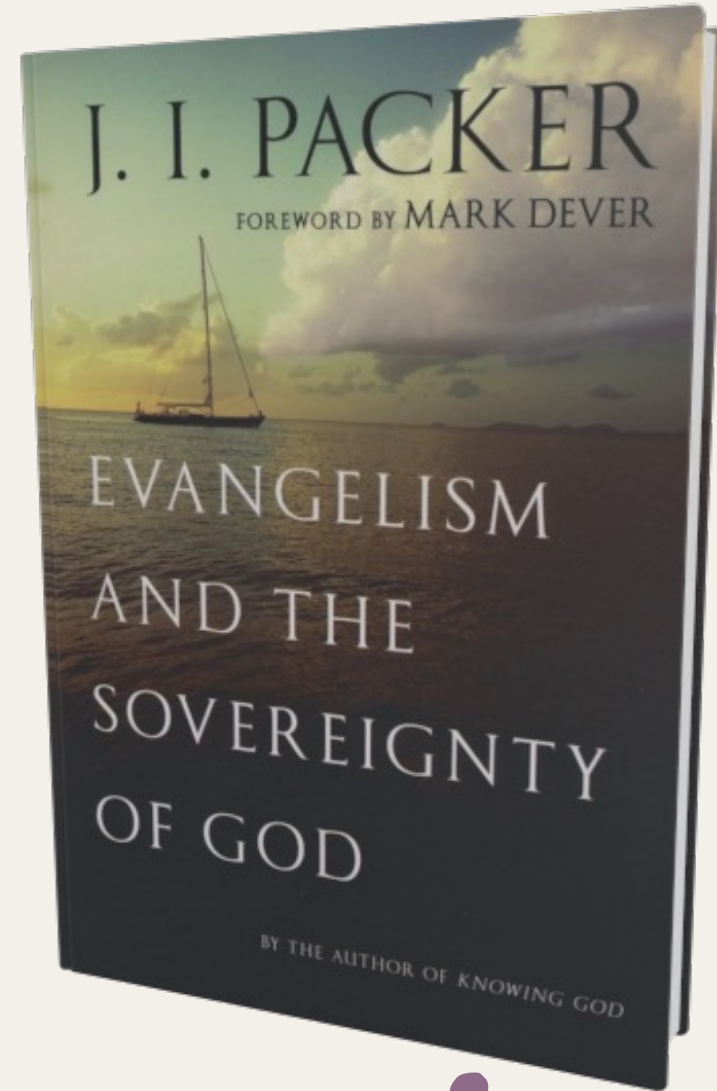


# *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*

By J.I. Packer

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Book of the Month  
Westminster Presbyterian Church  
November 6, 2024  
R. Carlton Wynne



# Background to the Book

- Originally a series of talks delivered at a pre-conference on missions for the London Inter-Faculty Christian Union on October 24, 1959.
- First published in book form in 1961.
- Addresses the perceived “problem” that if God meticulously sovereign, such a belief would have a negative effect upon evangelism.



# *The Plan*

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- (1) Who is J.I. Packer?
  - (2) What is the Basic Message of the Book?
  - (3) Lessons for Us Today

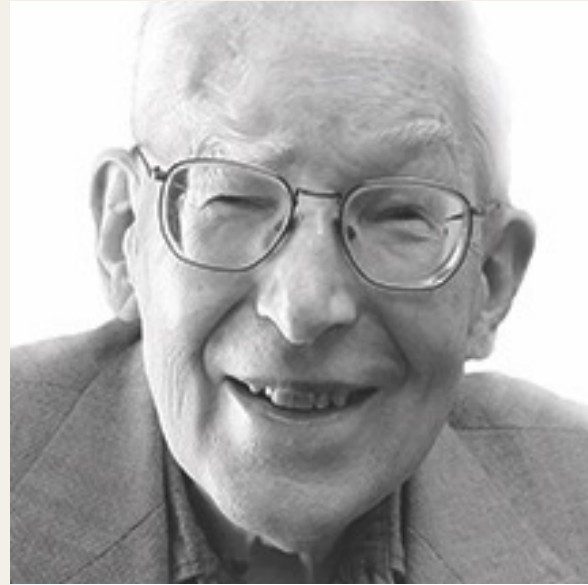


# I. Who is J.I. Packer?

- James Innell Packer is a British-born Canadian, born in Gloucester in July 1926.

