

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

# THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

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## GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND MY LIFE

Jim Stauffer

Sovereignty is defined as - *the state of being sovereign; the supreme authority*. When we speak of the sovereignty of God we are speaking of the Sovereign over all levels of sovereignty. There are levels of rulers throughout the earth from the municipal level all the way to national. Each of them have realms of authority over their subjects.

However, God is sovereign over all these because He is the one who created them. **2 Kings 19:15** *And Hezekiah prayed before Jehovah, and said, O Jehovah, the God of Israel, that sittest above the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.* Not only did He create them, He appointed each in his own time and term. **Rom. 13:1** *Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God.*

Some things about the sovereignty of God become clear. We understand He does not dictate the minds of those who rule over man, but He does choose when they need to be replaced to best serve His purposes. Jeremiah told Israel (Judah) God would send a nation to conquer them because they had rejected Him. **(Jer. 5:15-18)** But he also promised that any nation that repented of its evil would be matched by His repentance of any evil He planned against it. **(Jer. 18:5-12)** He then sent Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians to take them into captivity because they failed to repent. While the Judeans were captive in the land of Babylon God demonstrated His sovereignty to Nebuchadnezzar. He drove him from mankind and made his heart as the beasts of the field. He made him to live among the animals feeding on grasses as they, *until he knew that the Most High God ruleth in the kingdoms of men and that he setteth up over it whomsoever he will.* **(Dan. 5:21)** Later He punished Babylon for their evil by their conquest at the hands of the Persians. Cyrus acknowledged God as the One who gave him, *all the kingdoms of the earth.* **(2 Chron. 36:23)** Because of his recognition of God in this way he assisted the returning captives as they rebuilt the temple and the city of Jerusalem.

With this understanding of God's omnipotence, some find it difficult to believe He allows mankind to

make his own decisions. Yet in light of the knowledge God overthrows kingdoms as they no longer serve His purpose, we are forced to admit those kingdoms chose evil or that God used his supreme power to force them to choose evil. Who suspects God of such an evil nature? Of course no one admits they do. Yet the conclusions they have drawn concerning sovereignty demand that admission if honest thinking is to prevail.

What some would have us believe about God is that He must rule entirely if He is indeed sovereign. By ruling entirely they mean He dictates every action by every individual who ever walks on the face of the earth.

Of course this position is incompatible with what the revealed word of God, the Bible tells us. It tells us the entire story of the fall of man and the redemption of mankind through Jesus Christ. We know that *all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* **(Rom. 3:23)** Jesus said He, *came to seek and save that which was lost.* **(Lk. 19:10)** John tells us, *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life.* **(John 3:16)** When the apostles were given the commission to preach to the entire world, we are told, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.* **(Mk. 16:16)**

Please notice the all inclusive nature of the invitation of the Lord to come to him. **Matt. 11:28** *Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* It is clear *all those who have sinned* represent *that which was lost* and have the opportunity to be *whosoever believeth* and then be *baptized* and *saved*. It is their choice. You see God is sovereign. He is the One Who offers salvation. It is His choice. And He expressed His choice to save those who believe and obey His Son. **(Heb. 5:8,9)**

Now let's discuss the effect of God's sovereignty on the lives of those who serve Him. We must recognize what we can and cannot understand about God. **(Deut. 29:29)** He clearly supports the faithful in their endeavors to serve Him. **(Mat. 6:33; Heb. 13:5,6)** Even when He supports our service to Him it is not promised to be accomplished with ease. Listen to Paul as he describes his personal dilemma of suffering for the cause of Christ. **Phil. 1:21** *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is*

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gain. 22 But if to live in the flesh, — if this shall bring fruit from my work, then what I shall choose I know not. 23 But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better: 24 yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake.

He says on another occasion his life was in such danger the only hope he had was in God who has the power over death. (**2 Cor. 1:9**) He then tells us in **2 Tim. 4:6**, *the time of my departure is at hand*, as he describes his impending death and tells us of the heavenly reward awaiting him due to his faithfulness. It is apparent he harbors no illusions that his life will be spared this time. However, in **verse 17** of the same chapter he refers to a time when the Emperor of Rome was denied the opportunity of executing him and attributes it to the power of God.

