

Peace Adult Sunday School

Chosen by God

Chosen by God - R. C. Sproul

Session 1 – Introduction Notes

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God is sovereign - what do we mean by that?

Merriam-Webster: sovereign - one possessing or held to possess supreme political power or sovereignty, possessed of supreme power, enjoying autonomy

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What or whom did God choose?

Why or for what purpose did he choose?

On what basis did he choose?

So, it's pretty clear we're talking predestination- what comes to mind when you hear that term?

Merriam-Webster: [even the dictionary has this wrong]: the doctrine that God in consequence of his foreknowledge of all events infallibly guides those who are destined for salvation, to foreordain to an earthly or eternal lot or destiny by divine decree

Summary of the reformed view on these questions: From all eternity, God, out of the good pleasure of his will, sovereignly chose some for eternal salvation, not based on anything in them, but solely out of his grace and mercy, and others he passed by and left in their sins.

How does this view answer those questions? Discussion

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Why study this doctrine? Isn't this kind of inquiry for the theological elite? Why does it matter? How does this choice tie in with the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Personal importance

OUTLINE

- We believe it's Biblical [Joe]
 - These are doctrines of grace
 - Ephesians 1: 3 - 4, 11
 - Ephesians 2: 1 - 10
 - Ephesians 3: 14 -21
 - My yoke is easy - His sovereignty in our salvation obliterates our burden
 - Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.
 - John 14:27 - our salvation rests solely in God's hands - it depends on Him and the complete and finished work of Jesus - not on me.
 - God the enabler
 - Salvation v.s. Sanctification
 - A stumbling block
 - How can God be sovereign, and the "author and finisher of our faith" and we be held responsible for our sin and rightly condemned without surrendering to Jesus?
 - My [Joe's] struggle and fight.
 - God's glory - not man-centric

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Things on which Christians agree [Paul]

1. God is sovereign.
2. God initiates salvation (we can't be saved without God's grace).
3. God's salvation is through the person and work of Jesus Christ

Where we differ:

1. Some Christians believe that man must cooperate with God's plan - to accept or reject His salvation offer.
2. What does God's "initiation" look like? Does God simply "get the ball rolling", and we take it the rest of the way? Or is it 100% God from start to finish?
3. To what extent is God sovereign?
 - a. Reformed view - God sovereignly ordains whatsoever has come to pass or will come to pass, even the "minutiae" of life.
 - b. Open theism - God is "sovereign", but He has not ordained every single action of all people. He does not know the future because it has not happened yet. God sees man make choices and then reacts to them. We have free will to choose between A, B, C, etc. He is able to step in and intervene when humans are about to make a bad choice, etc.
 - i. View partially comes from verses that would seem to indicate that God changes his mind (Genesis 6:6, 1 Samuel 15:11)
 - ii. We would refer to this as anthropomorphic language
 - iii. Verses against open theism: Psalm 139:4; Isaiah 46:9-10; Lamentations 3:37-38; Romans 11:33-36; Number 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29
 - c. Arminian view - While Arminians would say God is sovereign over salvation, in practicality, their view teaches that man has the final say as to whether they become saved ("make a decision for Christ").
4. The reformed view is that God's choice to save us is not dependent on what we do or will do in the future; it is solely for His good pleasure and glory.

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<https://www.challies.com/articles/challenges-to-the-church-open-theism/>

1. God's greatest attribute is love. God's love so overshadows His other characteristics that He could never allow or condone evil or suffering to befall mankind.
2. Man has libertarian free will. Man's will has not been so effected by the Fall that he is unable to make a choice to follow God. God respects man's freedom of choice and would not infringe upon it.
3. God does not have exhaustive knowledge of the future. Indeed, He cannot know certain future events because the future exists only as possibility. God is unable to see what depends on the choices of free will agents simply because this future does not yet exist, so it unknowable. In this way open theists attempt to reconcile this doctrine with God's omniscience.
4. God takes risks. Because God cannot know the future, He takes risks in many ways – creating people, giving them gifts and abilities, and so on. Where possibilities exist, so does risk.
5. God learns. Because God does not know the future exhaustively, He learns, just as we do.
6. God is reactive. Because He is learning, God is constantly reacting to the decisions we make.
7. God makes mistakes. Because He is learning and reacting, always dealing with limited information, God can and does make errors in judgment which later require re-evaluation.
8. God can change His mind. When God realizes He has made an error in judgment or that things did not unfold as He supposed, He can change His mind.