world***.

Joh 3:16 KJV For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that ***whosoever*** believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Acts 17:30 KJV And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth ***all*** men every where to repent:

- He commands all men everywhere to repent, yet for the unelect in the view of Calvinism it is impossible to do so.

Jay Adams

Only God can bring life to dead souls to enable them to believe. He does this when and where and how He pleases by His Spirit, who regenerates, or gives life leading to faith...As a reformed Christian, the writer believes that counselors must not tell any unsaved counselee that Christ died for him, for they cannot say that. No man knows except Christ Himself who are His elect for whom He died.⁸

The Scriptures plainly teach that salvation is available to all who will receive (John 3:16, Acts 17:30, 1 Tim. 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9, Rev. 22:17).

If God offers salvation to only an elect few, then God's offers in Scripture of salvation to "whosoever will" are not genuine.

If Calvinism is true, God is not being totally honest in such Scriptures. He gives the impression that the cause of man's damnation is his own choice to remain in his sin, and that all he need do is

⁸ Jay Adams, *Competent To Counsel*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970), p. 70

respond to God of his free will, and God will save him. Yet, He knows that it is utterly impossible for man to do so. To give this impression, when in fact God has made no provision for his salvation (limited atonement), makes God into a cruel prankster. This also impugns God's character.

If this is the God of the Bible, then a specific example of His disingenuous offer of salvation, and His taunting the sinner, is found in *Gen 4:6-7* 6 *And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7 **If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.***⁹

What Does the Bible Say About Election?

Elect is a word that means to choose. We will see examples where God chose a nation such as Israel for a purpose, or that he chose a person for a task [like King Saul chosen to be king of Israel], but nowhere in scripture do we see an “**unconditional**” choosing” of any individual for salvation or damnation.

King Saul was “elect” / chosen

2Sa 21:6 NIV let seven of his male descendants be given to us to be killed and their bodies exposed before the LORD at Gibeah of Saul--the LORD's chosen one." So the king said, "I will give them to you."

- His election was not unto salvation - but to serve as king of Israel

God later rejected him because Saul rejected the word of the LORD

1 Sam 15:23(KJV) For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

The descendants of Israel and children of Jacob are “elect”

1Ch 16:12-13 NIV Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced, 13 you his servants, the descendants of Israel, his chosen ones, the children of Jacob.

- There was a “corporate election” of Israel -- i.e. that they would be the chosen people through whom Messiah would come. This was not an election of individuals to salvation or else according to the doctrine of Unconditional Election all of Israel would be saved.

His “chosen” people

Psa 105:42-43 NIV For he remembered his holy promise given to his servant Abraham. 43 He brought out his people with rejoicing, his chosen ones with shouts of joy;

- This was the people of Israel coming out of Egypt to the promised land
- Again this is not election to salvation - as a matter of fact in a few short days these same people would be worshipping a golden calf
- Everybody in this group over the age of 20 would die in the wilderness because of unbelief
 - Heb 3:15-19¹⁵ As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your

⁹ <http://www.pfrs.org/calvinism/calvino2.html>

hearts as in the rebellion.”¹⁶ For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? ¹⁷ And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸ And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹ So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

God made a covenant with his “chosen” David

Psa 89:3-4 NIV You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, 4 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations."

- In this case the chosen is David and the covenant was that his kingly lineage would go on forever. Again there is no reference to “elect” pointing to a person’s eternal salvation.

Moses was “chosen” to lead them

Psa 106:23 NIV So he said he would destroy them-- had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him to keep his wrath from destroying them.

Jesus is the elect - but we know his election was not to salvation

Isa 42:1 KJV Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

Luk 23:35 KJV And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.

1Pe 2:4-6 KJV To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Angels are elect

1Ti 5:21 KJV I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.