What then do we conclude from all this? God has a purpose for His kingdom, the church. As He rules over all earthly kingdoms, He uses them for His purposes. He further supports and strengthens those who serve in His kingdom, the church. He also uses them for His purposes as they have committed themselves to such service of their own free will.

It is not ours to plead for life in this world and this must not be why we pray for health and strength. It is, rather, as Paul says, that we might be strong in His service and aid His cause.

## THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

*Randy Harshbarger*

Does the church of Christ have a creed? How you answer that question might depend upon your understanding of what the church is. A person's creed is simply those things that person believes in. Creed comes from the Latin *credo* and means "I believe." In this sense, every person has a creed of some kind, because every person has something he believes in. It has been correctly *said* that if a creed contains more than the Bible it contains too much; if it contains less than the Bible it contains too little; if it contains the same as the Bible it is not needed. Most human creeds as utilized in the denominational world can be traced back to the Nicene Creed, formulated in 325AD. Creeds set forth the tenets of faith peculiar to each denomination. Human creeds are human in nature and are produced by men, not God. Creeds must never be given the same weight of scripture, whether written or unwritten.

Isaiah long ago challenged the apostate children of God to listen to their Creator by saying: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (**Isa. 55:8-9**). Man makes the mistake of trying to bring God down to his level. Man makes the mistake of thinking in terms of the seen rather than the unseen. Man makes the mistake of rationalizing his conduct, reaching the conclusion that God will do the same. All of these things, and more, demonstrate man's failure to listen to God.

Is it possible for those who claim New Testament

Christianity to subscribe to a creed of some kind, written or unwritten? Consider the oft-told story about the newly wedded bride, who prepared a delicious dinner of pot roast for her new husband. After sitting down to eat, the husband observed two pans of roast and asked: "Why do we have two pans of roast?" "I don't really know." "replied his wife," But that is the way Mom always prepared pot roast. A quick call to Mom brought forth the answer. "Mom, I cooked supper just like you always did, and I cut the roast in half, using two pans. But, why did you always use two pans?" "Because the roast was too large for one pan!" Mom answered.

Our worship to God must be in spirit and truth, but singing two songs, having a prayer, and then another song isn't the only way to conduct that portion of the worship service. It isn't mandated that each service be closed with prayer. There is nothing in scripture about the amount of time that should be given to each respective element of our worship. Yet, to change the "prescribed order" is to incur the ire of many who are quick to say: "That is wrong ... we've never done it that way before ... etc." You get the point. Am I advocating a change in the way we conduct our services? No! Am I saying that we can easily fall prey to creedal thinking if we are not careful? Yes! Do I believe we should give equal emphasis to HOW we do WHAT we do in our devotion to God? Yes! Don't be too quick to change something just because it is old, but don't assume that just because it is old, that it is right.

My friend Brother Elmer Moore has frequently said: "It is just as wrong to make a law, as to break a law." To that I say AMEN! May we never elevate what we think or what we say above that which is written. We may be using two pans when one will do just as well. Remember, God's ways are above our ways! ~

## Satan's Way

*Robert F. Turner*

To turn away from God's church and church government now is to turn away from him; to reject these is to reject him.

But what if elders of the church will not do the work? Let it be remembered that Samuel's wicked sons failed to do their work; still it was a rejection of God to reject his system of government, even when perverted by mean men. Why not turn the rascals out and select honest and righteous judges?

The wickedness of Samuel's sons furnished a pretext for asking for a king, and a failure on the part of elders and the church now to do the work God requires furnishes a pretext to those not satisfied with the New Testament order of things for asking for a change of Gods way.

This is a trick of Satan. He took advantage of the corruption and wicked practices of Samuel's sons to suggest a change in Gods government. He doubtless pointed out to the elders of Israel the centralization and solidity of other nations under kings and how they had succeeded; that the Israelites, in their spasmodic and irregular way of opposing their enemies, could not



succeed; and that the Lord's plan would not work. He practices the same trick today.

