



THE WELL INSTITUTE

SOTERIOLOGY
[THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION]

PART 2

SOTERIOLOGY

[THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION]

In this second part of the study on salvation, we will look at various theological characteristics of the nature of salvation and differing views from history on special aspects and nuances which have given rise to great debates concerning the role of God and man within mankind's salvation. Where possible, I will disclose the major viewpoints on differing doctrinal positions and opinions, while also simplifying the main ideas of each perspective. For brevity, I will highlight the two principle competing viewpoints concerning the nature of salvation: the Arminian Doctrine (named for a 17th century Dutch theologian and pastor, Jacob Arminius) and the Reformed Doctrine otherwise known as Calvinism (named for 16th century French theologian and pastor, John Calvin). Going forward, I will refer to these two perspectives simply as the "**Arminian**" and "**Reformed**" doctrines respectively.

The following topics in part 2 will be covered:

- Calling and Regeneration**
- The Sovereignty of God in Salvation**
- Election**
- Predestination/Foreknowledge**
- Free will**
- The Tenets of Calvinism Arminianism**
- Eternal Security/Assurance of Salvation**
- The Fate of the Unevangelized**

Calling – The Call of God to sinners to be saved

In terms of soteriology (the Study of Salvation), the "Calling" refers to the call of God (in time and space -i.e. temporal) to an individual to make them aware of their sinful state and need for salvation (2 Cor. 4:3-4). God uses the Church (those who are saved believers) to share the good news of the gospel to lost sinners in need of salvation. God has no other plan for global evangelization other than using His Church to spread the gospel to world, starting in the individual believer's home (family), neighborhood, workplace, and marketplace. Acts 1:8 states that when the Holy Spirit was to come and indwell believers after the ascension of Jesus, that the Spirit would cause the Church to be witnesses in "Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." For the disciples living in Israel, this meant that God was calling them to be faithful to share the gospel with everyone in their city (neighborhood to neighborhood), then to share with those in their "county" and region (their Judea), then to share with those differing ethnicities and people groups different than them within their state (i.e. their Samaria), and then finally with the rest of the known world (with foreigners, strangers, peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations). The gospel was to be shared with all people on the earth (Mark 16:15) and NOTHING has changed since. The Lord still expects His true disciples to be sharing the gospel to the whole world (Mt. 28:18-20), knowing that the gospel saturation throughout the world will initiate the Lord's return (Mt. 24:14).

The External Call of the Gospel is commanded by Christ to His Church to share with all peoples (Matt. 28:19-20). That means that the call of God to the Church is to share the gospel with everyone everywhere until Christ returns. Thus, the Call of God to salvation is both Universal and indiscriminate (Mt. 11:28; Jn. 7:37; Isa. 45:22; Rev. 22:17). The call of God is the means that God uses to bring people to faith in Jesus (Rom. 10:13-17).

The call of God is also Resistible, i.e. people can hear the saving message of Christ's sacrificial death for sinners and His resurrection from the grave in order to save sinners and hearers can reject the gospel-they can reject the offer of salvation (Isa. 65:11-12; Luke 9:30; Acts 7:51). Thus, there is a **genuine, free offer of the gospel to all people** (*IF* the Church will actually obey Christ and share this gospel with all peoples); this means that because no one (temporally) knows who will or won't actually be saved on this side of heaven, all believers are called to go (everywhere) and share the good news of the gospel with everyone. This is a universal gospel and is genuinely offered to all because God can save any and all. We will never know at the start of a spiritual conversation that leads to a gospel conversation *IF* the hearer will actually be saved or not ...until they really receive Christ as Savior or reject the gospel offer outright. Some people may have to hear the gospel message many times in their lives from several different people's testimonies before they finally surrender and accept Christ as their Savior. Only God knows if, how, and when someone will or will not ever receive salvation. Our task is to be faithful to pray, be available, and then actually share the salvation message, that is, to be able to give a clear presentation of the gospel in that person's heart language, and leave the results up to God. This is good news for us: we don't have to try and convert anyone's heart – that is the sole work of God. Rather, our responsibility and Christian joy is to share the message faithfully and liberally (to all hearers) and leave the spiritual work of grace to the Lord who alone converts hearts.

