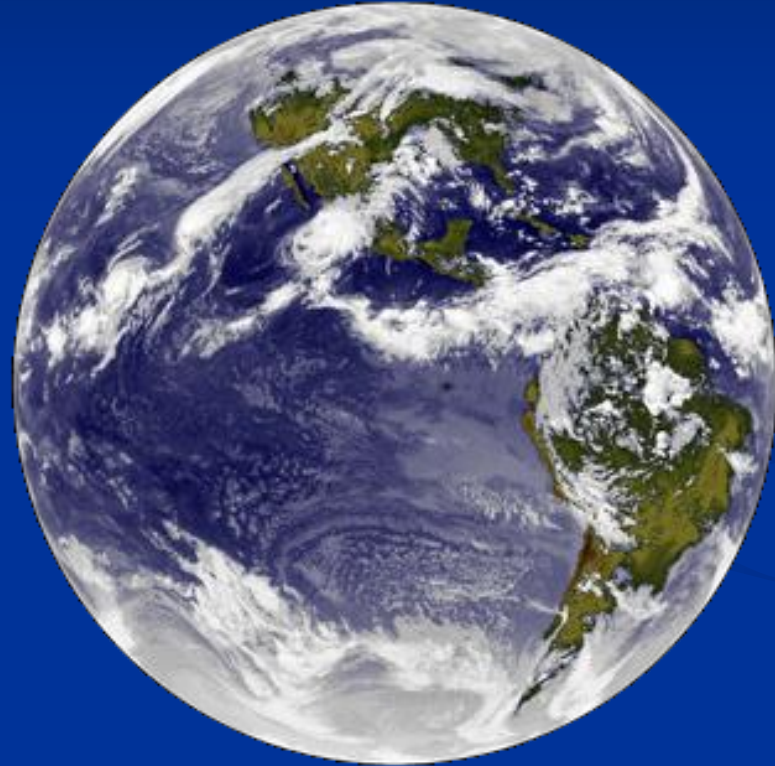


# The Sovereignty of God



# What does it mean that God is in Control?

- *Is God's Sovereignty an excuse to shirk our own responsibility? Is God the author of sin?*
- *Is God's Sovereignty an endorsement of fatalism? – Does He control all things robotically?*

# The Westminster Confession of Faith, 1646

*God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.*

# God's Sovereignty is Triune – a Trinity

Sovereign means “supreme in power... sovereign ruler of the universe... absolute sovereignty belongs to God only...” (Webster 1828)

*Isaiah 33:22 – For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; He will save us!*

- a. Sovereignty is source – one who initiates planning (Ps. 2:1-4) - Father
- b. Sovereignty is authority – one who is judge (Ps. 2:5-8) - Son
- c. Sovereignty is jurisdiction – one who acts precisely (Ps. 2:9-12) – Spirit

# Either God or Man is Sovereign

- *If God is Sovereign, then He initiates a relationship with man, and the individual, home, business, church and state are limited...*
- *If Man is Sovereign, then he initiates a relationship with God, and God is limited (in history, man being sovereign means the State has ultimate authority)*

# Two Streams of Theology

## Reformed Theology

- Augustine (354-430); John Calvin (1509-1564)
- *Total depravity toward God*
- *Unconditional Election*
- *Limited Atonement*
- *Irresistible Grace*
- *Perseverance of the Saints*

## Dispensational Theology

- Pelagius (360-420); Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609)
- *Partial depravity toward God*
- *Election conditioned by choice*
- *Atonement can be rejected*
- *Grace can be resisted*
- *Believers can lose salvation*

# Reformed Theology inspired Western Civilization in general, America in particular

- Developed comprehensive worldview “seamless garment”
  - (All of life is under His sovereignty, apply the Bible to “every area”)
- Reformed theology is stated from God’s perspective, not ours...
  - (God knows all so it sounds rigid; but we have responsibility as well)
- Reactions are often in extremes – dispensational/hyper-Calvinism
  - (Man limits God; or we have no responsibility and it is fatalistic)
- Dispensational a fragmented worldview – spirit good, culture is evil
  - (This became dominant in 1880’s; causing believers to retreat...)



# Genesis 1:1 and Deuteronomy 29:29

- *In the beginning God created...*
- *The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the works of this law.*



# The Sovereignty of God delineated

- The hidden things belong unto the Lord – omniscience of God – only God knows all things
- The created things demonstrate the omnipotence of God – we are not the creator
- The revealed things demonstrate the omnipresence of God – *transcendent* and *imminent*

# God's Providence: Application of Sovereignty

Webster's 1828: *The care and superintendence which God exercises over his creatures. He that acknowledges a creation and denies a providence involves himself in a palpable contradiction; for the same power which caused a thing to exist is necessary to continue its existence. Some persons admit a general providence but deny a particular providence not considering that a general providence consists of particulars... By divine providence is often understood God himself.*

# God's Sovereignty in our Daily Lives

- General Providence – *God is sovereign and in control of all*
  - *He is the “underlying cause” – history His autobiography*
  - *God times events, and our lives, for the advance of His Kingdom*
  - *God's Hand is often not discerned until generations later...*
- Particular Providences – secondary causes; our choices
  - *We often make our decisions without noticing God's timing*
  - *Human freedom and responsibility is an exercise of free will*
  - *Without His Will and power, we could not be regenerated to advance His Kingdom on earth, with civility and godly order*

(See the election sermon of S.W. Foljambe, January 5, 1876)