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- First educated at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, obtaining a Bachelor of Arts (1948), Master of Arts (1952), and Doctor of Philosophy (1955).
- Converted to Christ through a meeting of the Inter-Collegiate Christian Union.
- Ordained to Anglican Church, taught at Regents College (Vancouver).



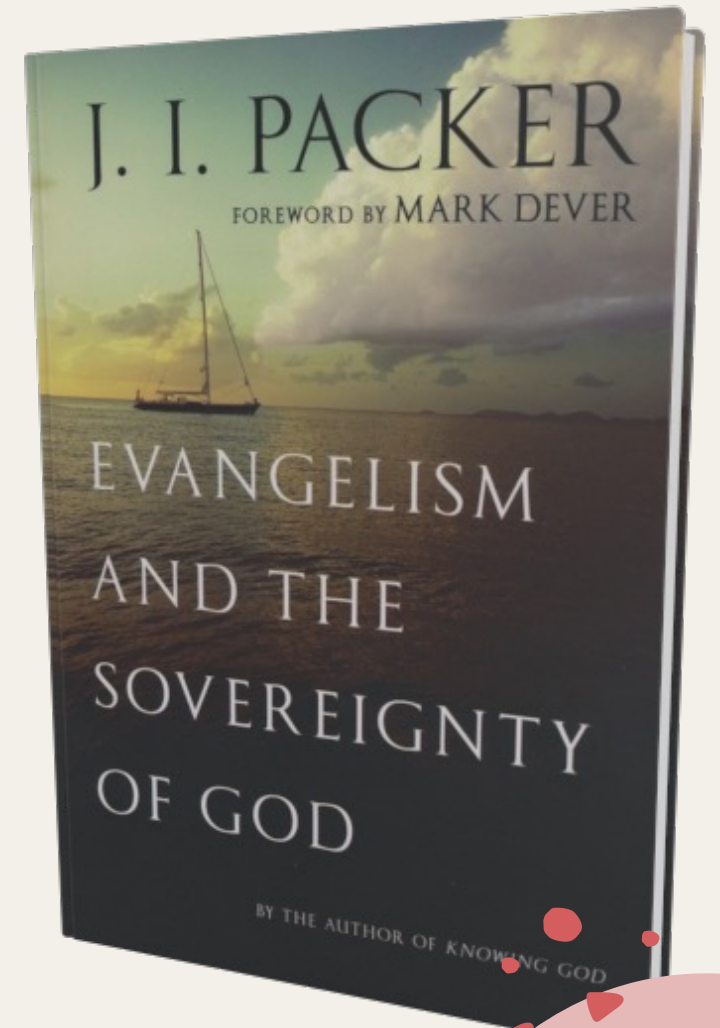
# I. Who is J.I. Packer?



## II. The Basic Message of the Book

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*“[This book] is a piece of biblical and theological reasoning, designed to clarify the relationship between three realities: **God’s sovereignty, man’s responsibility, and the Christian’s evangelistic duty.** The last is its proper subject; divine sovereignty and human responsibility are discussed only so far as they bear on evangelism.” (7–8)*