There is an element of mystery between God's sovereign grace in saving souls and man's moral responsibility to listen, understand, and respond to the gospel for salvation. We can only see and experience the temporal perspective as humans (what man experiences when he hears and responds to or rejects the gospel message). This is a limited experience since God, the Holy Spirit is doing an incredible spiritual (invisible) in the heart *AS* the message of the gospel is being shared and someone gives their life to Christ. Our prayer and faithfulness to share the gospel are critical to sharing Christ but are not determinative of a spiritual outcome.

Within Reformed doctrine, the "Effectual Call of the Gospel" describes the reality of God's gospel message being effective or efficient given to those who are elect and who will respond to the message of salvation as God causes spiritual transformation of the hearer's heart (2 Tim. 2:10). The concept of the Effectual Call is that when God calls to the elect (even though no one on earth knows who is or who is not actually elect), they will inevitably and *a/ways* (at some point or time destined by God) respond positively to gospel and be eternally saved (1 Cor. 1:17-31; Rom. 8:28-30; Jn. 6:37, 44, 64-65; 1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Pet. 2:9; 2 Pet. 1:10; Acts 13:48; 16:14; Rom. 1:6-7; Ezek. 37; and Jn. 11).

Regeneration – The life-giving power of the Holy Spirit to convert life from death

Regeneration is the salvific process often referred to as the new birth, being born again, being born from above, conversion, or spiritual renewal. Regeneration means re-birth or renewal (new beginning). Regeneration is the miraculous moment when the dead heart is wonderfully transformed to new spiritual life (Col. 1:13). The question is when and how this happens:

There is a difference in perspectives between the Arminian and Reformed doctrines on Regeneration as to when regeneration actually occurs in the heart of the person and the main “actor” or agent who causes regeneration. The Arminian perspective of salvation and man’s capability within salvation is one of ‘semi-pelagianism’- the capacity for man to choose Christ as God pours out common grace upon the hearer. This is called Decisional Regeneration, man can exercise his faith as a decision which prompts the spirit to regenerate the soul so as to be saved.

As God moves in the heart to enlighten the mind of one’s need for salvation, man *can* respond to the gospel and choose salvation. Thus, Arminians hold that regeneration (new birth) **follows** man’s faithful response to the Lord to repent of sin and choose salvation by faith. In this perspective, as soon as the gospel offer is received, man can freely respond to the offer of salvation and choose Christ as Savior -thus, initiating (activating) the Spirit to regenerate the heart and rend salvation complete. Since man can have an active role in his own salvation with God’s gracious help, Arminians hold to a **synergistic** perspective of salvation (God and man at work *together* to affect salvation). Arminians reason that if God is going to hold man responsible and accountable for their response/rejection of salvation, that man *can* and does play a role to repent and choose Jesus as Savior (Mt. 3:2; 4:17; acts 3:19; 1 Jn 3:23; Ps. 78:19-22). See also: Jn 5:40; Gal. 6:7; Rom. 1:20-21.

Conversely, from the Reformed (Calvinistic) perspective regeneration is a work of God alone. Thus, the Reformed hold to Sovereign Regeneration. This view contends that man is spiritually dead from birth (Eph. 2:1,5) and is completely incapable (total depravity/total inability) to choose Christ or respond favorably to the gospel message -even when the mind is convinced of the sinful state and a person’s lostness. Therefore, the Reformed doctrine of Regeneration holds that regeneration is a spiritual work accomplished **ONLY** through God’s power because of His grace and mercy toward us. Regeneration is when **God** the Holy Spirit *causes* a spiritual change and **precedes** man’s faith and *becomes* the very impetus for man’s gift of faith (from the Spirit) with which he exercises to believe/trust on Christ for salvation.

Therefore, regeneration is a spiritual, invisible, secret act of God in which He imparts through His Spirit new spiritual life to us and generates within the heart -conviction, enlightenment, contrition, repentance, and faith (Titus 3:5).

The Reformed, then, hold the nature of Regeneration to be *solely* sovereign work of God the Spirit and man has no say or play in the matter (Jn. 1:12-13; 3:3-8; Jas. 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:3). Since man can play no role in his salvation which is a work of God alone, the Reformed hold to a **monergistic** perspective of salvation, namely that the work of salvation is a divine work completely unaided by man in the process (Jn 15:16).

