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## Theological Conundrums: God's Sovereignty & Man's Volition Selected Scriptures

### Introduction

The last couple of weeks I have been emphasizing that the nature and character of God is beyond our full comprehension because He is a self-existent spiritual being who is infinite, and we are but finite creatures entrapped in the space-time continuum. As God Himself declared in Isaiah 55:8-9, “*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,*” declares the LORD. 9 “*For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.*” We can only understand God to the degree to which He has revealed Himself and that we are capable of comprehension, for even some of the things He has revealed about Himself are so removed from human experience that we cannot even properly imagine it.

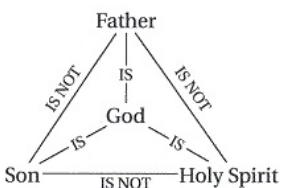
God is infinite in all ways and we cannot even really comprehend the idea of infinity much less its application to time, space, knowledge and power. Yet God reveals Himself to be eternal and self-existent having no beginning or end and transcending time. He is everywhere present at the same time and throughout time. He is all knowing of and about all things throughout time at the same time. He is without limit in His power so that even when He brought forth Creation he had no loss of power. He placed the First and Second laws of Thermodynamics upon Creation but they do not apply to Him.

All of these things mean that God is the sovereign supreme authority. There is nothing that can thwart His will for nothing can outlast Him, avoid Him, out smart Him, or over power Him. Despite man’s quest for autonomy, man is completely subject to God’s sovereignty. Man’s freedom exists only within the boundaries God has placed upon him. Keep that thought in mind throughout today’s topic. Again, man’s freedom exists only within the boundaries God has placed upon him

All of God’s communicable attributes are perfectly holy and exist in perfect harmony with one another so that God is unchanging in His being and character. He is always consistent with Himself.

Because God is so different from us there is much about Him, and what He does that are conundrums for us - confusing or difficult problems we do not understand. There are truths that He declares and things that He does that even seem contradictory to us because we do not know how all of God’s various attributes work together in harmony with one another or the exact nature of the boundaries He has set for man. We learn to accept by faith that what God reveals about Himself is true even when we do not understand it.

One of those conundrums that we examined last week is the Trinity. God is a plural unity of one God existing in three co-equal but distinct persons. It is a theological doctrine developed to express what God has revealed about Himself in two absolute Biblical facts that according to human wisdom are contrary to each other. 1) There is one and only one God - Deuteronomy 6:4, “*Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!*” Isaiah 45:21, “*there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me.*” 2) Three distinct persons are each God: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Isaiah 48:12-16, “<sup>12</sup>*I am He, I am the first, I am also the last. Surely My hand founded the earth, and My right hand spread out the heavens . . .*” <sup>16</sup>*Come near to Me, listen to this: From the first I have not spoken in secret, From the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord GOD has sent Me, and His Spirit.*”



The Athanasian Creed was developed to distinguish the truth of what God has revealed Himself to be from the heretical musings of men who teach falsehoods in the effort to try to make God understandable to themselves. A few key statements in it are these.

*"We worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity; Neither confounding the persons; nor dividing the substance. . . the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy [Spirit] is all one: . . [They are] equal in glory and co-eternal in majesty, uncreated, eternal, almighty, immeasurable. There are not three Gods; but one God . . . one Lord . . . [yet] acknowledge every Person by Himself to be God and Lord . . . in this Trinity none is before or after another: none is greater or less than another. But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal . . . the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshiped. He therefore that will be saved, must thus think of the Trinity.*

The doctrine of the Trinity is confusing to us since the idea that three distinct persons are one essence and one essence exists in three indivisible persons is beyond our understanding, yet believing it by faith is critical for our salvation because A) The one God will not tolerate any other God which eliminates every form of polytheism (Exodus 20:3-5; Isaiah 42:8), B) A Jesus who is not God or is a lesser god cannot redeem man and is not the Savior, and C) An impersonal Holy Spirit cannot convict of sin, righteousness or judgment or carry out the other ministries that He performs.

Be wary of illustrations that reduce God to something you think you understand because they usually end up teaching a heresy of some kind. The Triune God is not like a three linked chain or three leaved clover for the three persons of the Trinity cannot be separated and each is the whole. The Triune God is not like either water or relationships because the Trinity is not one person who changes mode but rather three distinct persons. The Triune God is not like an egg for each person in the Trinity is fully deity individually and not one third of a triad that make up one deity.