# II. The Basic Message of the Book

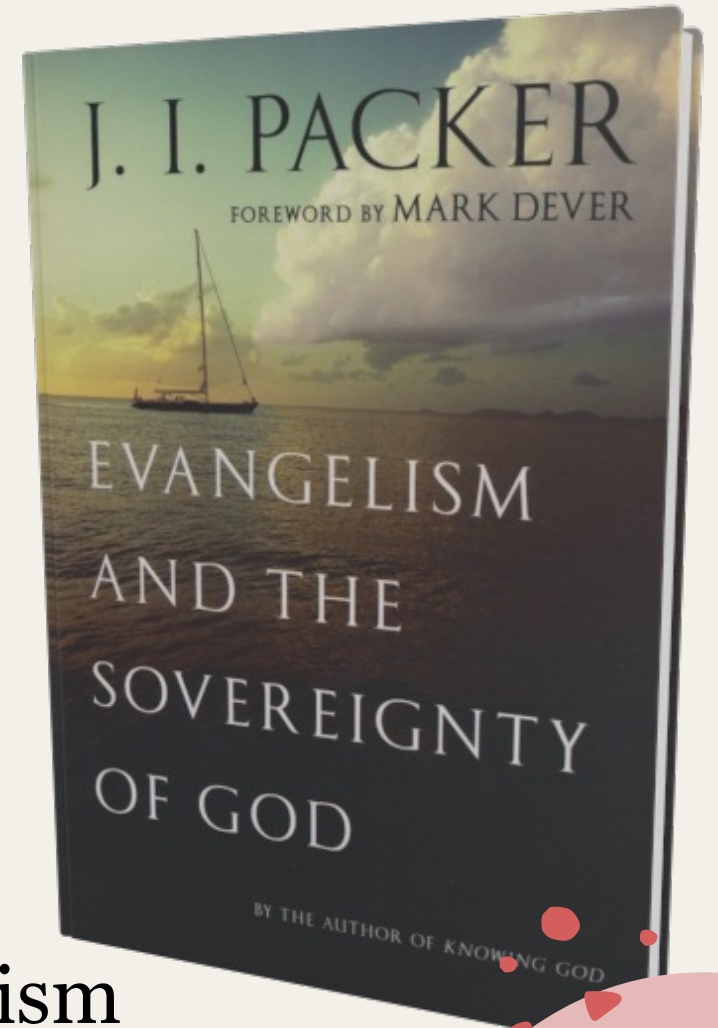
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**Chapter 1** – Divine Sovereignty

**Chapter 2** – Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility

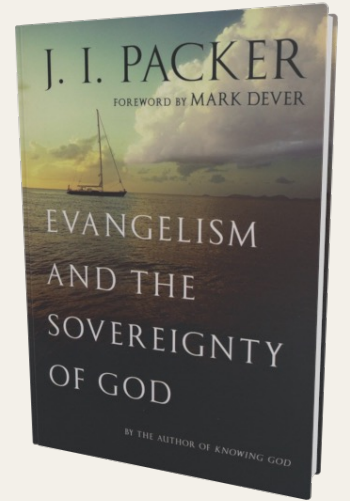
**Chapter 3** – Evangelism

**Chapter 4** – Divine Sovereignty and Evangelism



# II. The Basic Message (Ch. 1 – Divine Sovereignty)

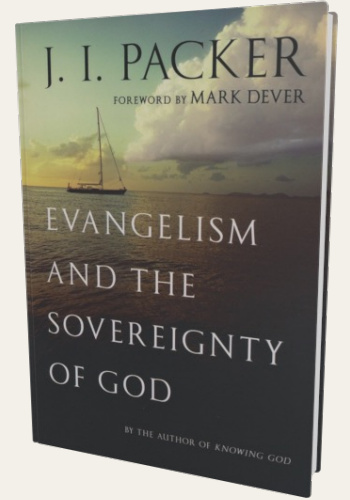
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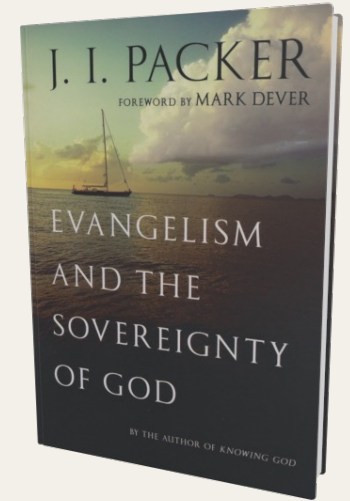
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- **PRAYER** – *“When we are on our knees, we know that it is not we who control the world ...”* (11).

