

# The Sovereignty of God - Adult SS - Lesson 2: Sovereignty & Salvation

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 19 April 2026

Preacher: Andrew Kueh

[ 0 : 00 ] Welcome to Sunday School. Just a quick recap. So we are looking at the sovereignty of God this term.

! Last week we saw that God is sovereign over all things. And by sovereignty we mean God's kingly rule.

! It's his power, his control, his authority, his plan over all things. And so God created all things. We saw that. We saw God not only just creates it. He doesn't just create it and just let it loose.

He creates it and he upholds all things. So nothing can happen or exist without him. He is in complete control and rule and authority and power over all the details of the universe.

That's what it means for God to be God. That's what him being Lord over all means. So that means he is sovereign over all sorts of things. Creation, nature, even what we would call random or charts, the wrong of the dice.

[ 1 : 15 ] It's all determined by the Lord. He raises up kings and opposes them. All the events of history he is in control over. He's in control of where people live.

That's not a mystery to him or something out of his control. Over life and death. Even the cross itself, right? The greatest evil in all history. The Lord is sovereign over that.

And so what we see, he is sovereign over even sin and Satan and the evil of his world. He's sovereign over the future as well. Where creation is heading toward the new creation.

And we saw he's even sovereign over human decisions. And of course, there are going to be questions about that. We're going to come on to free will. We're going to have a whole week on free will in three weeks time.

OK, so there will be questions, but just hold on to them and we'll come on to certain things as we go. And what is the reason behind why God is sovereign over these things?

[ 2 : 20 ] So is creation just this kind of thing independent of God? But God is just really good at seeing that creation and seeing what's going on.

And he's just really good at moving the pieces when he wants to intervene. And when things go wrong, he's just like a really good and a really quick being that is so good at stepping in and sorting the problems out.

Is that it? No. Being sovereign is far deeper than that. God is sovereign over all these details and knows all these details and is in control of all these details because he has decreed, declared them to happen from all eternity.

So that's what Isaiah 6 says. I am God. There is none like me declaring the end from the beginning. He has a counsel and a purpose and he declares that from even before creation and it all happens. It will be accomplished. So you can think of it like this. But before God made anything, he had a plan. He had a blueprint. And when he said, let there be light, that plan began to unfold.

[ 3 : 43 ] You can think he had the history books already written in eternity. And when he creates, those history books start to happen. He has a counsel and a purpose and a plan from all eternity.

And all things are happening according to that plan. Nothing can exist without him, without his word and therefore without his plan and decree.

And so the Westminster Confession, which has been our guide through Sunday School, it says this, sums it up. 3.1. God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass.

He's sovereign over all things, in control and upholding it all and has authority over it because he decreed all things from eternity past.

And this is what we often call predestination. He has set the destination pre, pre-creation. He's predetermined all things.

[ 4 : 50 ] And over the next few weeks, I want us to unpack more and more what that means. And I want us to address questions that we often have about this. Because as soon as we hear that, we think, well, what about evil?

How can God be good and sovereign over evil? What about free will? Doesn't this just make us robots? And what about prayer? What's the point of praying then?

And so we're going to come on to those as the weeks go on. So you may need to hold on to some questions. But today, there is one aspect I want us to zoom in on about God's sovereignty.

And I want us to see today that if God is sovereign over all things, then he is completely sovereign over faith and salvation.

That's one aspect I want us to look at today. If God has declared all these things from the beginning, then that means God knows who he's going to save.

[ 6 : 01 ] He's planned who he's going to save. He's chosen and elected and predestined them before the foundation of the world.

And that's where I want us to begin today. I want us to jump straight in and I want us to see God has chosen us before the foundation of the world. So I realise what we're about to look at today. It might be new to some of you. This might be something you're wrestling with. Or maybe you just don't agree with. Well, wherever you are on the spectrum, I want us to see today that the idea of election, God choosing whom he will save in eternity past, I want us to see this isn't just kind of a made up teaching that some people came up with a few centuries ago.

But I want to see that this is a thoroughly biblical teaching. And though we may not be able to wrap our heads around every single aspect of this completely, I want us to see this is a glorious teaching. And actually, it's a teaching that if you take it out of the Bible, lots of other really important things start to collapse around it. And so I want us to see that actually we really desperately need election.

[ 7 : 26 ] And so to begin, I want us to really think hard about what is involved in salvation. Right. So if God is sovereign over salvation, I want us to think, OK, what is involved in that salvation he's sovereign over?

So I've got some questions breaking down what the Bible teaches about salvation. It's there in the dotted box. And I want us to see how all these pieces together teach us predestination.

