TITLE: **"SOVEREIGN SALVATION"**
TEXT: **ACTS 13:13-52**
DATE: **9/17/89**

INTRODUCTION: Nothing happens by accident!

***GOD HAS BEEN IN SOVEREIGN CONTROL OF OUR SALVATION FROM START TO FINISH!**

Three Evidences of God's sovereignty in salvation:

I. GOD SOVEREIGNLY PREPARED THE WAY FOR YOUR SALVATION (v. 17-25)

(God worked through a nation, when He prepared for your salvation)

A. GOD HIMSELF PRESERVED ISRAEL,
TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR CHRIST'S COMING (v. 17-22)

B. GOD MADE A PROMISE TO DAVID,
TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR CHRIST'S COMING (v. 22-23)

C. GOD USED THE PREACHING OF JOHN,
TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR CHRIST'S COMING (v. 24-25)

II. GOD SOVEREIGNLY PROVIDED THE WAY FOR YOUR SALVATION (v. 26-37)

(God fulfilled His Word when He provided for your salvation)

A. CHRIST'S CONDEMNATION WAS FULFILLED JUST AS GOD SAID (v. 27-28)

B. CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION WAS FULFILLED JUST AS GOD SAID (v. 28-29)

C. CHRIST'S RESURRECTION WAS FULFILLED JUST AS GOD SAID (v. 30-37)

III. GOD SOVEREIGNLY PLANNED THE WAY FOR YOUR SALVATION (v. 38-43; 47-48)

(God chose a way of forgiveness, when He planned your salvation)

A. GOD PLANNED ONLY ONE WAY TO BE SAVED (v. 38-43)

B. GOD PLANNED FOR YOU SPECIFICALLY TO BE SAVED
(v. 47-48)

CONCLUSION:

v. 52 - Our response to the sovereign workings of God should be fullness of joy!

TITLE: **"SOVEREIGN SALVATION"**
TEXT: **ACTS 13:13-52**
DATE: **9/17/89**

INTRODUCTION:

When we speak of the sovereignty of God, we are saying: "God is on the throne of the universe, directing all things, working all things, `after the counsel of His own will' (Eph. 1:11)." (Pink, p. 32).

Scripture reveals that God does what He desires, only what He desires, and always what He desires.

No one can stop God from accomplishing His purpose: "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Is. 46:10); "He doeth according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand or say to Him, What doest Thou" (Dan. 4:35).

Ps. 135:6 - "kWhatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places."

Nothing happens by accident!

--It is no accident that the primary elections went the way they did this week.

--It is no accident that you are here this morning.

--It was no accident when you faced difficulty or "success" in your life this week. "For we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." (Rom. 8:28)

--And it was not by accident that there was a time in your life when you realized that Christ had died for your sins (God was in control all the time).

Personal Testimony:

It was no accident that I took a walk downtown with my grandfather one Saturday morning.

It was no accident that we walked into the post office.

It was not an accidental coincidence that I met a man who ministered in the same church my brothers and sister attended.

It was not accidental that on a Saturday in March, 1976, I believed that Jesus Christ died for me personally!

God in His love and sovereign control so directed my life that I would come in contact with the Gospel and believe it! What an honor! What a privilege it is to be saved! To think that out of all the millions, God chose to save me . . . and God chose to save you.

The salvation I received in 1976 was not a last-minute thought on God's part. He had prepared for it long before the day I believed. He had provided for it long before. He had planned for it long before.

My coming to Him did not catch Him by surprise.

***GOD HAS BEEN IN SOVEREIGN CONTROL OF OUR SALVATION FROM START TO FINISH!**

Three Evidences of God's sovereignty in salvation:

I. GOD SOVEREIGNLY PREPARED THE WAY FOR YOUR SALVATION (v. 17-25)

(God worked through a nation, when He prepared for your salvation)

A. GOD HIMSELF PRESERVED ISRAEL,
TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR CHRIST'S COMING (v. 17-22)

V. 16

Paul addresses the men of Israel and the God-fearing proselytes to Judaism and boldly reminds them of God's sovereign control over their nation in the past.

The tendency for Israel might be to exalt themselves and pat themselves on the back, thinking that what they achieved was by their might (ILLUS: of the Hasidic Jew in Israel who overflowed with a proud nationalistic spirit. He talked as if it was by the righteousness of men that God had favor upon that nation in the past).

This is Paul's first recorded sermon and throughout it, God is exalted! His message--contrary to liberal man-centered preaching of today--was theocentric (God-centered)!

Note all the times the personal pronoun "He" appears in verses 17-22.

