

Sovereign Grace O'er Sin Abounding

Sovereign Grace O'er Sin Abounding has special connection to our church family as this particular tune was composed by Tom Wells, father of our own Jonathan Wells. His melody wonderfully captures the joy of understanding God's grace that secures us in Christ. Though many of our hymns were written by pastors, we benefit from the ordinary faithfulness of so many believers like Tom who used their skills to glorify Jesus and equip the church to do the same.

Hymn writer John Kent was one such ordinary, faithful believer. Living in 18th-Century England, Kent began apprenticing as a shipwright with his father at age 14 and remained in the profession for the rest of his life. Kent followed his parents' footsteps not only in vocation but also in faith, turning to follow Christ at any early age. As Kent worked diligently with his hands building ships, his mind was free to sail on the seas of Scripture and meditation on God's word. He loved spending time after work reading, studying, and writing. He became a wonderful hymn writer, creating works that sprang from his love of the English language and reformed theology.

"Sovereign Grace O'er Sin Abounding" itself is a celebration of the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. Though the opening verse makes it clear that this is a truth that cannot be fathomed ("*Who its breath or length can tell?*") the lyrics go on to connect God's grace to his covenant promises, the inheritance secured for God's redeemed, and eternal union with Christ.

The hymn ends with a clear call to do as Kent had learned to do during his many years of faithful labor: think on God's love in Christ, and praise him for it.

Scripture to consider:

Psalm 145

Jeremiah 31

John 6

John 10

Romans 5

Romans 8

Ephesians 1

Ephesians 3:14-21

Hebrews 13:20-21

1. Sov' - reign Grace o'er sin a - bound-ing, Ran - somed souls, the ti - dings swell;
 2. What from Christ that soul shall se - ver, Bound by e - ver - last - ing bands?
 3. Heirs of God, joint - heirs with Je - sus, Long ere time its race be - gun;
 4. On such love, my soul, still—pon - der, Love so great, so rich and free;

'Tis a deep that knows no sound-ing; Who its breadth or length can tell?
 One in Him, in Him for - e - ver, Thus th'e - ter - nal cov' - nant stands;
 To His Name e - ter - nal prais - es, O what won - ders He hath done!
 Say, while lost in ho - ly won - der, "Why, O Lord, such love to me?"

On its glo - ries, on its glo - ries Let my—soul for - e - ver dwell.
 None shall pluck thee, none shall pluck thee From the—Strength of Is - rael's hands.
 One with Je - sus, one with Je - sus, By e - ter - nal u - nion one.
 Hal - le - lu - jah! Hal - le - lu - jah! Grace shall—reign e - ter - nal - ly.

WORDS: John Kent, 1766-1843

MUSIC: Tom Wells, 2000

STOCKSTILL

8.7.8.7.8.7.

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