If you can understand the God you worship, then you have a lesser god of human imagination and not the LORD God, Creator of heaven and earth, eternal, all knowing, everywhere present, all powerful, unchanging, and sovereign. This same truth applies to the next conundrum that I want to address.

### **God's Sovereignty and Man's Volition**

I am not under any delusion that I am going to some how solve this conundrum that has been debated for many, many centuries among great theological scholars. For the plain fact is that there is a serious head on collision between God being absolutely sovereign, which He is, and man having volition (the ability to make choices), which he does. If man can choose, then is God really sovereign? And if God is truly sovereign, then can man really choose? Error enters in when either truth is emphasized to the exclusion of the other. The clash between these two ideas shows up in several areas including salvation and prayer. My endeavor this morning is to first show that the Bible clearly teaches both of these truths and then point you to a possible harmony that may allow you to have some peace even if it does not provide a perfect solution.

### **God is Sovereign**

As I have already pointed out, God's sovereignty arises from His very nature of being infinite with respect to time, space, knowledge and power. There is nothing that can go around Him, out last Him, out smart Him or overpower Him. God is the supreme authority and He does what He desires, and what He desires is always consistent with His character and nature. I commented on each of these in my sermon on *The Incomprehensible God* a couple of weeks ago, so I will brief this morning, but I do want to point out at least one verse for each of these characteristics and then tie that to God being Sovereign.

According to Webster, to be sovereign is to have "*undisputed right to make decisions and act accordingly,*" to be "*unlimited, absolute,*" to be "*the person supreme in a state.*" All of these apply to God. The word translated as sovereign in 1 Timothy 6:15 (*He who is blessed and only Sovereign, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords*) is *dunastās* (δυνάστης) which has a root meaning of ability and power. God is the only one with supreme ability and power. This same concept is expressed in God being the almighty. That is the meaning of His name, El Shaddai, God Almighty, in the Hebrew scriptures which is translated in the LXX as *παντοκράτωρ*, *pantokratōr*, all-powerful. That same word is used in 2 Corinthians 6:18 and nine times in Revelation. Here are seven proofs of God's sovereignty.

1) God is sovereign because He has no rival. Deuteronomy 4:39, “*Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the Lord, He is God in heaven above and on the earth below; there is no other.*”

2) God is sovereign because He is unlimited in what He can do. Psalm 135:6 - “*Whatever the Lord pleases, He does, In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps.*”

3) God is sovereign because He is the supreme authority. Psalm 103:19, “*The Lord has established His throne in the heavens; And His sovereignty rules over all.*”

4) God is sovereign because He is omnipotent, all powerful. Jeremiah 32:17, “*Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You.*” Luke 1:37, “*For nothing will be impossible with God.*”

5) God is sovereign because He is omniscient, all knowing, which makes it impossible for Him to be deceived. Psalm 147:5, “*Great is our Lord, and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite.*”

Hebrews 4:13, “*And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*”

6) God is sovereign because He is eternal both encompassing and transcending time at the same time and thus controlling it instead of being entrapped within it as is man. Revelation 22:13, “*I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.*” Isaiah 46:10, “*Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, ‘My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’*”

7) God is sovereign because He is omnipresent, everywhere present at the same time so that nothing can escape Him. Jeremiah 23:23–24, “*Am I a God who is near,*” declares the LORD, “*And not a God far off?*<sup>24</sup> “*Can a man hide himself in hiding places So I do not see him?*” declares the LORD. “*Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?*” declares the LORD.

God’s sovereignty in the affairs of men is expressed in His providence which blesses the righteous in His provision, protection and preservation. Because God is sovereign, Paul could confidently proclaim God’s provision in Philippians 4:19, “*And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*” Because God is sovereign, the Psalmist can declare God to be his helper, keeper, protector, & guardian (Psalm 121). Because God is sovereign, He declares His preservation of His people in Isaiah 41:10,

“*Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.*”

What about the intersection of God’s sovereignty and man’s ability to choose? Man cannot escape God’s sovereignty of determination of the outcome of any of man’s choices. In general, Proverbs 16:9 states, “*The mind of man plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps.*” Man needs to be humble before God’s sovereignty over life as James 4:13-16 explains. *Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit.”*<sup>14</sup> Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.<sup>15</sup> Instead, you ought to say, “*If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that.*”<sup>16</sup> But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil.