V. 17

"God . . . chose (lit. picked out, selected, elected)" - God's choice of Abraham, Isaac, then Jacob points to His sovereign right to pick whom He wanted.

1. He redeemed Israel out of Egypt (v. 17).

   The Jewish nation was in slavery to Pharaoh until God raised up Moses; sent 10 plagues, and delivered Israel.

   "With a high arm" - "a high hand" - a reference to how God defied Egypt and Israel came out ; a bold declaration of confidence in God's power (Ex. 14:8).

   Israel's deliverance from Egypt (The Passover and the crossing of the Red Sea) was the greatest act of God in O.T. history (Ex. 15; Ps. 106), and it illustrates our redemption! (I Cor. 6:7)

2. He endured Israel's unbelief and murmuring in the desert (v. 18)

   God, on more than one occasion desired to wipe out the Israelite nation and begin over--but was long-suffering.

3. He fought Israel's battles (v. 19a)

   The Captain of the Lord's armies - a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ (Josh. 5:13 - 6:2) went on ahead of Israel into battle (6:8) and won every victory for them.

   At Jericho, then Ai, then southern Canaan, then Northern Canaan.

   God gave them victory over the 1) Hittites, 2) Girgashites, 3) Amorites, 4) Canaanites, 5) Perizzites, 6) Hivites, and 7) Jebusites (Deut. 7:1; Josh. 9:1).

   God fought their physical battles and today He fights our spiritual battles

   "The battle is not yours, but God's" (II Chron. 20:15).

   David said: "The battle is the Lord's" (I Sam. 17:47)

   Jonathan said, "The Lord will work for us" (I Sam. 14:6).

(Cp. II Chron. 14:11; Ps. 44:6-7)

4. He gave Israel their land (v. 19b)

It was not because of Israel's goodness or greatness that they gained the most strategic location of land on the face of the earth for the spreading of God's Word, but because of an unconditional promise made to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-2).

5. He provided Israel's deliverers (v. 20).

When Israel was in their land...content, enjoying what God gave them, they forgot the Giver and fell into a cycle of: 1) Sin
2) Suffering
3) Supplication
and needing a:
4) Savior

When Israel forsook the Lord, God allowed the following nations to chastise Israel until God raised up a deliverer(judge).

1) Mesopotamia (Chushan-rishathaim)...Othniel
2) Moabites (Eglon).....Ehud
3) Philistines.....Shamgar
4) Canaanites (Jabin of Hazor).....Deborah & Barak
5) Midianites (120,000 man army).....Gideon (300)
6) Ammorites.....Jephthah
7) Philistines.....Samson

B. GOD MADE A PROMISE TO DAVID,
TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR CHRIST'S COMING (v. 22-23)

SEE Isaiah 9:6-7

II Sam. 7:12-13 - "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever."

Ps. 89:3-4 - "I have made a covenant with my chosen. I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations. Selah."

Ps. 132:11 - "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne."

The nation of Israel expected the Messiah to come specifically through the line of David. (Godly Jews identified jesus as the Messiah - Mt. 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30; 21:9, 15).

C. GOD USED THE PREACHING OF JOHN,
TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR CHRIST'S COMING (v. 24-25)

John was the forerunner of Jesus, who prepared the way for the Lord in partial fulfillment of Malachi 3:1 and Is. 40:3.

Mark 1:2-3 - "As it is written in the prophets, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

God controlled the details of history in such a way that Christ came into this world at just the right time. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His son" (Ga. 4:4).

II. GOD SOVEREIGNLY PROVIDED THE WAY FOR YOUR SALVATION (v. 26-37)

(God fulfilled His Word when He provided for your salvation)

The word "fulfilled" occurs in v. 27, 29, and 33.

The emphasis in verses 26-27 is on how God's Word regarding His son was fulfilled precisely the way He said it would. The fulfillment of prophecy points to the sovereignty of God!

A. CHRIST'S CONDEMNATION WAS FULFILLED JUST AS GOD SAID (v. 27-28)

Christ's betrayal by Judas fulfilled Ps. 41:9.

The price for the betrayal ("thirty pieces of silver") fulfilled Jer. 18:1-4, 19:1-3, and Zech. 11:12-13.

Jesus was found guilty without a just trial (Is. 53:8) - "His judgment was taken away."

When Jesus was condemned (judged worthy of death), the Scriptures were fulfilled which said, "They hated me without a cause" (Jn. 15:25).

B. CHRIST'S CRUCIFIXION WAS FULFILLED JUST AS GOD SAID (v. 28-29)

V. 29

--Jesus' death was no accident.

--It was due to no failure in God's plan.

