

Limited Atonement + Unconditional Election = DOUBLE PREDESTINATION

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Election, Predestination and Foreordination: Conditional or Unconditional



Calvinism teaches that each individual was unconditionally predestined or foreordained by God's sovereign decree before the world began. This predestination or foreordination is unconditional, having nothing to do with the will, choice, obedience, or character of the individual. Those who are saved and destined to eternal life are said to be "elect."

The alternative to Calvin's view of unconditional election would be free will or free moral agency - the doctrine that salvation is conditional and each individual has a choice whether or not to meet the conditions of forgiveness. Which view does the Bible teach?

Introduction:

One of the fundamental doctrines of Calvinism is "unconditional election," also known as predestination or foreordination.

Consider these quotes from the *Westminster Confession*:

"God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: ... By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed: and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of his free grace and love alone, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto ... The rest of mankind God was pleased ... to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin ..." - Chap. III, p 1-7.

"All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ ... This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein ... Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, ... yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved ..." - Chap. X, p. 1-4.

Hence, God unalterably decreed certain individuals to go to heaven and others to go to hell, without in any way considering the character, conduct, obedience, choice, attitudes, or desires of the individual. This denies that man has free will or free moral agency.

The purpose of this study is to examine the Bible teaching about election, predestination, and foreordination to see whether they are conditional or unconditional.

The Bible definitely teaches that the elect have been predestined by God to eternal life (Ephesians 1:3-14). [Cf. Rom. 8:28-33; 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Peter 1:1; 2:9; 2 Thess. 2:13.] The question is: How is it determined whether or not any specific individual is among the elect? Is this determined by an unconditional, unchangeable decree of God? Or does God offer salvation to all men, and then give each individual the power to choose for himself whether to accept or reject that offer?

Part 1: Evidence that Salvation of Individuals Is Conditional

I. Salvation Is Offered by God to All Men.

Calvinism says that the decision whether or not a particular individual will be saved is entirely up to God, and man cannot influence that decision. If we can prove that God offers salvation to all men, then it must follow from Calvinism that *all people will be saved!* But that conclusion is clearly false. Hence, the Calvinistic concept of unconditional election must be false.

A. God Desires All Men to Be Saved.

1 Timothy 2:4 - God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. [Note: This is the same "all men" for whom we should pray - v1.]

2 Peter 3:9 - The Lord is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

If God sincerely wants *all* people to be saved and wants none to perish, and if the decision is entirely up to Him (man has no choice), then all people will be saved and none will be lost! The logical conclusion of unconditional election must be universalism!

Yet we know only a few will be saved and most lost (Matt. 7:13,14) [22:14]. Hence, either God does not sincerely want everyone saved, or else man does have a choice!

B. God's Grace Is Extended to All Men.

Because God wants all to be saved, He has shown all men mercy and favor by offering them salvation.

Titus 2:11 - For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. Note that what God's grace brings to all is "salvation."

C. Jesus Died to Offer Salvation to All Men.

1 Timothy 2:6 - Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all (the same "all" that God wants to be saved - v4).

Hebrews 2:9 - By the grace of God Jesus tasted death for everyone. This "everyone" refers to those who are subject to the fear of death (v15), which is every human.

John 3:16 - God so loved the *world* that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Note that the ones Jesus died to save are all those in the world whom God loves. Yet He loves even His enemies (Matt. 5:43-48).

Romans 5:18,19 - Justification came unto "all men" by Jesus' righteous act (His death). This was the same "all men" on whom condemnation came as a result of Adam's sin. So, however many people are condemned by sin, that is how many can receive the benefit of Jesus' death.

The intent of Jesus' death was to offer salvation to all men. If these passages are true, then either all men will be saved (which cannot be), or else there is something each man must do to determine whether or not he will receive the benefit of Jesus' death.

D. God's Offer of Salvation Is Preached in the Gospel to All Men.

2 Thessalonians 2:14 - Men are called to glory by the gospel. To whom is this call extended?

Mark 16:15,16 - The gospel should be preached to every creature in the whole world. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved. [Matt. 28:19]

Acts 2:38,39 - The promise of remission and the gift of the Holy Spirit is for ALL, as many as God calls. But the call is sent to everyone in the world!

Calvinists respond to these points by saying that the gospel should be preached to all, however no one can respond to that call unless the Holy Spirit unconditionally works directly on their heart to empower them to respond. But this makes the preaching of the gospel simply a pretense. If the Holy Spirit makes the choice unconditionally, why not doesn't the Spirit just lead the person to salvation and forget the preaching?

Acts 2:39 says the promise of the Spirit is to *all* that are called, and we have shown that all humans should be called by the gospel, Jesus died for all, etc.

II. God Has Decreed Conditions of Salvation which All Men Can Meet.

Calvinism says there is nothing in man that acts as a condition that moves God to choose any certain man to save him. Man is "altogether passive." However, notice the following conditions that the Bible lists as necessary for salvation, and note further that the Bible says everyone can meet these conditions.

A. Men Must Believe in Christ.

Mark 16:15,16 - The gospel is for the whole world. Those who believe and are baptized shall be saved.

John 3:14-16 - Jesus died for the whole world, and *whosoever* believes should not perish but have everlasting life.

The Scriptures clearly teach that faith is a condition to salvation, and anyone in the world may meet that condition.

B. Men Must Repent of Sin.

Acts 17:30,31 - God commands *all* men *everywhere* to repent. This refers to all the people who will be judged by Jesus, which means everyone in the whole world.

2 Peter 3:9 - God does not want any to perish but *all* to repent.

Note that all who will be judged must repent (Acts 17:30,31). But those who need to repent are the ones God does not want to see perish. Hence, God does not want anyone in the world to perish. He wants them all to repent.

The Scriptures clearly teach that repentance is a condition of salvation, and everyone on earth must meet that condition.

C. Men Must Confess Christ and Be Baptized.

Matthew 10:32 - *Whoever* confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.

Mark 16:16 - The message preached to everyone in the world is that he who believes and is baptized shall be saved.

Acts 2:38,39 - The message to *all*, whoever God calls by the gospel, is that *everyone* must repent and be baptized for remission of sins.

Summary

Romans 10:13,14,17 - *Whoever* calls on the Lord will be saved, but to call one must believe, and to believe one must hear the gospel. The gospel is to be preached to all, and of those who hear it, whoever calls on the Lord will be saved.

The Scriptures clearly teach that salvation is conditional, and that every person is able to meet those conditions.

Calvinists respond to these points by saying that the only people who can truly meet these conditions are people whom the Holy Spirit unconditionally chose & empowered to do so. But again, this turns the preaching of these conditions to all people a farce. If salvation is not conditional, why did God state conditions? If not everyone can meet the conditions, why did God insist that they be preached to everyone?

The above passages clearly teach that everyone can obey the conditions, but Calvinism flatly contradicts this and denies that everyone can obey.

III. God Grants to Each Person the Power to Accept or to Reject Salvation.

If as Calvinism teaches, no conditions man can meet will affect whether or not God saves him, then man has absolutely no choice regarding his salvation. If God chooses the man, he will be saved regardless of the mans' choice. If God does not choose the man, he will be lost regardless of his choice. Hence, man's choice is irrelevant to his salvation. However, the Bible teaches man does have a choice in whether or not He will please God and be saved.

A. Each Person Is Able to Choose Whether or not He Will Meet the Conditions of Salvation.

Consider the following passages. Why would God say these things if people have no power to choose whether or not to meet the conditions necessary to be pleasing to Him?

Deuteronomy 30:15-19 - God promised blessings to Israel if they would obey Him (28:1-14) and curses if they would disobey Him (28:15-68) [cf. chap. 29,30]. Then He urged them to *choose* life.

Joshua 24:15 - Likewise, Joshua exhorted Israel to *choose* what god they would serve. [Cf. Exodus 32:26; 1 Kings 18:21]

Hebrews 11:24,25 - Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, but *chose* to share ill treatment with God's people, rather than to enjoy sin. [Luke 10:42]

Isaiah 1:18-20 - God reasons with man, He does not compel them against their will. If men were *willing* to be obedient, God would bless them. If they refused and rebelled, He would punish them.

Matthew 23:37 - Jesus *wanted* to gather Jerusalem under His wings, but they *were not willing*! Note: Jesus preferred one choice, but the people rejected it because it was not according to their choice.

Clearly God does not choose men unconditionally and then compel men to accept His choice. He wants them all saved and invites them to accept His will, but He allows them to choose how they will respond to His invitation.

Matthew 13:14,15 - Certain people would not turn ("be converted" - KJV) and be (spiritually) healed by Jesus, because *they* closed their eyes and did not accept His teachings. Clearly Jesus was willing to heal these people if they were converted, but they resisted His teaching by their own choice.

Revelation 22:17 - *Whosoever will*(KJV) may freely take of the water of life. It is a matter of man's *will*, and each person may determine his own will.

B. Each Person Has a Role in Determining His Own Destiny.

According to Calvinism, there is nothing in man's conduct or choice that influences one way or another whether or not God will save that person. Hence, nothing a man does will in any way affect his salvation. Yet note these passages that show that what man does definitely will affect His eternal destiny.

1 Peter 1:22 - *You* have purified *your* souls in *your* obedience to the truth.

Romans 6:13,16-18 - Present *yourself* to God and your members as instruments of righteousness. To whom you present *yourself* as a servant to obey, that is your master - either sin or obedience. They were freed from sin because they became *obedient* to the teaching delivered to them.

2 Corinthians 8:5 - The Macedonians gave *their own selves* to the Lord.

Philippians 2:12 - Work out *your own* salvation with fear and trembling.

1 Timothy 4:16 - Take heed to *yourself* and to the doctrine ... for in doing this you will *save* both *yourself* and those who hear you.

Acts 2:40 - Be saved (*save yourselves* - KJV) from this perverse generation.

2 Corinthians 5:20 - God was pleading with men, through His ambassadors, to BE reconciled to God. Clearly God wants men to come to Him. But He does not compel, He pleads. Men must then take the step that determines the final outcome.

Based on these Scriptures, how can it be concluded that man is "totally passive" in salvation? How can it be that taught that nothing in man is a condition that influences whether or not God chooses to save him?

Clearly all these passages show that man does have the power to choose and that what we do will determine whether or not God chooses to give us eternal life.

C. God Is No Respector of Persons.

Romans 2:6-11 - If God chooses to save some but not others, either the choice must be based on the conduct of the people (hence, conditional) or else God is a respector of persons. [Cf. Acts 10:34,35]

Calvinists respond that this simply means God will save people of all nations. But that is not all the passage says. It says He is not a respecter of persons because His choice of who to save or condemn is based on *man's conduct*! He gives eternal life to those who continue doing good, and gives tribulation to those who are disobedient. For God to grant eternal life to those who do not choose to meet the conditions, or for Him to punish those who do meet the conditions, would constitute respect of persons. Calvinism is a system inherently based on partiality, favoritism, and injustice! Worse yet, it makes God guilty of all of these!

IV. One Who Is Chosen May Later Become Lost.

If salvation is unconditional and nothing one does will affect his salvation, then a person decreed to be among the elect would be saved no matter how he later acted. He could not possibly so act as to be lost because the choice was unconditional.

So, if we can show that people, once saved, later so acted as to be lost, then we have proved salvation must be conditional, and Calvinism is wrong.

An example - 2 Peter 2:1

Men who have been bought by Jesus can yet deny Him and be destroyed. Clearly the choice of man's destiny is not unconditional. It does depend on man's conduct.

The solution - 2 Peter 1:10

To "make our calling and *election* sure" we must add the listed qualities to our faith. Then we will not stumble but will enter the eternal kingdom. It is conditional!

There are numerous other passages showing a child of God can so sin as to be lost.

That is another whole subject. But every such passage proves that salvation is conditional and disproves Calvinistic election.

Conclusion to Part I

Calvinism compared to a king

Calvinism's doctrine of election pictures God like a king who has thousands of people imprisoned in his dungeon (for another man's crime - the sin of Adam). He declares to them:

- 1) I want all of you to be set free.
- 2) I have genuine mercy and love for all of you, so I extend my pardon to all of you.
- 3) So much do I love you that my son has paid the penalty so everyone of you can go free.
- 4) Therefore, whichever ones of you choose to do so may leave your cells and go free!
- 5) However, your cells are still locked and I am the only one who has the key.
- 6) So regardless of what you say, do, or want, I will unconditionally open a few doors and let some of you go. The rest of you, regardless of what you say, do, or want, I will unconditionally leave your cells locked, and you will stay imprisoned forever!

Did the king really want all the prisoners set free? Did he really have love and mercy for all, extend pardon to all, and have his son pay the penalty for all? If so, and if freedom was unconditional, why were not all prisoners set free?

Did the prisoners really have a choice about whether or not to be set free? If they did, why did the king free only certain ones regardless of their choice? If they had no choice, why did the king say they did have a choice?

Calvinism makes God unloving, unjust, untruthful, insincere, and a respecter of persons. If Calvinism is true, we may as well throw our Bibles away, because they surely do not mean what they say!

The proper conduct of such a king.

How would a king act if he really believed what this king said? First, he would not have imprisoned anyone except for their own crimes.

Then he might pardon all the prisoners, but that would treat the truly penitent the same as the hardened criminal.

He could be true to his will by offering *conditions* of pardon to all the prisoners (such as they must confess their crime, ask for pardon, and pledge loyalty to the king and do works of service for him, etc.). Then each prisoner would have the right to choose whether or not to meet the conditions. He would free those who would meet them, but not the rest.

This would act in harmony with the king's wish that everyone be free (because he really hopes everyone will meet the conditions). Pardon would still be an act of mercy. But the king is still just if he keeps in prison those who refuse to meet the conditions.

This is exactly the course God has chosen.

Part 2: Answers to Defenses of Unconditional Election

I. Bible References to Election and Predestination

The New Testament unquestionably refers to "election" and "predestination."

Calvinists often quote these passages as though the mere mention of the words proves their brand of predestination.

But we all agree that God has "chosen" (elected) certain people, and that the elect have been foreordained to eternal life. The question is: ***How is it determined whether or not any particular individual is or is not among the elect***, and is that determined unconditionally or conditionally.

The Bible doctrine of predestination is that God chose a body or group of people to be saved, but each individual has the power to choose whether or not to be in that body.

To illustrate, consider a country with voluntary military service. The president chooses the Marines for a mission. The General calls the Marines an "elect" body because the President chose them (rather than the Navy, Army, etc.). But the President did not choose each individual. He chose the body, but each individual decides whether or not to be in that body.

Another illustration: An elite company chooses to place its product for sale in a certain store. The store owner then refers to his employees as an elect or chosen group of people. But they were chosen as a group, not individually. Each individual employee enters that company only by meeting certain conditions.

God's "elect" is just another name for the faithful members of the church. God predestined the faithful to be saved, but each individual decides whether or not he will be among the faithful. Hence, the saved are the elect, but this is conditional (not unconditional) and they do have a choice. Consider the evidence:

A. People Are "Elect" According to the Will of God.

Ephesians 1:5,11 - We are predestined according to His will, according to His purpose. [Rom. 8:28; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Cor. 2:7]

Calvinists assume God wills to choose each individual unconditionally. But where do these passages say this?

The will of God regarding man's salvation is revealed in the Scriptures. We have already proved by Scripture that it is God's will to offer salvation to ALL, then to let each individual CHOOSE whether or not he will respond.

B. People Are Elect "in Christ."

Ephesians 1:4 - God chose us "*in Him*" (Christ). [Cf. v6 - in the beloved; v7 - in whom; v10,11 - in Him; V3,10,13; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2:10]

Note other passages about those in Christ.

Consider their circumstances in Christ:

- * Made nigh unto God (Eph. 2:12-17)
- * New creatures (born again) (2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:3,4)
- * No condemnation (Rom. 8:1)
- * Grace (2 Tim. 2:1)
- * Salvation (2 Tim. 2:10)
- * Eternal life (1 John 5:11,12)
- * All spiritual blessings (Eph. 1:3)

Clearly those "in Christ" are the elect, destined to salvation.

But how does an individual come into Christ?

Galatians 3:26,27; Romans 6:3,4 - We are *baptized* into Christ, after hearing, believing, etc. This makes us members of God's family the church, saved from our sins.

Again, salvation is conditional. It is offered to all, but each individual has the power to choose whether or not to meet the conditions. This does not contradict the Bible doctrine of predestination but is part of it.

C. People Are Elect in Christ's Spiritual Body, the Church.

Passages

Ephesians 1:3-14 - Paul is addressing the elect in Christ. But the rest of the book refers to them as the church, the body of Christ - this is the theme of the book.

1:22,23 - Jesus is head of the church, His body.

2:13,16 - To be reconciled "in Christ" is to be reconciled in His body or household (v19), the temple of the Lord (v21,22).

3:10,11 - We are predestined according to God's purpose (1:11), but His eternal purpose is revealed in the church.

5:22-33 - Jesus is Head and Savior of the body, having loved it and gave Himself to sanctify and cleanse it. Note that it is a **body** or group that is destined to be saved. [Cf. 3:21; 4:4,16

1 Peter 2:9,10 - The ones "chosen" or elected are a race, a nation, a priesthood, a people. We are chosen as a body, a group, the church.

Note the circumstances of those in the church.

Acts 20:28 - Jesus purchased the church with His blood.