So remember, Sunday school is like a zoo. So you can learn about animals in a safari. That's preaching. Or you can learn about animals in a zoo. Right. That's what Sunday school is. We're gathering together all the animals in the zoo.

And we're learning about one specific animal. Well, today I want us to gather the animal of predestination. Gather all together in this box. And let's see what we can find out about salvation.

We've got a special treat today. Today, I have eight copies of a free book to give to people if you put your hand up and answer some of these questions.

[ 8 : 25 ] So if you're wanting a book and you've got an answer, put your hand up. So this is courtesy of Ligonier Ministries, courtesy of Sam Tunncliffe. This is an absolutely fantastic book. It's called Chosen by God by R.C.

Sproul. I read it a couple of weeks ago for the first time. It's actually, I think it's one of the best books I've ever read on the topic of election and predestination.

And it gets into topics like free will as well. This is really, really excellent. So if you want a free copy, put your hand up as we go and I'll give it to you.

And if you don't like the copy of the book, you can thank Sam Tunncliffe. So first question. Who saves us? Hey, Rory. There we go.

Nice, easy one. It's the Lord's to do. It's nothing. It says it's nothing. It's nothing that we do. Our works cannot do anything for us. It's entirely the Lord's to do. Excellent.

[ 9 : 20 ] Right. There is only one saviour in salvation. There's only one saviour, only one without title, one who can have the claim. I saved them. It's God. It's the Lord.

Right. And what is our contribution to our salvation? Judy. There we go.

Right. So that's there in Ephesians 2. Right. So that is not a result of works. Right. Right. It is not your own doing. Right. Right. We have no contribution to this.

Right. And that's why I've put John 3 there. You might have wondered why is John 3 there. So what is involved in salvation? We must be what? Born again. Right. Right. What contribution did you

make to your birth or to being existing in the first place?

Being conceived. Right. We have no contribution. We are passive in that process. We must be born. We don't contribute to our birth. Right. And what would we be able to do if salvation is even 1% down to us?

[10:28] Think of Ephesians 2. Hands up anyone? Free book? Grace. We can boast. Right. Do you see that?

Right. It is not a result of. It's not your own doing. It is the gift of God. All from God. Not a result of works. So that no one may boast. Right. If it was, let's say God does 99% of salvation, but I take the final step.

Right. What can we do? I can boast in that moment. Right. Yes, God did a lot. Praise God for that. But I came to my senses and I believed. Right. Well done me.

But know that there is no boasting. We contribute nothing in our salvation. So let's think about what we are like before we are saved. How did we feel about God?

What were we like? Hands up. John. Right. Yeah, exactly. So yeah. Romans 3. We are dead.

[11:33] First of all, Ephesians 2. Spiritually dead, aren't we? Right. So no spiritual life in us. We're not following God, but we're following. Do you see those three things?

It's the world, the flesh and the devil. So we are just following our sinful desires. That's what we want. So what does that mean? Our hearts like Genesis 6.

Corrupt. Totally polluted with evil. Set in the direction not toward God, but towards sin. So as John said, we are not seeking God.

No one seeks for God. Romans 3. And in fact, can we seek God? Can we even have the ability to do this?

No. Without God's spirit, Romans 8, we are in the flesh. We cannot submit to God's law or please God in any way. God's law.

[12:28] Think about God's law. It's comprehensive, right? God's law. It involves loving God and trusting in him. Right. That's what pleases God.

And so we cannot do that before God saves us. This is what we are like in our sin before God saves us. Completely dead.

And this is often called the doctrine of total depravity. You might have heard that. The doctrine of total depravity. And it just means we are, we have no spiritual life in us.

And this is really, really key to understanding the doctrine of election and predestination.

Predestination. Okay. So if you have the doctrine of total depravity, you will see it necessitates the doctrine of election.

Because some people might use the analogy of, this is actually in this book, so I recommend it. You might have heard this analogy. So some people might use the analogy, which is, I'll give a precursor, this is not the way to think about sin.

[13:32] So some people may say, sin is like we're drowning in the sea and we're about to go on. We're really struggling. We're trying to stay afloat. We're really struggling. And in salvation, God throws us a life ring.

And all we need to do is just grab onto it. Right. That's the gospel. We just grab onto it. But just have a think. Is that the case? Think about what sin is.

No, that can't be the case. What is a more accurate picture of sin? We're not struggling at the surface of the ocean. No, we are stone cold dead on the ocean floor.

Or you might have seen this diagram. You might have seen this diagram here. So there's a chasm.

Right. There's a chasm here. God is on one side. Right. We're on the other. And sin separates us.

Right. And in this illustration, it says we're trying to get to God.

