

The Issue of the Sovereignty of God Today

[Charles Woodruff](#)

Almost 30 years ago I wrote an article titled “**Should We Make An Issue of the Sovereignty of God**”? This was put into a tract, and has been reprinted a number of times, and has literally traveled the world. I have received testimonies that it seemed to help some grasp this truth. I have recently seen it on several websites. It is very humbling, because I am nobody but a sinner saved by grace.

I was only about 35 when I wrote it, and now I am 64. You may ask, “Would I change anything if I wrote it today”? The answer is yes! No, I have not changed my core doctrinal view, not at all. If anything I believe **stronger** in God’s sovereignty today. But, the way I expressed some things as a young, zealous man who had some battles with opposers of this truth may have been said in more boldness than knowledge. So I have rewritten it. The first four paragraphs are the same, and much of the tract remains the same. After some further study, I have rethought about people doing evangelism just after their conversion, and found it necessary to restructure some thinking. So here is my **revised version**. I hope it speaks, and will be used of God as the former. For God’s Glory alone!—

Charles Woodruff

It might not be realized, but in the average church today, God’s Sovereignty is a very real issue indeed. Though many preachers never mention it, many don’t understand it, and many try to hush it up (to “avoid controversial subjects”), it is still a very real issue. The reason I say this is because most of our modern churches are the fruit of modern, or man-centered, evangelism. This is evangelism that is based on the sinner’s mental assent to a particular Bible verse or verses: a “**decision**” to follow Jesus. It is rarely (if ever) mentioned what God designs to do, and many **wrongly** exalt His love over and above all of His other attributes.

God’s holiness is practically unheard of in our day. Yet, holiness is the **central** attribute of God. The seraphim, in the presence of God, cry one to another, “**Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts**” (Isaiah 6:3). They do not cry, “Loving, loving, loving, is the Lord of hosts.” Certainly love is an attribute of God, but without holiness in view, it is a warped concept of love.

It is no wonder that churches are filled with so-called **“Carnal Christians.”** They have been taught that God is some kind of old grandpa in a heavenly rocking chair saying, “I know you have been naughty, but I love you, and if you will just accept my Son as your Savior, everything will be alright between us.” And where would this deity of modern evangelism be if he did not have his little helpers, the “soul winners” with a **“Romans road map to heaven”**, and their canned sales-talk “plan of salvation”? Of course, this “god” could not do without them!

2 I get tired of hearing preachers say, **“We’re the only arms and legs God has.”**

This is entirely unscriptural! These preachers ought to know better than this. God made our arms and legs, and He is **not** in need of our hands, but we sure need His: **“The Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save . . .” (Isaiah 59:1).**

God Almighty needs no one or any thing (Acts 17:25). Hear John the Baptist: **“And think not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of the stones to raise up children unto Abraham” (Matthew 3:9).** Is this Sovereign God, this absolute Monarch of the universe, **your** God?

How we long for a modern John the Baptist to cry out against the sins of today’s religious people! See Isaiah 58:1 and Matthew 3:2. Instead of our pulpiteers preaching like John the Baptist, they are more concerned about splitting hairs over prophecy and **“dispensational truth.”** Yet, God says, **“Cry aloud.”** So many today are not experiencing **true** conversion and a conforming to the blessed image of Christ Jesus.

Meanwhile, churches figure out new ways to entice more to come (so they can have the world’s largest Sunday School). Getting more people to attend Sunday School has become an end in itself. Shouldn’t the **true** Gospel be taught to the ones already coming, thus “feeding the sheep” and praying God will ground them, and then be pleased to use these to tell others? This prepares them for **true** evangelism. Yet I heard one preacher say that the **minute** you are saved you are to be a **“soul winner”**, and go get somebody else saved. I will grant that you will want to see others saved, but we are only **vessels**. The Holy Spirit is the **true** soul winner.