- Angels are elect, but obviously they are not participants in salvation

A chosen generation

1Pe 2:9-10 KJV But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

- This speaks of the call to the Gentiles - not any individual’s unconditional election to salvation
- We were not a people - now the people of God
- We have been chosen to be incorporated into the people of God
- Chosen to be a royal priesthood - a holy nation to offer praise
 - Rom 9:24-26 NIV even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews **but**

also from the Gentiles? 25 As he says in Hosea: "I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one," 26 and, "In the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'children of the living God.'"

Chosen in him before the foundation of the world

Eph 1:4-5 KJV According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

- Again there is no sense of an individual's being chosen or unconditionally elected
- The idea is that God determined before the foundation of the world how our salvation was to take place
 - a. That we would be chosen IN HIM
 - 2Co 5:21 KJV For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God ***in him***.
 - b. That we should be holy and without blame
 - c. Predestinated us unto the adoption
 - Romans 8:15-16 KJV For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. (16) The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Calvinist's will point to some verses in Romans 9 as a proof text for unconditional election.

Rom 9:11-13 KJV(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. 13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

- We will dig into this in greater detail when we do an overview of Romans 9. But a short answer is:

The elder shall serve the younger

This election does not speak of eternal salvation or eternal damnation of either of the boys...It is talking about the elder "serving" the younger, and is a quote from a scripture in Genesis, where we see it is actually a reference to "two nations" - not two individuals.

- Gen 25:23 KJV And the LORD said unto her, ***Two nations are in thy womb***, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and ***the elder shall serve the younger***.

The children not being born yet - neither having done good or evil

This was to show that God's choice of the nation of Israel [just like the way the Gentiles were being saved as he was describing in Romans] was not based on "works" but based on "calling" [i.e. he didn't wait until the boys were born and see which was a more obedient, or kind person for example, and then choose that one].

- He chose Abraham out of all people to be the Patriarch who would father the people of Israel and eventually lead to Messiah
- He chose Isaac - NOT Ishmael [again not for salvation, but to be the one who would continue the lineage that would lead to Messiah]. Isaac was chosen because he was the son of the promise, Ishmael was the son of “works”.
- He chose Jacob, not Esau [again not for salvation] but to be the ancestral head of the children of Israel, Esau became the head of the Edomites

“As it is written, Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated”

This is written in Malachi 1:1-3.

Mal 1:1-3 KJV The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. 2 I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, 3 And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

This was written nearly 1500 years after Jacob and Esau lived, after Esau had chosen to practice his evil acts. God said, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." This is speaking about “two nations” not two individuals - and it was speaking about Edom’s evil throughout history, not Esau’s Unconditional Election prior to his birth. “Jacob have I loved” does not translate into “Jacob was Unconditionally Elected. “Esau have I hated” does not translate into “reprobation”. God did not elect one to be saved and the other to be lost.

Conditional Election

Mat 22:14 KJV For many are called, but few are chosen.

- What distinguishes the “called” from the “chosen”? - The earlier context gives us a hint
 - Mat 22:2-5 KJV The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, 3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. 4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. 5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

The elect are not just random picks - but rather according to the foreknowledge of God.

1Pe 1:2 KJV **Elect according to the foreknowledge of God** the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

- Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father [foreknowledge - to know beforehand]
- Through sanctification of the Spirit
- Unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ

Summary of this section

It is important to understand what the Bible says about Election. We have seen that the word is used more broadly than might be defined by the concept of Unconditional Election. We see

in Scripture where various nations and specific people were “chosen” or “elected” - not to salvation, but to perform a specific task or a purpose...and when it does speak about those elect with respect to salvation, it is never in the context where an individual is chosen or elected for eternal life or eternal damnation **unconditionally**. [keyword unconditionally]

Calvin taught that God unconditionally and arbitrarily selected some people to go to heaven, and others He elected to burn forever in hell. The Calvinists believe that it is already decided who will be saved and who will go to hell, and the individuals have nothing to do with it. This is what is meant by Unconditional Election.

While election is a biblical doctrine, unconditional election is not. Election in Scripture is not unconditional, but rather according to God's foreknowledge (1 Pet. 1:2). Because God is omniscient (all knowing), He knew from eternity who would choose to trust Christ and be saved and who would reject Christ. On the basis of that foreknowledge, God elected those He foreknew and determined ahead of time [predestined] that these would receive adoption into His family; to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:28-30), and to be holy, and without blame.