[14:40] We really want to. We're trying to get over the chasm. But we can't because of our sin. And so the cross bridges the gap. Now, I'm not condemning this whole illustration.

Don't worry. If you've used this before, that's OK. There are lots of helpful things about this. But there is just something not accurate about that. What are we like before God saves us?

Are we trying to get to God? It's just my sins in the way. But I want God. But I just can't reach him.

No. We're not even trying to get to God.

But what's the more accurate picture? Anyone want to suggest? What are we like? James the air is just pretty nice. Boo. Exactly. We're running in the opposite direction. Exactly.

This is what we are all like before God saves us. And so what does God do for us in salvation? More books. I've got eight of them.

[15:46] What does God do for us in salvation? Ephesians 2. Yeah, Noah. He makes us alive together with Christ. There we go, right?

So if we are dead in our sins, even when we were dead, God made us alive together with Christ. If we're dead at the bottom of the ocean, what does God do?

He reaches down, picks up our dead bodies, and brings us back from the dead. Makes us alive. So that means giving us a new heart, Ezekiel 36, new hearts that now love God, hearts that don't run away from him, but hearts that now are seeking him.

Just think, we love him because he first loved us. That is to say, we are born again. That's what John 3 is talking about.

That's what being born again means. A new life, a new nature. We are by nature dead in our sins. By nature not wanting God. And so God gives us a new nature, a new life.

[16:59] Or another word for that is regenerated. You might have heard that. Regeneration. It just means being born again, right? Generations like family, children, birth, generations, rebirth.

And that means, in that moment of salvation, that also means giving us faith. So do you see in Philippians 129?

It has been granted to you to not only believe in him, but also suffer for his sake. So what has been granted to us to believe in him?

And that's what we see with Lydia in not Philippians 16. What should it be? Acts 16. But it's in Philippi, right? If you spotted that, you get a book, right?

So the Lord opens up Lydia's heart to hear what Paul has said and to believe it. And so what are we dependent on in salvation?

[17:59] Hands up. Yeah, Tina. Unless the Father draws us, then we cannot. Unless he reveals to us.

Yeah, exactly. Unless the Father draws, we cannot. It's not that we will not. We cannot. We are entirely dependent on God.

God must draw us. God must reveal truths to us. Open blind eyes. That's another picture of sin. Blindness. And God opens our eyes. And that is also key to why God saves us.

What does God's work of salvation display about God? Hands up. Yeah, Lucy. His glorious. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

That's it. And it's his will as well, right? Yeah, his will is in action. We see what God wants, what his purpose and his choices are.

[18:56] And we see something about his character. Do you see? It's all in love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.

Why? To the praise of his glorious grace. It's all displaying his grace, his gracious decision to raise undeserving sinners from the dead.

His grace to draw guilty sinners who don't deserve to be drawn, who should just be left on their own, drawing us from our own desires and bringing us to himself.

Without which no one will be saved. So if it all if it wasn't all down to God and it was at least a bit on us, our our choice, our kind of coming to our senses and choosing God, then what would happen to grace?

Romans 11. Grace would no longer be grace. Which is why he saved sinners. It's to display his glorious grace. Grace. And so now let's get to the crux.

[20:06] Does God know whom he will save beforehand then? Hands up. Katya.

Yes. Right. Yeah. So yes, he does know. And why? How does God know that? Because he's predestined us for that adoption, for that salvation, for that new birth.

In love, he predestined us. He's decreed all things. He's decreed all things from the beginning.

I haven't even read it. Right. He's decreed all things from eternity past. And that includes whom he will save.

Do you see Romans 9? He's prepared vessels of mercy. People prepared beforehand for glory. So all of that was in his blueprint. So if you looked into one of those history books that were on God's shelf in eternity, you would find not only all the events of history and all the kings and queens of all history, you would find a list of every single person God will save.

[ 21 : 28 ] Your name, for those in Christ, your name is written in those books. And so when Christ went to the cross, he already had a people he was going to die for.

The father, you could say the father had given him that list. These are the people you're going to die for. And so that means no one is able to snatch them out of the father's hand.

That list cannot be added to or taken away. It's perfect. And so I want us to tie all this together. So let's just think from the beginning.

God is the only savior. He contributes all the work of salvation. None of the work belongs to us. And that is because by nature, we're dead in our sins. We can't contribute anything.

We can't seek God. We can't believe him or choose him because we don't want to. We're dead on the ocean floor. And so what must God do? Something radical. He must raise us from the dead.

[ 22 : 30 ] Give us new hearts, hearts that trust him. Open those hearts and give us faith. And so in salvation, we are utterly dependent on God. That's what makes grace, grace.