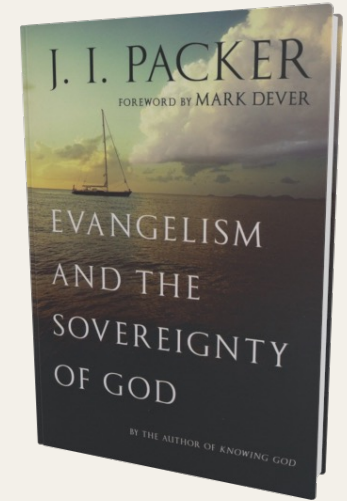
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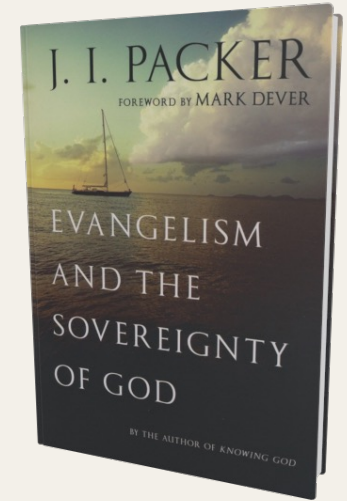
- **PRAYER** – *“When we are on our knees, we know that it is not we who control the world ...”* (11).
- **THANKS FOR SALVATION** – *“... you give thanks for your conversion. Now why do you do that? Because you know in your heart that God was entirely responsible for it. You did not save yourself; He saved you.”* (12)

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- **PRAYER FOR THE CONVERSION OF OTHERS** – *“In prayer, then (and the Christian is at his sanest and wisest when he prays), you know that it is God who saves men ...”* (15)

## II. The Basic Message (Ch. 1 – Divine Sovereignty)



- **So WHY do Christians disagree about God’s sovereignty in salvation?**
- *“The root cause is the same as in most cases of error in the Church—the intruding of rationalistic speculations, the passion for systematic consistency, a reluctance to recognize the existence of mystery and to let God be wiser than men, and a consequent subjecting of Scripture to the supposed demands of human logic.” (16)*

## II. The Basic Message (Ch. 2 – Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility)

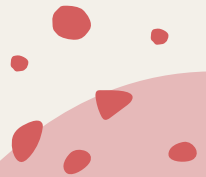
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## II. The Basic Message (Ch. 2 – Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility)

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- *“An antinomy exists when a pair of principles stand side by side, seemingly irreconcilable, yet both undeniable.” (18)*



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- **Matt 11:28** – *“Come to me, **all who labor and are heavy laden**, and I will give you rest ...”*
- **John 6:44** – *“**No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him**. And I will raise him up on the last day.”*
- **John 6:39-40** – *“And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of **all that he has given me**, but raise it up on the last day. <sup>40</sup> For this is the will of my Father, that **everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life**, and I will raise him up on the last day.”*