Acts 2:47 - All the saved are added to the body (church) by the Lord.

Clearly the church is the elect, those destined to be saved. [Matt. 16:18]

But how does one enter the church?

1 Peter 1:22,23 - The elect (1:1,2; 2:9) are those who "purified your souls" in **obedience** to the truth and so were born again - born into God's family, the church (1 Tim. 3:15)

1 Corinthians 12:13 - We are baptized into the one body.

Acts 2:38,41,47 - When we repent and are baptized, we receive remission and are added by the Lord to the church.

So, from eternity, God knew there would be people willing to obey Him. He purposed to establish the church (Eph. 3:10,11) as the body that would contain all saved people (5:23,25). These would be His special people, the elect (1:3-14). This body He decreed to be destined for eternal glory (1:3-14).

However, each individual has been given by God the power to choose to meet the conditions to enter that body or not enter. Once in the body, each has the power to continue faithful and receive the reward or to fall away and be lost (these will be removed from the body before it enters glory - Matt. 13:41-43; Rev. 17:14; 2 Peter 1:10).

II. The Sovereignty of God

Since God is the absolute, all-powerful ruler of the Universe, it is argued that He must absolutely govern everything that happens on earth (see quotes from Westminster Confession). This means He must personally choose whether or not each individual will be saved. The decision must be completely His, and no one else can determine the

outcome. To say that man has a choice is to deny the absolute sovereignty of God. [Eph. 1:11; Rom. 8:28; 11:36; 1 Chron. 29:11; 1 Tim. 6:15; Psalm 115:3; Isaiah 46:10] Response: There is no doubt that God has the sovereign right to do whatever He wills to do. The question is: *What is it that God has willed to do?* Has God chosen to unconditionally determine the eternal destiny of each individual, or has He chosen to offer salvation to all men and give each man the choice whether or not to accept based on conditions? *If God is truly sovereign, then if He wishes, He has the right to give man the power to choose!*

A. Has God Ever Granted Anyone the Right to Choose Anything?

If God has ever granted anyone the right to choose anything, then it would not violate His sovereignty to give man the right to choose salvation.

Calvinists admit that Adam had the right to choose whether or not to obey God. If so, then God's sovereignty is not violated simply because He gives man the power to choose. Why then would it violate His sovereignty to give us also the right to choose?

If man never has the right to choose about anything, then God must have decided to make man (and Satan) sinners!

If God's sovereignty means He has decreed everything about men, and we have no choice about anything, then He must have decreed that Adam and all men must commit sin. This means that God is responsible for the fact men commit sin & that they suffer the consequences. Man had no choice. We are all sinners because God chose for us all to become sinners.

Yet God hates sin and commands men not to sin (Prov. 15:9; 6:16,17; etc.). So, the consequence of Calvinism is that God decreed that man must do the very thing God hates and commands men not to do. God is therefore divided against Himself (Matt. 12:25; 1 Cor. 1:13; 14:33). How can they avoid the charge that their view makes God hypocritical?

Illustration: Calvinism makes God like a father who commands his son not to go in the street, and if he goes, the father will spank him. Then the father carries the son into the street and spansks him for going there!

B. There Is a Difference Between What God Unconditionally Decrees and What He Chooses to Permit.

God is the absolute ruler of the Universe. But this does not deny His right to give men the power to choose.

God unconditionally decrees that some things must come to pass.

In this case, His decree must come to pass, and no one can change it. [1 Chron. 29:11; 1 Tim. 6:15; Psa 115:3; 33:11; Job 23:13; Isaiah 14:27; 46:9,10; Prov. 21:30]

Yet the Scriptures teach that God has decreed to allow men (and Satan) to have the power to choose and make some decisions.

Consider some examples:

* God does not tempt man to sin (James 1:13). Yet man faces temptation. Why? Because God permits Satan (within limits) to tempt man (Job 1). [Note 2 Cor. 4:4; John 12:31]

* God hates sin and commands men not to practice it (see above). Yet sin exists. God is not the source of it, else He is not righteous but contradicts Himself and forces men to do what He Himself hates!

The truth is that God gave man the power to choose to obey or disobey, having warned them of the consequences. Having decreed that man has power to choose, God respects His own decree and permits His creatures to choose, even when those choices displease God.

* In the same way, God has decreed (as shown in the Scriptures already studied) that man has the power to choose whether or not to obey His conditions of forgiveness and thereby become one of His elect.

No, man is not free to do absolutely anything we want (can we destroy God?). God has placed limits on us, but one thing He has granted us is the power to obey Him or not. This is not a violation of God's sovereignty, nor is it weakness on His part, for He is the one who decreed that man has this power!

Do you deny that a sovereign God could give man the power to choose?

If God is truly sovereign, then He can decree whatever He chooses. If so, then He can decree that man has the power to choose! If you deny this, then it is ***you***, not us, who deny the sovereignty of God!

The question is not whether or not God is sovereign. The question is: What did the sovereign God decide to do? The Bible says God decreed to give man the power to choose whether or not to obey. This is what it means for "all things" to work according to His purpose.

C. God's Sovereign Government Is Controlled by His Will and Character.

God must act in harmony with His own will.

Man can never limit God, but God can and often does limit what He does according to His will. He may choose not to exercise certain powers He possesses in order that He may accomplish some higher purpose.

The consequence of Calvinism is that God acts in ways that are contrary to His own revealed will. He says that man can choose whether to obey or disobey Him and that salvation is for all and that there are conditions everyone can meet to be saved (shown already). However, Calvinism says none of this is true, we have no choice, etc.

God must act according to His character

There are some things God cannot do because they would violate His character.

* God cannot lie - Titus 1:2

* God cannot sin (He is always righteous) - 2 Chron. 19:7

* God cannot deny Himself - 2 Tim. 2:13

* God cannot change - Hebrews 13:8

The consequence of Calvinism is that God continually acts contrary to His character. He hates evil, yet He decrees that men practice evil. He cannot lie, yet He says things in the Bible that are not true, etc.

III. Romans 9:6-24

Several statements in this passage "sound like" Calvinistic predestination:

V11-13 - God chose Jacob even before he and Esau were born or had done anything good or bad. He hated Esau and loved Jacob.

V15-18 - God has mercy on whom He wills and hardens whom He wills. This is determined by God, not by the person who "wills" to receive His mercy.

V19-24 - God forms men for destruction or glory like a potter with clay.

This is the main proof text on which Calvinistic predestination rests. They argue that this means God chooses to eternally save or condemn men unconditionally, entirely according to God's whim.

A. Such a View of Romans 9 Contradicts Other Scriptures.

This view contradicts all the other passages showing God wants all to be saved, gives them the power to choose, etc.

See previous material. The Bible does not contradict itself. Yet this view would surely make the Bible self-contradictory. We must search for a view which harmonizes with all the Scriptures.

This view contradicts the overall teaching of the book of Romans.

1:16 - The gospel is God's power to save *everyone* who believes (it is conditional, and everyone can meet the conditions).

2:6-11 - God is *no respecter of persons*. For each individual, eternal life or condemnation is determined by what he *does*, good or bad.

5:18,19 - Justification by Jesus' death comes to *all* men - the same [all] men who receive condemnation as a result of Adam's sin.

6:13,16-18 - Man must yield his own members to God to be made free from sin.

This view contradicts the immediate context of Romans 9-11.

All three of these chapters discuss God's dealing with the nation of Israel.

9:1-3; 10:1 - Paul hopes and prays for the salvation of Israel. Why so if he believed that some would be damned by God's unchangeable decree?

10:13 - *Whosoever* calls on the Lord will be saved.

10:21 - God spread His hands to Israel (inviting them), but they refused.

11:7-14 - "The rest" of Israel were not elect, but were hardened. Nevertheless, Paul was trying "by any means" to save some of them! Why so? Calvinism says if they were non-elect and were hardened, they cannot be saved.

11:19-24 - Non-elect Israelites were "cut off" because of unbelief, and Gentiles were grafted in. But those Israelites could be grafted in again and Gentiles could be cut off again, depended on their belief or unbelief. Salvation is conditional; non-elect people can change and be accepted.

11:32 - God offers mercy to *all*. This must include the non-elect Israelites being discussed. And since God is no respecter of persons, it much also include all Gentiles.

Romans 9, the main Calvinist proof text, creates insurmountable difficulties and contradictions, if it is explained as Calvinists do.

B. What Does Romans 9:6-24 Mean?

The context: the theme of Romans 9-11 is the condition of Israel as a nation.

9:4,5 - Paul discussed the exalted position (blessings and privileges) God formerly gave the nation of Israel under the Old Testament. They received these simply because they were members of the nation, but this did not prove they would or would not be saved eternally.

9:6-23 - Paul defended God's sovereign right to use the nation of Israel as He chose. In particular, God was not obligated, as some seemed to think, to give an exalted position to every person who physically descended from Abraham.

9:24-11:32 - Paul discussed the blessings available to Israel under the gospel and how they could receive those blessings.

9:6-13 - God's promise to Abraham did not require Him to give an exalted position to every physical descendant of Abraham.

The Old Testament itself shows that God chose the descendants of Isaac (not of Ishmael) and then chose those of Jacob (not of Esau).

The context discusses a promise about Abraham's seed or children (v7,8).

This was not a promise to *save* any of them eternally. It was a promise to make them a great nation, give them Canaan, and make them the ancestors of the Messiah. (See Gen. 12:1-3; 22:16-18; Deut. 4:37,38; 9:4f; Gal. 3:16.)

Hence, the "election" or choice (v11) does not refer to the election to eternal life, but to the ones through whom these promises to Abraham would be fulfilled. This is the election that was made before Jacob or Esau were born or had done anything good or bad. It was an election in which "the elder would serve the younger" (v12), not an election to eternal life! (God often spoke of Israel as His elect or chosen nation, but that had to do with this promise to Abraham, not eternal life.)

The statement "the elder will serve the younger" refers to two nations - the nations that would descend from Jacob and Esau - not to the two men themselves!

Genesis 25:22,23 - The original passage quoted in Romans 9:12 expressly says that the statement refers to two nations. If this meant all Israelites would go to heaven and all Edomites be doomed, that would indeed be respect of persons.

"Loving Jacob and hating Esau" likewise has no reference to eternal destinies.

This statement was made long after both men had died, not before their birth - Malachi 1:2,3. The only one of the statements made before their birth was "the elder will serve the younger."

This statement also refers to the nations that would descend from the men, not to the men themselves (see the context of Mal. 1).

"Hate" means a lesser love, like Christians must hate their families and their own lives (Luke 14:26). It has no reference whatever to salvation! (Must we wish our families to be eternally damned?)

These statements merely prove that the promise of God to Abraham didn't obligate him to give an exalted position to every physical descendant of Abraham. Our Old Testament history shows, in fulfilling this promise, God repeatedly made choices between individuals regarding whose descendants He would use in fulfilling the promise.

No application whatever is made here to eternal destinies. Later, however, Paul did discuss salvation, and there he showed that God is not obligated to save all Israelites but only a "remnant" (11:1-5).

9:14-18 - God shows mercy according to His own will.

The decision as to who will receive mercy is a decision made by the one who shows the mercy, not by the one who receives it (v15,16,18).

Mercy is a favor shown to one who does not deserve it. It follows that the one who wants mercy (the one who "wills" or "runs" - Israel) cannot set the conditions under which it will be given. This is determined by the one who extends the mercy.

The application to Israel is that they could not insist (as they apparently thought they could do) that God must continue to give them a favorable position, just because He once did so. They had received a favorable position by God's mercy, but He could withdraw it anytime He so chose.

The key word here is the word "will."

God gives mercy to whom He "will." Calvinists assume (without proof) this means that God wills to unconditionally send some folks to heaven and others to hell. Now God can do whatever He wills to do; but does the context here say that is what He wills to do? If so, where? This passage is not talking about eternal destinies.

Now salvation is a matter of mercy, so God can show mercy on whom He wills - men cannot dictate the terms of salvation. But God's will regarding salvation is revealed in the Bible & on that subject we have seen His will is to offer salvation to all conditionally and let men choose whether or not to comply. That will is stated later and elsewhere. But it is not even under discussion here.

This passage is describing the hardening of Pharaoh's heart (v17).

Whereas God used Israel in a favorable way in fulfilling His promise to Abraham, He also used Pharaoh in an unfavorable way. Pharaoh was the ruler of Egypt when Israel became a great nation and when they left to go to the promised Canaan.

The Old Testament account shows that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, but only after Pharaoh had already several times hardened his own heart (Exodus 8:15,32; 9:12; 10:1,20,27; Cf. Psalm 95:8; Heb. 3:8)

God used Pharaoh, but for what purpose? V17 - He used him that God might show His power and that His name might be declared to the whole earth (by the plagues and crossing the Red Sea). This is not talking about anyone's eternal salvation but about an act by which God brought honor to Himself.

Nothing here says God unconditionally caused anyone to do evil or to be lost without choice. Pharaoh was already (by his own choice) a wicked man, so God used him to accomplish His purpose and bring glory to Himself.

In fulfilling His promise to Abraham, God showed mercy to Israel and hardened their enemy, Pharaoh. He used men and nations to accomplish His purpose. But this is not talking about their salvation. He never violated any man's right to choose to obey Him or disobey Him. God gave Israel an exalted status as a nation to use them for His purposes in fulfilling the promise to Abraham. Having done this, He had the right to withdraw that exalted status, for it never did have anything to do with what they had deserved. And above all, nothing here says anything about how God decides whom He will or will not save eternally.

9:19-24 - The potter and the clay

God here affirms His right to deal with men however He pleases. Man has no right to object.

The application in context is to the nation of Israel.

In particular, God can make of the same lump (Israel) vessels to honor and vessels to dishonor. God had exalted Israel in the past to accomplish His will in fulfilling the promise to Abraham. That promise had been completely fulfilled when Jesus died on the cross. If God then chose to withdraw Israel's "most-favored-nation" status, they had no right to object (as some apparently were doing).

To affirm a person has power to do whatever He chooses, does not of itself tell you what He has chosen!

1 Corinthians 9:1-18 - Paul argued that preachers have the right to marry or to be supported financially. In fact, however, he refused to exercise neither of those rights. Matthew 26:39,53,54 - God had the sovereign power to save Jesus from death, but it was not His will to save Him.

You may affirm that you have the power to slug me with your fist, but you have not chosen to do so (not yet).

So God here affirms His right to make choices however He pleases, but that does not of itself tell us what His choice will be. It surely does not tell us how He decides who will be saved, since that is not even being discussed here.

This passage does not apply to man's eternal destinies but to God's right to withdraw Israel's privileged status as a nation.

God's choice here pertained to how He used the nation of Israel in fulfilling the promise made to Abraham. He used them for many years in a way that exalted Him. When the promises had been fulfilled (because Jesus died), there was no longer any reason to continue their exalted status. So God withdrew it. That was His right, just like a potter could make whatever He chose from a lump of clay.

Nevertheless, regarding salvation God does have the right to do whatever He chooses (consistent with His character). But nothing here says anything about what He has chosen or how He will determine who will be saved or lost.

Later, in 9:24-11:32, Paul does discuss God's choice regarding who will or will not be saved. There he shows that God offers mercy to all (11:32). Those who believe and obey will be saved (10:13-17). This is exactly what we learned to be true in multitudes of other passages.

God has the right to do whatever He wills with man. He used Israel for His purpose, then ceased to use them. He is not here discussing salvation, yet God can save us or not save us according to any standard that He chooses. The standard that He chose was to offer salvation to all on the basis of conditions and let each man decide whether or not to meet the conditions.

IV. People Whom God Foreknew

Before they did good or evil, God foreknew that certain people would be sinners, prophets, etc. Examples:

Judas - John 13:21-26; 6:70f; Matthew 26:20-25,50; Acts 1:16-20,25

Pharaoh - Exodus 4:21; 14:17,18

Prophets - Jeremiah 1:5; Galatians 1:15

Calvinists argue that, since God knows everything, He must know all about a person's life, even before he is born. Once God knows a thing, then it is decreed and cannot be avoided. Therefore, one's eternal destiny is decreed before his is born. He has no choice.

A. God Does Not Force People against Their Will to Be Good or Bad, but He Can Foreknow What Choices They Will Make.

Judas was already evil before He betrayed Jesus - John 12:6. This evil was nowhere predicted.

Pharaoh was also evil before God hardened his heart - Exodus 8:15,32; 9:12.

God did not make these men evil. He simply foreknew what choice they would make, then He used them accordingly. If foreknowing and prophesying a thing means that God *decreed* it, so men have no choice, then since the men sinned, it must be that God *decreed them to commit sin!* This violates His righteous character, as already discussed. Jesus' death was also foreknown and prophesied - Isaiah 53; John 3:14; 12:27; Matthew 16:21. Nevertheless, Matt. 26:53 shows that Jesus had the power to stop it. He had a choice despite the fact the matter had been prophesied.

God foreordained that Jesus would die (1 Peter 1:20; Acts 2:23; 4:28; Luke 22:22). This involved a sin committed by those who killed Him. If this means it was decreed, so men had no choice, then again God decreed that men must commit sin!