Baptismal Regeneration is a view held by some (errantly) that the process of repentance and faith must be accompanied by baptism in order for true regeneration to take place (Mark 16:16; John 3:5; Titus 3:5). This is described as an Instrumental Sacrament whereas baptism functions instrumentally or the *cause* of salvation and not just as a sign or symbol for salvation. For those who hold that baptismal regeneration refers to the physical necessity of water baptism for salvation (such as Roman Catholics; Church of Christ), one only need to look to the thief on the cross who was promised salvation without experiencing physical baptism (Luke 22:43) to demonstrate this errant view of baptism. Further, outside of the questionable origin and use of Mark 16:16, no other Apostle specifies that baptism is necessary FOR salvation, but rather that baptism *follows* salvation (Acts 2:38; 8:12; 10:47; 18:8) as a significant physical symbol and reminder of our being united with and to Christ's death and resurrection through the sacrament of baptism (Rom. 6:4). More so, Paul emphasized believing the gospel and not the need for or process of baptism (1 Cor. 1:17).

In a non-causal sense (but symbolically), for those who are already regenerated by faith in Christ can in one sense also say that baptism is "necessary for salvation" – in the symbolic sense that as *proof of or demonstration* of regeneration (i.e. true salvation)—the holy Spirit indwells new believers and is said to have "baptized them into one body through one Faith" (Eph. 4:5; Acts 11:16). This language is often employed in the Anglican and Lutheran Churches concerning their understanding of the Sacrament of Baptism as Protestants. "Indeed, there is no particular danger in seeing a connection between the sign on the one hand and the thing signified on the other so long as this is not conceived in causal or instrumental terms. Thus, the sign of baptism undoubtedly points us to regeneration as its meaning, and regeneration gives meaning to the baptismal sign. Or, to state it another way, Christian regeneration is that which is signified in baptism, and baptism is that which signifies regeneration." (G. W. Bromiley, "*Baptismal Regeneration*," ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Revised (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979–1988).

We may conclude that if the term baptismal regeneration is to be used at all it should be with reference to the *sign* (symbol) alone, to the thing signified alone, or preferably to the work of Christ, in which the sign and the thing signified are truly one and the same.

The Sovereignty of God in Salvation

When speaking of God's Sovereignty, as we studied in our lesson on Theology Proper (God's Attributes), we are reminded that God is all-powerful and the source of and in control of all creation and everything in it. Being all-wise (omniscient), all-powerful (omnipotent), and able to be unrestrictedly everywhere He wants simultaneously (omnipresent), the Bible declares that all things come from God, exist for God, and that He superintends all parts of creation -even the *human heart* (Ps.24:1; 139:7-8). The Bible declares that God is completely sovereign (in control) of all things (Isaiah 38:1), while containing infinite wisdom (Rom 11:33), and perfect love (1 John 4:18, John 3:16, Rom 5:8). This is good news for the world. This means that everything that God does and has complete control over He does it with a loving purpose for His glory and the world's good (Isaiah 38:17). This means that we must learn to trust God in all circumstances, even when we do not understand (Rom 11:33).

Sovereignty defined: Sovereignty is the universal reality that God is able to do anything He desires. God's *sovereignty* is His right and power to do all that he decides to do (Ps. 115:3; 135:6). Job 42:2 states, "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted."

- God does **not** have an image problem of Himself (Ps. 115:3; Dan. 4:35; Is. 45:7).
- God, as Sovereign, demands that ALL the world align itself to HIM and His holy standard of righteousness since He is the glorious standard of all worth (Ro. 8:29; Ps. 138:8)
- The nature of God's sovereign **judgment** (past and future) toward the world is both the physical and spiritual reality of God enacting that 'final alignment of ALL things in creation to Himself (Ps. 9:7; 75:6-7; Rev. 20:12).

But notice that nothing in that definition of sovereignty refers to God's wisdom or God's plans. It's simply God's "right" and His power at work: He has the right and He has the power to do what He decides to do. "When God decides to do a thing, He does it, and no one can stop Him. That's *sovereignty*." John Piper. Therefore, the Bible is clear that God is sovereign over all things, all angels, humans, creatures, and all of creation (Lam. 3:37-38; 1 Tim. 6:15). God's sovereignty is demonstrated through His daily, intentional superintention (providence) over all the earth always.