Those that are unrighteous cannot escape God’s sovereign judgment as declared in Isaiah 43:13, “*Even from eternity I am He; And there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?*” Those that are righteous can rest in God’s sovereignty even when they do not understand their current circumstances, Romans 8:28, “*And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to [His] purpose.*”

## Man can Choose

There is not much if any debate about man having volition, the ability to choose, since it is an aspect of God making man in His image and granting to him personhood. It is clear that God not only allows man to make choices, He demands that he does as seen in every commandment that He has given going

all the way back to the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were given a choice of either obeying or disobeying God's command, and tragically they exercised their volition in choosing to disobey and plummeting all of their descendants into sin.

References to man choosing occur throughout the Scriptures about all sorts of subjects. Proverbs 1:29 warns about those who "*did not choose the fear of the LORD*." Proverbs 3:31 warns about choosing the ways of a man of violence while Proverbs 16:16 encourages that "*to get understanding is to be chosen above silver*." Isaiah 7:15-16 references the age of a young boy as to whether he "*knows enough to refuse evil and choose good*." Judges must decide cases - make a choice between contending parties (Deuteronomy 17:8-9). 2 Chronicles 2:1, "*Solomon decided to build a house for the name of the Lord and a royal palace for himself*." 2 Chronicles 24:4, "*Joash decided to restore the house of the LORD*." Acts 16:4, Paul and Silas delivered the decrees "*which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem*." Acts 20:3, Paul "*decided to return through Macedonia*" and also "*decided to spend the winter [in Nicopolis]*." We make so many decisions about so many things that we take the ability God has given us to choose for granted.

The debate is not that God has granted to man volition, but rather the extent of man's ability to choose. At this point it must be made clear that while God has given to man the ability to choose as part of being made in His image, man is not autonomous in his choices. The phrase "free will" is often used to describe man's ability to choose, but that is actually incorrect and one of the reasons for confusion on this issue. The only being that actually has "free will" is God Himself for only He is infinite in all respects and therefore has the ability to actually carry out every facet of His will. Every other living being is limited in time, space, knowledge and power, and therefore also limited in being able to carry out their own will individually or collectively. Man's will is not "free," but rather restricted by both man's own limited abilities and any boundaries God has placed upon him. Or to state it another way, because God is sovereign, man has freedom only to the extent of his abilities and what God allows.

Man is finite and therefore his will is limited to his abilities. Man does not have free will to do whatever he desires. Man cannot create something from nothing. He cannot travel the length of the solar system much less our galaxy or the universe. He is trapped in present time. He cannot know what he does not know is even something to know - *The secret things belong to the LORD* (Deuteronomy 29:29).

Man's will is also not free because he cannot control the consequences of the choices he does make. He can only heed the admonitions and warnings God makes about them. An example of this is in Joshua 24:14-28. In verse 15 Joshua charges them, "*If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD*." He then warns them about the consequences of choosing to serve the Lord and then failing to do it. They collectively choose the Lord, and in verse 22 Joshua declares, "*You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen for yourselves the LORD, to serve Him.*" And they said, "*We are witnesses.*" The history of Judges shows that the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua and those who had been with him, but the next generation turned away and went through cycles of oppression, contrition, repentance and deliverance to fall back into sin again later. They were given freedom to choose whether they would or would not serve the Lord, but they did not have freedom of will to avoid the consequences of sinful choices or failure to carry out good choices.

That God is sovereign and man has limited choice is not much of a conundrum for most people and about most issues as I have already described. The difficulty for people comes at the intersection of God's sovereignty and man's volition. There is a philosophical debate as to the extent of God's sovereignty if man can make choices and what is the extent of man's volition if God is sovereign. I will let the philosophers enjoy their debates about that. The issue I am concerned about and which Christians debate is the intersections of these things in salvation. Or stated in the format of a common question? Is man's salvation from sin dependent upon God's sovereignty or man's choice? The answer is yes, for to

place emphasis on one aspect of what occurs in salvation to the exclusion of the other is to go contrary to what God has revealed.

**Salvation: Man must choose.** There are those that want to deny this, but in doing so they must reject the clear teaching of many, many scriptures that salvation is dependent upon man making choices regarding God's commands, admonitions and warnings.

**Repentance** - Jesus' message from the beginning of His ministry was commanding men to repent for the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Matthew 4:17) and that He came to call sinners to repentance (Luke 5:32). Repentance is an essential part of the gospel message (Mark 1:15) to bring about forgiveness (Luke 24:47) and life (Acts 11:18). It is God's command and stated wish that all humans repent.