B. Though God Foreknew What Some Men Did, That Does Not Prove He Foreknows All the Acts of All Men.

God is both all-powerful and all-knowing. His power to know is just a part of His overall power. He has the power to do anything He chooses to do. But does He do everything He has the power to do? Obviously, there are many things God could do that he chooses not to do. To claim that God is all-powerful is not to say that he will actually do everything He has the power to do.

Since His power to know is part of His overall power, does it not follow that, just as He may choose not to exercise His power to do some things, so He may not exercise His power not to know some things about the future?

As with all His other powers, can He not choose to know only those things that suit His purposes? If we really believe that God is all-powerful, then wouldn't that include the power to choose not to know some things about the future, if He wills to not know them?

Consider some examples that appear to indicate that God did not know certain things before they happened. But then He deliberately chose to exercise His power to know them.

Genesis 11:5 - At the tower of Babel, God "came down to see" what the people were doing.

Genesis 18:20,21 - God went to see what Sodom and Gomorrah were doing.

Genesis 22:12 - After Abraham had proved he was willing to offer Isaac, God said, "**Now** I know that you fear God ..." Did He not know beforehand?

I know that God chooses to know everything that has happened in the past, because the Bible says so. He will bring every work into judgment with every hidden thing -- Ecc. 12:14; etc.

God can do whatever He chooses to do. But we only know what He chooses to do by what He says in the Bible. I know He chooses to know everything in the past because the Bible says so. I also know that He has the **power** to know anything in the future that He chooses to know, and I know that He has exercised His power to know **some** in the future, because the Bible says so. The question is: Where does the Bible say that God has chosen to know **everything** will happen in the future in the life of **every** individual? The passages above appear to me to indicate that God chose not to know certain things **before** happened.

In any case, by whatever means one explains it, it cannot be denied that God's power to foreknow the actions of people does not invalidate man's power to choose. The Bible clearly says that God allows men to choose to do good or evil.

Conclusion

Calvinist arguments must fail because they make God a violator of His own will and of His own righteous character. Salvation is offered to all men, so any one can receive it. But each individual must choose for himself whether or not to respond, and each one is capable of so choosing. Does this mean that salvation is by the power of men, not of God's power? No!

Illustration: Suppose a man is drowning, but a sailor throws him a life preserver attached to a rope. The drowning man by himself was powerless to be saved. The sailor was his savior. But the man still had to choose to take hold and continuing holding on until he was in the boat. So, God is the source & provider of salvation. Salvation is by God's grace. But He has decreed that each individual must choose for Himself whether or not to accept the salvation offered. – *The Gospel Way*

Election Without Reprobation?

As we examine the Calvinist doctrines of salvation, we need to also examine what Calvinists teach about reprobation. The strict Calvinists have no hesitancy in stating emphatically that God has decreed the damnation of certain men. They state,

By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death (Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter III, No. 3).

After having stated their belief about God electing some to salvation, the writers of the Westminster Confession of Faith stated their belief about God's treatment of the reprobate.

The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extended or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to passby, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice (Chapter III, No. 7).

Even the early Baptists wrote openly of their conviction that God has predestinated some unto life and others unto eternal damnation. The Philadelphia Confession of Faith states this doctrine as follows:

By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated or foreordained to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace; other being left to act in their sin to their just condemnation, to the praise of his glorious justice (Section III, No. 4).

Their creed goes on to discuss how the reprobate are damned because God withholds from them a sufficient amount of grace to cause them to be saved. Hence, strict Calvinists had no trouble stating their belief in both election and reprobation.

But, my brethren, Calvinists have long ago perceived that the doctrine that God damned some people to hell was not all that popular. Who wants to believe that this reprobate baby who died in infancy long before it was old enough to commit a single sin will burn forever in hell because God predetermined that this should occur to the praise of His glory?

Yet, this is what strict Calvinism teaches. Most rational men want nothing to do with such a damnable, pernicious doctrine. Hence, in recent years, Calvinists have begun to back off of the doctrine of reprobation. They want to continue to believe in election but deny that they believe in reprobation.

In Present Truth magazine, Klaas Runia wrote as follows about this problem:

When L. Berkhof gives his proof for the doctrine of reprobation, he begins with the following statement. "The doctrine of reprobation follows from the logic of the situation. The decree of election inevitably implies the decree of reprobation. If the all-wise God, possessed of infinite knowledge, has eternally purposed to save some, then He ipso facto also purposed not to save others. If He has chosen or elected some, then He has by that very fact also rejected others." And L. Boettner opens his discussion of "Reprobation" with these words: "The doctrine of Predestination of course logically holds that some are foreordained to death as truly as others are foreordained to life. The very terms `elect' and 'election' imply the terms `non-elect' and `reprobation.' When some are chosen out others are left not chosen."

It is of course true that `logic' does play an important part in theology. Reformed theology has always freely acknowledge its good right. The Westminster Confession states that "the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture or by good and necessary consequence, may be deduced from Scripture" (Ch. 1, vii. By this very means the church has developed its doctrine of the Trinity also its Christology, yet the question must always arise; is a particular consequence `good and necessary'? In general, we must say that especially at the point of an eternal decree of reprobation we have to be most careful. And one should ask oneself: why does Scripture itself not draw this conclusion, if it is so natural and so logical! (Vol. V, No. 6, p. 28).

The author in Present Truth chose to call this a "paradox" and left it unresolved. The truth of the matter is that **Calvinists want to believe in election without accepting the logical conclusion of the doctrine, reprobation.** That doctrine is just a little too sour for their taste. Hence, they choose to abide in inconsistency rather than accepting the logical consequences of their damnable heresy.

My brethren, please keep in mind the logical conclusions to which Calvinism leads. It states that God has predetermined every event in history. Hence, God has predetermined, not foreknew, that the greater majority of men would die in sin, whether inherited or committed, and be eternally punished in hell.

He predetermined that this would happen for the praise of His glory. We must not allow the Calvinists the luxury of not accepting the logical consequence of the doctrine of election.

Does God Want Men To Perish?

It seems ridiculous to pose such a question, yet this is exactly the question we must pose to deal with reprobation. This doctrine teaches that God has decreed, predetermined, and foreordained that the great number of men in this world would end up in hell for the praise of His glory. Inasmuch as God wants to be praised by men, He certainly wants these men to end up as He has willed that they be. Hence, this is by all means a legitimate question for Calvinists to answer. Does God want the greater portion of mankind to burn eternally in Hell. Calvinists say yes; the Bible says no. Read the following passages:

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time (1 Tim. 2:5-6).

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9).

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (Jn. 3:16).

Contrary to what Calvinists teach, God gets no pleasure out of watching the wicked perish and burn forever in Hell. The prophet Ezekiel stated this plainly as he wrote:

But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? (Ezek. 18:21-23).

Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? (Ezek. 33:11).

The God which the Calvinists worship is a horrible God indeed. He obtains some kind of sadistic pleasure in watching people burn forever in hell. He creates a large number of men for the express purpose of watching them die in sin and burn forever in hell! Who can worship such a God?

The Calvinist doctrine destroys the plain statement of Scripture that God is love. Rather, Calvinism demands that God be a god of hatred. He hates more people than anybody else; He hates them longer than anyone else can hate them inasmuch as He hates them prior to their coming into this world and forever after they come into this world. Having hated more people than anyone and harboring this hatred forever, God would become a God of hatred! As a matter of fact, God would have this hatred toward every man except that select little group of "teacher pets" whom He arbitrarily chose to elect to salvation.

Conclusion

This doctrine of Calvinism is by all means the most repugnant of the doctrine presented in that system. Men tend to turn their eyes away from it and look at the positive points of Calvinism. Indeed, some among us are even intrigued at the idea of "once in grace, always in grace." Others like the idea that God personally called me to give me faith and repentance so that I could be saved. These doctrines which attract men cannot be logically maintained without accepting the conclusion that God damns the non-elect of His own will. The doctrine of reprobation is one of the main reasons for rejecting Calvinism in all of its parts. – Mike Willis

(The following is a direct quotation of Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics Vol. II/2* with a few modifications to the text from the T&T Clark study edition, by replacing the original Greek and Latin quotations with the corresponding italicized English Translations from the footnotes. I've also added the bold-italicized headers and broken up longer paragraphs for readability.)

Development of Single Predestination:

Augustine himself did receive here a salutary check, as is shown by the fact that on the whole he avoided reducing God's twofold dealings to one common denominator, even in concept. By *predestination* he always (or almost always) understood *predestination to grace* (a definition taken over by Peter Lombard, *Sent.* I, *dist.* 40 A) and therefore *predestination to life*. Predestination consists positively in *election*, and does not include *reprobation*. Thomas Aquinas held a similar concept. For him predestination was *means, pre-existing in God, of the transmission of eternal life* (*S. th.* I, *qu.* 23, *art.* 1 c), or, according to a later definition: *a predestination from eternity for those things which are to exist, by the grace of God, in time* (*S. th.* III, *qu.* 24, *art.* 1 c). Thomas, like Augustine, does set the two alongside: *God willed among men a number whom he predestined, to be given his goodness according to the manner of his mercy by which they are spared; and a number whom he reprobated, by the manner of his justice, by which they are punished* (*qu.* 23, *art.* 5 *ad.* 3). But more clearly than Augustine he regards *reprobation* as in fact a separate genus, quite apart from and standing to some extent only in the shadow of *predestination*. A similar view was held in the 14th century even by such strong "predestinarians" as Gregory of Rimini and John Wyclif.

Development of Double Predestination:

Already, however, Isidore of Seville in the 7th and Gottschalk in the 9th century had taught a doctrine which differed formally from that of Augustine: *Predestination is twofold: either of the elect for rest, or of the reprobate for death* (Isidore, *sent.* 2, 6, 1). *Just as God has predestined all the elect to life by the free gift of his grace alone ... so he has also predestined every reprobate to the punishment of eternal death, by what is most evidently the most just judgment of his righteousness* (Gottschalk, according to Hinkmar, *De praed.* 5). In this case predestination is an over-ruling concept, including both election and rejection. This was the usage adopted by the Reformers. In Luther's *De servo arbitrio [Bondage of the Will]*, in Zwingli's *De providentia* and in the writings of Calvin, predestination means quite unequivocally double predestination: double in the sense that election and rejection are now two species within the one genus designated by the term predestination.

It is true that not only in Luther but in Calvin too there are passages to dispense with this fatal parallelism of the concepts election and rejection: *It is necessary to say that God, by his eternal decree, of which the cause depends on nothing else, has destined for salvation those whom he pleased, and whom -- leaving others out -- he graced with his free adoption to enlighten them by his own Spirit, that they might receive the life offered to them in Christ. But he decreed also that others should be freely unbelieving, so that destitute of the light of faith, they should remain in the darkness (De aet. Dei praed. C.R. 8, 261 f.).* So, too, in the famous definition in the *Institutio* (III, 21, 5): *We call the eternal predestination of God that decree in which he has it established in himself what he wills to become of each man. For all were not created in a like state. Rather, eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Therefore, just as each person is made for one or other of these ends, so we can say that they are predestined either for life or for death.*

Balancing of Double Predestination by the post-Calvin Reformed Dogmaticians, and how Arminianism is also Double Predestination:

It was quite in the spirit of Calvin, and yet quite fatal, when many of the older Reformed dogmaticians thought that they ought to balance against the concept of the **election of grace that of an election of wrath**. Although they attempted to amend the doctrine, it is noteworthy that even the Arminians could not escape the concept of a "double" predestination in this sense: *The predestination of God is that divine decree by which he established in the decree of his will before all temporal ages to choose those who believe in his Son Jesus Christ, to adopt them as his sons, to justify them, and if they persevere in the faith, to glorify them eternally. But he chooses to reprobate / reject, to blind and to harden those hard-hearted unbelievers, and if they persist in their hard-heartedness, to condemn them in eternity (P. a Limborch, Theo. chr., 1686, IV, 1, 5).* As against that, it is one of the merits of the *Canones* of the Synod of Dort (1619) that a definition of predestination was there given (I, 7) which, although it did not, of course, exclude the divine reprobation, did not include or append it as an autonomous truth, being content to state positively what *election* is: *the immutable decree of God in which, before the foundation of the world were laid, according to the most free decree of his will, out of his undiluted grace, he elected in Christ unto salvation a definite multitude of certain men (out of the whole human race which had fallen from its original wholeness into sin and death by its own fault) neither better nor more worthy than others, but laid up in the same wretched state as those others.*

He established Christ as the mediator from eternity, the head of all the elect, the basis of salvation, and decreed to give to him those who are to be saved, and effectually to call and bring them to communion with him through his own Word and Spirit, to give them truth faith in him, to justify, to sanctify, and in the end to glorify those he had powerfully kept in communion with his Son, as a demonstration of his mercy and for the praise of the glorious riches of his grace. Whatever else one may think of the formula, in this form the doctrine of predestination certainly did take on again the character of evangelical proclamation which it had lost in the definitions in which it referred simultaneously and equally to grace and non-grace, salvation and reprobation.

While they could not evade the importance of the content of his doctrine, some of Calvin's more timid contemporaries were much exercised about the danger of misunderstanding. They expressed the view that the doctrine of predestination out to be reserved as a kind of secret wisdom for theologians of sobriety and discretion, and not published abroad amongst the people. Calvin made the forceful answer that true discretion cannot consist in burying away a truth to which all truth servants of God testify, but only in the sober and reverent yet quiet open confession of what is learned in the school of the heavenly Teacher (*De aet. Dei praed* C.R. 8, 347). It would not be a true Christian simplicity, *to flee from the 'harmful knowledge' of the things which God has revealed (ib., 264)*. What is revealed to us in Scripture is as such necessary and useful and worthy to be known by all. On no account, then, must the doctrine of predestination be withheld from believers (*Instit.* III, 21, 3). *For just as holiness is to be preached so that God might be correctly worshiped, so also should predestination, so that those who have ears to hear may, by the grace of God, glory in God and not in themselves (De aet, Dei praed. ib., 327).*

The balanced assertion of Double Predestination has changed the message of Good News (euangelion) to one of Bad News (dysangelion):

With its *parallel lines*, with that balanced assertion of the twofold dealings of God, as a doctrine of double predestination, this is precisely what it is not. The balance gives to the doctrine neutrality which is almost scientific. It does not differentiate between the divine Yes and the divine No. It does not come down on the side of the divine Yes.

On the very same level as the Yes it registers and equally definitive divine No concerning man. In such a form it is inevitable that the No should become much stronger and ultimately the exclusive note.

It is inevitable that the doctrine should in the last resort be understood as *bad news (dysangelion)*, and that as such it should be repudiated with horror (and not without inward cause).

Barth, Karl. "[*Church Dogmatics Study Edition 10*](#)" Ed. T. F. Torrance and G.W. Bromiley. *II.2 The Doctrine of Election*. Trans. G. W. Bromiley. London: T & T Clark, 2010. 15-7

Calvinism (I): Predestination and Election

By Harry E. Ozment

Historical Background

One of the greatest periods of human history was the Protestant Reformation. Prior to this movement, the Roman Catholic Church held the world in a dark, corrupted, and stagnant mire. Out of this confusion arose great men of courage such as Martin Luther in Germany and John Knox of Scotland who were intent upon reforming the religious world. One of the greatest reformers and brilliant thinkers of his day was John Calvin. Although born in France, he had to flee for his life to Geneva, where he became a leader in the Swiss reform movement. At the age of 27, he wrote his famous Institutes, which set forth his particular theories of religion and introduced what we know today as "Calvinism." Calvinism consists of five points of doctrine: (1) Predestination and Election; (2) Limited Atonement; (3) Total Hereditary Depravity; (4) Irresistible Grace; and (5) Impossibility of Apostasy. Although we may admire Calvin for his desire to reform the Roman Catholic Church, we cannot condone his "theorizing" in religious matters. Probably no set of doctrines could be found which is more destructive to faith in God's word than the tenets of Calvinism. In spite of this fact, however, many churches teach Calvinism in their official creeds and many people hold to Calvinistic ideas.

Definition

The root of Calvinism is the doctrine of "Predestination and Election." Before we can consider the doctrine at all, we must first have some idea of its nature and what it teaches. The word "predestinate" simply means to plan or determine beforehand. All will agree upon this. Therefore, the issue is not the meaning of "predestination" but rather the object of predestination.

It might be a surprise for some to know that the Bible does indeed speak of predestination and election. Paul states in Rom. 8:29-30: "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. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Paul speaks of the same idea in Eph. 1:4-5, 11: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, . . . in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."

The Bible doctrine of predestination is a very simple one. In the beginning, God foresaw that man would sin. Man, of course, would not have the power to save himself from sin he would need the grace of God. God realized this, and He formulated a scheme of redemption. In this scheme, God predetermined to save a collective group or body of people (otherwise known as the church). Any person can now become a part of this body by obedience to God's scheme of redemption. That this is the Bible doctrine of predestination is proven by Paul in Eph. 3:9-10: "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God (this is what is involved in predestination-HEO), who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church (the object or fulfillment of God's predestination, HEO) the manifold wisdom of God."

