

I. Intro**A. Greetings & Announcements**

1. Welcome

2. Why this topic? Why now?

- a. Every generation of Christians has hoped that their eyes would see the Return of Jesus, the establishment of His Kingdom, and the revealing of His Glory.

One generation however, actually WILL see that. We wonder...is it us?
We know all this will happen in His timing but we look for clues that the time is near. We hope we're the generation.

Deuteronomy 29:29 The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

From what has been revealed, we want to see all that we can see, and we want to live the way He has called us to live...and so be found faithful.

Things seem different.

4. Prayer

B. Class Overview

1. The theme for our time together will be "Things to Come", Eschatology, the study of last things.

- a. We'll look at some history and some current events as well as things to come.

- b. Our focus will be on comparing the views of Islam as compared to what we see in the Bible.

- i. I'll attempt to fairly present an accurate portrayal of Islamic Eschatology as believed by the majority of the Shiite branch of Islam.

- ii. Examine some of the parallels between what the majority of Shiite Muslims believe versus what we see presented in the Bible.

- (1). Regarding the one who is to come, the Messiah

- (2). Regarding Jesus

- (3). Regarding the one who stands against "the guided one"

- (4). Regarding a coming world-wide economic, political, and spiritual rule

iii. I will not attempt to explain every nuance of every prophetic passage in the scriptures nor will we explore the variations of Islamic belief on the end times. Overview & Comparison.

iv. We'll examine Iran's relationship with Syria & Russia and why it matters, and what's driving the leadership of Iran, the ancient nation of Persia

2. This Week

a. We'll build perspective and foundation. Truth and the Sovereignty of the God of the Christian Scriptures.

3. Week 2

a. We'll look at a prophetic passage found in Ezekiel 37 through 39 and see if it fits the context of our days.

i. Iran's relationship with Syria & Russia and why it matters

4. Week 3

a. We'll begin to look at some of the views held by the leaders of the most populous Shiite nation in the Middle East...and see the implications of those views.

i. What is driving the leadership of Iran. We'll look at Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his vision for his country and his role in future days

5. Week 4 & 5

a. Will be spent on an incredible comparison of the people and events described in Islamic eschatology vs those revealed in Biblical eschatology.

6. Week 6

a. We will look at the incredible deceit of the last days and put some final perspective on what we've seen.

II. The Sovereignty of God

A. Comprehending God. Grasping what He has revealed...

Luther to Erasmus: *"Your God is altogether too human."*

1. He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth - **Isa 40:22**

2. He forms light and creates darkness - **Isa 45:7**

3. His ways are above yours/mine, His thoughts above - **Isa 55:8-9**

4. We barely grasp what He has revealed

5. He is beyond you and me...yet He says...

a. **Isaiah 57:15** For this is what the high and lofty One says— he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.

b. Let us humble ourselves and attempt to learn of Him tonight...

B. Why do we begin with the Sovereignty of God?

1. God’s Sovereignty gives us perspective with which to approach these topics without fear.
2. So that when we look at things to come, you will not be frightened or discouraged

C. Sovereignty defined

1. Sovereignty as spoken of by men

a. **Johnathan Edwards:** “God’s absolute, independent right of the disposing of all creatures according to His own pleasure.”

b. **A.W. Pink:** Our first postulate is that because God is God, He does as He pleases, only as He pleases, always as He pleases; that His great concern is the accomplishment of His own pleasure and the promotion of His own glory; that He is the Supreme Being, and therefore Sovereign of the universe.

c. God’s will is not and cannot be determined by anything outside Himself.
God reigns. Absolutely.

- i. God is not Contingent, Dependent
- ii. God is Un-Hindered in the accomplishment of His will
- iii. God is free and is not bound by any limit

2. Sovereignty as revealed by God

a. Paul to the philosophers of Athens

i. **Acts 17:22-26** So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. 23 “For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, ‘TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.’ Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. 24 “The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; 25 nor is

He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things; 26 and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,

b. God's reveals His attitude toward the powers of this earth

i. **Daniel 4:35** All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him: "What have you done?"

c. God sovereignly raises up nations and Kings and deposes them

i. **Daniel 2:21** He removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:

ii. **Psalms 2:2-4** The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One. 3 "Let us break their chains," they say, "and throw off their fetters." 4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.

d. God sovereignly orchestrates everything in conformity to His will

i. **Ephesians 1:11** In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,

ii. **Isaiah 46:9-11** "Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; 11 Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.