God's providence is distinguished from plain 'sovereignty' in that **PROVIDENCE** is God's sovereignty in the service of His own wise purposes; sovereignty is the right of the King to reign over His dominion (Kingdom) and justly do what He sees fit to do/accomplish according to His own eternal wisdom and divine purposes. J. I. Packer states, "God's providence is His constant care for and His absolute rule over all His creation for His own Glory and the good of His people." How can God accomplish this perfectly? It's because He alone is perfectly Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, & Omnibenevolent (Is. 40:26; Neh. 9:6; Ps. 147:8-9).

Job 12:13-13 "Wisdom and strength belong to God; counsel and understanding are His. **Whatever He tears down cannot be rebuilt**; whoever He imprisons cannot be released."

2 Chronicles 20:6 "He said: Yahweh, the God of our ancestors, are You not the God who is in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations? **Power and might are in Your hand, and no one can stand against You.**"

God's sovereign purpose extends to all things in His creation and is not limited by space or time. Ps. 103:19 "The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and **His kingdom rules over all.**" Jeremiah 27:5 "**By My great strength and outstretched arm, I made the earth, and the people, and animals on the face of the earth. I give it to anyone I please.**"

His sovereignty is so complete over all creation that Scripture declares, "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD" (Prov. 16:33). Consider the implications of a statement like this! Ultimately there is no *chance* in this universe because even the workings of probability and statistics are controlled by God. There are no real accidents and God is surprised by nothing. The God of Creation is the God of all Nature, including natural disasters (Consider: Job 37:3, 6, 10-13; Ps. 147:8-9, 16-18; Jer.. 10:13; Amos 4:7).

Trusting God's sovereignty and providence fully means trusting God even when we do not understand His design, His power, or seemingly the destructive power which occurs in Nature (Jeremiah 14:22). What should our response be to God's provision of weather (Num. 11:1; Hab. 3:17-18)? What about Tornados, drought, hurricanes, Tsunamis, hail, earthquake etc.?

Are these always from God too? (Is. 45:7, Is. 31:2; Amos 3:6-8; in judgment Is. 47:11; Lamentations 3:38)

Is. 45:7 “I form light and create darkness, I make success and ***I create disaster, I, Yahweh, do all these things.***” God has sovereign control over every aspect of nature (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3). He has a design and plan to accomplish His will, plan, and purpose within creation and using creation (Is. 48:9-11). God has, throughout history, used weather phenomena to judge the ungodly [i.e. the Red Sea to kill Egyptians, hail, fire from the sky over Sodom and Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon, and as in the Seal, Trumpet, Lightning, and Bowl Judgments of the Book of Revelation]. Our universe still suffers (groans in pain and longing) and on this earth we are still under the curse of sin and death until Christ’s return (Ro. 8:18-20). This means even the order of weather and the functions of weather are at times controlled by satan or used in evil to exact disaster upon the world (John 10:10). Still, there is nothing that happens on this earth (good or evil) that doesn’t fall under God’s good providence that can and will eventually be used for His glory and believers’ good (Gen. 50:20).

Consider Jesus’ response when asked about apparent random evil (acts or tragic circumstances) perpetrated on the “innocent” in Luke 13:1-5. What does Jesus say to “random” evil or tragedies that befall humanity? Jesus’ focus is always on the hearers’ hearts, and He is always pointing seeming tragedy back to salvation and man’s readiness to meet God in death (Rom. 8:28-29; Lamentations 3:31-33; Job 37:23; Ezekiel 33:11; Ps. 132:10)

In spite of severe weather, natural disasters, tragedies, and the great brokenness and fallenness of this world, God has called us to trust Him fully and His beneficent plans for our lives and this universe (2 Tim. 1:12; Romans 11:33)

The question for us is, do we have such a relationship with God and such a confidence in Him, that we believe He is (sovereignly) with us in our adversity and trials, even though we do not see or feel His presence? More so, do we have confidence in God if He is fully (sovereignly) in charge of the world and tragedy strikes, or things in life don’t go our way, or bad things happen to people we love, or heartbreak and evil seem to be winning in our world? And what about salvation? Does God have the last say in who is actually saved or does He allow and permit salvation only to those who really want it, deserve it, or who respond positively to the gospel message? Again, both the Arminian and Reformed perspectives differ on the question of God’s sovereignty in salvation.