The Bible doctrine of predestination, however, is not the predestination of Calvinism. Whereas Bible predestination involves an elected body or group to be saved (which any person can be added to), Calvinism's predestination involves the election of individuals to be saved (which is exclusively limited to those persons chosen by God Himself). We read in the Presbyterian Confession of Faith: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by, and to obtain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice." (Chapter 3) The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, in commenting on Calvin's theory, states: "Calvin's mode of defining predestination was as the eternal decree of God, by which He has decided with Himself what is to become of each and every individual. For all, he maintains, are not created in like condition; but eternal life is foreordained for some, eternal condemnation for others." (p. 2436)

Errors of the Doctrine

Such a doctrine, even on the surface, seems preposterous to any Bible believer. Indeed, this doctrine destroys the Bible picture of our all-perfect God. This Calvinistic theory:

1. Makes God a respecter of persons. In chapter 3 of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, we read: "Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes moving Him thereunto." That, my dear friend, is respect of persons-pure and simple! A judge in our court system today would not be tolerated long at all employing these tactics. But the same denominational "scholars" who would condemn an earthly judge for showing respect of persons will, in their next breath, accuse God of the same thing and praise Him for it! Oh consistency, thou art a jewel! The fact of the matter is that God's infinite justice would not allow Him to act accordingly. This is emphasized again and again in holy writ. Peter said to Cornelius, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons." (Acts 10:34) Peter was trying to show Cornelius that he, as a Gentile, had a perfect right to obey the gospel and be saved. If God did not elect a particular nation for eternal salvation, how could he have been so unfair as to elect a particular person for salvation? Paul emphasized the same point in Rom. 2:11-12, "For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." Now this is what we would expect from a fair and just God. It makes no difference if you are a Jew or Gentile (Acts 15:9; Rom. 10:12), bond or free (Eph. 6:8-9)-you will receive justice at the hand of God. Peter sums it up in I Pet. 1:17: "And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."

2. Makes the invitation of God foolish. The invitation of God is found in Rev. 22:17, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Jesus expressed it this way: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am, meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matt. 11:28-30) Beautiful words, aren't they? But absolutely senseless-if Calvinism is true. Why should God invite the lost to come to Him if they are to be lost anyway? Moreover, why should the lost accept God's invitation if it would be of no benefit to them? My, what a doctrine-it robs God of His wisdom and robs Christianity of its beauty! Heaven forbid!

3. Makes the work of Satan unnecessary. The Bible reveals that there is a real person named Satan, and Peter explains his work in this way: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (I Pet. 5:8) But why is this "devouring" necessary if Calvinism is true? In the case of the lost and "unelected" person, Satan already has full possession of his soul. It matters not how morally good that person might be nor how much he might desire to obey God-God has already consigned this person to the clutches of Satan! Why should Satan do anything in this case? On the other hand, in the case of a saved and "elected" person, his glorious fate is sealed and cannot be altered. It matters not how sinful and ungodly Satan might tempt him to be, he is bound for heaven because he was "elected." Question: Why should Satan seek to "devour" this man if such is impossible? If Calvinism is true, there is no need for Satan to stalk about as a roaring lion, seeking to lead all down the broad way to damnation-God has already done his work for him!

4. Makes accountability to God impossible. If the parable of the talents teaches anything, it teaches that man one day must give an account of what he has done in this life. "After a long time, the lord of these servants cometh, and reckoneth with them." (Matt. 25:19) There will indeed be a day of reckoning. Paul said, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10) Calvinism, however, denies this is going to happen, for man has no control over his own fate and therefore is not responsible. If a man is not responsible, he cannot be held accountable. According to these denominational theorists, the judgment took place before the beginning of time in the mind of God. If Calvinism is true, why should there be another judgment at the end of time in which man gives account of something he had no control over?

5. Makes love for God impossible. The Psalmist once wrote, "O love the Lord, all ye his saints." (Ps. 31:23a) This was important under the Old Covenant. Jesus said, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." (Mk. 12:30) However, how can man love God if Calvinism's concept of Him is true? In I Jn. 4:19 we read, "We love him, because he first loved us." But how much love does God show to that person who is consigned to the depths of hell even before he has a chance to draw his first breath? Yes, who could love a God who arbitrarily, despotically, and tyrannically chooses some to be saved and others to be damned? Calvinism is so destructive to the Biblical picture of God that it needs to be opposed with all the strength of Godfearing men. Even the Calvinists themselves admit how terrible their theory really is. Theodore Parker said, "The God of Calvinism is an almighty he cat, playing with the mice until he is ready to destroy them." (The Christian, May, 1879, p. 3) It is reported of Calvin himself: "Calvin confesses that this is a 'horrible decree.'" (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, p. 2436) How could any Bible believer believe in Calvinism's theory of predestination and election? Truth Magazine, XVIII:27, p. 9-10

"Having Predestinated Us"

Donnie V. Rader

Ephesians 1:5 teaches predestination. That is undeniable. The text says, "having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." Just what does that mean? This passage has been greatly perverted by those who have bought John Calvin's thoughts on salvation.

Misunderstanding and Abuse of The Text

Calvinism teaches an unconditional and individual pre-destination. This is necessary in view of their doctrine of total depravity. This says that man is born in sin and is completely depraved. He is unable to do any good. He cannot believe unless God causes him to believe. Thus, any election (chosen to be saved) would have to be unconditional.

Consider how the Calvinists use Ephesians 1:5. In *The Doctrines Of Grace*, Lasserre Bradley, Jr. (speaker for Baptist Bible Hour) has a chapter on each of the major points of Calvinism. In his chapter on unconditional election he says, "election is a sovereign act of God whereby He chooses certain individuals from the fallen race to eternal life for the glory of His name. . . . One of the clearest definitions of the doctrine of election is found in the first chapter of Ephesians" (p. 14). He then quotes verses 3-5 and applies them to his chapter heading: "Unconditional Election." He adds, "By unconditional election, we mean that the choice of God was not conditional on anything within man" (p. 16).

Notice two things in the above quotes. Mr. Bradley says that Ephesians 1:5 teaches an election or predestination that is (1) unconditional and (2) individual. Thus, Calvinists wrest this text to say that before creation God arbitrarily and unconditionally selected certain individuals to be saved and certain individuals to be lost.

The Context of Ephesians 1:5

The book of Ephesians is about God's eternal purpose in Christ Jesus (cf. Eph. 1:9-10 and 3:10-11). Chapter one describes the blessings we have in Christ through God's eternal purpose. Chapter two describes the object of God's eternal purpose: salvation. Chapter three tells of the revelation of God's eternal purpose.

Back to chapter one. Verses 3-14 tell of the blessings that we have in Christ: (1) All spiritual blessings — v. 3, (2) We were chosen before the foundation of the world — v. 4, (3) We were predestinated — v. 5, (4) We receive God's grace — v. 6, (5) We have redemption through the blood of Christ — v. 7, (6) God has made known to us the mystery of his will — v. 9, (7) We have an inheritance — v. 11, (8) We receive the Holy Spirit — v. 13. The point I want us to see is that the context is dealing with God's eternal plan.

The Meaning of the Text

1. Predestinated defined. The word "predestinated" means to "mark out beforehand, to determine before, fore-ordain" (W.E. Vine, I:305). Darby's translation says "having marked us out beforehand" in Ephesians 1:5. Both the ASV and Young's Literal Translation render this phrase, "having foreordained us."

2. Two questions. No one can or should deny that our text teaches that God marked out our salvation beforehand. However, we must ask: (a) Is the predestination conditional or unconditional? (b) Did God select particular individuals or did he select salvation in Christ and all in him are chosen?

3. Conditional. Receiving salvation (being chosen or elected) is conditional upon our obedience to the gospel. Consider these simple texts.

And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (Heb. 5:9).

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city (Rev. 22:14).

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven (Matt. 7:21).

Therefore, it is of faith that it might be according to grace ... (Rom 4:16).

The selection is not particular individuals but choosing that those who are obedient will be saved. "God foreordained that all those who voluntarily choose to walk by faith in Christ shall be added to his family by adoption. God willed in his love that those in Christ should be his sons with the full benefit of inheritance" (C.G. "Colly" Caldwell, Truth Commentaries: Ephesians, 21). "God foreordained the provisions of salvation, the characters that should be saved, and the conditions and tests by which they would be saved. He left every man free to choose or reject the terms & provisions of salvation and in so doing to refuse to form the character God has foreordained to be his children and so predestined to everlasting life" (Lipscomb, Gospel Advocate Commentaries: Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, 19-20). B.W. Johnson said, "The whole line of argument is general in-stead of particular" (Peoples' NT Commentary; On-line edition). This is much like a man predestinating (marking out beforehand) a secretary. His choosing is not unconditional nor is it a "marking out" of a particular individual. Before he hires anyone he marks out the qualifications. She must take shorthand, do word processing on the computer, have some knowledge of his type of business, have at least two years of college, and be in good health. She must meet these conditions. He did predestinate her. No, he did not arbitrarily choose Sally Jane. But he chose the qualities of the person who would be hired. Sally Jane meets those and is hired. We can easily see how that works with God's eternal plan.

Does John 6:37 Teach Calvinist “Predestination”?

By Wayne Jackson

“Please explain John 6:37. Who are those ‘given’ to Christ? Does this mean that they were selected by God before the foundation of the world, and are ‘elected’ — irrespective of their personal obedience?”

The passage under consideration reads as follows:

“All of those whom the Father gives me shall come unto me; and him who comes to me I will in no wise cast out.”

First, the Bible student needs to remind himself of this premise. The Scriptures are the inspired word of God (1 Thes. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). Coming, then, from Jehovah as the ultimate source, they do not contradict themselves; instead, they are perfectly harmonious (Dt. 32:4; 1 Cor. 14:33a). When one encounters a passage, therefore, that may appear to conflict with plain-spoken texts contained elsewhere in Scripture, he must look carefully at the more obscure text and determine if there is a reasonable way to bring it into harmony with the other.

Having said that, let us further emphasize this point. No sacred text must be viewed in any way that would negate the following fundamental truths.

(1) Man has been granted free will (Mt. 23:37b; Jn. 5:39; 7:17; Rev. 22:17).

(2) His salvation is dependent upon his personal acceptance of divine grace, in obedience to the requirements of the gospel of Christ (2 Thes. 1:7-9; Heb. 5:8-9; 1 Pet. 4:17).

To suggest that God, before the world’s foundation, chose certain ones to be saved, and others to be lost, independent of a *personal reception of truth*, is a doctrine that cannot be sustained by the Scriptures — regardless of the number of sincere people who subscribe to it.

There are several crucial questions that must be addressed in connection with John 6:37. *When* did the “giving” of certain people to the Son take place? In *what sense* does the Father “give” these people to his Son? What *relationship* does the “giving” bear to their “coming” to him? And, what is the significance of the *promise*, “I will in no wise cast out”? Let us take each of these in order.

(3) *When* did the “giving” take place? The idea that believers were unconditionally “given” to Christ, in the eternal counsel of God before the foundation of the world, is negated by this very passage. The verb “gives” (didotin) is a present tense form, indicating action in progress; the Father, at that very time, was in the process of giving certain ones to his Son. This passage cannot possibly be employed, then, to establish a “done-deal” gift back in pre-world eternity. As Reynolds noted, “‘The giving’ implies a present activity of grace, not a foregone conclusion” (17, p. 201).

(4) In *what sense* did God “give” people to his Son? The terms “gift” and “given” are frequently employed idiomatically in the Scriptures to denote divine favor as expressed in Heaven’s redemptive work on man’s behalf — without there being any inclination of an “unconditional election.”

For example, David prophesied that Jehovah would “give” the “nations” (Gentiles) to Christ as an inheritance (Psa. 2:8; cf. Acts 4:25-26). Surely no one will contend that all Gentiles were unconditionally predestined to salvation irrespective of their response to divine truth. Even the most cursory examination of the book of Acts, from chapter 10 onward, reveals that the Gentiles were admitted into redemptive favor by yielding to the requirements of the gospel. Salvation was not as a consequence of an eternal decree independent of human obedience (cf. Acts 10:34-35,43; 11:14; 15:8-9; 1 Pet. 1:22-23).

(5) What *relationship* is there between the “giving” and the “coming” in John 6:37? There is a significant connection. The “giving” represents what God has provided in the great plan of human salvation; the “coming” represents the acceptance of that plan as manifested in the sinner’s obedience.

The subsequent context affords a wonderful illustration of this — with slightly different imagery, but with corresponding thought. Note the language of verses 44-45.

“No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Everyone who has heard from the Father, and has learned, comes unto me.”

In this passage, God's "drawing" is parallel to his "giving" of verse 37. And yet, clearly in vv. 44-45 the drawing is accomplished by hearing his word, learning, and coming to the Lord. Jehovah provides the redemptive information, but humanity must access it. By a comparison of these passages, therefore, one may logically conclude that this is how men are "given" to Christ as well. As Bloomfield once observed, "The term [gives] therefore (here and at ver. 39 and 65) must signify something compatible with the free agency of man" (I, p. 363).

When former Baptist minister Robert Shank issued his book, **Life in the Son**, it produced shock waves among Calvinists. Professor William Adams of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary characterized the book as "one of the most arresting and disturbing books" he had ever read (p. xiii). In this instructive volume, Shank has a special Appendix, "Whom Does the Father Give to Jesus?" in which he discusses this very passage. Therein the author fires this parting blast:

"There is nothing about God's gift of believers to be the heritage of the Son who died for them which somehow transforms the Gospel's 'whosoever will' into a 'whosoever must' and a 'most of you shan't.' There is nothing about it which binds men in the strait jacket of an antecedent decree of positive unconditional election and reprobation, while insisting that they are 'free'" (p. 339).

(6) Our final question is this: "What is the meaning of the affirmation, 'I will in no wise cast out'?" Some allege it suggests the dogma of the impossibility of apostasy, i.e., that no one "given" to Christ in the eternal scheme of things could ever be lost. The child of God, therefore, can never fall from grace — or so it is claimed.

The passage does not even remotely suggest this pernicious doctrine. Even Albert Barnes, who subscribed to the Calvinistic doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy (see his comment at Matthew 7:23), conceded the following, with reference to John 6:37b. "This expression does not refer to the doctrine of perseverance of the saints, but to the fact that Jesus will not *reject* or *refuse* any sinner who comes to him" (pp. 246-247).

This admission, combined with the scriptural declarations that God wants all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9), and that "whosoever will" may come to Christ, are death blows to the theory that some were chosen by God for salvation, and others for damnation, before the world began. Perhaps no dogma has ever been so misguided.

Sir, I perceive, by your Discourse, that you come very nigh the Doctrine of Absolute and Inevitable Election and Reprobation. Why, to give you my Opinion freely, and as briefly as I can, I do believe, (a) That Election is the Eternal Decree of God, whereby "he freely and infallibly appointed, for the Glory of his own Name, to bring some Men to Everlasting life, through Christ." But what do you take to be the Moving Cause of this Election? (b) Neither foreseen Faith, Works, Freedom of Will, Nobleness of Birth, nor Merit of Christ, but only the good Pleasure of God. I can by no means concur in your Opinion; because, the Reason of Man's Salvation, in Scripture, is not said to be given barely from the Will of God, but from the Faith and Obedience of Men; for it is an Act of Rewarding Justice, as well, as Paternal Love and Mercy; and therefore we must distinguish very nicely between the Decree of God, and the Execution of it. For if Unbelievers, Disobedient, and Rebellious Persons be chosen to Salvation, and it is not in God's Power to revoke that Election, (as is concluded by some) I can see no Necessity of Faith and Obedience.

Then I perceive your Opinion is, that God (b) "hath Rejected some, as well as "Elected others?" Yes. What do you take to be the Moving Cause thereof? a) The good Pleasure of God. Then it is in vain to take any pains to be Religious for if Men be ordained to Destruction, will be to no purpose to strive, for they shall lose all their Labour; but if they preordained to Salvation, tho' they live never wickedly, it cant prejudice their Salvation, for they must come to their appointed End. Bit God has commanded us to use Mans; and such Commands are Encouragements, that God will not Men the End and Blessing to Them that use the Means as well as they can. Bit still, Sir, this does not remove the Stumbling-block out of my Way.

For Men of your tell us that these Blessings are really given to none but the' Elect ;" As for the Reprobates, "all Gifts whatsoever are unprofitable to them: "And the Churches, do in their Declaration, tell the World That they who 'are not Elected, all though they may be called by the Word... I must confess, that I don't think it possible for a Reprobate to live a Godly Life, or an Elect Person to live always Lewdly and Loosely for the same God that ordains the End, 'ordains the: Means.

For who, but a Fool or a Madman, will trouble his Brain, or spend his Labour about Impossibilities? Now, if God gives a Man Power to do his Duty, then his Commands for Obeying are possible to be comply with; but if God gives us no Ability, either by with-holding his Talents, or not allowing Opportunity to improve them, I cannot see how God can be laid to render to every Man according to his Work. Neither can I think, that God would commit to my Trust and Stewardship Talents of Silver, and then expect that I should turn them into Talents of Gold. He knows his poor Creature hath no of such Virtue: he expects but an Improvement in the same kind of Talents: for you may as reasonably expect that a Man may beget an Angel, as that he should turn from Vice to Virtue, if he be a Reprobate, in Your Scene of that Word. For, how unreasonable is it to expect a Machine to act above the Sphere of its Activity? Will you expect a Watch should go twenty four Hours, when the Spring was made to go but twelve? or that a Gun should carry a thousand Yards, when the Charge that was given it will carry but five hundred? But the so are and must be the Consequences of your Doctrine...