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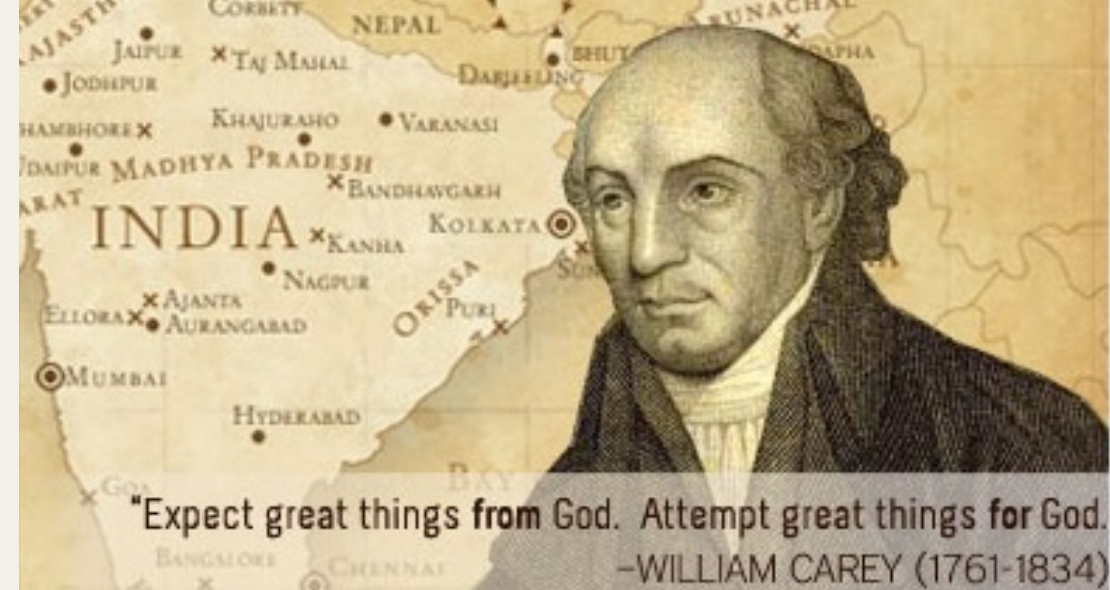
- The Error of “Hyper-Calvinism”!
- Defined: *A system of theology framed to exalt the honor and glory of God but that wrongly minimizes the moral and spiritual responsibility of sinners, such that there should not be any invitation to salvation in the proclamation of the gospel.*



## II. The Basic Message (Ch. 2 – Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility)

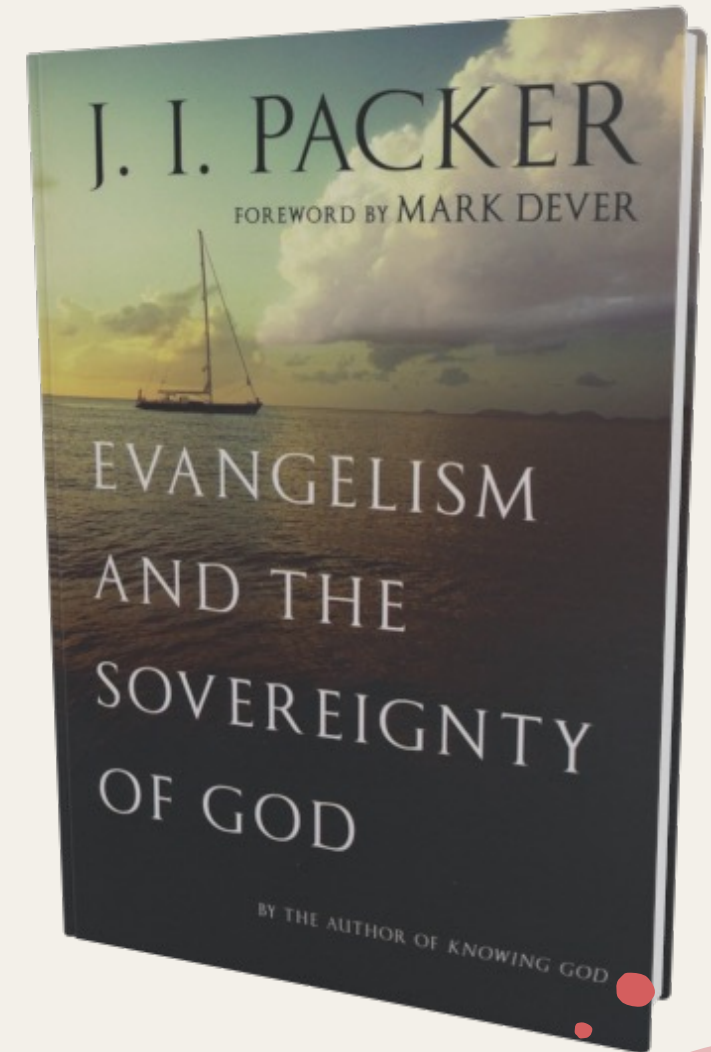
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- The Error of “Hyper-Calvinism”!
- *“Young man, sit down. When God wants to convert the heathen, He will do it without your help or mine.”*