--God's purposes were not foiled when Christ was crucified.

God had it planned before the world was created and before man sinned that Christ would die (Rev. 13:8).

All that was written of Christ's death was fulfilled exactly the way God said it would be. The whippings, beatings, and mockings of Christ fulfilled Is. 52:14, 53:5.

Christ's oppression and verbal affliction by the people fulfilled Is. 53:7.

Christ's stunning silence before the high priest and Pilate fulfilled Is. 53:7.

The parting of His garments while He hung on the cross fulfilled Ps. 22:18

His dying with two thieves fulfilled Is. 53:9.

C. CHRIST'S RESURRECTION WAS FULFILLED JUST AS GOD SAID (v. 30-37)

Christ's resurrection fulfilled:

Ps. 2:7 - "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."

Is. 55:3 - "I will give you the sure mercies of David."

Ps. 16:10 - "Thou shalt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption."

Every time God fulfills Scripture, He is proven to be the sovereign of the ages.

The future second coming, tribulation, and millennium will be fulfilled as God has determined!

Even when men (such as the Antichrist) do their own will and shake their fist at the Heavens in defiance of God, they are accomplishing that which God has already planned out. Nothing catches Him by surprise.

III. GOD SOVEREIGNLY PLANNED THE WAY FOR YOUR SALVATION (v. 38-43; 47-48)

(God chose a way of forgiveness, when He planned your salvation)

A. GOD PLANNED ONLY ONE WAY TO BE SAVED (v. 38-43)

Because God is sovereign He alone has the right to determine the conditions whereby you can be forgiven!

Only God has the privilege to choose the way to salvation.

Only God can tell us the means by which we get into His Heaven and achieve His righteousness!

No church, religion, denomination, preacher, priest, pope, etc., can determine how a man is saved!

The sovereign God has planned only one way - His Son (cp. Jn. 14:6).

1. Only through Christ is pardon (v. 38).

   "Forgiveness" = to be pardoned, to be released from a penalty; to have your punishment cancelled, and be allowed to go free!

2. Only by Jesus is righteousness (v. 39).

   In Christ we are freed from all of our law-breaking, transgression, and sin that works can never undo!

   V. 41

   God says, "I work a work." God accomplished a work that is hard for an unsaved person to grasp. It's incredible, but true!

3. Only in God is saving grace (v. 43).

God chose the plan for salvation. His spiritual blessings are "in Christ" (Eph. 1:3)

He chose us to be holy and blameless "in Him" (Eph. 1:4).

He adopted us as children by Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:5).

He made us acceptable in His sight on "in the beloved." (Eph. 1:6).

B. GOD PLANNED FOR YOU SPECIFICALLY TO BE SAVED (v. 47-48)

V. 48

"Ordained" - perfect, passive, participle.

--The perfect tense: points to something that was done in the past that has continuing results.

--The passive voice: points to someone other than the ones who believed who appointed (enrolled) them -- God did!

"Ordained" = appointed or enrolled.

God is saying:
--Those who had an appointment and had their names inscribed in God's appointment book believed.

--Those who had their names enrolled in the book of life believed.

Scripture indicates that your name does not get written in His book the day you believe, but that--because God knows and chose those who would be saved in advance--your name (as a Christian) is already written in!

The Bible describes unbelievers in the tribulation as standing in awe at the resurrection of the Antichrist. "...And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

ILLUS: I could not in advance write in my Bible Institute class roll the names of students because I did not know for sure who was coming, until they actually did.

HYMN: "There's a New Name Written Down in Glory" is actually unBiblical. No new names get written down and no names get blotted out (Rev. 3:5).

The day you believe simply manifests the fact that your name had been written in it all along.

Why did God appoint you to eternal life? Why did he write your name down in the Lamb's book of life before you even were born?

Did God ordain to save you based on your goodness, moral character, family background, etc.? NO!

Did God choose you because He knew that you wee more superior in some quality than the other billions who perished and will perish without Christ? NO!

The basis upon which God appointed you to eternal life is the fact that He knew He would save you.

His foreknowledge -

I Pet. 1:2 - "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."

Rom. 8:29 - "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

~The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal: The Lord knoweth them that are His." (II Tim. 2:19).

"God's prior knowledge of all things, based on His causative relation to them, is the basis of our election" (Ryrie).

God being omniscient, knew you would believe before you believed, and He worked all circumstances out so that you would believe, because He set His love upon you!

Our salvation is all of God!

Who controlled the circumstances that led us to the Gospel? --God.

Who opened your eyes so that you would understand the Gospel? --God.

Who softened your heart so that you would accept the Gospel? -- God.

