

**A healthy church takes its stand upon
 the absolute sovereignty of God.**

I. GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY & THE DECISION OF DARIUS

A. God made sure his temple would be _____.

- _____ of the decree of Cyrus.
- Re-affirmation of that decree by Darius.
- _____ to that decree by Darius.
- God's sovereign providence held the remnant & temple closely in his hands. All they needed, all they could have asked for and more was given to them by Darius & they didn't have to pay for any of it.

B. Darius declared _____ sovereignty over all nations & peoples. v. 12

- Darius put the authority of the central government behind his decree by stipulating that anyone who tried to stop the building of the temple would be _____.
- He asked that God would exercise his _____ over kings, nations & individuals who would seek to stop the building of the temple or cause it any harm.
- And so the temple was built. It took four more years but by Feb. 21, 515 BC, the house of the Lord stood complete in Jerusalem. It remained until Herod the Great rebuilt it completely in 20 BC.

II. GOD'S _____ SOVEREIGNTY.

A. I believe in God the Father Almighty.

- Since Jacob Arminius, who sought to correct hyper-Calvinism, has been division in Protestant church—_____ & _____.
- Second Great Awakening led to popularity of Arminianism. Emphasized ability of persons to choose for Christ by the exercise of _____ will which is in contradistinction to classical Lutheranism & Calvinism.
 - Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, says man has no free will.
 - John Calvin argued individuals are helpless to do any good on their own, to even turn to God in faith, without first God giving them by grace the ability to believe.
 - Jacob Arminius, Dutch Calvinist, developed basis for Arminianism. Refined & codified by Dutch reformers & John Wesley. Point of contention: how much freedom of the will man has. Arminius taught that God gave to all persons born prevenient grace that enabled a person to make a _____ for or against God & salvation.

ARMINIANISM	CALVINISM
Universal prevenient grace	Total depravity
Conditional election	Unconditional election
Unlimited atonement	Limited atonement
Resistable grace	Irresistible grace
Uncertainty of perseverance	Perseverance of the saints

3. Luther, Calvin & Arminius said were upholding _____. Will

find support for all said in the Bible. Is a mystery here that as Calvin said, we dare not look too far into. John Wesley, *Fifty-two Sermons*:

I want to know one thing, — the way to heaven; how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach me the way. For this very end He came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be homo unius libri (man of one book). Here then I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone; only God is here. In His presence I open, I read His book; for this end, to find the way to heaven.

- If there is anything we must get right, it is God's _____. I have come to believe that Jesus meant what he says in John 6:35-40 & in John 15:5—“I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me & I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”
- A _____ church relies, rests upon, puts its trust in & lives by the sovereignty of God.
 - It knows it can do nothing except _____ by his grace acts.
 - It knows it can save no one except _____ brings people to faith.
 - It knows it has no future unless _____ sovereignly builds the body through his Son to his glory. A healthy church is God's church & she rejoices in his _____.

B. Church knows all this because it knows God is sovereign.

- Over the _____ (Ps. 8:3-4)
- Over the _____ & _____, (Prov. 21:1) (Ps. 2:1-6)
- Over _____ & _____. (Ps. 139:7-12).
- Over the _____ & _____. (Col. 1:17-23)

III. A HEALTHY CHURCH CARRIES OUT THE MISSION OF GOD IN THE WAY GOD INTENDS BECAUSE SHE BELIEVES IN THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

A. The Gospel is _____.

- “While we were still weak, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly.” (Romans 5:6) By God's sovereign power, we have been born from above, given to Christ by the Father, drawn to Christ by the Spirit.
- We believe that this Gospel is for whosoever will come. (John 3:16).

B. The _____ are faithfully & properly administered.

C. Jesus Christ is _____ as Savior & Lord.

- Healthy church accepts & recognizes only one Lord --- Jesus Christ, the way, the truth & the life.
- She celebrates with great joy signs of his presence in life of the body.
- She looks forward to his great return w/ increasing anticipation

D. _____ are convicted of sin & drawn to Christ.

- When the church is healthy, people are made new.
- Healthy church names sins for what they are. But she is gentle w/ the sinner. Christ died for all our sins — past, present & future.

E. God's people _____ one another unconditionally.

- There's a sweet, sweet spirit in this place because love is present & obvious. People care about one another. People find love here that lifts the soul & revives the spirit.
- As Christ's hands & feet in this world, we dare to care, to love beyond love, without condition, without merit to any & all who enter our company.

Our God is the sovereign God. His sovereignty makes all the difference in what we proclaim, what we do, how we live, how we love, how we serve, how we die.