When elders fail in qualifications and duties and the church drags along, Satan steps in and suggests change. He never suggests that the church should have intelligent, active, scriptural elders, doing a scriptural work. His special effort is to persuade the church that God's way will not work; that all the denominations practice the one-man-pastor or one- man-minister system, and the church must be like them — **and do as they do or fail**. Hence frequently a novice (**1 Tim. 3:6**) — a beardless youth — is installed as the pastor or the minister of the church, and the elders are practically laid on the shelf.

When the church fails to endeavor to do the will of God in developing the young members, Satan, becoming at once very much interested in their spiritual welfare, never suggests that the church should be stirred up to the discharge of its duty, but proposes to organize an endeavor society which will do this particular work; when the church fails to associate as it should, Satan, becoming interested in Christian association, proposes the organization of an association which will do this work; when the church fails to do missionary work, old Satan, suddenly turning missionary and, shedding great crocodile tears over the poor heathen who are dying without the gospel, never suggests that the church should be taught and trained, as such, to do this work, but proposes to furnish an organization which will do it.

## Modesty

**Ben Hastings**

Modesty of speech, modesty of action, and modesty in dress are almost void in the lives of people in this world. Christians need to safeguard themselves so that we might not let worldliness affect our modesty.

**Eph 5:4** "neither filthiness, nor foolish talking,nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks".

The first part of this verse deals with things that the Christian is not to participate in which includes "foolish talking, nor coarse jesting." The second part of this verse states that "the giving of thanks" is something that is acceptable to God. It is very easy for people to get caught up in laughing at dirty jokes, or dirty remarks. Let us be an example to this world, and not participate in idle talk.

**I Cor. 3:16** "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"

We must also be modest in our actions. Let us make sure that we handle our bodies in such a way that would befit the temple of God. We must not misuse God's temple by dancing or by immoral behavior. The way in which we conduct ourselves is just as important as how we talk. We must strive to be Christ like in every facet of our life.

**I Tim. 2:9** "In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, With propriety and moderation,not with braided hair or gold or pearls or

costly clothing." A third way in which one may be modest is in the area of dress. We are seeing a lack of material in clothing. The skirts and shorts are getting cut higher, and the shirts are getting cut lower. Christians must be careful that we are modest in our dress so that we might dress properly as one who professes godliness. (**1 Tim. 2:10**) A good question to ask is "Am I dressing to conceal or reveal?" Sometimes we make it too hard for those in the world to notice that we are different. We should not blend into the crowd with our dress. We should never wear something that we would be uncomfortable wearing if the Lord was sitting right beside us, because He is always looking at us.

Christians, we can shine as lights to this dark world if we have modesty of speech, modesty of action, and modesty in dress.

## Ordained To Eternal Life

**Sean P. Cavender**

A common proof-text that many Calvinists will use to assert the doctrine of unconditional election, or God's predetermined choice of those individuals who will be saved (and conversely, those who would be damned) is **Acts 13:48**. The text reads, "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

The word "ordained" means "to place in order, arrange," signifies "to appoint," (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words). The word was often used in the context of arranging a meeting place, or arranging a group of people, like an army.

The passage is not teaching the doctrine of unconditional election as some suppose. The passage is not teaching an effectual calling of God, giving those that were chosen, a measure of faith to believe in the gospel. Kittel correctly summarizes the passage: "Christians are ordained to eternal life in **Acts 13:48**; conferring of status rather than foreordination is the point."

What Acts 13:48 teaches us is that all those who believe are ordained to eternal life. In fact, that is the construction of the original Greek text. Belief is the condition that would ordain us to everlasting life. But what must we believe? The gospel of salvation (**Ephesians 1:13**). And then we are added to the arranged body of Christ, the church (**Acts 2:47; Ephesians 1:20-23**).

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***There will be Thanksgiving in heaven  
Tho' no turkey with dressing nor pies  
But there will be unhindered rejoicing  
And no clouds will darken the skies***

***by Grant Clothier***

**Eph. 2:19** So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

**1Pet. 2:9** But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

**Psa. 1:1** Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

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Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

**Visitors welcome**

**We conduct in home Bible Studies**

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**Evangelist and Editor Jim Stauffer**

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## **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**

**Hear** the gospel - Romans 10:17

**Believe** in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

**Repent** of sins - Acts 17:30

**Confess** Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

**Be Baptized** for remission of sins

Acts 2:38

**Be Faithful** unto death - Revelation 2:10