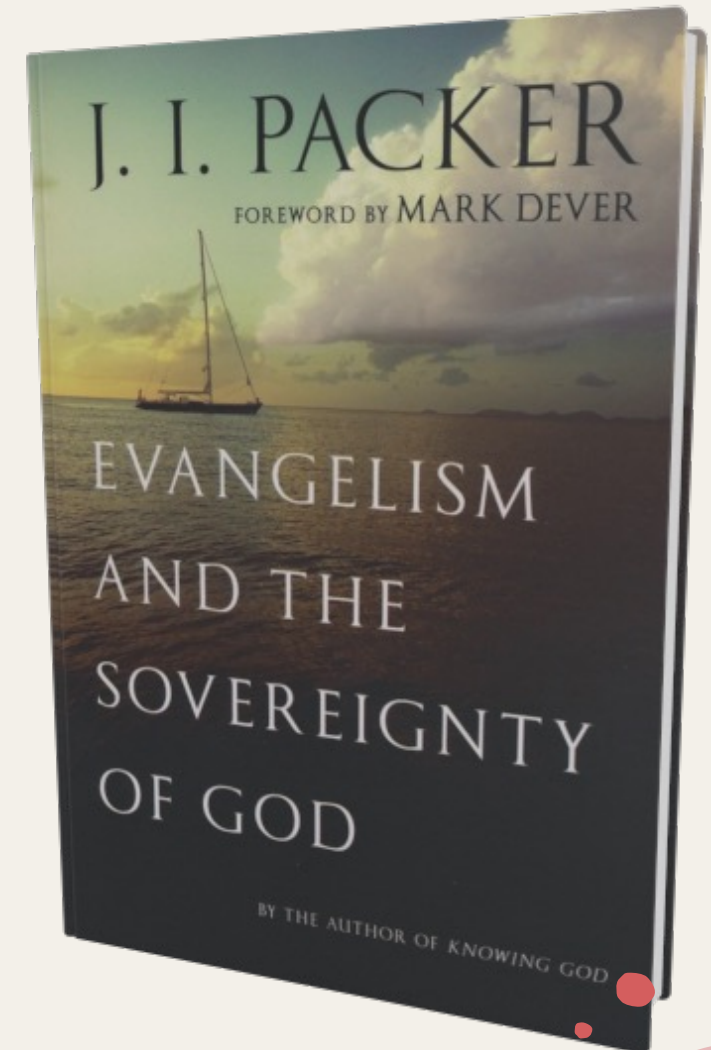
## II. The Basic Message (Ch. 3 – Evangelism)

- “[G]oing out in love, as Christ’s agent in the world, to teach sinners the truth of the gospel with a view to converting and saving them.” (53)