REPLY: I believe there is a vast difference between Saving, and Common Grace: For I believe, I may have a Notional Knowledge of "Christ, and the Necessity of his Blood, and of, "the Excellency of Salvation, and yet perish; I may weep at the History of his Passion, when i read how he was used - by the Jews, and yet perish; I may come desirously to his Word and Ordinances, and yet perish; I may obey him in many Things, —escape much of the Pollutions of the World, by his Knowledge, and yet Perish; I may suffer much, and "lose much for him, parts of my Pleasures and Profits I may part with, in hopes of Salvation, and yet perish; I may be esteemed "by others, a Man zealous for Christ, and be loved and admired upon that account, and yet perish I may be a zealous Preacher of Christ and Salvation, and reprove others for their Neglect of both, and lament the Sin of the World with most bitter and passionate Expressions, and yet perish ; I may verily think that I set more by Christ and Salvation, than by anything else whatsoever, and yet be mistaken, and perish.

RESPONSE: Again, (a) By Common Grace, a Man may not only know, but love God also; and love him as Merciful and Gracious, as better than the Creature, as best for him yea, he may love God, under the Notion of the chiefest Good, and most desirable End, in whose Sight and Fruition everlasting Happiness consistent; and by Common Grace, he may believe in Christ, or desire him as a Saviour, to free him from every Sin, and yet perish. If the Case be so, I pray, what can a Regenerate Man do more? And how is it possible to form a right Distinction between Saving, and Common Grace? All this would be but cold Comfort to a disconsolate Soul, to tell him or indeed, anyone else that he may love God, believe in Christ; and that, tho' Belief and Love are real Acts, and physically true, and have a Being, yet they are morally defective and insincere, not the same Things which have the Promises made to them in the Gospel; and consequently, are no Evidences of Spiritual Life in the Soul.

Medieval Era Lapsarian Systems

Arminius' Reasons for Rejecting:

THIS DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION WAS/IS:

Repugnant to the nature of God,

Repugnant to the justice of God,

Repugnant to the goodness of God,

Contrary to the nature of man,

Diametrically opposed to the act of creation,

At hostility with the nature of eternal life,

Opposed to the nature of eternal death,

Inconsistent with the nature/properties of sin,

Repugnant to the nature of divine grace,

Injurious to the glory of God,

Highly dishonorable to Jesus Christ our Savior,

Hurtful to the salvation of men, and in open

hostility to the ministry of the Gospel.

THE LAMBETH ARTICLES

1. God from eternity hath *predestined* certain men unto life; certain men he hath reprobated.
2. The moving or efficient cause of *predestination* unto life is not the foresight of faith, or of perseverance, or of good works, or any thing that is in the person *predestinated*, but only the good will and pleasure of God.
3. There is *predestinated* a certain number of the *predestinate*, which can neither be augmented nor diminished.
4. Those who are not *predestinated* to salvation shall be necessarily damned for their sins.
5. A true, living, and justifying faith, and the Spirit of God justifying [sanctifying], isn't extinguished, falleth not away; it vanisheth not away in the elect, either finally or totally.
6. A man truly faithful, that is, such a one who is endued with a justifying faith, is certain, with the full assurance of faith, of the remission of his sins and of his everlasting salvation by Christ,
7. Saving grace is not given, is not granted, is not communicated to all men, by which they may be saved if they will.

8. No man can come unto Christ unless it shall be given unto him, and unless the Father shall draw him; and all men are not drawn by the Father, that they may come to the Son.

9. It is not in the will or power of everyone to be saved.*

**The Lambeth Articles were drawn up by Dr. William Whitaker, Regius Professor of Divinity in Cambridge, with input from Dr. Richard Fletcher (Bishop of London), Dr. Richard Vaughan (Bishop-elect of Bangor) and Humphrey Tyndall (Dean of Ely). The Articles were formally approved by the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. John Whitgift), the Archbishop of York (Dr. Matthew Hutton), the Bishop of London (Dr. Richard Fletcher), the Bishop-elect of Bangor (Dr. Richard Vaughan), and other prelates convened at Lambeth Palace, London (20 November, 1595). Dr. Whitgift, the Archbishop of Canterbury, sent the Lambeth Articles to the University of Cambridge a few days later (24 November, 1595), not as new laws and decrees, but as an explanation of certain points already established by the laws of the land. At the Hampton Court Conference of King James I and several prelates with the leaders of the Puritans (January, 1604), Dr. Reynolds made the request that "the nine orthodoxal assertions concluded on at Lambeth might be inserted into the Book of Articles." But the Lambeth Articles were never formally added to the Church of England's Thirty-Nine Articles (1563). They were, however, accepted by the Dublin Convocation of 1615 and engrafted on the Irish Articles (1615), which are believed to have been largely the work of James Ussher, who was to become Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland (1625-1656). In the Church of Ireland, the Lambeth Articles obtained for some time a semi-symbolical authority. It is stated that they were exhibited at the Dordt Synod (1618-1619) by the English deputies, as the judgment of the Church of England on the Arminian controversy.*

65 Errors of Predestination

01. Unconditional election is compromise with Calvinism.
02. Puts election before everything.
03. Limits salvation to a few.
04. Decreases the number saved.
05. It is non-progressive.
06. Produces fatalists.
07. Produces Hardshells.
08. Makes a hotbed for Universalists.
09. Causes infidels.
10. Puts all the responsibility on God.
11. It denies that men are born free and equal.
12. It destroys a free agency.
13. It will slacken our energies.
14. Sinners need feel absolutely no concern.

15. Christians should not worry.
16. Many people were never in any danger of being lost.
17. Many must go to Hell in spite of all they can do.
18. It lessens our love and respect for God.
19. Makes God's Word contradict itself.
20. Contradicts things already settled.
21. Puts Apostle Paul against the Bible.
22. Makes God partial.
23. Charges God with dishonesty.
24. Makes God unreasonable.
25. Makes God unjust.
26. Makes God a deceiver.
27. Non-elect thirst for salvation but have no chance.
28. Sends men to Hell for being non-elect.
29. Fights our own denomination. (Note: He's Baptist.)
30. Fights fraternalism.
31. Wants to run everything.
32. Discourages our best workers.
33. Stresses giving above everything.
34. Caused Gospel Competitive Missioners.
35. Puts too much stress on Joining the Church.

36. Non-elect never die in infancy.
37. No elect among heathens before Gospel reached.
38. Makes the Jews a puzzle.
39. All the elect are not saved.
40. All sins past, present & future forgiven when saved.
41. God does not pardon sins.
42. No use for sinners to pray.
43. Cuts the Devil out of a job.
44. Too much guess work.
45. "Hope" I am saved.
46. No "mays" or "mights."
47. Interferes with legitimate marriage.
48. Frustrates the second coming of Christ.
49. It nullifies the Judgment.
50. Opposes women's work.
51. More dangerous than straight Hardshellism.
52. Puts grace before everything.
53. Could be no unpardonable sin.
54. Causes radical changes in our revivals.
55. Kills the old-time revival.
56. Kills the evangelist's message.

- 57. Kills our prayers.
- 58. Kills our best songs.
- 59. Cuts out altar work.
- 60. Casts reflection on the old preachers.
- 61. Masses do not know the plan of salvation.
- 62. Destroys spirituality.
- 63. Kills all the emotion in religion.
- 64. Causes "Holy Rollers."
- 65. Contrary to our experience.

Source: "Sixty-Five Errors of Unconditional Election" by Everett G. Sisk, Baptist Seminary Instructor of the Little Bethel Baptist Association, written & published in 1925.

DISPUTING ELECTION

- Universalism & Reincarnation
- Salvation By Grace – Infant Inclusive
- Choice Conditioned By Imputed Faith

- **Salvation By Grace & Human Choice**

- Salvation Only To The Elect & All Infants
- Salvation Only To Elect & Elect Infants
- Fatalism: No Elect, No God, & No Hope

The Potter and His Vessels

God has molded each one of us into a vessel. But he has given each of us a mind of our own to either respect our maker (the Potter), or reject him.

There is a song we sing from time to time entitled "Have Thine Own Way." The first stanza of the song says "Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way! Thou art the Potter; I am the clay. Mold me and make me After Thy will, While I am waiting, Yielded and still." What a beautiful song this is and when we as God's creation fully realize and understand that we are simply God's vessels and that he is the Potter (our maker), then we can humble ourselves to the point of doing whatever service we have been molded to do for the Lord!

The Vessels of God

God is truly our Potter. We can read this in the book of Jeremiah 18 verses 1-12, and also in Romans 9:22 where Paul says, "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction . . ." Here, Paul likens us to the vessels of God and that is truly what we are. Have you ever noticed a potter working with his clay, molding that clay into a fine vessel? There is a lot of time and patience that is involved in the potter's work. Likewise, God has spent much time and effort in the creation of his vessels, you and me. In the verses pointed out above in Jeremiah and in Romans we can read where God is long-suffering with his vessels and does the very best he can with them. It is through us (his vessels) that we can see the riches of God's glory. "And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory" (Rom. 9:23).

There are all kinds of vessels out there. There are some vessels of wrath (Rom 9:22), and there are even dishonorable vessels. Paul says, "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" (Rom. 9:21). He echoes those same words in 2 Timothy 2:20. But we can see from Romans 9:21 that there are also vessels of honor and of mercy in Romans 9:23.

We Are Individual Vessels Made By God

God has molded each one of us into a vessel. But he has given each of us a mind of our own to either respect our maker (the Potter), or reject him. The choice is entirely left up to us. That is why it is so important for us to realize that had it not been for "the Potter," we would not even be here today. Therefore, knowing this, why is it that so many still choose not to honor the very one who allowed us this opportunity to live and enjoy our short time on this beautiful earth that he also created? We can become honorable vessels unto the Lord by heeding the call. Paul says in Romans 9:23-24: "And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" One heeds the call of God by simply obeying his commandments (John 14:15).

Characteristics of An Honorable Vessel

The characteristics of an honorable vessel is that one is sanctified, fit for use, and prepared for all good works. This is what the apostle Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:21: "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work." One must purge himself from evil and join himself with doing the things of honor, approved unto God almighty! Then when one proves himself to be a vessel of honor unto the Lord certain glory will result as Paul said in Romans 9:23. What is that glory? The same glory as Paul was sensing when he told Timothy, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8). When we prove ourselves a worthy vessel, one that is serving the purpose that God designed for us to do, then we can enjoy a life eternal with God our Potter. But when we decide to do our own thing and rebel against our maker then our end is certain destruction (Rom. 9:22). Why not let "The Potter" (God) have his own way with his vessel (you and me)? – *Richie Thetford*

*Calvin's Contribution To The
Destiny & Determinism Debate:
HUMAN MORAL RESPONSIBILITY*

Reformation Theology

*Fate & Free Will:
Agent Causation
- Versus -
Causal Determinism
- Versus -
Classical Compatibilism*

Reformation Theology

THE DIVINE OMNISCIENCE

- *“We must grant that God foresees nothing as absolutely and inevitably certain which he has made contingent; and because he has designed it to be contingent, therefore, he can not know it as absolutely and inevitably certain. I conclude that God, although omniscient, is not obliged, in consequence of this, to know all that he can know, no more than he is obliged, because he is omnipotent, to do all that he can do.”
(Adam Clarke, Commentary on Ac. 2:47).*

What about verses that suggest that God has learned something He didn't know?

Anthropomorphic expressions of God's response to man's actions.

- *And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. (Genesis 11:5;)*
- *“I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.”
(Gen. 18:21)*

Anthropomorphic expressions of God's will in revelation

- *“And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, and it did not come into My mind. (Jeremiah 7:31)*
- *and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, a thing which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it ever enter My mind; (Jeremiah 19:5)*
- *“And they built the high places of Baal that are in the valley of Ben-hinnom to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I had not commanded them nor had it entered My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin. (Jeremiah 32:35)*

*God's foreknowledge is prescient,
knowing reality before it is real,
people before they exist, and days
and events before they occur.*

- He knows what His purpose is
- *The counsel of the Lord stands forever,
the plans of His heart from generation
to generation. (Psalm 33:11)*

Difficulties with God's foreknowledge

Intro: The doctrine of God's omniscience is a powerful truth; but it is also a Truth from which men have derived gross misconceptions and misunderstandings. Let's consider three viewpoints together.

Is God's foreknowledge absolute and predetermining?

John Calvin, following Augustine, affirmed that to whatever extent God knows man's action, he does then also make them necessary. Hence, man's actions are foreordained of God; some are foreordained to life while others are foreordained to salvation.

“All are not creation on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestined to life or to death. This God has testified, not only in the case of single individuals; he has also given a specimen of it in the whole posterity of Abraham, to make it plain that the future condition of each nation was entirely at his disposal.” (Institutes, Book 3, Chapter 21, Sec. 5 as quoted in McGuiggan's commentary on Romans) “Reformation theology has contended that the divine foreknowledge contains the ingredient of divine determination. The Reformers claimed that God indeed foreknows who will believe, because believing in Christ is not a human achievement, but a divine gift imparted to men by God's grace and Spirit. Thus God's foreknowledge is not merely prescience, but knowledge that itself determines the event. That is, in Reformation thought what God foreknows He foreordains.” (ISBE)

It is true that God has foreseen what in His counsels He will do.

God foreknew that His Son would die for the sins of mankind. This Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death. (Acts 2:23)

God foreknew and thus selected those who believed in Him would be His people.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ... to those who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure. (1 Peter 1:1-2)

Peter does not affirm that God's choice was dependent upon the merit of those who believed or that God foresaw something in people that prompted His choice. He only affirms that God set the boundaries of salvation and those to whom He writes had fulfilled God's purpose by believing in Jesus. God foreknew that those He chose would have an inheritance with Him. Also, we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, (Ephesians 1:11)

When God exercised His sovereign right to choose who His people would be and to set the terms of their inclusion, there is in that sense a predestination or foreordination that occurs. This no one can deny and the Bible plainly affirms.

But the Calvinistic doctrine of foreordination and election contradicts Biblical affirmations about both man and God.

It contradicts God's own stated will for all mankind. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

It contradicts God's statements about man's accountability and responsibility to respond to God. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. (Matthew 23:37) As McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia appropriately says concerning the actions of creatures endowed with free will: "If such actions do not take place then we reach a necessitating eternal decree, which in fact, the predestinarian contends of; but it unfortunately brings after its consequences which no subtleties have ever been able to shake off—that the only actor in the universe is God himself, and that the only distinction among events is that one class is brought to pass by God directly and the other indirectly, not by the agency, but by the mere instrumentality, of His creatures." (Watson)

Must we conclude God's foreknowledge is limited because of the nature of free will?

One response is to contend God's omniscience must be qualified to mean "God knows what He chooses to know", affirming that God chooses not to know contingent events such as acts of man's free moral agency. Brents, in a vigorous anti-Calvinistic work, argues that God simply does not know what men may choose to do. He ends his chapter on God's foreknowledge by quoting Adam Clarke:

"We must grant that God foresees nothing as absolutely and inevitably certain which he has made contingent; and because he has designed it to be contingent, therefore, he cannot know it as absolutely and inevitably certain. I conclude that God, although omniscient, is not obliged, in consequence of this, to know all that he can know, no more than he is obliged, because he is omnipotent, to do all that he can do." (Commentary Acts 2:47). This is unsatisfactory because the Scripture clearly reveal that God foreknew certain things that require knowledge of individual decisions.

That Pharaoh would harden his heart (Exodus 7:4).

That Cyrus would decree the return of the Israelites (Isaiah 44:28).

That the Jewish people would reject His Son and die for man's sin (Acts 2:23).

That God knows who the saved will be (Revelation 17:8).

What about verses that suggest that God has learned something He didn't know?

Anthropomorphic expressions of God's response to man's actions.

And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. (Genesis 11:5;) "I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know." (Genesis 18:21)

Did God have to come to earth to know what men were doing?

Surely not in view of texts that show that He sees all. Hence, these expressions are anthropomorphic, suggesting to Abraham that God's judgment of the city was founded on actual knowledge obtained by first-hand experience. And he said,

"Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." (Genesis 22:12)

Did God not know whether Abraham would sacrifice His son? Is it possible that the expression anthropomorphically suggests a confirmation & a promise, like punishment of Sodom and Gomorrah, based on actual first-hand experience? In both texts, God communicates to His creatures in this way that He is fully aware of their attitudes/actions.

Anthropomorphic expressions of God's will in revelation.

"And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, and it did not come into My mind. (Jeremiah 7:31) and have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as burnt offerings to Baal, a thing which I never commanded or spoke of, nor did it ever enter My mind; (Jeremiah 19:5)

"And they built the high places of Baal that are in the valley of Ben-hinnom to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I had not commanded them nor had it entered My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin. (Jeremiah 32:35)

The point of all these texts is that the activity of human sacrifice was not a part of God's deliberative purpose for man in commanding man's worship and service.

God's foreknowledge is complete but not determinative.

Perhaps a better solution is to affirm that God's foreknowledge is prescient, knowing reality before it is real, people before they exist, and days and events before they occur. He knows what His purpose is. The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation. (Psalm 33:11)

He knows through whom those purposes would be accomplished. And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; for though the twins were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger." (Romans 9:10-12)

He knows the outcome of the redemptive plan not merely in theoretical terms but with specificity to individuals...