If you **really** get saved, like the woman at the well (See John 4:29), you **will** tell others. However, her situation was rather unique. She already knew about Messiah, and was expecting Him to come one day. Now she had met Him and He was nearby. She was a zealous and valuable witness. She told others and **brought them to Christ**, but she could not **“get them saved”**. You see, only God can save.

We are only **“witnesses”**. But most who get converted know little about the Bible

at the start, and therefore need to be grounded before doing much witnessing. Usually they need first to **“as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2).**

No one believes in the sovereignty of God any more than I do. But I also believe in the **declaration** of the gospel to all. The great commission was not just for the apostles, it was **for all time** until He comes again. **“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.**

Amen” (Matthew 28:19-20). I say **“Amen”** to Christ’s Amen! It is clear to me He intended for those that were instructed by the original apostles to **continue the work on and on until His second coming!** Otherwise, a lot of good men like the Scottish Covenanters, Polycarp, John Hus, and all those listed in Foxe’s Book of Martyrs, **died for nothing.** The Greek word translated “witness” is **“martus”**, from which we also get the word “martyr”. These men and women were witnesses as well as martyrs. They endeavored to preach the gospel to all. **It cost them their lives!**

God is **absolutely** Sovereign in **all** of His doings. **He does the saving!** He sends revival **when it pleases Him!** Saying this, He didn’t leave His preachers without tasks. To be an effective witness, one that pleases God, you need **power**, which is only from the Holy Spirit (see Acts 1:8 and Romans 12:1).

Because so many in the religious world are playing a **“numbers game”**, there are many folks that simply become statistics on a church roll in these days. Too many **profess** Christ, but do not **possess** Christ! So many in our generation who profess to know Him are **not also willing to live for Christ**, much less die for Him! Too many who are joining our modern churches have not been instructed in Christian dress or Christian conduct. How many ever raise objections to receiving **anyone** into the membership of the **average** church? Quality has been sacrificed for quantity. Anyone should be welcomed in any true gospel-preaching church (to hear the gospel), but not be accepted as a member until they bring forth those fruits which support their professed repentance (Matthew 3:8).

Yes, the Sovereignty of God is **already** an issue. If more of our modern churches and preachers believed in God’s Sovereignty, their methods would **drastically** change. When men become convinced that salvation is 100% of the pure, sovereign grace of God, preaching takes on a new light. Men who believe this great truth don’t go around trying to **help** God, but beg His help for them and their hearers! (Cmw)

“Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth’s sake.” (Psalm 115:1).

Free Grace! Unmerited Mercy! Sovereign Love!
(Octavius Winslow, "The Soul After Conversion")

No truth shines with clearer luster in the Bible than that salvation, from first to last, is of God. God is sovereign in salvation!

He often selects . . . the poorest...the vilest...the most depraved...the most fallen...as if utterly to explode all idea of human merit, and to reflect the free grace of His heart in its richest luster.

O precious truth!
It stains the pride of human merit!
It lays the axe at the root of self!
It humbles and abases!
It empties and lays low!

It ascribes all the praise, honor and glory, might, majesty and dominion, of the new creation in the soul, to the Triune God!

No worthiness of the creature allures Him to the sinner's heart! What worthiness can be supposed to exist--what merit can there be in . . .

a guilty criminal,
an outlawed rebel,
a poor insolvent, one whose mind is enmity,
one whose heart is swelling with treason against God, His government,
and His Son? One who owes millions, but has 'nothing to pay'? None
whatever!

And that the eternal Spirit should enter the heart of such a one . . .

convincing of sin;
subduing the hatred;
breaking down the rebellion;
leading to Jesus, and sealing pardon and peace upon the conscience;
oh! what but free grace, unmerited mercy, and
sovereign love could thus have constrained Him?

"Lord, what did You see in me," exclaims the converted soul, "that moved You with compassion, that drew You to my heart, and that constrained You to make me Your child? Nothing on my part, but poverty, wretchedness, and misery! Nothing on Your part, nothing but love, sovereignty, and unmerited favor!"

O the riches of His grace!

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