To predestine is to set boundaries ahead of time. Think of it like this. When a man becomes a police officer it is predetermined that he will receive a badge, a gun, handcuffs and a uniform. In a similar fashion, when a person becomes a Christian - God has determined ahead of time that he is to be in Christ, adopted into His family, and conformed to the image of God's Son.

The conditions are simple.

- The damned believed not the truth - but continue in unrighteousness
- Those chosen to salvation believed the truth and the Holy Spirit sanctifies them

2Th 2:10-15 KJV And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because ***they received not the love of the truth***, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That ***they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness***. 13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning ***chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth***: 14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.

God's Sovereignty

The idea of God's Sovereignty is foundational to the five articles of Calvinism. While all Christians believe in the Sovereignty of God - those within the debate between Calvinism and Arminianism define it differently.

Calvinist Slant

"God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatever comes to pass."¹⁰

¹⁰ Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter III

“Nothing in this world happens by chance. God is in back of everything. He decides and causes all things to happen that do happen. He is not sitting on the sidelines wondering and perhaps fearing what is going to happen next. No, He has foreordained everything ‘after the counsel of his will’ (Eph. 1:11): the moving of a finger, the beating of a heart, the laughter of a girl, the mistake of a typist – even sin.”¹¹

Comparison of the Opposing Views

The point of difference between Calvinism and Arminianism is the definition of sovereignty. On the Calvinistic view, sovereignty means meticulous control (i.e., theological determinism),⁵ while on the Arminian view, God’s sovereignty necessarily means His complete freedom and authority (or right) to act any way He so wills. On this view, God certainly has the freedom and authority to exercise meticulous control over every minute detail (though the Arminian can’t see how this doesn’t necessitate God’s authorship of sin), but He also has the freedom and authority to not exercise meticulous control. For the Arminian, if God chooses to not exercise meticulous control, that decision is itself a sovereign decision.¹²

God is no less sovereign in a world where he chooses to grant his creatures libertarian freedom than he is in a world where he determines everything. Sovereignty cannot simply be equated with meticulous control. Rather, sovereignty is the freedom to choose as one will and to accomplish one’s purposes. If God chooses to create people who are free and to accomplish his purposes through their undetermined choices, it is his sovereign right to do so. Less control is not the same as less sovereignty if God chooses to have less control. A perfectly good and wise God will exercise just the amount of control appropriate for the sort of world he chooses to create.”¹³

Isaiah 46:9-11 NIV Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. (10) I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, 'My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.' (11) From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that I will bring about; what I have planned, that I will do.

At the Garden of Eden

- Was Adam and Eve’s sin ordained of God?
- Was God the author of sin? or Was man exercising free will?
- If Adam and Eve acted out of free will - did God all of a sudden lose his Sovereignty?

It repented the LORD and grieved his heart

Gen 6:5-6 KJV And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

- Was God still sovereign during the time of Noah’s Ark?
- Did he preordain this evil [the flood] for a higher purpose, or was he truly grieved at man’s choice and moved to bring judgment?

¹¹ Edwin H. Palmer, The Five Points of Calvinism (27th Printing, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI: 2009), p. 25

¹² <http://arminiantheologyblog.wordpress.com/2012/07/16/do-arminians-believe-in-the-sovereignty-of-god/>

¹³ Walls, Jerry and Dongell, Joseph, Why I Am Not A Calvinist (2004: InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL), p. 145

The Lord changed his mind

Exo 32:14 ISV So the LORD changed his mind about the calamity he had said he would bring on his people.

- Did that mean his first pronouncement was wrong?
- Or did Moses' prayer move the heart of God?
- If prayer moves God - does it mean he is not sovereign?

God relented of the calamity he was to bring to Nineveh

Jon 3:9-10 ISV Who knows but that God may relent, have compassion, and turn from his fierce anger, so that we are not exterminated?" 10 God took note of what they did—that they turned from their evil ways. Because God relented concerning the trouble about which he had warned them, he did not carry it out.