I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from Thee, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth. Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Thy book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them. (Psalm 139) And those who dwell on the earth will wonder, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come. (Revelation 17:8)

It is not necessary to make God's knowledge of man's actions causative. Simply because God knows what men may do doesn't cause the action to take place. Man still has freedom of will. He is the cause of his actions; but God knows the action. His knowledge of man's choices does not make the outcome necessary but it does make it certain because God's knowledge is perfect. In this view God's knowledge is complete; mankind's free will is preserved. There is an adequate basis for prophetic statements in Scripture.

How God knows these things is not explained to us; but perhaps it is a quality of God's eternal nature. He lives in the eternal now; therefore, both past, present, and future (dimensions of time) are not relevant in describing Him.

Conclusion: Man's understanding or misunderstanding of the omniscience of God has played a key role in the forging of the doctrine of salvation found in many churches. Even if God knows the outcome of His redemptive plan, each person must exercise his free will. You are not destined to perish in hell by God's choice; but we may very well be destined for such a place by our choice! We don't need to wait for God to do something. He has done all that His nature allows to save our souls. Now we must decide whether we will be one of those who He elected to salvation or whether we are a vessel of wrath endured by God for final destruction. I would hate to think that I lived my whole life only, for it to be said about me, that God endured my existence only so He could save others around me, but not me!

1 Peter 1:1-2 – Foreknowledge

By Wayne Jackson

In the salutation of his first letter, Peter wrote: “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect. . . according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:1,2). Note that the epistle is addressed to “the elect.” The Bible theme of election has been made unnecessarily obscure by baseless theological theories (e.g., Calvinism, which teaches that God, before the creation of the world, arbitrarily elected those who would be lost and saved, irrespective of obedience or disobedience on their part). There are several facts regarding this matter suggested in this context.

1. Election is according to the *foreknowledge* of God. This simply means that God, before the foundation of the world, elected (chose, determined) to provide a plan of redemption for man (whom he knew would fall from his initial holy estate), and that this choosing would be upon the basis of those who are “in him” (Christ) as opposed to those who are not (Ephesians 1:4).
2. From the divine side, election is accomplished by virtue of the *sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*. This is a reference to the atoning death of the Son of God, who was foreshadowed by the animal offerings of the Old Testament economy (cf. Exodus 24:8; Hebrews 9:13,14). Jesus’ death satisfied the justice of God which demanded the payment for the penalty of sin (cf. Romans 3:24-26).
3. Our election involves a *sanctification of the Spirit*, i.e., by means of the Spirit’s guidance (through the word of God – John 17:17; Ephesians 5:26; 6:17; 1 Thessalonians 1:4,5; 2 Thessalonians 2:13,14) we learn of our need to be sanctified (separated from the world unto God’s service), hence, we are led to accept the heavenly election.
4. The design of Jehovah’s interest in our behalf is that we might be motivated *unto obedience*, since it is by means of our obedience that our souls are purified. (1 Peter 1:22).

So, election involves: God’s redemptive plan, Christ’s sacrificial death, the Holy Spirit’s revelation of the truth, and man’s obedience to the same!



PREDESTINATION IN HISTORY

Augustine (354-430)

He was the Bishop of Hippo (a city in Northern Africa, present-day Annaba, Algeria). An influential Christian thinker, his works continue to be studied. In his book *Confessions*, Augustine concluded, among many other things, that every area of the human nature was corrupted by the effects of sin.

Martin Luther (1483-1546)

As a German priest and professor of theology, his objections to church doctrine and practice initiated the Reformation. In *The Bondage of the Will*, Luther debated the great philosopher Erasmus of Rotterdam. Luther argued that original sin—Adam and Eve's sin in Eden—had so corrupted human nature, that now unaided, we are unable to do any good. Any righteousness we may have comes from God's grace.

John Calvin (1509-1564)

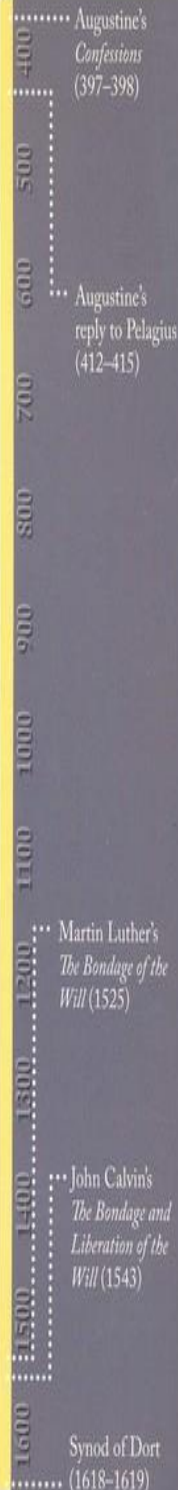
As a Reformer, Calvin had a profound influence on Protestant theology. Calvin believed that all the glory of salvation belonged to God. Calvin brought God's sovereignty and mercy together in the historical doctrine of predestination: After the fall, humanity stood condemned before God. In his mercy, God decided to save many people from this condemnation; in his sovereignty, God chose and called those who would be saved. Humans, being unable to reach out to God, received God's salvation without deserving it. That this election happens according to God's will is proof of God's sovereignty, mercy, and love. Calvin's views are well presented in his debate with the Dutch theologian Albert Pighius and in his book *The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*.

Reformed churches

These are churches that follow Calvinistic teachings. They originated in countries like the Netherlands, Switzerland, France, and Germany. The Presbyterian churches, also Calvinistic, originated in the United Kingdom.

Synod of Dort (1618-1619)

Almost ten years after the death of Arminius (see next page), the Reformed theologians in the Netherlands called a Synod (assembly) in the town of Dordrecht. This synod responded to a document named "The Remonstrance of 1610," which Arminius's disciples drafted. The *Canons of Dort*, a confessional document for Reformed churches, outlines their view on God's sovereignty, election, grace, and salvation.



FREE WILL IN HISTORY

Pelagius (354-420/440)

Pelagius argued that sin had no effects on human nature. In his view, humans retained their ability to choose between good and evil. Since humans could choose good, Pelagius proposed that humans could act in a way that they can obtain God's grace. This grace would lead them to salvation and holiness. The church agreed with Augustine and declared Pelagius's teaching heretical.

Erasmus of Rotterdam

(1466-1536). He was a Dutch scholar, known for his humanist and theological works. Although an early sympathizer of Luther's ideas, Erasmus objected to Luther's views about human free will. He presents his views in his book, *The Freedom of the Will*.

Albert Pighius

(1490-1542). He was a Dutch Catholic theologian, mathematician, and astronomer. Among his works, Pighius argued against the Reformation. In his *Ten Books on Human Free Choice and Divine Grace*, Pighius argued that original sin did not corrupt human nature.

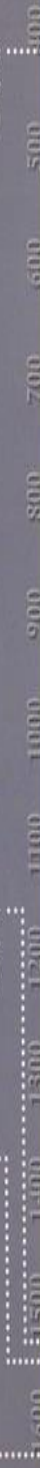
Arminius (1560-1609)

Arminius agreed with Calvin and the other Reformers that God's grace is essential for the beginning, the continuation, and consummation of faith. He agreed that human nature was so tainted that it is impossible for people to seek God on their own. However, Arminius considered that Christ's death conveys grace to all people. This grace, which John Wesley later called "prevenient grace," enables people to choose or reject God's offer of salvation. Arminius rejected Pelagius's views, in favor of the position that, although God's prevenient grace allows people to exercise their free will, humans cannot do such choosing without God's grace.

Remonstrants


The term was used for Arminius's students who drafted the strong protest against the Reformed church's teachings about election, predestination, and God's grace. Their writing became the basis for Arminian theology that many still hold.

Pelagius's response to Augustine (c. 405)






FREE WILL
...
"...CHOOSE TODAY WHOM YOU WILL SERVE"
- JOSHUA 24:15



PREDESTINATION
...
"THOSE WHOM HE FOREKNEW, HE ALSO PREDESTINED..."
- ROMANS 8:29



THE ORIGINATORS

JACOBUS ARMINIUS

JOHN CALVIN

N.T WRIGHT
BILL JOHNSON
JOHN WESLEY

MODERN DAY CHAMPIONS

TIM KELLER
JOHN PIPER
MATT CHANDLER

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

FREE WILL IS THE POWER AND ABILITY TO MAKE CHOICES.

PREDESTINATION IS THE DIVINE PREDETERMINING OF DESTINY.



FW // EXAMPLE

MAN IS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS DECISIONS. IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN ADAM AND EVE WERE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR SINFUL CHOICE. C.S.LEWIS: "THE HAPPINESS WHICH GOD DESIGNS FOR HIS HIGHER CREATURES IS THE HAPPINESS OF BEING FREELY, VOLUNTARILY UNITED TO HIM AND TO EACH OTHER IN AN ECSTASY OF LOVE"

PD // EXAMPLE

THERE ARE NO ACCIDENTS. EVERYTHING IS ON PURPOSE AND PART OF GOD'S PLAN. "BEFORE I FORMED YOU IN THE WOMB I KNEW YOU" (JEREMIAH 1:5) RC SPROUL: WHAT PREDESTINATION MEANS, IN ITS MOST ELEMENTARY FORM, IS THAT OUR FINAL DESTINATION, HEAVEN OR HELL, IS DECIDED BY GOD NOT ONLY BEFORE WE GET THERE, BUT BEFORE WE ARE EVEN BORN. IT TEACHES THAT OUR ULTIMATE DESTINY IS IN THE HANDS OF GOD.

Issue 1: FREE WILL AND TOTAL INABILITY

What are the effects of sin in humanity? How does human sin relate to human free will? Can humans choose to move closer to God on their own?

Points of Agreement

Christians agree that the effect of sin on the human nature is fatal and reaches every area of our nature. Arminians and Calvinists agree on the total inability or depravity of humanity. In other words, total inability means that without the prior intervention of God's grace, humans cannot come to him on their own. Total depravity does not mean that humans are as sinful or evil as they can be. It means that the entirety of the human being is tainted, in one way or another, by sin.

Biblical Passages

- ✘ *As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one" (Rom. 3:10-12).*
- ✘ *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins (Eph 2:1).*

DEPRAVITY

Human sin affects every area of humanity in every person. It means that people continue to make choices, but every choice is tainted by the effects of sin.

Arminianism

Although the effects of sin are devastating, God did not leave humans in that helpless state. God extended his grace to all humans to enable them to come to him. This measure of grace, called "prevenient grace," allows human free will to accept God's call. However, the will is also free to reject this call. Faith, then, as a gift of God, grants the power to believe. However, people must choose to exercise this faith in the act of belief. Until this faith is exercised, the Holy Spirit does not make a new heart. Faith, then, precedes the new birth.

Before God's graceful intervention, humans are unable to believe. Once God's grace, "prevenient grace," arrives, people are enabled to believe or to reject. Humans are held accountable based on their free choice of accepting or rejecting God's call.

Some Arminians believe that the effects of sin, although damaging to the extreme, were not fatal. Human nature retained a faint pulse and remained alive. Most Arminians today do not hold this view.

Biblical Passages

- ✦ *And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself (John 12:32).*
- ✦ *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9).*
- ✦ *This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:3-4).*

FREE WILL OR PREDESTINATION?

The expression "being saved" points to the beginning of a wonderful relationship with God. These words mean much to Christians because they encompass much: A new relationship with God and other people, the renewal of our hearts and minds, the growth of faith and obedience in our lives, and much more. How does this salvation happen? More importantly, once we are saved, can we lose our salvation? Is sharing the good news of the gospel even necessary? Do we have to do anything to be saved?

Before seeing two ways to answer these questions, let's focus on the points with which all Christians agree. Regarding God's merciful work of salvation, Christians agree that:

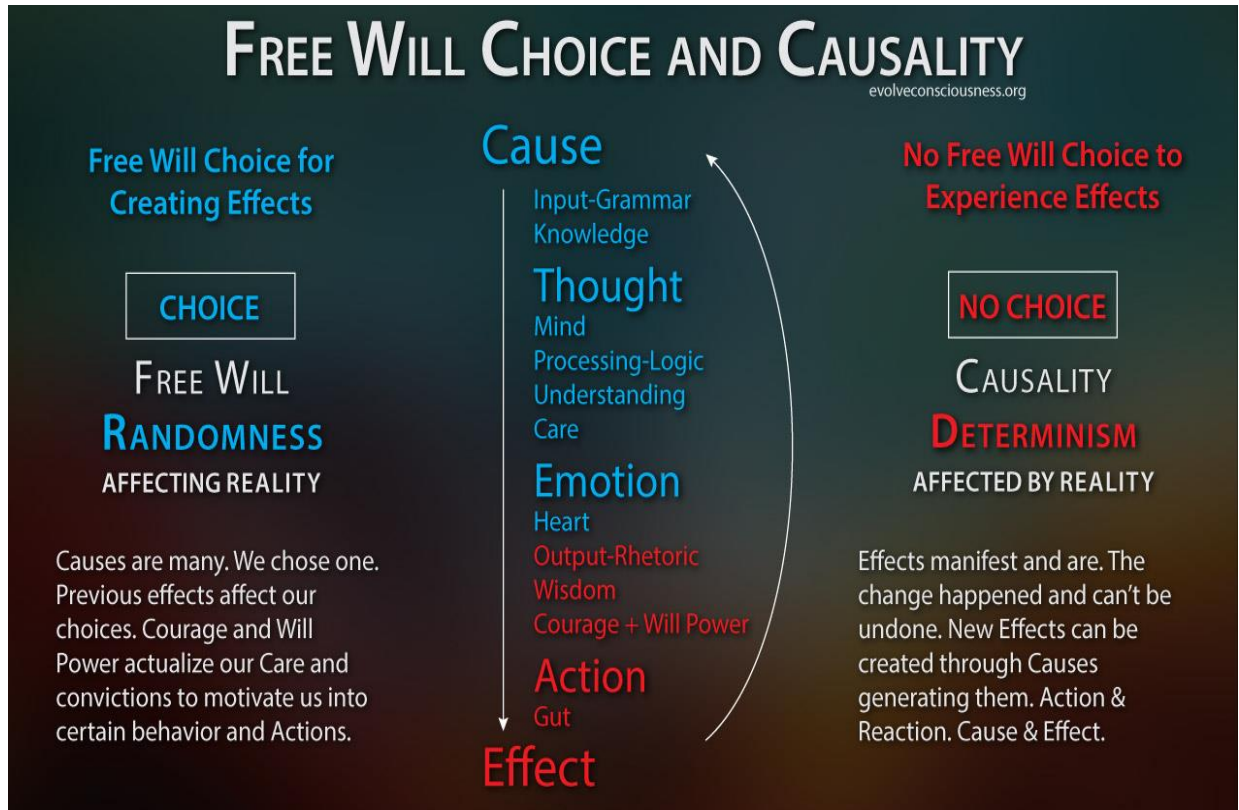
1. Because of sin, all humans need God's grace.
2. Salvation from sin and condemnation is an act of God.
3. Salvation is accomplished only by grace through faith in Christ.
4. Works, good works or works of the Law, cannot lead one to salvation.

However, Christians do not agree on how God's sovereignty and human freedom (free will) relate to each other in connection to salvation. Two views answer these questions quite differently: from a Calvinistic (predestination) or an Arminian view (free will). Although the answers available are not simple, they are important for our understanding of God's mission in the world and our responsibility as believers.

SIDE-BY-SIDE COMPARISON

This pamphlet will define and explain the terms in the following table.

| See: | Arminianism | Calvinism |
|----------|---|---|
| p. 4-5 | Total depravity and free will (also called human ability) | Total depravity, also called "radical depravity" or "total inability" |
| p. 6-7 | Conditional election | Unconditional election, also called "sovereign election" |
| p. 9-10 | Universal redemption (also called general atonement) | Limited atonement, also called "particular, purposeful, or definite atonement" |
| p. 10-11 | Grace can be resisted | Irresistible grace, also called "efficacious or effectual grace" |
| p. 12-13 | Possibility of falling from grace | Perseverance of the saints, also called "preservation of the saints or believers" |



FUTILITY COMPARED

FATALISM

If it is fated for you to recover from this illness, then you will recover whether you call a doctor or not. Likewise, if you are fated not to recover, you will not do so whether you call a doctor or not. But either it is fated that you will recover from this illness, or it is fated that you will not recover. Therefore it is futile to consult a doctor.

DETERMINISM

If you are caused to recover from this illness, calling a doctor might be part of that causality. Likewise, if you are caused not to recover, not calling the doctor might be part of that causality. But either it is that you will be caused to recover from this illness, or you will be caused to not recover. Since calling a doctor might be a cause of your recovery, it isn't futile to consult a doctor.

DETERMINISM OR FREE-WILL?

THE NATURE AND IMPLICATIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY. The charge is, again, that Determinism robs praise and blame and responsibility of all meaning, and reduces them to mere verbal expressions which some may mistake for the equivalents of reality, but which clearer thinkers will estimate at their true worth. What is the use of praising or blaming if each one does what heredity, constitution, and environment compels? Why punish a man for being what he is? Why hold him responsible for the expressions of a character provided for him, and for the influence of an environment which he had no part in forming? So the string of questions run on. None of them, it may safely be said, would ever be asked if all properly realized the precise meaning and application of the terms employed. For as with the previous terms examined, it is an acceptance of Indeterminism that would rob these words of all value. Rationally conceived they are not only consonant with Determinism, but each of them implies it.