Acts 17:30, "*Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent.*"

2 Peter 3:8-9, "*But do not let this one [fact] escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. <sup>9</sup> 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.*"

**Universal Offer** - similar to the command for all to repent are the invitations to call upon the Lord, believe and be saved

Isaiah 55:6-7, "*Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. <sup>7</sup> Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.*"

Romans 10:11-13, *For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed." <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same [Lord] is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; <sup>13</sup> for "Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved."* (Isaiah 28:16; Joel 2:32)

John 3:16, "*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.*"

These are general calls to salvation that are universal and not to be confused with the particular effectual call to the predestined that always results in justification and glorification as described in Romans 8:30. Remember that Jesus' atonement has an effect on everything. Paul points to it in Romans 8:19-23 as the basis for the hope of the whole creation being set free from its current slavery to corruption. 1 John 2:2 points out, "*and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for [those of] the whole world.*" It is also a basis for God's condemnation of those who do not repent and seek the Lord.

**Accountability** - God will judge men for their choices.

2 Thessalonians 1:7- 8, "*. . . when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, <sup>8</sup> dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.*"

Romans 2:8-9, "*but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. <sup>9</sup> [There will be] tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, However, they did not all heed the glad tidings; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?*"

Romans 10:16-21 removes the excuse of men claiming ignorance with verses 17-18 stating, <sup>17</sup> "*So faith [comes] from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. <sup>18</sup> But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have; "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world."*"

1 Peter 4:17-19, “*For [it is] time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if [it begins] with us first, what [will be] the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?*<sup>18</sup> *And if it is with difficulty that the righteous is saved, what will become of the godless man and the sinner?*<sup>19</sup> *Therefore, let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.*

Man has volition and will be held responsible for his choices to disobey God’s commands. The logical construct is that man must therefore have within his range of volition the ability to choose between good and evil and by extension between salvation and damnation. However, it is right at this point that the antinomy (apparent contradiction) is displayed, for the Bible is also very clear that only those chosen by an act of God’s gracious sovereign will are saved.

**Salvation: God is Sovereign.** There are those that want to deny this, but in doing so they must reject the clear teaching of many, many scriptures that salvation is dependent upon God’s sovereign choice. Here are a few of them.

#### **God Must Act -**

John 6:44, “*No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.*” This is a strong statement. You can only come to Jesus by God the Father drawing you to Him.

Titus 3:3-7, “*For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.* *4 But when the kindness of God our Savior and [His] love for mankind appeared,*<sup>5</sup> *He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,*<sup>6</sup> *whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,*<sup>7</sup> *that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to [the] hope of eternal life.*” This removes any basis of human works bringing a person to salvation. It is by God’s mercy and grace. He withholds the punishment you deserve and gives you blessing you do not deserve.

#### **God Acts by His Sovereign Choice**

Ephesians 1:3–8, <sup>3</sup> “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,*<sup>4</sup> *just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love*<sup>5</sup> *He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,*<sup>6</sup> *to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.*<sup>7</sup> *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace*<sup>8</sup> *which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight . . .*” Because God’s choice is made before the foundation of the world (vs. 4), this is referred to as predestination (vs. 5).

Ephesians 2:4-10, “*But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,*<sup>5</sup> *even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),*<sup>6</sup> *and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly [places], in Christ Jesus,*<sup>7</sup> *in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*<sup>8</sup> *For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, [it is] the gift of God;*<sup>9</sup> *not as a result of works, that no one should boast.*<sup>10</sup> *For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*” It is God that regenerates the dead (Eph. 2:1) and by His grace gives the gift of faith and salvation. Salvation is the work of God, not man.

Why must God sovereignly choose who will be saved? It is because man is -

**Man is utterly lost** - This is referred to as Total Depravity

Ephesians 2:1-2, “*And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,*<sup>2</sup> *in which you formerly walked*

*according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.*" What is dead cannot respond. It can only rot.

Romans 3:10-12 cf. Psalm 14, as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup> There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; <sup>12</sup> All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one." The emphasis here excludes any exceptions.

Isaiah 64:6, "For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away." Even what man does that could be considered righteous is filthy before God's absolute holiness.

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."

## Toward a Resolution

Though very briefly outlined here, it is clear that both 1) God is sovereign in salvation and 2) man must chose and will be held accountable for his choice. The apparent contradictory clash of both these ideas is a conundrum for man largely because we tend to emphasize one truth over the other instead of simply believing what God has revealed and by faith accepting there is a harmony between them even if we do not know exactly what it is.