Arminians hold that God is sovereign over all the earth including who can and will be saved. However, they understand God’s sovereignty as One who has set up His own sovereign “system” for man to play out his own life in free will and to have the choice of salvation/rejection of God within the universe. In other words, Arminians are uncomfortable with the idea that God alone decides who will or will not be saved. Rather, they hold to a sovereign reality that God has set up the universe in a way where man’s (unlimited) free moral agency gives mankind a true capacity within God’s common grace to hear the gospel message and respond to or reject it on their terms and in their timing. Man decides for himself if he will agree to or deny God’s grace when it is presented (in God’s timing) and then God sovereignly brings to fruition a person’s salvation based on that person’s foreseen faith and positive response to the gospel. In this case, the Arminian sees that this view best represents fairness

and justice to God's creation, allowing mankind freely to respond or reject God's overture of love for the world by Jesus' atoning provision of the cross. If people hear the gospel and willfully reject it, then from the Arminian perspective, they deserve hell and eternal punishment. This presents an idea of equal justice for the lost – everyone has an equal opportunity and chance to respond to the gospel of grace *IF* the Church will be obedient to share the gospel with all nations. Along with God's sovereignty, man's unlimited free will and divine justice (fairness) are front and center within the Arminian perspective of God's sovereignty in salvation.

In all candor, the Arminian perspective appeals to man's justice and fairness, and is the more popular doctrine among the Church at large. Everyone can understand that if someone is genuinely offered a blessing and they choose to refuse it of their own free will and for their own purposes, then that person does not deserve to receive that blessing. It seems like an equitable agreement for all parties. However, does the Bible present the reality of sin and the need for salvation in these same terms?

The **Reformed perspective** of God's sovereignty in salvation centers *all* the attention on God Himself and His choice (election) of men for salvation. According to the Reformed doctrine of God's sovereignty in salvation man is elected to salvation expressly NOT based on their (future) foreseen faith or positive response to the gospel (John 1:13). Rather, God chooses whom He will elect to salvation solely according to *His* own purposes and pleasure, then He predestines and enacts said salvation in each individual in time (temporally) through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit.

The Reformed perspective of God's sovereignty in salvation is based on the biblical reality of the total depravity within man which is a fatal condition to man's soul. In total depravity, man is devoid of God, is spiritually dead, and stands already condemned before a holy God (Rom. 3:10-12; Eph. 2:1, 5; John 3:18). Therefore, no man can or ever could fully participate with God in faith for their own salvation *if* they are truly spiritually dead people. Dead people can't "do" anything for themselves or in partnership with God other than be dead. In the Reformed perspective, all the burden of man's salvation rests solely on God Himself to elect, predestine, and actualize a person's salvation . . . in spite of, and because of man's total depravity.

The Difficulty with the Reformed doctrine of God's Sovereignty

In all equal candor, the Reformed view of God's sovereignty in salvation in one sense is very difficult to hear, process, and accept. This means that if God alone is in control of salvation, then those who are not saved were not actually chosen (elected) by God. That begs the question why not, who can be saved? Further, if God alone has complete sovereignty over who is or who is not saved, then does man truly have free will in choosing Jesus as Savior or does he not? Last, and most difficultly, why then would God create humans (by the billions) who He would never elect for salvation? What is God's purpose in creating the vast majority of humanity only to have them perish eternally? What is the point of their lives if they cannot, nor could ever, live a life to God's glory and pleasure? Are these humans less loved by God? Should they be less loved by us? And if God has the first and last say in who can be saved at all, then why should the Church even bother to share the gospel if the outcome is already predetermined and "fixed" so to speak; isn't it all a waste of time?

These questions must be answered. And the only way to give a satisfying answer to any of them is to allow the Bible to inform them; **what does Scripture teach about God's sovereignty in salvation?**

Divine Influence in the hearts and lives of humans

The Bible teaches that God can and at times interferes (intervenes), controls, changes, and influences the hearts (minds) of humans: God's divine intervention in the lives of people surely influences men's destinies (Pr. 19:21; 29:18; 2 Chr. 20:6; Ezra 1:5; Daniel 1:9).