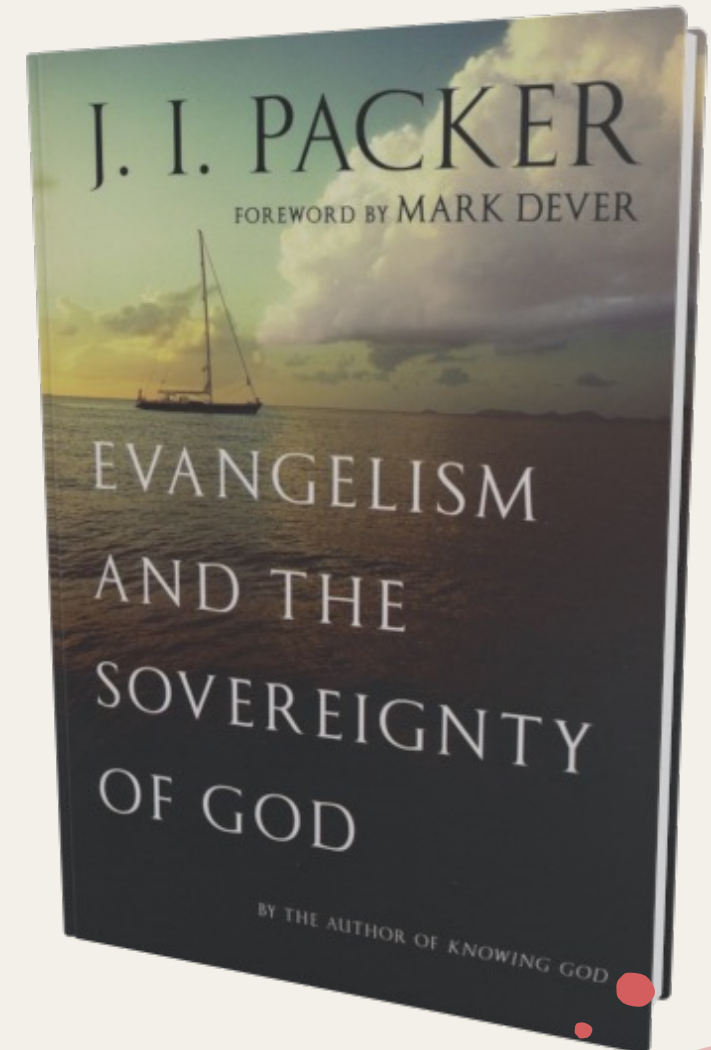
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- “[G]oing out in love, as Christ’s agent in the world, to SO teach sinners the truth of the gospel THAT THEY ARE converted and saved.”



## II. The Basic Message (Ch. 3 – Evangelism)

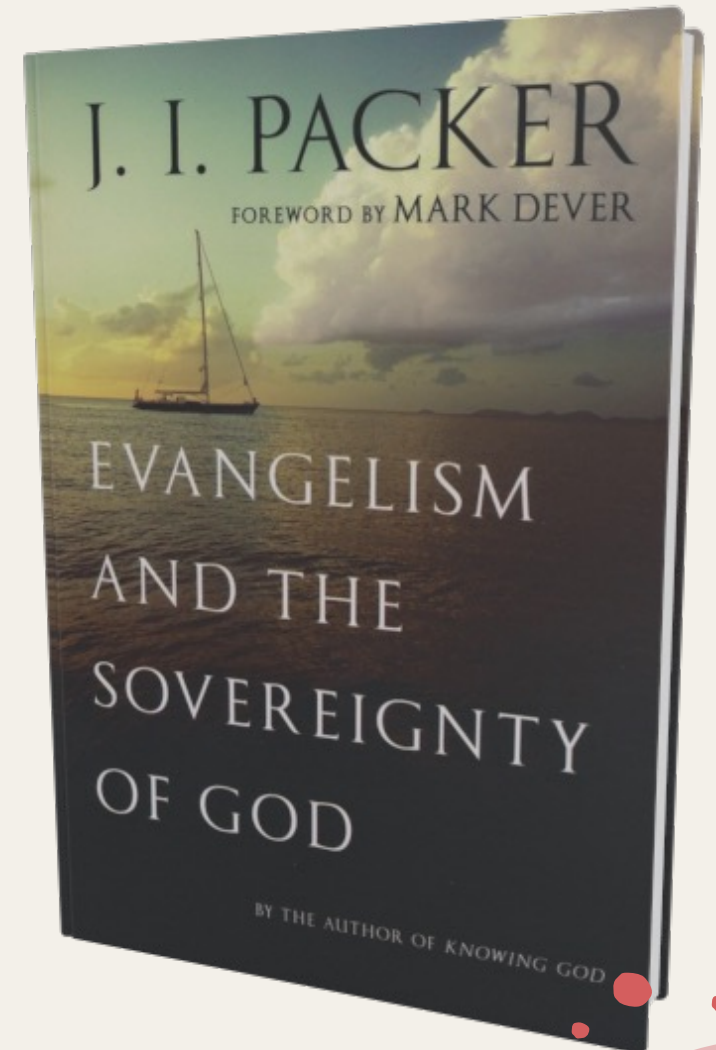
- *A message about GOD*
- *A message about SIN*
- *A message about CHRIST*
- *With a SUMMONS to REPETANCE and FAITH*
- *Motivated by LOVE for GOD and NEIGHBOR*