The resolution that I have come to believe does not satisfy everyone, but it allows me to sleep at peace at night knowing I am being faithful to and not contradicting what God has said. I also take comfort in knowing it is in agreement with those wiser than I that wrestled through these issues and published in The Canons of Dordt (marked copies on the back table or appended to the notes).

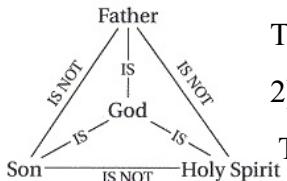
I believe that the Scriptures teach that God universally offers redemption in Jesus Christ to all men who will believe, but because man is so limited by his sinful nature, no man will choose to repent, seek, believe or call upon the Lord. Therefore, salvation from sin and its consequence of eternal damnation can only come by God' direct intervention by His sovereign eternal choice and the working of His Spirit to convict the conscience, enlighten the mind and quicken the spirit of the sinner to irresistibly respond to His gracious gift of faith to repent and believe in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ and receive redemption, forgiveness of sin and adoption into God's family to the praise of His own glory and grace. To put it more simply, no man will choose to respond to God's universal call of salvation in repentance and belief without God's direct intervention according to His own eternal sovereign choice to make him do so to the glory of God. Or as Paul states in 1 Thessalonians 2:13-14, "But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. <sup>14</sup> It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

May each of you who have received God's gracious offer of salvation to all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ rejoice and be at peace. May those of you who have not yet believe heed His call to seek Him and obey His command to repent. The starting point for both is to humble yourself before Him for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Cry out to the Lord for mercy for your soul, for even that very act is evidence of the Holy Spirit's early work in you to convict you of sin, righteousness and judgment. Talk with any of our church leaders. We are glad to pray with you and show you the truths of God's word.

Sermon Notes - January 19, 2020  
God's Sovereignty & Man's Volition - Selected Scriptures

### Introduction -

Isaiah 55:8-9 We can only understand God to the degree to which He has \_\_\_\_\_ Himself & we are capable  
God is \_\_\_\_\_ in all: Self-existent; Eternal, transcendent, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, Sovereign  
God is \_\_\_\_\_: free to do as He pleases. Man's freedom exists only within the boundaries set by God  
All of God's communicable attributes are perfectly \_\_\_\_\_ and exist in perfect harmony with one another  
We learn to accept by faith that what God reveals about Himself is \_\_\_\_\_ even when we do not understand it



The Trinity: 1) There is one and only \_\_\_\_\_ God - Deut. 6:4; Isaiah 45:21, etc.  
2) The Father, the Son, & the Holy Spirit are each \_\_\_\_\_ and each God. Isaiah 48:12-16

The \_\_\_\_\_ Creed distinguishes what God has revealed from the heretical musings  
The Trinity is critical to faith because you must have the \_\_\_\_\_ God: Father, Son & Holy Spirit to be saved  
The three persons of the Trinity cannot be \_\_\_\_\_ & each is the whole - not like a chained links or clover  
The Trinity has three \_\_\_\_\_ persons and not one person who changes mode - not like water or relationships  
Each person of the Trinity is \_\_\_\_\_ and not 1/3 of a triad - not like an egg  
A God you can fully understand is a lesser God of human \_\_\_\_\_ and not the infinite God of the Bible

### God's Sovereignty and Man's Volition

The conundrum: If God is sovereign, can man \_\_\_\_\_? If man can \_\_\_\_\_, is God sovereign?

### God is Sovereign

God's infinite attributes make Him sovereign: the supreme authority, \_\_\_\_\_, absolute, free to do His will

- 1) God is sovereign because He has \_\_\_\_\_. Deuteronomy 4:39
- 2) God is sovereign because He is \_\_\_\_\_ in what He can do. Psalm 135:6
- 3) God is sovereign because He is the \_\_\_\_\_. Psalm 103:19
- 4) God is sovereign because He is omnipotent, \_\_\_\_\_. Jeremiah 32:17; Luke 1:37
- 5) God is sovereign because He is omniscient, \_\_\_\_\_. Psalm 147:5; Hebrews 4:13
- 6) God is sovereign because He is \_\_\_\_\_ - encompassing & transcending time. Rev. 22:13; Isaiah 46:10
- 7) God is sovereign because He is omnipresent, \_\_\_\_\_. Jeremiah 23:23-24