DETERMINISM AND CHARACTER.

The whole of education, the whole of the discipline of life, is thus based upon the determination of conduct by circumstances and character. If the principle of cause and effect does not fully apply to conduct, all our training is so much waste of time. But it is because we cannot really think of the past not influencing the present, once we bring the two into relation, that we, Determinist and Indeterminist alike, proceed with our deterministic methods of training, and in this instance at least wisdom is justified of her children. Finally, if the above be granted, can we longer attach meaning to the expression that man forms his own character? Well, if it means that a man has any share in his psychic endowments, or that they being what they are at any given time he could at that time act differently from the way in which he does act, the expression is meaningless. It is absolute nonsense. But in another sense it does convey an important truth. We must, however, always bear in mind that in speaking of a man's character we are not dealing with two things, but with one thing. The character is the man, the man is the character. Or to be quite accurate, body and mind, physical and psychical qualities together, form the man, and any separation of these is for purposes of analysis and study only. If we say, then, that a man is master of his own character, or that a man may mould his own character, we do not imply the existence of an independent entity moulding or mastering something else. We are saying no more than that every experience carries its resultant into the sum of character. Action generates habit, and habit means a more or less permanent modification of character. What a man is, is the outcome of what he has been, and a perception of this truth no more conflicts with the principles of Determinism as explained, than a stone being intercepted in its fall down the side of a hill by lodging against a tree is an infraction of the law of gravitation. In this sense, using figurative language, a man may be said to be master of himself. What he does proceeds from himself; it is the expression of his character, and his doing cuts deeper the grooves of habit, and so makes more certain the performance of similar actions in the future. It is the fact of motive springing from character which determines the act that makes the man its author. And knowledge of this supplies him with, not alone the most powerful incentive towards the determination of his own character, but, what is equally important, the only method whereby to fashion the character of others.

Cohen, Chapman. Determinism or Free-Will? . Kindle Edition Copy

DETERMINISM VS. FATALISM

COMPARISON

DETERMINISM

FATALISM

Incompatible with "Free Will"

Dependent on causality.

The future is causally determined.

What we think, say, and do is part of the causal process.

Does not lead to defeatism, as our conscious thought and action leads to future events.

We have an effect on our future outcome.

Often a secular understanding of causality.

Causality and what it implies can be logically inferred.



Not dependent on causality.

The future is "fated" or destined.

We are fated regardless of what we think, say, or do.

Often leads to defeatist attitudes, as what we think or do doesn't matter to the fated future.

We are powerless to affect our future.

Often a religious idea of being fated by a deity or god.

No logical evidence for fatalism.



THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Be careful of studies that mix fatalistic attitudes of lacking free will with deterministic understandings of the lack of free will. These are not the same thing.

Non-caused events do not help grant free will. Indeterminism is equally as incompatible as determinism and more problematic to willing.



FUTILITY COMPARED

FATALISM

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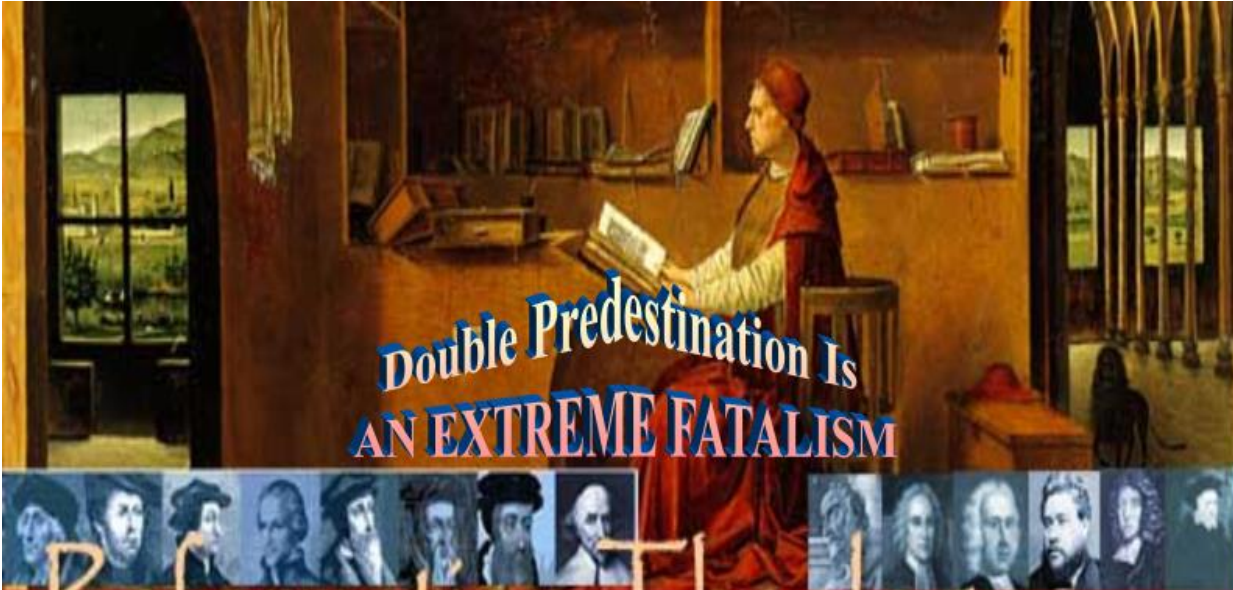


Scrutinizing Calvinism


You Apologetics 

philosophies of human freedom

| | <i>ultimate origin of choice</i> | <i>freedom of choice</i> | <i>outcome</i> |
|----------------------------|--|--|---|
| Hard determinism | Divine will | human free will doesn't exist, everything is predetermined | necessarily beyond human control |
| Soft determinism | Divine agency directing human desires | free to act in accordance with the strongest natural inclination | inevitably beyond human control |
| Hard libertarianism | human agency | absolutely free to choose or refrain from a choice | contingent, always alternative |
| Soft libertarianism | human agency concurrent with human character | free to choose and refrain in freedom-giving circumstances | contingency depending on the range of options |



Double Predestination Is AN EXTREME FATALISM



Reformation Theology

CALVIN ADOPTS CLASSIC FATALISM

- ❖ **Greek philosopher Leucippus claim assuredly –**
”Nothing happens at random, but everything for a reason and by necessity.”
- ❖ **Fatalism is a doctrine that’s tied to the idea of fate. It maintains that certain events are bound to happen no matter what one does, that the outcome is inevitable.**
- ❖ **Fate plays a central role in Homer’s epic poem the Iliad, dating back to about 750 BC. In the Iliad, the fatalistic worldview begins to get personified as fate, and fate determines things. This is somehow separate from the gods who are discussed elsewhere in the poem.**
- ❖ **Greek Gods Versus Fate. The Syrian philosopher Lucian exposes these tensions in his wonderful satire *Zeus Catechized*. The first thing he does is point out how strange it is to make sacrifices to the gods if everything is already set in stone by fate. The work precedes the dialogue between his characters Cyniscus and Zeus.**
- ❖ **Cyniscus says to Zeus: *If the Fates rule everything... why do men sacrifice to you gods and make you great offerings of cattle, praying to receive blessings from you? I really don’t see what benefit we can derive from this precaution, if it is impossible for us through our prayers either to get what is bad averted or to secure any blessing whatever by the gift of the gods.***

- ❖ **Lucian goes on to point out that there are implications for responsibility and he even questions the propriety of punishment. “If a man slay, it is [Fate] who slays, and if he robs temples , he only does it under orders.”**
- ❖ **The Reach of Fate. The Greek notion of fate is that for the Greek theologians and philosophers, the gods and fate didn't dictate every little behavior of the mortals. Instead, it was the major life events like death, marriage, and injury, and the outcome of a war that were fated.**
- ❖ **Fate Versus Free Will. In Greek cosmology, in the Greek's view of the universe, fate is probably just local fate. It's fate for a particular life event. There can be an element of free will in the choices that somebody makes on the path to achieving their fate. There is, however, a lurking worry here about control. If my action – if my outcome – is fated by the gods, do I really have control over the action? Does that really count as free will?**

- Shaun Nichols Free Will & Determination Lecture

Jonathan Edwards: Free Will Philosophical Argument

When Edwards applies to those who have “human understanding in exercise,” he constructs a reasoned argument upon the subject of free will that deserves much admiration for its tight, logical connection and its vigorous statement. Indeed, from the point of view of the history of ideas, as well as from the perspective of persons who are persuaded that the latest is bound to be the most advanced philosophy, it is striking that two hundred years ago Edwards was saying the same thing that is being said today, with variation and often not so well, by the latest analysts of the determinist school. A brief summary of the agreement between Edwards’ opinions and those of many present-day philosophers needs to note at least the following crucial points: (1) Since ordinary language is notoriously inexact, “freedom” and all other terms to be used in this discussion must be carefully defined. Freedom means the ability to do what we will, or according to our pleasure. (2) That men indubitably have such freedom, and only such freedom, can be demonstrated by an exhaustive analysis of an act of volition. In defining freedom and analyzing the nature of an act of volition, questions about what *goes before* an act of willing should not be raised. By *placing brackets around* all such questions and removing them from consideration, we can be sure of sticking close to the actual *experience* of freedom and not be tempted to import into the discussion notions of freedom that are the product of confused metaphysical speculation. (3) Not only is the determination of action by will, motive, or pleasure of the agent consistent with morality, but morality actually requires determinism, since law and commandment, praise and blame apply to the motive or inclination inherent in the willing agent. (4) There can be no event without a cause. (Here, consciously or unconsciously, the brackets are removed and both Edwards and contemporary determinists introduce consideration of events before the act of willing.) There are no grounds for supposing a “pure ego” intervening from without to influence the course of voluntary action. (5) In speaking of causation, however, it is the *connection* or *correlation* between antecedent and consequent rather than efficient causation that we should have in mind. (6) Moreover, *moral* necessity needs to be distinguished from *natural* necessity, and *determinism* from *compulsion*. Determinism and moral necessity are consistent with praiseworthiness and blameworthiness (indeed, they require it), while compulsion and natural necessity are not.

Now, Jonathan Edwards was not merely a rationalist; Puritanism was also his heritage. He even states that he “should not take it at all amiss, to be called a Calvinist, for distinction’s sake: though I utterly disclaim a dependence on Calvin” (p. 131). Therefore, the foregoing summary of the agreement between Edwards and present-day determinists perhaps suggests the question whether after all “the wonderful one-hoss shay, / That was built in such a logical way / It ran a hundred years to the day” ever actually “went to pieces all at once,—” Does not a wheel or a splinter off the Deacon’s Masterpiece continue on among philosophical determinists today? One may raise this question without forgetting their heritage from Spinoza, Hobbes, and Hume, and without ignoring the original repair work Edwards did on the “shay.”¹

¹ Edwards, J. (2009). [Freedom of the Will](#). (H. S. Stout & P. Ramsey, Eds.) (Revised Edition, Vol. 1, pp. 11–12). New Haven; London: Yale University Press.

CONCEALED CALVIN: Double Predestination and The Abominable Fantasy -

“God hereby indirectly glorifies his grace on the vessels of mercy. — The saints in heaven will behold the torments of the damned: “the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.” Isa. 66:24, “And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.” And in Rev. 14:10 it is said, that they shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. So they will be tormented in the presence also of the glorified saints.

Hereby the saints will be made the more sensible how great their salvation is. When they shall see how great the misery is from which God has saved them, and how great a difference he has made between their state and the state of others, who were by nature (and perhaps for a time by practice) no more sinful and ill-deserving than any, it will give them a greater sense of the wonderfulness of God’s grace to them. Every time they look upon the damned, it will excite in them a lively and admiring sense of the grace of God, in making them so to differ. This the apostle informs us is one end of the damnation of ungodly men; Rom. 9:22-23, “What if God willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?” The view of the misery of the damned will double the ardor of the love and gratitude of the saints in heaven.

The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints forever. It will not only make them more sensible of the greatness and freeness of the grace of God in their happiness, but it will really make their happiness the greater, as it will make them more sensible of their own happiness. It will give them a more lively relish of it: it will make them prize it more. When they see others, who were of the same nature and born under the same circumstances, plunged in such misery, and they so distinguished, it will make them sensible how happy they are. A sense of the opposite misery, in all cases, greatly increases the relish of any joy or pleasure. The sight of the wonderful power, the great and dreadful majesty, and awful justice and holiness of God, manifested in the eternal punishment of ungodly men, will make them prize his favor and love vastly the more. And they will be so much the more happy in the enjoyment of it.” – JONATHAN EDWARDS

Four Views Of Faith

Faith in God, and all involved in it, is indispensable to pleasing him (Heb. 11:6). Its importance can be seen in the fact that it is the means by which the grace of God is appropriated (Eph. 2:8-9); it is the principle by which the Christian lives (Gal. 2:20); it governs the manner of our daily walk in life (2 Cor. 5:17); and it is an integral part of the armor of the Christian (Eph. 6:16). There is much confusion among religions as to what faith is and how it is obtained. Many think faith comes through feelings, some unusual emotional experience, or even a dream. Others have the false concept that faith comes through prayer. At least four views of faith are much in evidence today.

First is the **rationalistic view** of faith - the assent of the mind to a demonstrated truth. "The practice of guiding one's opinions and actions solely by what is considered reasonable" (Webster). This false view of faith demands that a thing be demonstrated before accepted. If it is not "reasonable" to the human mind, then it must be rejected. The rationalist would reject every miracle because he has not seen one. True faith cannot be put into a test tube; it has to do with "unseen things" (Heb. 11:1, 3).

Second is the **legalistic view** of faith. This conceives a system of good works devised by man which induces God to supply the faith that is lacking. "Conforming to a code of deeds and observances as a means of justification" (Webster). The reasoning is this: if I just do the best I can, God will make up the difference. This false concept has resulted in the counting of beads, offering human sacrifices, forbidding to marry, abstaining from meats, etc. At the judgment, Jesus will say to those who devise their own works, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (without law or faith) (Matt. 7:21-23).

Third is the **fatalistic view** of faith. This false view regards faith as a grace imparted by God and, if faith is withheld, it is not the fault of the sinner who refuses to believe. The fatalist leaves faith entirely up to the Lord who either bestows or denies it. There is no individual responsibility involved, but all events are determined by fate.

Fourth is the **realistic view** of faith. Webster defines reality as, "the character of being true to life or to fact; someone or something real; an actual person, event, situation, or the like." The realist believes that "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). He believes that God has presented in His word the record concerning His Son, and men must believe that record. He places the most favorable construction upon what the Bible teaches and anticipates the best possible outcome if he accepts and obeys (Mk. 16:15-16; Rev. 2: 10). His faith is real! What is your view of faith? – Austin Mobley, Guardian of Truth

Two Dangers of Christian Fatalism

By Ray Hollenbach



“Everything happens for a reason.” Perhaps you’ve heard that before. Perhaps you’ve said it. I’d like to suggest that there’s a world of difference between “Everything happens for a reason,” and “God gives reason to everything that happens.” The first is Christian superstition; the second declares the glory of God.

The idea that God is somehow pulling the levers behind the screen of life is what I call Christian fatalism: God is all-powerful. His will cannot be denied. Therefore, everything that happens must have been part of his plan from the beginning. He was behind everything all along. Isn’t God great? It’s true: God does manage to draw wonderful outcomes from the foolishness of men. It is also true that the glory of God’s power and wisdom is frequently on display in human affairs *in spite* of our choices, not *because* of them. Part of the glory of God is his ability to accomplish his will in the midst of the complexity of a billion human choices. He does not *over-rule* our lives. He works *within* them. He is forgiving, patient, and kind. He knows our weaknesses and chooses to partner with us anyway. What some mean for evil, God turns into good. But he is never the author of that evil.

The twin dangers of Christian fatalism are that believers—who ought to be disciples—first come to believe that their sinful choices have been the will of God all along, and second, believers are tempted to believe that whatever happens in life must be ordained by God. **The first danger** strips away responsibility for our choices and undermines the call of God to repentance as a way of life. Repentance is not simply the doorway into life with God; it is the hallway as well. The New Testament word for repentance is *metanoia*, which means simply to change one’s mind, or even better, to rethink our way of life. This rethinking should be an on-going way of life. The Apostle Paul tells us “be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Renewal comes from a continual rethinking of every aspect of life. **The second danger** of Christian fatalism is that believers accept each event in life as part of God’s foreordained plan.

GENESIS TEACHES FREE WILL

In the Beginning God

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (Gen. 1:1). So opens the most popular book in the world. The first verse also opens the book of Genesis, the record of man's beginnings. One might think that such a book would open with a reasoned defense of why man should believe in God. It doesn't. Rather, it assumes the existence of God and begins with an account of creation. The creation narrative cannot be separated from the Bible without undermining its foundation.