For example, Scripture teaches God influenced the minds of the Egyptians to give up their silver and gold to the Jewish slaves just before their great exodus from Egypt (Ex. 3:21-22; 12:35-36). In time/space, these Egyptians employed their own free will to acquiesce to the requests of the Jewish slaves. No where do we observe that God is forcing them or that the Jews are forcing them. The Jews were instructed by Moses to just ask the Egyptians for their "wealth." Obviously, what Egyptian in their right mind would just simply hand over their life-savings to a slave? Yet, God sovereignly made the Egyptians pre-disposed to concede with the outlandish request and the Jews "plundered" the Egyptians as they left.

Scripture teaches that God moves the hearts of **Kings** to accomplish His will through them. Consider Proverbs 21:1; King Cyrus, Ezra 1:1; King of Assyria, Ezra 6:22; Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel 4:16-17; Abimelech, Gen. 20:6; King Sihon, Deut. 2:30; and Pharoah, Exodus 7:3-4; 7:13-8:19)

God is also seen to be controlling emotions, desires, and people's wills. Consider Gen. 35:5; Ex. 34:23-24; Ezra 5:5; Ex. 10:1,20; Joshua 11:20. Pr. 16:9; 31:15; Ps. 33:10-11; Acts 17:25-28; 2 Cor. 9:10; Ja. 4:15)

More specifically, God can and does (at times and for His ineffable purpose) interfere in the lives of people concerning their **salvation**. Scripture teaches that, "God blinds the eyes so the lost cannot see or understand truth" (Is. 6:9-10); that He "*hands over* the sinners to their own sin and destructive fates" (Rom. 1:24, 28), and at times, that He "hardens hearts," sealing the fate of the lost never to be saved (Ex. 4:21ff; 2 Th. 2:11). Rom. 9:18 states, "**He shows mercy to those He wants to, and He hardens those He wants to harden.**"

Another passage along this line is 1 Peter 2:8. Speaking of those who reject Jesus Christ, Peter says that "They stumble because they disobey the word, *as they were destined to do.*" Scripture also says, "The Lord works everything for its own ends--even the wicked for the day of disaster" (Prov. 16:4; also compare Ps. 92:6-7). These verses also reveal how God hardens hearts at times for His purposes: (Is. 6:10; 44:18; John 12:40; Rom. 11:7-8, 25).

These are very difficult passages for us to understand and we may never truly grasp the divine purposes for what He does and to (for) whom, however, our responsibility as Believers is trust in the goodness and loving wisdom of the God of all ages. Interestingly, when Scripture portrays God's intervention in the minds of men, nowhere does it indicate that God actually forced them against their own free will to act out or decide something contrary to their own wishes. There is never any suggestion in Scripture of people being "mindless puppets" with God moving them by divine strings. The Bible, rather, indicates that these individuals acted freely, of their own accord, to lead the way they "thought" most naturally -even while God was sovereignly superintending His will upon theirs. The Bible teaches both the sovereignty of God and the free moral choices of men with equal emphasis. "It is impossible for us to reject either of these great truths and it is

equally impossible for our minds to reconcile them.” – Richard Fuller. The Bible teaches human responsibility and accountability to God for man’s free will (free moral agency) to choose Christ and respond by faith to God’s genuine offer of salvation. Hell is the result for those who willingly reject Jesus Christ as their personal Savior (John 3:16-18). Simultaneously, the Bible is also clear that God sovereignly elects, foreordains, and predestines only those He wants to be saved.

God sovereignly ELECTS individuals for salvation.

God directs the history of the universe along the course of His foreordained plan. This involves God’s ability and purpose to choose individuals and groups for special purposes in the outworking of this plan. For instance, Jeremiah and Paul were chosen by God to have special missions even before they were formed in their mother’s wombs (Jer.. 1:5; Gal. 1:15). Christ speaks of those elected for salvation (Matt. 24:22, 24, 31; Luke 18:7; John 1:13), and Paul clearly clarifies this concept (Rom. 8:29-33; Col. 3:12; 2 Tim. 2:10; Titus 1:1; see also 1 Peter 1:1-2; John 1). Ephesians 1:4-5, 11 is particularly striking: God’s election of those who would be saved is **pretemporal**, “before the foundation of the world,” according to verse 4. This choice involved love and it was based solely on God’s kindness. He predestined us “to adoption as his sons through Jesus Christ, *according to the pleasure of his will*” (v. 5). God’s good desire and holy pleasure based in His divine and perfect love are the criteria for who and how He chooses some to election (and presumably not others). Our election to salvation and eventual glorification (Rom. 8:30) are founded solely on God’s choice for Himself, and not based on anything that humans can merit, do, say, pray, believe, faith, or desire (John 1:13; Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 3:4-5; Rom. 9:16). Daniel 2:21 emphasizes that “God changes the times and seasons; He removes kings and establishes kings. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.” God is in complete control concerning who gets what and who has (keeps) what in this universe (Mt. 25:14-30), including salvation or damnation (John 6:44).