Who drew you to saving faith in Christ? -- God.

No wonder Jesus said: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him..." (Jn. 6:44). ("Draw" = compel, drag, pull).

Someone might ask: "How do I know God drew me to Jesus?" ANSWER - If you came to him, God did draw you!

Where should the credit, praise, and thanks go for your salvation? --God!

Because of hyper-Calvinist teaching, people live in fear and worry over whether or not they have been ordained to eternal life/whether they are one of "the elect."

How do I know I was ordained to eternal life; how do I know my name has been written in the Lamb's book of life? ANSWER - I believed!

Because I believed, I know I'm a chosen one of God (I would not have believed if I was not ordained of God to do so).

And because I was (past tense) a chosen one of God, I was certain to believe!

The questions are these: Did you choose God, because God chose you? (Emphasis is on God's choosing)

OR

Did God choose you because you chose God? (Emphasis is on man's choosing)

Scripture teaches both! SEE II Thes. 2:13

Scripture on the one hand teaches man's responsibility to believe (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 10:9-13),

And on the other hand, the Bible says that God's grace was given to us before the world began (II Tim. 1:9).

God's plan for us to be "in Christ" was established "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4).

Mt. 25:34 - "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Jesus said to His disciples: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit" (Jn. 15:16).

Jesus said of Paul: "He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles" (Acts 9:15).

The hyper-Calvinist stresses God's part in our salvation to the exclusion of man's responsibility to believe; while the Armenian stresses man's responsibility, but undermines God's sovereign pre-determining of those He saves.

The Bible teaches "sovereignty and free will" both.

This is a mystery (not totally explainable).

This is a paradox (an apparent contradiction).

Whenever the Divine and human meet, there are things that our finite minds cannot handle.

Examples of some hard-to-understand mysteries:

1. The incarnation of Christ - total God and total man

2. The production of Scripture - Word of God, yet men wrote it

3. The effectiveness of prayer - God knows all that He will do, yet prayer changes things.

4. Living the Christian life - Our part/God's part (Phil. 2:12-13; Gal. 2:20).

5. The believer's sanctification - We must be holy, yet God must make us holy (I Pet. 1:16; I Thess. 5:23).

6. Salvation - We must choose Him, yet He chose us!

Note, however, that in all of these interactions between the Divine and human, it is God (the Divine) who takes the initiative!

--For which we ought to be joyful!

CONCLUSION:

V. 52

Our response to the sovereign workings of God should be joy!

To think that God saved me...God saved you (out of the multitudes)!

The fact that a sovereign God (who was under no obligation) reached down and chose to pull you out of sin and prospects of eternal damnation should bring joy!

God's sovereignty in your salvation should also bring humility. "What do you have that you did not receive?" (I Cor. 4:7).

God's sovereignty in your salvation should also bring security - Because our salvation is totally dependent upon Him, we don't wonder if we have done enough works to earn it. It's not of works.

God's sovereignty for the believer also brings comfort. To know when we face adverse circumstances and severe trials that sovereignty has ordained these afflictions and sovereignty overrules them (Spurgeon). This will provide comfort to your soul!

Hymn #57 (Praises II)

"Before I Loved Him" (by Ron Hamilton)

TITLE: **"SOVEREIGN SALVATION"**
TEXT: **ACTS 13:13-52**

INTRODUCTION: Nothing happens by accident!

***GOD HAS BEEN IN SOVEREIGN CONTROL OF OUR SALVATION FROM START TO FINISH!**

Three Evidences:

I. GOD SOVEREIGNLY <u>PREPARED THE WAY</u> FOR YOUR SALVATION (v. 17-25)

A. God Himself <u>preserved</u> Israel,
To prepare the way for Christ's coming (v. 17-22)

B. God made a <u>promise</u> to David,
To prepare the way for Christ's coming (v. 22-23)

C. God used the <u>preaching</u> of John,
To prepare the way for Christ's coming
(v. 24-25)

II. GOD SOVEREIGNLY <u>PROVIDED THE WAY</u> FOR YOUR SALVATION (V. 26-37)

A. Christ's <u>condemnation</u> was fulfilled just as God said (v. 27-28)

B. Christ's <u>crucifixion</u> was fulfilled just as God said (v. 28-29)

C. Christ's resurrection was fulfilled just as God said (v. 30-37)

III. GOD SOVEREIGNLY PLANNED THE WAY FOR YOUR SALVATION (v. 38-43; 47-48)

A. God planned only one way to be saved (v. 38-43)

B. God planned for you specifically to be saved (v. 47-48)

CONCLUSION: