



March 2025

Fox River Life



*The following article was written
by Derek Thomas. Dr. Derek W.H.*

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God is sovereign in creation, providence, redemption, and judgment. That is a central assertion of Christian belief and especially in Reformed theology. God is King and Lord of all. To put this another way: nothing happens without God's willing it to happen, willing it to happen before it happens, and willing it to happen in the way that it happens. Put this way, it seems to say something that is expressly Reformed in doctrine. But at its heart, it is saying nothing different from the assertion of the Nicene Creed: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty." To say that God is sovereign is to express His almightiness in every area.

God is sovereign in creation. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). Apart from God, there was nothing. And then there was something: matter, space, time, energy.

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And these came into being ex nihilo—out of nothing. The will to create was entirely God's. The execution was entirely His. There was no metaphysical “necessity” to create; it was a free action of God.

God is sovereign in providence. Traditional theism insists that God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent—all powerful, all knowing, and everywhere present. Each assertion is a variant of divine sovereignty. His power, knowledge, and presence ensure that His goals are met, that His designs are fulfilled, and that His superintendence of all events is (to God, at least) essentially “risk free.”

God's power is not absolute in the sense that God can do anything (*potestas absoluta*); rather, God's power ensures that He can do all that is logically possible for Him to will to do. “He cannot deny himself,” for example (2 Tim. 2:13).

Some people object to the idea that God knows all events in advance of their happening. Such a view, some insist, deprives mankind of its essential freedom. Open theists or free-will theists, for example, insist that the future (at least in its specific details) is in some fashion “open.” Even God does not know all that is to come. He may make predictions like some cosmic poker player, but He cannot know absolutely. This explains, open theists suggest, why God appears to change His mind: God is adjusting His plan based on the new information of unforeseeable events (see Gen. 6:6–7; 1 Sam. 15:11). Reformed theology, on the other hand, insists that no event happens that is a surprise to God. To us it is luck or chance, but to God it is part of His decree “The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord” (Prov. 16:33). Language of God changing His mind in Scripture is an accommodation to us and our way of speaking, not a description of a true change in God's mind.

God is sovereign in redemption, a fact that explains why we thank God for our salvation and pray to Him for the salvation of our spiritually lost friends. If the power to save lies in man's free will, if it truly lies in their unaided ability to save themselves, why would we implore God to “quicken,” “save,” or “regenerate” them? The fact that we consistently thank God for the salvation of individuals means (whether we admit it or not) that belief in absolute free will is inconsistent.

God is sovereign in judgment. Few passages of Scripture reflect the sovereignty of God in election and reprobation with greater force than Romans 9:21: “Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?” On the face of it, this might appear unfair and arbitrary—as though God were playing some vindictive child's game with the petals of a flower: “He loves me; He loves me not. He loves me; He loves me not.” In response, some people have insisted that God has the right to do whatever He pleases and it is none of our business to find fault with Him—a point that Paul himself anticipates (Rom. 9:20). Others have taken the view that if God were to grant us what we deserve, we would all be damned. Election is therefore a gracious (and not just a sovereign) act. Both are true. But in any case, our salvation displays God's glory: “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:36)

Human Responsibility

The assertion of divine sovereignty is not without further questions that should be addressed

First, there is the question of evangelism. If God is sovereign in all matters of providence, what is the point of exerting human effort in evangelism and missions? God's will is sure to be fulfilled whether we evangelize or not. But we dare not reason this way. Apart from the fact that God commands us to evangelize—"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19)—such reasoning ignores the fact that God fulfills His sovereign plan through human means and instrumentality. Nowhere in the Bible are we encouraged to be passive and inert. Paul commands his Philippian readers to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12–13).

Second, there is the question of ethics. We are held responsible for our actions and behavior. We are culpable in transgression and praiseworthy in obedience.

Third, in relation to civic power and authority, there is the question of God's sovereignty in the determination of rulers and government. God has raised up civil governments to be systems of equity and good and peace, for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of them who do well (Rom. 13:3; 1 Peter 2:14). But this is also true of evil powers and corrupt regimes that violate the very principles of government itself; these are also under the sovereign government of Almighty God.

Fourth, in the question of both the origin and continued existence of evil, the sovereignty of God meets its most acute problem. That God does not prevent evil from existing seems to call into question His omnipotence or His benevolence. Some non-Christian religions try to solve this problem by positing that evil is imaginary (Christian Science) or an illusion (Hinduism). Augustine and many medieval thinkers believed part of the mystery could be solved by identifying evil as a privation of the good, suggesting that evil is something without existence in and of itself. Evil is a matter of ontology (being). Reformed thought on this issue is summarized by the Westminster Confession of Faith:

God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain what-soever 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. (3:1)

God is the “first cause” of all things, but evil is a product of “second causes.” In the words of John Calvin, “First, it must be observed that the will of God is the cause of all things that happen in the world: and yet God is not the author of evil,” adding, “for the proximate cause is one thing, and the remote cause another.” In other words, God Himself cannot do evil and cannot be blamed for evil even though it is part of His sovereign decree.

God is sovereign, and in His sovereignty, He displays His majestic glory. Without it, we would have no being, no salvation, and no hope. Soli Deo gloria.

Pastor Tim

VIDA

Collection is started for VIDA and Trinity House starting March 2nd.

Vida is looking to collect diapers ,size 4,5 and 6.

Diaper cream and Kid's toothpaste and toothbrushes.

We can always use baby clothes ,new or gently used.

Any Questions please see Ellen, Carol and Angela



potluck Brunch

Saturday March 8th at 10:00 am in the Fellowship Hall
Sign up sheet is located on the Welcome Desk.



If you have events and need bulletin insert made please send me the information by Thursday 9am of each week, bulletins are printed Thursday morning.

Children's Church

The children are starting to learn about the people in the Old Testament. We are also working on a presentation for church on Easter Sunday.

It's a surprise !!!!!



Fox River Baptist Church

2700 East Henry Street
Appleton, WI 54915

Phone: 920-734-6162

E-mail: office@foxriverbaptist.com

Website: foxriverbaptist.com

Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday
& Thursday - 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm



Here at FRBC, we have a prayer chain meant for the sharing of prayer request needs and for sharing praise for the awesome & mighty work God does in our lives. Please feel free to share any praise or request at our new Prayer request email address:

Prayer@FoxRiverBaptist.com

Care to be part of the prayer chain?

Email or call Becky Godfrey at
becl.godfrey@gmail.com —
(920) 277-1526

St. Joseph Food Program

!

March

Chicken



Help us reach our goal of 1,000 cans
Drop off cans in the foyer near the Baptismal area

March Birthdays

Anniversaries

06 Howard Schimke

14 Lynn Abitz

18 Doris Olson

19 Pat Groff



Sunday Evening Services

March 2—Ask PT

March 9—Corporate Prayer

March 16—Sol Fide Study

March 23—Corporate Prayer

March 30-TBD

Financial Update 2025

Budget needed weekly:

2836.35



Contact Mark Wildenberg

920-378-3380 with questions.



***Women's Prayer
Wednesdays at 9:30am***

***Women's Bible Study
Thursdays at 1:00pm***

***Men's & Women's
Bible Study
Saturdays at
8am***



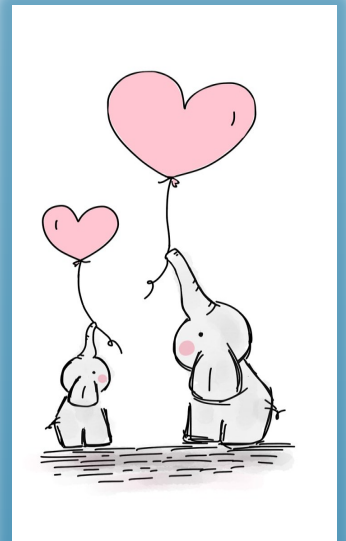
March 2
Scott Smith

March 9
Ryan Smith

March 16
Pat Groff

March 23
Ray Rudzinski

March 30
Jeffrey Smith



**Please contact the
Church Office at 920
-734-6162 or Carol
Smith at (920) 475-
8727 to volunteer
for Nursery
Ministry.**

Communion is celebrated the first Sunday of every month



Benevolence Fund

The Benevolence Fund is used to help those in need of assistance inside and outside of our local congregation. We take up a special offering on the same Sunday that we celebrate the Lord Table to provide the money for this ministry.

Monetary offerings can be labeled or written for Benevolence Fund



[Young at Heart](#)

Care Partners service on Thursday, March 6th Please call
Lynn Abitz at
920-788-9482 if you wish to join or have questions.