- Was He still sovereign?
- Is he double minded?
- Or do the choices of man come into play in how God interacts with us?

Jesus could do no miracles because of their unbelief

Mar 6:5-6 ESV And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. 6 And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching.

- Was He still sovereign?

God Is Sovereign

Various Hebrew words that are translated as “sovereign” in the NIV

- **H113** From an unused root (meaning to *rule*); *sovereign*, that is, *controller* (human or divine):—lord, master, owner. Compare also names beginning with “Adoni-”.
- **H7990** (Chaldee); corresponding to H7989; *mighty*; abstractly *permission*; concretely a *premier*:—captain, be lawful, rule (-r).
- **H7980** A primitive root; to *dominate*, that is, *govern*; by implication to *permit*:—(bear, have) rule, have dominion, give (have) power.
- **H4437** *dominion* (abstractly or concretely):—kingdom, kingly, realm, reign.
- **H7985** (Chaldee); from H7981; *empire* (abstractly or concretely.):—dominion.

God is Sovereign Over All

God is sovereign - rules over all, does all that He pleases, in heaven and earth, throughout all time to accomplish his purpose...(the who, what, when, where, how). In his sovereignty he can even relent when man repents.

- Ps 103:19 The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all.
- Ps 115:3 Our God is in the heavens; He does all that He pleases.
- Isa 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all My purpose,

- Ps 135:6 Whatever the Lord pleases, He does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.
- 'Isaiah 46:10-11 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. 11 From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.
- Jonah 3:10 When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that He had said He would do to them, and He did not do it.

Interaction Between the Sovereign God and the Will of Man

Comment: *The two subjects are often set in opposition to each other, as though they were mutually contradictory, rather than complementary. This contradiction highlights two extremes - One where the sovereignty of God is so pervasive that any act of man is only the Lord's doing. The other describes life as totally man-centered and the Lord is nothing more than a spectator who created the world and leaves its progression to the wiles of man. However we see in scripture that both the sovereignty of God and the will of man are true, and they are found side by side in the Word of God. In scripture we see an intermingling of the sovereignty of God working in conjunction with the heart/actions of man to bring about God's purposes. Simply stated, if God created man with a free will, then for man to exercise that free will is not a denial of the sovereignty of God.*

At times, the Sovereign Lord fulfills his purpose by using the will of man

Comment: *God is Lord, Master, Owner and Controller, His purpose will be accomplished regardless of the acts of men. In fact, sometimes the very anger and rebellion of man is used by the Lord to accomplish his plan. In this way the sovereignty of God and the free-will of man are not mutually exclusive, but work together in harmony to fulfill the Lord's plans.*

Acts 2:23 This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

Acts 4:27-28 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. 28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

Acts 13:26-33 "Brothers, children of Abraham, and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. 27 The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. 28 Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. 29 When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. 30 But God raised him from the dead, 31 and for many days he was seen by

those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people. 32 “We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers 33 he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm: “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.

Proverbs 16:4 The LORD works out everything for his own ends-- even the wicked for a day of disaster.

Prov 21:1 The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He will.

Psalm 76:10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

Romans 9:17-18 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.”18 Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

At times the Sovereign Lord responds to man’s heart

Amos 7:1-7 This is what the Sovereign LORD showed me: He was preparing swarms of locusts after the king’s share had been harvested and just as the second crop was coming up. 2 When they had stripped the land clean, I cried out, “Sovereign LORD, forgive! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!” 3 So the LORD relented. “This will not happen,” the LORD said. 4 This is what the Sovereign LORD showed me: The Sovereign LORD was calling for judgment by fire; it dried up the great deep and devoured the land. 5 Then I cried out, “Sovereign LORD, I beg you, stop! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!” 6 So the LORD relented. “This will not happen either,” the Sovereign LORD said. 7 This is what he showed me: The Lord was standing by a wall that had been built true to plumb, with a plumb line in his hand.