God's sovereignty in the affairs of men is expressed in His \_\_\_\_\_: Provision, Protection, Preservation

God's sovereignty overrules the \_\_\_\_\_ of any of man's choices. Proverbs 16:9; James 4:13-16

God's sovereignty \_\_\_\_\_ the unrighteous (Isa. 43:13) and \_\_\_\_\_ the righteous (Romans 8:28)

### Man can Choose

God made man in His image imparting to Him \_\_\_\_\_ (ability to choose) - an aspect of personhood

God's \_\_\_\_\_ demand that man make choices of obedience or disobedience - going back to Eden

Man makes \_\_\_\_\_: Proverbs 1:29; 2:31; 16:16; Isaiah 7:15-16; Deut. 17:8-9; 2 Chron. 2:1, 24:4, Acts 20:3

Man has volition, but only God has “free will” - all other beings are \_\_\_\_\_ by ability & God’s boundaries

Man is finite and therefore \_\_\_\_\_ by time, space & power, and limited in intelligence and knowledge

Man cannot control the \_\_\_\_\_ of His choices and therefore does not have “free will” (Joshua 24)

What is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God’s sovereignty and man’s volition in salvation?

### **Salvation: Man must choose**

\_\_\_\_\_ is commanded & essential: Mt. 4:7; Lk 5:32; 24:47; Mk 1:15; Acts 11:18; 17:30; 2 Pet. 3:8-9

\_\_\_\_\_ - invitations to call upon the Lord, believe & be saved: Isa. 55:6-7; Rm. 10:11-13; Jn 3:16

Do not \_\_\_\_\_ general calls to salvation with the particular, effectual calls to the predestined (Rom. 8:30)

\_\_\_\_\_ - God will judge men for their choices: 2Thess. 1:7-8; Rom. 2:8-9; 10:16-21; 1 Pet. 4:17-19

### **Salvation: God is Sovereign**

\_\_\_\_\_ - John 6:44 (unless the Father draws); Titus 3:3-7 (according to His mercy . . . by His grace)

**God Acts by His \_\_\_\_\_** - Eph. 1:3-8 (before the foundation of the world); Eph. 2:4-10

**Man is utterly lost** - (\_\_\_\_\_\_). Eph. 2:1-2 (dead in sin); Rom. 3:10-12 / Ps 14 (none, not even one); Isa. 64:6 (even righteous deeds are filthy); 1 Cor. 2:14 (he cannot understand)

### **Toward a Resolution**

1) God is \_\_\_\_\_ in salvation, and 2) Man must \_\_\_\_\_ and will be held accountable for his choice

No man \_\_\_\_\_ to respond to God’s universal call of salvation in repentance and belief without God’s direct intervention according to His own eternal sovereign choice to make him do so to the glory of God

1 Thess 2:13-14, *God has \_\_\_\_\_ you from the beginning for salvation . . . He called you through our gospel*

### **KIDS KORNER**

Parents, you are responsible to apply God’s Word to your children’s lives. Here is some help. **Young Children**

- draw a picture about something you hear during the sermon. Explain your picture(s) to your parents at lunch.

**Older Children** - 1) Count how many times God is mentioned. 2) Talk with your parents about why man will not seek God unless God acts to draw him to Himself.

### **THINK ABOUT IT!**

Questions to consider in discussing the sermon with others. Describe God. Why can’t man fully comprehend God? What is the Trinity and why is it important to believe it? What does it mean that God is sovereign? List out the reasons that God is sovereign? How is God’s sovereignty displayed in the affairs of men? Why should that be a terror to the unrighteous and a comfort to the righteous? What is volition and what is its origin in man? List some verses in which man makes choices? Why does only God have “free will”? How does man being finite limit his will? Give examples. How does man’s inability to control the consequences of his choices limit his will? Give examples. What is repentance and what is its relationship to the gospel and salvation? What is God’s command and desire for humans concerning repentance? Can the verses listed above related to *Universal Offer* be restricted to the elect - why or why not? How can a general call to mankind be distinguished from a particular call to an individual or particular group of people? According to the verses listed above related to *Accountability*, what will be the basis for God’s judgment of those that are not saved? According to the verses listed above related to *Man is utterly lost*, what prevents people from seeking the Lord and getting saved? What is the basis for God saving man? When did God choose the elect? What was the basis for His choice? Read *The Canons of Dordt*. Write out your understanding of the resolution between God’s sovereignty in salvation and man being held accountable for his choices concerning salvation.