Election

Election, as previously defined, is God’s direct and foreordained choice of some individuals for salvation, but not others. In other words, Divine Election holds that God is not only willing and able, but determined to decree those who will (and/or won’t) be saved in eternity future. God makes the choice to ultimately save some future individuals for His glory and their eternal benefit. “The issue is not whether or not the Bible teaches election or predestination, for that is clear to all. But the issue is: ‘What does it mean to be elect or predestined?’ How one answers this question will place him in one theological tradition or another” -Arminian or Reformed. All of the approaches to the doctrine of election can be grouped under three headings: Conditional, Unconditional, and concurrent:

- **Conditional Election (Arminian perspective).** The doctrine of Conditional Election contends that God’s selection of a person for future salvation is based or conditioned upon that person’s foreseen (future) faith. In other words, God chooses people to be saved because He knows (foreknowledge) how and when that individual would (rightly) respond to the gospel, a genuine offer of salvation. Since God knows all the possible outcomes of every person’s heart and future decisions, God then willingly elects and predestines people to salvation based on *their own* individual, unlimited free will to decide/reject the future gospel offer of salvation. Those whom God foreknows *would* respond positively to the gospel offer, He then based on that conditional information decrees in eternity past that this individual is elect to be saved and predestines (determines) that they *will* actually be saved (in time/space) at some future point in history. The doctrine of conditional election presupposes that man is not totally depraved and

may still seek God and want salvation; further, the doctrine of conditional election implies that man has unlimited free moral agency and can decide or reject the gospel plainly in their own timing based upon their own free will. In essence, in conditional election, man's faith and God's stirring of hearts with common grace (**synergism**) are the acting agents in man's salvation.

- **Unconditional Election (Reformed perspective)**. The doctrine of Unconditional Election contends that God's selection of a person for future salvation is based or conditioned solely upon God's own will, pleasure, and loving purpose, and expressly NOT based upon any merit or foreseen faith in an individual. Man's salvation is based uniquely on God's purpose and desire, man having nothing to add to the equation (**monergism**). In unconditional election, God's choice is the ultimate cause of that person's choice to believe. Though man is able to express genuine (uncoerced) free will to believe upon Christ for salvation (in time/space), it is ONLY because God elects, predestines, and then has the Holy Spirit apply regeneration to that individual (granting the very gift of saving *faith* to be exercised) that he or she could even choose Christ/respond positively to the gospel. The Reformed doctrine of election is very specific that because man is totally depraved (literally void of God within the heart), he needs God to intervene to actually save him since no man is able (total inability) or even truly desires God or salvation through saving faith (Rom. 3:10-12; Gen. 6:5) until God intervenes to render new spiritual life (Col. 1:13-14). Unconditional election then, is expressly God-centric in salvation, whereas one could say that conditional election is a partnership between God and man in their salvation.

The doctrine of unconditional election, therefore, affirms that for purposes known only to Himself God chose those whom He would save. He did not choose them because of anything about them, but for his own "good pleasure" (Matt. 11:25-27). Romans 8:29 is a pivotal verse in this discussion, where the apostle Paul affirms, "whom he [God] foreknew he also predestined."

Most broadly, just on the face of it, to affirm that God "chose" us certainly seems to convey divine initiative (or the cause), *not response* (the effect). That is, "chosen because of foreseen faith" would render God's "choosing" irrelevant or at least redundant. But the New Testament everywhere speaks of election as coming from God's side entirely, grounded in His own initiative and grace, for His own purpose and eternal design. Election is according to grace (Rom. 11:5) and to the praise of His grace (Eph. 1:3-6). We are saved as an outworking of His purpose (Acts 13:48; Rom. 8:28; Eph. 1:4-5, 11; 1Thes. 1:4-5; 2Thes. 2:13-14; 2Tim. 1:9, etc.). God the Father "gave" us to His Son, and it is this that explains our believing response to His call after the Spirit regenerates our hearts to actually believe by faith.