D. Sovereignty as shown by men's actions

1. **Peter** understood that God Rules

a. Jesus death was no accident

i. **Acts 2:22** "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God

performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know—
23 this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and
foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless
men and put Him to death.

2. **Job** had relinquished his life to God's sovereignty

a. **Job 13:15** Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him:

3. **Stonewall Jackson** understood the Sovereignty of God

a. When asked about his bravery in leading his men into battle, he
replied...“Captain, my religious belief teaches me to feel as safe in battle as
in bed. God has fixed the time for my death. I do not concern myself about
that, but to be always ready, no matter when it may overtake me. That is
the way all men should live, and then all would be equally brave”

E. Observations on God's Sovereignty

1. **God reigns now.** God has always reigned. God will always reign.

Q: When will God reign with Sovereignty? A: Now

a. **Psalms 103:19** The LORD has established His throne in the heavens, And His
sovereignty rules over all.

b. We dwell now, in the Domain of God, in the domain of His KINGdom

2. **Sovereignty is a blessing** to those who are His

a. **Romans 8:28** And we know that all things work together for good to them that
love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

3. **Sovereignty is a fearsome thing** to those who are not His

a. C.H. Spurgeon on the Sovereignty of God

*“On the other hand, there is no doctrine more hated by worldlings, no truth of
which they have made such a football, as the great, stupendous, but yet most
certain doctrine of the Sovereignty of the infinite Jehovah. Men will allow
God to be everywhere except upon His throne. They will allow Him to be in
His workshop to fashion worlds and to make stars. They will allow Him to be
in His almonry to dispense His alms and bestow His bounties. They will
allow His to sustain the earth and bear up the pillars thereof, or light the*

lamps of Heaven, or rule the waves of the ever-moving ocean; but when God ascends His throne, His creatures then gnash their teeth; and when we proclaim an enthroned God, and His right to do as He wills with His own, to dispose of His creatures as He thinks well, without consulting them in the matter, then it is that we are hissed and execrated, and then it is that men turn a deaf ear to us, for God on His throne is not the God they love. The love Him anywhere better than they do when He sits with His scepter in His hand and His crown upon His head. But it is God upon the throne that we love to preach. It is God upon His throne whom we trust. It is God upon His throne of whom we speak. I believe He has a right to do as He wills with His own, and that He exercises that right.”

III. Our Confidence in the Sovereignty of God

A. We have no fear as to the means of His working

1. Sovereignty means the outcome of this world is not in doubt

a. The end is not in doubt, the means are not in doubt

2. **Daniel 3:15-18** “Now if you are ready, at the moment you hear the sound of the horn, flute, lyre, trigon, psaltery and bagpipe and all kinds of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, very well. But if you do not worship, you will immediately be cast into the midst of a furnace of blazing fire; and what god is there who can deliver you out of my hands?” 16 Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego replied to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to give you an answer concerning this matter. 17 “If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire; and He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 18 “But even if He does not, let it be known to you, O king, that we are not going to serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.”

3. My hope is...

a. **Psalms 39:7** “And now, Lord, for what do I wait? My hope is in You.”

b. **Psalms 56:11** In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?

c. **Psalms 95:7** For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.

B. What happens when you combine the following...?

1. **Sovereignty** - God's right to rule
2. **Providence** - God's all-wise plan to rule
3. **Omniscience** - God's unlimited knowledge of His creation
4. **Omnipotence** - God's unlimited ability to achieve His will
5. **Omnipresence** - God's unlimited and immediate presence
6. **Compassion, Mercy, Grace, Love and the rest of God's attributes**

C. What happens when that Being has adopted you

into His redeemed family as His son or His daughter?

1. You can live now with confidence and hope because your trust is in Him.
2. You can face the future with confidence and hope because your trust is in Him.
3. No Fear as to the Outcome of Life
 - a. I will not fear because...
 - i. **Isaiah 41:10** 'Do not fear, for I am with you;
Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you, surely I will help you,
Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'
4. No Fear as to the Future - Things to come or things that are
 - a. **Romans 8:38-39** For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

IV. Conclusion

A. Assignment: Read **Ezekiel 37-39**

B. Prayer