And so God is completely sovereign over our salvation from all the elements, from coming to us, raising us up, new hearts, new spirit, new faith, every single aspect of it.

Therefore, if it's not down to us, it is all down to whom he chooses. When anybody is saved.

It's down to his gracious will. His decision. He must elect and call sinners and give them life.

Because if he didn't, we could never and would never do it on our own.

It's down to his choice. And when did that choice happen? Before the foundation of the world. He declared the end from the beginning. He decreed it.

[ 23 : 37 ] Elected, predestined, every single person who will be in the new creation. And God knows how many they are and who they are. And the Westminster Confession helpfully sums this up.

3.3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

3.4. These angels and men, thus predestined and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished. And that must be the case. I'm going to press this in again. Because if God didn't predestine or elect us, would anyone be saved?

No. We would all be left in our sins. And if it's not down to us or our decision to be saved, what must it be down to? Whose decision then? God's.

[ 24 : 41 ] God's choice. And if God knows all things, and has planned all things, and all things are dependent on him, when did God make his choice?

Before the foundation of the world. And so, can you see how election is not just a take it or leave it, small little side teaching of the Bible.

No, it is inseparably linked to two really key things in the Bible. But if sin is what it is, if we are dead in our sins, then salvation must mean it's all depending on grace.

And if it's all depending on grace, then that means sin must be what it is. We're dead in our sins.

And if sin is what it is, then it must be by grace. And if it is by grace, then it's down all to God, his power, his sovereignty, his choice.

Therefore, it must be, there must be an election. And then, if it's not in our choice, then, it must be election.

[ 25 : 52 ] All these three things are kind of interconnected and dependent on each other. You take one out, and these, the other two big teachings, important teachings of the Bible, start to crumble.

If you say, well, sin isn't really bad, well, then grace will go on, it becomes grace. And of course, election will crumble with that. It's not down to God's choice. Or if, well, but that's not really how grace works, well, then sin becomes not so bad.

And we do kind of have the choice. And we can really kind of say, we can contribute about 1% to ourselves. But that's not the case. All these three things are connected.

Therefore, the doctrine of election and predestination, it's not just a fringe teaching that some people have come up with. No, this is integral to the Bible.

Integral to God's grace. He elects, why? To the praise of his glorious grace. Which is a helpful thing to remember.

[ 26 : 57 ] When we attempted to ask, but how is this fair? And I just want to end on this thought, and then we'll break up with questions. Okay. How is this fair? What one thought of all this, I do.

Well, hang on. So if it's all down to his decision, yeah, how is this fair? this sounds like just randomly sending some people to heaven, some people to hell.

Why does God save some and not others? But when we ask that, we are understanding election in the wrong way. That assumes everyone is kind of in a neutral state.

And they can easily either go to heaven or hell. So, that question assumes we are, before God saves us, we're kind of neutral.

We're going along, and God, we can either go to heaven or hell. God can either send us to heaven or hell. Either up or up the ground, right?

[ 28 : 06 ] But what is the reality about election? Who is God electing? God elects and predestines sins. What are we, naturally, by nature, we are, all by nature, going to hell.

But that's the default state. And so, what happens in salvation? God, by his own gracious will, out of his love, his free love, he elects and raises up and brings people to the eternal life.

Make it embarrassing, right? That is election. He's electing sinners, undeserving sinners.

Election, it's all about grace. It's all about God saying, you deserve nothing. You could do nothing on your own, but I'm going to pick you up out of your sin, give you life and give you everything.

And so, the question is, why doesn't God save some rather than others? What is the real question?

Why does God save anyone at all?

[ 29 : 27 ] And the answer is grace. And so, in a way, election isn't fair. Fair would be to leave us where we are.

Fair would be to not elect, but in God's mercy, out of his love, he's chosen us before the foundation of the world. And therefore, it is all to the praise of his glorious grace.

And let me just end on this thought before questions. Election and predestination, it might be a big doctrine we're dealing with here, but God has told us this because this is a comforting doctrine.

Because election and predestination means your future is absolutely certain. If God knows who are his elect and that number cannot change and no one, not even Satan himself can snatch those people out of God's hand, then that means for all of us in Christ, we can never, ever be lost.

We might go through trials in this life and our faith can wobble at times and we can wonder, but how can I do this in my own strength? Well, thankfully, it is not in our own strength that we reach the end.

[ 30 : 46 ] It is all because of God's grace and his sovereignty. It is because we have been chosen before the foundation of the world. We've got a few minutes for questions and I realise there might be lots or you might need a bit of time to think about it.

You can speak to me after, but we'll have a bit of time for questions. Thank you.