

The Sovereignty of God
Believer's Fellowship // August 16, 2026

Introduction

Understanding God's Sovereignty

In His Being

In His Will

In His Works

Experiencing God's Sovereignty

In Creation

In Our Salvation

In Our Suffering

Conclusion

Isaiah 45:1-25

- [1] Thus says the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus,
whose right hand I have grasped,
to subdue nations before him
and to loose the belts of kings,
to open doors before him
that gates may not be closed:
- [2] "I will go before you
and level the exalted places,
I will break in pieces the doors of bronze
and cut through the bars of iron,
- [3] I will give you the treasures of darkness
and the hoards in secret places,
that you may know that it is I, the LORD,
the God of Israel, who call you by your name.
- [4] For the sake of my servant Jacob,
and Israel my chosen,
I call you by your name,
I name you, though you do not know me.
- [5] I am the LORD, and there is no other,
besides me there is no God;
I equip you, though you do not know me,
- [6] that people may know, from the rising of the sun
and from the west, that there is none besides me;
I am the LORD, and there is no other.
- [7] I form light and create darkness;
I make well-being and create calamity;
I am the LORD, who does all these things.
- [8] "Shower, O heavens, from above,
and let the clouds rain down righteousness;
let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit;
let the earth cause them both to sprout;
I the LORD have created it.
- [9] "Woe to him who strives with him who formed him,
a pot among earthen pots!
Does the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?'
or 'Your work has no handles'?
- [10] Woe to him who says to a father, 'What are you begetting?'
or to a woman, 'With what are you in labor?'"
- [11] Thus says the LORD,
the Holy One of Israel, and the one who formed him:
"Ask me of things to come;
will you command me concerning my children and the work of my hands?
- [12] I made the earth
and created man on it;
it was my hands that stretched out the heavens,
and I commanded all their host.

[13] I have stirred him up in righteousness,
and I will make all his ways level;
he shall build my city
and set my exiles free,
not for price or reward,"
says the LORD of hosts.

[14] Thus says the LORD:
"The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush,
and the Sabeans, men of stature,
shall come over to you and be yours;
they shall follow you;
they shall come over in chains and bow down to you.
They will plead with you, saying:
'Surely God is in you, and there is no other,
no god besides him.'"

[15] Truly, you are a God who hides himself,
O God of Israel, the Savior.

[16] All of them are put to shame and confounded;
the makers of idols go in confusion together.

[17] But Israel is saved by the LORD
with everlasting salvation;
you shall not be put to shame or confounded
to all eternity.

[18] For thus says the LORD,
who created the heavens
(he is God!),
who formed the earth and made it
(he established it;
he did not create it empty,
he formed it to be inhabited!):
"I am the LORD, and there is no other.

[19] I did not speak in secret,
in a land of darkness;
I did not say to the offspring of Jacob,
'Seek me in vain.'

I the LORD speak the truth;
I declare what is right.

[20] "Assemble yourselves and come;
draw near together,
you survivors of the nations!

They have no knowledge
who carry about their wooden idols,
and keep on praying to a god
that cannot save.

[21] Declare and present your case;
let them take counsel together!

Who told this long ago?

Who declared it of old?

Was it not I, the LORD?

And there is no other god besides me,
a righteous God and a Savior;
there is none besides me.

[22] "Turn to me and be saved,
all the ends of the earth!

For I am God, and there is no other.

[23] By myself I have sworn;
from my mouth has gone out in righteousness
a word that shall not return:

'To me every knee shall bow,
every tongue shall swear allegiance.'

[24] "Only in the LORD, it shall be said of me,
are righteousness and strength;

to him shall come and be ashamed
all who were incensed against him.

[25] In the LORD all the offspring of Israel
shall be justified and shall glory." (ESV)

The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647)

Chapter 2: Of God, and of the Holy Trinity

1. There is but one only,^a living, and true God,^b who is infinite in being and perfection,^c a most pure spirit,^d invisible,^e without body, parts,^f or passions;^g immutable,^h immense,ⁱ eternal,^k incomprehensible,^l almighty,^m most wise,ⁿ most holy,^o most free,^p most absolute;^q working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will,^r for his own glory;^s most loving,^t gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin;^u the rewarder of them that diligently seek him;^w and withal, most just, and terrible in his judgments,^x hating all sin,^y and who will by no means clear the guilty.^z

2. God hath all life,^a glory,^b goodness,^c blessedness,^d in and of himself; and is alone in and unto himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he hath made,^e nor deriving any glory from them,^f but only manifesting his own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things;^g and hath most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever himself pleaseth.^h In his sight all things are open and manifest,ⁱ his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature,^k so as nothing is to him contingent, or uncertain.^l He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands.^m To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience he is pleased to require of them.ⁿ

3. In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost:^o the Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father;^p the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.^q

Chapter 3: Of God's Eternal Decree

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:^a yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin,^b nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.^c

2. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions,^d yet hath he not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.^e

3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels^f are predestinated unto everlasting life; and others foreordained to everlasting death.^g

4. These angels and men, thus predestinated, and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.^h

5. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen, in Christ, unto everlasting glory,ⁱ out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith, or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto;^k and all to the praise of his glorious grace.^l

6. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto.^m Wherefore, they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ,ⁿ are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified,^o and kept by his power, through faith, unto salvation.^p Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.^q

7. The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy, as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by; and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.^r

8. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care,^s that men, attending the will of God revealed in his Word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election.^t So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God;^u and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.^w

Chapter 5: Of Providence

1. God the great Creator of all things doth uphold,^a direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things,^b from the greatest even to the least,^c by his most wise and holy providence,^d according to his infallible foreknowledge,^e and the free and immutable counsel of his own will,^f to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.^g

2. Although, in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the First Cause, all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly;^h yet, by the same providence, he ordereth them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.ⁱ

3. God, in his ordinary providence, maketh use of means,^k yet is free to work without,^l above,^m and against them, at his pleasure.ⁿ 4. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in his providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men;^o and that not by a bare permission,^p but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding,^q and otherwise ordering, and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends;^r yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.^s

5. The most wise, righteous, and gracious God doth oftentimes leave, for a season, his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover unto them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled;^t and, to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.^u

6. As for those wicked and ungodly men whom God, as a righteous Judge, for former sins, doth blind and harden,^w from them he not only withholdeth his grace whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts;^x but sometimes also withdraweth the gifts which they had,^y and exposeth them to such objects as their corruption makes occasions of sin;^z and, withal, gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan,^a whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God useth for the softening of others.^b

7. As the providence of God doth, in general, reach to all creatures; so, after a most special manner, it taketh care of his church, and disposeth all things to the good thereof.^c

Heidelberg Catechism (1563)

Q 27: What do you understand by the providence of God?

A: God's providence is
his almighty and ever present power,
whereby, as with his hand, he still upholds
heaven and earth and all creatures,
and so governs them that
leaf and blade,
rain and drought,
fruitful and barren years,
food and drink,
health and sickness,
riches and poverty,
indeed, all things,
come to us not by chance
but by his fatherly hand.

Q 28: What does it benefit us to know
that God has created all things
and still upholds them by his providence?

A: We can be patient in adversity,
thankful in prosperity,
and with a view to the future
we can have a firm confidence
in our faithful God and Father
that no creature shall separate us
from his love;
for all creatures are so completely in his hand
that without his will
they cannot so much as move.