Rejecting the creation narrative would undermine the following doctrines: • A belief in God as the Creator. Derivatives of the word "create" occur 106 times in the Bible (create — 54; creation — 6; Creator — 5; creature — 41). God's authority over man is tied to his being man's creator. John said, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11). • The divine origin of the soul of man. Not only does man have a soul, but he also possesses free will — a will that can be subjected to the Devil's temptations and choose to obey or disobey God. • The origin of sin. The book of Genesis reveals to us what sin is and what are its consequences. • The role of man and woman. Paul ties the headship of man to the order of God's creating male and female (1 Tim. 2:13-14). • The institution of marriage. Jesus related God's original plan for husband and wife to have a lifelong commitment to each other to creation (Matt. 19:1-12). • The scheme of redemption is tied to the creation narrative of Genesis 1-3. The role of the serpent, the great tempter of man, is revealed in this account. The origin of sin and what its consequences are for mankind are revealed in this narrative. Man's hopelessness because of his sin reveals man's need for a Savior who is the "seed of woman" and who crushes the head of that serpent (Gen. 3:15). This interpretation of Genesis 3:15 is confirmed by Romans 16:20 — "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. 16:20). • The week as a division of ordered time is derived from the creation week. This list could probably be much extended, but this suffices to establish this point: Genesis lays the foundation on which the whole Bible and God's work of human redemption is built. If one starts tampering with this foundation, he undermines the whole scheme of human redemption. Under a different metaphor, the story of human redemption is a garment woven from one thread. If one unravels a single thread of that garment, he unravels it all! The book of Genesis is one of the most important books in the Bible because it forms the basis of all revelation. It is necessary to account for the moral condition of man and his consequent need of redemption by Christ. The book of Genesis is the root whose trunk extends through all Scripture. Therefore, one must treat with utmost seriousness any attacks on the creation narrative.

The Interpretation of Genesis 1

In recent times, liberal Bible scholars (modernists) have addressed Genesis 1 as a cosmogony of the same order as non-inspired cosmogonies, such as the Enuma Elish of the Babylonians or those of the Grecian mythologies. The usual approach is to say that the author of the Genesis narrative (whether the E document of Gen. 1 or the J document of Gen. 2) borrowed from and revised these cosmogonies to write a revised version consistent with monotheism. Not believing the book of Genesis to be the work of the historical Moses, the creation narrative is usually thought to have been produced by some unknown author of the 8-7th century B.C. and pawned off as the work of Moses. The rejection of the Genesis narrative as history results in treating the creation narrative, the flood, and other miraculous things in Genesis as myth.

Another group of scholars, usually described as "harmonists," try to harmonize the Bible account of creation with the latest pronouncements of late twentieth century geology, paleontology, and other scientific disciplines that have accepted evolution and its old earth (thought to be over 4.5 billion years old). The harmonists disagree on what things they will try to harmonize (the age of the earth, a universal or local flood, the Tower of Babel, etc.), but all of them start from the same place. They have more confidence in the pronouncements of science than in the historicity of the Genesis narrative when given its most natural meaning. So, Genesis must be made to harmonize with late twentieth century science, rather than allowing the theories of science to be judged by the Genesis narrative.

The modernists make no effort to re-interpret the Genesis narrative; they believe that it contradicts modern science, that it cannot be harmonized with science, and that science is right and Moses was wrong. Modernists join hands with those who believe in the literal account of creation in telling the "harmonists" that they are twisting and perverting the text of Genesis in an obvious effort to bring it into harmony with science and to the distortion of the obvious meaning of the words of the Bible.

Genesis 1:1 Answers Many Theological Questions

The very opening verse of Genesis denies a number of philosophies and theologies that are presently being taught. Consider the following: 1. Genesis 1:1 denies atheism and humanism. The Scripture begins, "In the beginning God . . ." The Bible accepts the existence of a divine creator, the being of God. Any philosophy that excludes God is contrary to revelation and wrong.

2. Genesis 1:1 denies polytheism. The statement of Scripture is that God created the heavens and the earth. This stands in stark contrast to the pagan accounts of creation. The Enuma Elish, for example, relates that the body of Tiamat was torn into two pieces by Marduk for the creation of the heaven and earth. The Grecian mythologies depict a pantheon. The opening verse of Genesis affirms the oneness of God.

3. Genesis 1:1 denies materialism. The philosophy of materialism believes that matter is eternal and that there is no operation on matter by an outside force such as God. But the creation account denies the eternity of matter.

4. Genesis 1:1 denies pantheism. The doctrine of pantheism makes all of creation a part of God; the tree and the mouse are divine, as a part of God's being. But Genesis 1:1 separates God from his creation. God exists independently of his creation.

5. Genesis 1:1 denies fatalism. Fatalism believes that the world is not operated by the unguided and chance collisions of the molecules of atoms. The Scriptures teach that the world is directed by an omnipotent and omniscient God.

Conclusion

One's beliefs about Genesis 1 reflect to a great degree his belief about the inspiration and authority of the Bible. The doctrine of Bible inspiration declares that God supernaturally revealed to its authors the very words of God himself (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Because the Bible is God's inspired revelation, it has authority over man. What it speaks on creation carries greater weight than the pronouncements of the educated of any age, including our own and those in the future. When men begin allowing the pronouncements of scientists to have greater weight than the inspired word of God, they have crossed a significant bridge in their thinking which takes them down a road away from God. The one who crosses such a bridge will never be the same again until he repents and retraces his steps.

If we believe in the inspiration of Scripture, let us accept whatever it teaches. This is not to imply that we should not examine every word in that text to see what its meaning is; indeed, the belief in the inspiration of Scripture forces us to work to understand what that revelation is saying. But, when those words are clearly understood, they must be accepted as the truth, without regard to what modern philosophers and scientists may assert.

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CALVIN TAUGHT & T.U.L.I.P. TEACHES A TWISTED GOSPEL OF GRACE!

by Jesus People on Errors of Calvin

Five points of Calvinism(T.U.L.I.P.)

Grace of God Is Redefined

- ⊙ Calvinism's distinctive doctrines could be better called 'the doctrines of damnation,' because they promise damnation to the majority of people. God offers no grace and no hope of salvation for them, as they are doomed from before they were even born to an eternal hell!

Grace of God Is Redefined

One of the most common arguments that Calvinists use revolves around a unique definition of grace. “If people are saved ‘by grace alone,’” they say, “then people can’t play any part in their salvation. Salvation must be 100% the work of God if it is truly salvation by grace.”

Calvinists have even labeled their distinctive doctrines as ‘the doctrines of grace,’ as if none else have a theology of grace! Calvinism’s distinctive doctrines could be better called ‘the doctrines of damnation,’ because they promise damnation to the majority of people. God offers no grace and no hope of salvation for them, as they are doomed from before they were even born to an eternal hell!

Calvinists believe that God could have saved everyone just as easily as He saved those whom He allegedly predestined for salvation, but He was pleased to save only a small minority of those He created in His image. The rest He was pleased to fore-ordain to hell. We cannot help but ask, ‘If God is love, what kind of love is that?’ John Wesley, Methodist founder, replied, ‘That’s the kind of *love* that makes one’s blood run cold!

Does salvation by grace require that human beings play no part in their salvation? NO! Imagine if I were bankrupt, but someone paid my debts and gave me a fresh start by means of a million-dollar check & some great business advice. Would you say that my financial recovery was not ‘by grace alone’ because I had to deposit the check into my bank account in order to enjoy the benefits of my benefactor? **Of course not!!**

Does salvation by grace require that human beings play no part in their salvation? So, if such logic would be considered absurd by anyone & everyone, why is the same logic, when applied to salvation, swallowed by Calvinists?

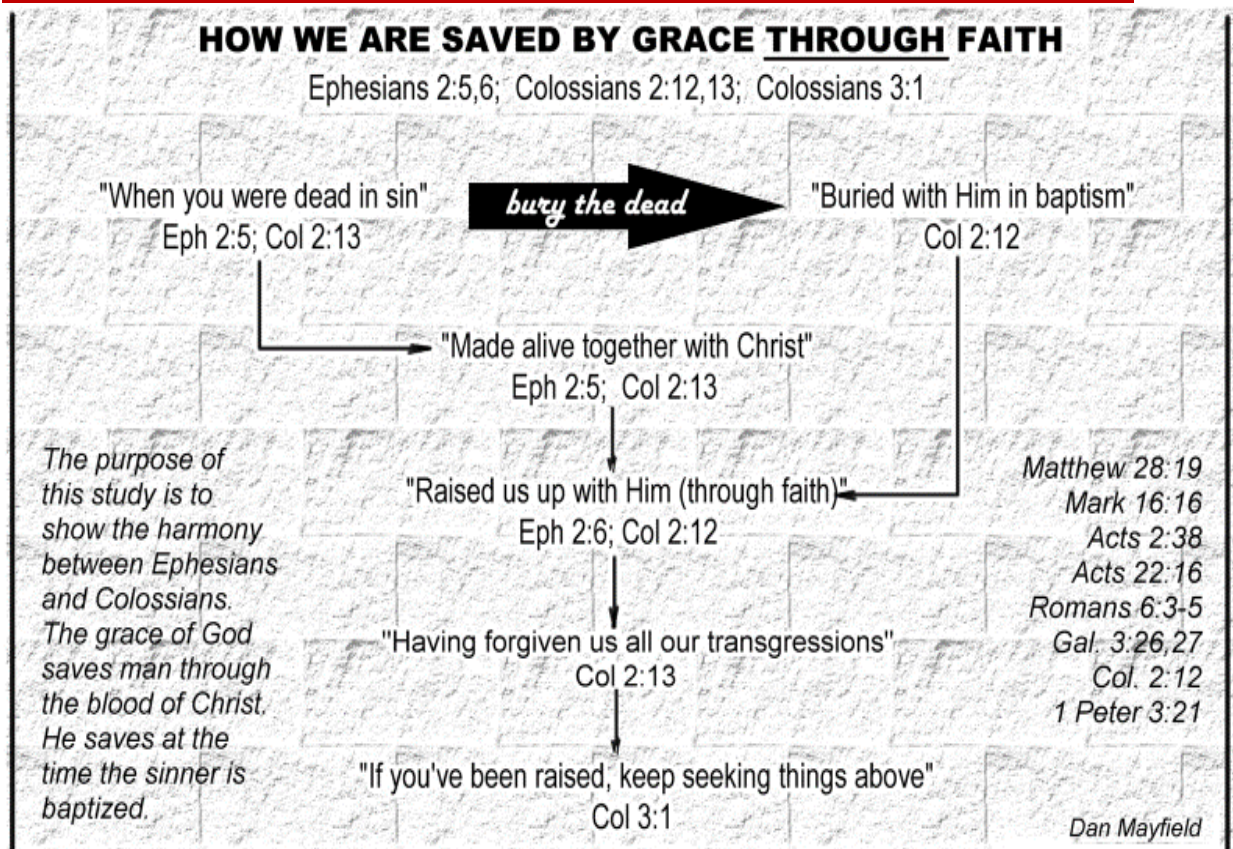
Why do Calvinists accuse non-Calvinists of not having a gospel of grace simply because we maintain that those who are saved are those who, as the Bible teaches, don't resist God's gracious drawing? If you accept a birthday gift, is that a 'work' that lessens the grace of the giver?

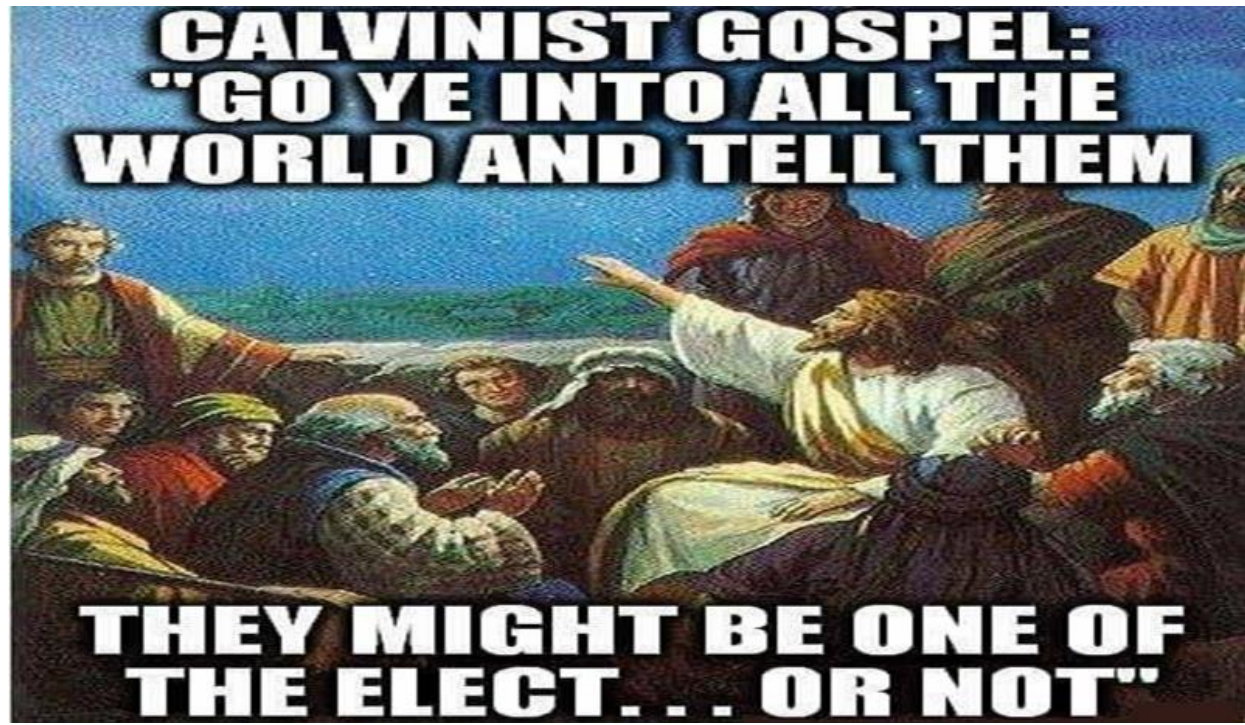
Calvinist logic that sets grace against human response is not a logic that can be supported by any scripture. There are no verses in the Bible that tell us that if salvation is of grace, then human free will plays no part in the salvation process. Rather, the Bible affirms that salvation is all of grace & also affirms that those who are saved are those who, by their own wills, do not resist God's gracious drawing.

Calvinists elevate human reasoning above Scripture's revelation, making God's grace and human responsibility mutually exclusive concepts, while the Bible makes them mutually inclusive. Applying the same kind of human logic, we could claim that, because salvation is by grace alone and human responsibility plays no part, Christians can sin all they may want without eternal consequences. Yet, the same Bible that affirms salvation is by grace alone also affirms that the unrighteous 'will not inherit the kingdom of God' (First Corinthians 6: 9, 10). Does your will have anything to do with your not stealing? If your answer is *yes*, then you have just admitted that your will plays a part in whether or not you will inherit eternal life.

Salvation is by grace from beginning to end - God graciously draws everyone in the world by means of His creation & their God-given consciences. He awes them & convicts them. He expects every person whom He so draws to seek Him {Acts 7:26}. Those who seek Him do so only because of His gracious initiative. And Jesus promised that those who seek will find {Matthew 7:7}. Scripture affirms that God 'is a rewarder of those who seek Him {Hebrews 11: 6}.

If people are incapable of seeking God, as some claim, then we would have to wonder why the Bible scripture says otherwise. – Jesus People





Matthew 7: Fruits Of Calvin Tulip **Mania** & **Depression**

- Bible Abused, Word Confused, Truth Obfuscated
- Makes God The Greatest Respector Of Persons
- Blinder To God's Good Grace & Cross Of Love
- Makes Of All Men Victims & Our God Merciless
- Leads To View Of Mankind Being Beyond Blame
- Broadcasting Bad News Stymies Scripture Studies
- Substitutes Subjective Experience For Elect Proof
- Robs The Human Race Of Its God-Given Dignity
- Framed Inherited Sin & Infant Baptism Doctrines
- Dishonors God & Denies Us His Justice & Mercy

**THE FIVE PETALS OF THE T.U.L.I.P.
FUNERAL FLOWER & FIVE FALSE
STRATA OF LAPSARIANISM ARE BOTH
BASED ON FALLICIOUS REASONING
PRESUMING A NON-EXISTENT PARADOX
& FLAWED CLASSICAL & MEDIEVAL
PRESUMPTIONS OF HUMAN LOGIC.
CALVINISTS SHOULD INSTEAD
REVISIT THE CLEAR PASSAGES OF
SCRIPTURE THAT SPEAK OF THE
FIVE TRUE STATES OF THE
HUMAN SOUL & THE TRUE FIVE
STEPS TO PERSONAL SALVATION.**

JUDGEMENT PREPARED
FIVE STATES FIVE STEPS

Five States of the Soul:

- **EXEMPTION:**
- Ezekiel 18: 20; Matthew 18: 1 – 3
- **CONDEMNATION:**
- Galatians 3: 22
- **JUSTIFICATION:**
- Romans 5: 1, 2; 8: 1, 2
- **DAMNATION:**
- Matthew 23: 3; Mark 16: 16
- **GLORIFICATION:**
- Romans 8: 17, 30; II Thess. 1: 7 - 12

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Five Steps For Saving:

- **HEARING:**
- **Romans 10: 17; Matthew 7: 24 - 27**
- **BELIEVING:**
- **Hebrews 11: 6; Mark 16: 15, 16**
- **REPENTING:**
- **Acts 2: 38; 17: 30; Luke 13: 3**
- **CONFESSING:**
- **Matthew 10: 32, 33; Acts 8: 36, 37**
- **BAPTISM:**
- **Romans 6: 3 – 5; Acts 8: 36 - 38**