God responded to Ahab’s repentance

1 Kings 21:27-29 When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and fasted. He lay in sackcloth and went around meekly. 28 Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: 29 “Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself, I will not bring this disaster in his day, but I will bring it on his house in the days of his son.”

The Sovereign Lord, the accountability of man, and God’s desire to spare them

Ezekiel 22:30-31 “I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none. 31 So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their own heads all they

have done, declares the Sovereign LORD.”

Comment: Even though at times God responds to man and acts on the basis of man’s actions, He is not held hostage to the will of man...He is still able to accomplish his purposes regardless of how man reacts or responds

God used the jealousy of Joseph’s brothers to accomplish his purpose

Gen. 50: 20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.

Whether or not a specific person steps up to the plate His purpose will be done

Esther 4:12-14 When Esther’s words were reported to Mordecai, 13 he sent back this answer: “Do not think that because you are in the king’s house you alone of all the Jews will escape. 14 For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father’s family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?”

Isaiah 46:5-13 “To whom will you compare me or count me equal? To whom will you liken me that we may be compared? 6 Some pour out gold from their bags and weigh out silver on the scales; they hire a goldsmith to make it into a god, and they bow down and worship it. 7 They lift it to their shoulders and carry it; they set it up in its place, and there it stands. From that spot it cannot move. Though one cries out to it, it does not answer; it cannot save him from his troubles. 8 “Remember this, fix it in mind, take it to heart, you rebels. 9 Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. 10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. 11 From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do. 12 Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted, you who are far from righteousness. 13 I am bringing my righteousness near, it is not far away; and my salvation will not be delayed. I will grant salvation to Zion, my splendor to Israel.

Adam and Eve exercised their free will to disobey, yet the Lord, knowing their decision ahead of time purposed to send his Son as a Lamb slain from the creation of the world

Genesis 2:15-17 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

Revelation 13:8 All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the book of life belonging to the Lamb that was slain from the

creation of the world.

Some Practical Implications of the Sovereignty of God

We live with a sense of calling and purpose

Jeremiah 1:5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

Ephesians 2:10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

We live in hope, understanding that God is at work in us completing the work he began

Philippians 2:12-13 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Philippians 1:6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

We live a submitted life, subordinating our will and acknowledging His sovereignty

James 4:13-15 Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money." 14 Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. 15 Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

We live in confidence knowing there is no greater authority and we appeal to Him

Acts 4:18-31 Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. 20 For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." 21 After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. 22 For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old. 23 On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. 24 When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you

made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. 25 You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: “Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? 26 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One. 27 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. 28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. 29 Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. 30 Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” 31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

We live knowing our prayers do affect change

Ezekiel 22:30-31 “I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none. 31 So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their own heads all they have done, declares the Sovereign LORD.”

James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

We have confidence to look to him when situations are impossible

Genesis 15:2 But Abram said, “O Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?”

He is the Sovereign Lord - throughout my life

Psalms 71:1-24 ...5 For you have been my hope, O Sovereign LORD, my confidence since my youth. 6 From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother’s womb. I will ever praise you...9 Do not cast me away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone...15 My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long, though I know not its measure. 16 I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, O Sovereign LORD; I will proclaim your righteousness, yours alone. 17 Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. 18 Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come. 19 Your righteousness reaches to the skies, O God, you who have done great things. Who, O God, is like you?

The Sovereign Lord our protection in battle

Psalms 140:6-8 O LORD, I say to you, “You are my God.” Hear, O LORD, my cry for mercy. 7 O Sovereign LORD, my strong deliverer, who shields my head in the day of

battle—8 do not grant the wicked their desires, O LORD; do not let their plans succeed, or they will become proud.
Selah

The Sovereign Lord has laid Christ as the foundation-there is only one way to salvation

Isaiah 28:16 So this is what the Sovereign LORD says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts will never be dismayed.

Rom 9:30-33 Jew and Gentile alike must come to this stone

1 Pet 2:7-8 they stumble at the stone because they disobey the message