## II. The Basic Message (Ch. 3 – Evangelism)

- *“Whenever I am justified in choosing my subject of conversation with another, the theme of themes (Christ) shall have prominence.”*

– H.C. Trumbull



# III. Lessons for Us (Ch. 4 – Divine Sovereignty and Evangelism)

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  - It does not affect the NECESSITY of evangelism.
  - **Rom 10:14–15** – *“How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? <sup>15</sup> And how are they to preach unless they are sent?”*



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  - It does not affect the GENUINENESS of the gospel offer or the TRUTH of God's promises.



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- **Matt 11:28** – “Come to me, **all who labor and are heavy laden,** and I will give you rest.”
- **John 3:16** – “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, **that whoever believes in him** should not perish but have eternal life.”
- **Ezek 18:11** – “**Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked,** declares the Lord God, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?”
- **Is 45:22** – “Turn to me and be saved, **all the ends of the earth!** For I am God, and there is no other.”



# III. Lessons for Us (Ch. 4 – Divine Sovereignty and Evangelism)

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*Come, ye sinners, poor and needy  
Weak and wounded, sick and sore  
Jesus ready, stands to save you  
Full of pity, love and power*

*Come, ye weary, heavy laden,  
lost and ruined by the fall;  
if you tarry till you're better,  
you will never come at all.*

- John Hart, "Come, Ye, Sinners, Poor and Needy"



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  - It does not affect the RESPONSIBILITY of the sinner for his or her reaction to the gospel.





### III. Lessons for Us (Ch. 4 – Divine Sovereignty and Evangelism)

- *(2) The sovereignty of God in grace gives us our only hope of success in evangelism.*

*“So far from making evangelism pointless, **the sovereignty of God in grace is the one thing that prevents evangelism from being pointless.** For it creates the possibility—indeed, the certainty—that evangelism will be fruitful.” (106)*



# III. Lessons for Us (Ch. 4 – Divine Sovereignty and Evangelism)

- *(2) The sovereignty of God in grace gives us our only hope of success in evangelism.*
- **Rom 8:7** – *“For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.  
8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”*
- **John 6:44** – *“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.”*



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- **2 Cor 4:3–4** – *“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. <sup>4</sup> In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”*



# III. Lessons for Us (Ch. 4 – Divine Sovereignty and Evangelism)

- *(2) The sovereignty of God in grace gives us our only hope of success in evangelism.*
  - So we should be ...
    - ... **BOLD**



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- *(2) The sovereignty of God in grace gives us our only hope of success in evangelism.*
  - So we should be ...
    - ... **BOLD**
    - ... **PATIENT**



# III. Lessons for Us (Ch. 4 – Divine Sovereignty and Evangelism)

- *(2) The sovereignty of God in grace gives us our only hope of success in evangelism.*
  - So we should be ...
    - ... **BOLD**
    - ... **PATIENT**
    - ... **PRAYERFUL!**

**2 Thess 3:1** – “Finally, brothers, **pray for us**, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you ...”



### III. Lessons for Us (Ch. 4 – Divine Sovereignty and Evangelism)

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- “Not only does [God’s sovereignty] **undergird and uphold evangelism**, and **uphold the evangelist**, by creating a hope of success that could not be otherwise entertained; it also **teaches us to bind together preaching and prayer**; and as it makes us bold and confident before men, **so it makes us humble and importunate before God**. Is not this as it should be?” (125–26)