Jesus states, "You do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life" (John 10:26-28). This principle is illustrated in John 15:16 where Jesus asserts to his disciples, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." Of course, on one level Jesus' disciples did, in fact, respond to his call and in that sense "chose" him. But what Jesus plainly indicates is that it was not, in fact, their choice of him that determined His choice of them; it was, rather, His choice of them that determined their choice of Him. Sovereign election comes first.

Last, the doctrine of Unconditional Election presupposes total depravity (total inability) in that man being spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1,5) is unable to actually ever respond to the genuine offer of salvation unless God intervenes and regenerates the dead heart to life.

The following verses indicate man's total depravity and necessity for God's unconditional election toward salvation:

Human Inability to Come to Christ on one's own

1. "**Can** the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? (No!) Then **may** you also do good who are accustomed to do evil?" (No!) (Jer.. 13:23)
2. "How **can** you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." (Mt. 12:34)
3. "A good tree **cannot** bear bad fruit, nor a bad tree bear good fruit." (Mt. 7:18)
4. "'Who then **can** be saved?' But Jesus looked at them and said to them, 'With men this is **impossible**, but with God all things are possible.'" (Mt. 19:25-26)
5. "Unless one is born again, he **cannot** see the kingdom of God." (Jn. 3:3)
6. "No one **can** come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him" (Jn. 6:44)
7. "No one **can** come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father." (Jn. 6:65)
8. "Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are **not able** to listen to My word." (Jn. 8:43)
9. "They **could not** believe, because Isaiah said again: 'He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.'" (Jn. 12:39-40)
10. "For when we were still **without strength**, (helpless) in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom. 5:6)
11. "the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, **nor indeed can be**." (Rom. 8:7)
12. "So then, those who are in the flesh **cannot** please God." (Rom. 8:8)
13. "the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor **can** he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. 2:14)

- **Concurrent Election (Molinism).** The doctrine of Concurrent Election holds that somehow the arguments for the unconditional and conditional positions are both true simultaneously. Concurrent Election contends that God could sovereignly create a universe where the most possible people could be elect based upon their own future free choice of the gospel; and that God actually sovereignly created that specific universe where the maximum amount of people would and did choose Christ for salvation based upon their own unlimited free will to do so.

God's Non-Election of the Lost

We have seen that God's eternal plan is all-inclusive, extending even to His election of those who will be saved. **But what about those not elected for salvation?** Most theologians would naturally prefer to limit the bounds of God's sovereign plan at this point. The word *preterition* is often used here, meaning that God "passes by" the non-elect.

However, several passages in Scripture seem to support a more active role on God's part. If this is so, *reprobation* may be a more appropriate word than *preterition*. (Some also refer to God's active damning and non-electing of the world as "Double Predestination"). Romans 9:10-24 is one passage that should be carefully studied. "God has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires." Both verbs are active (v. 18). God's choice is not based on human merit, but on His mercy and inscrutable purposes. But if God hardens some, how can human responsibility be real? How can He blame (hold accountable) the non-elect for not doing His will -when they have no capacity to do it (total inability) (v. 19)? God answers that *the question is out of order* (v. 20). We know that there is no injustice with God (v. 14), and therefore, as simple vessels not in control, we must trust the Potter. This is a difficult theological issue for many and much contested. Though these truths may seem to us irreconcilable only because our finite minds cannot understand the Infinite, we must never allow our faulty apprehension of the eternal counsels of God to hinder unquestioning faith in the words of Holy Scripture or His complete sovereignty. We are called to wrestle with this and allow God to work through these biblical tensions and questions to come to a peaceable conclusion that we can live with, share, and biblically defend.

God's sovereignty is self-determined, and this fact is emphasized three times in Ephesians chapter 1 (v. 5, 9, 11). In God's loving purpose, all things have been designed to lead "to the praise of the glory of his grace" (v. 6, 12, 14). It is best that God works in all things, for only in this way will all things ultimately glorify God. This glorification is consistent with God's love and kindness because He alone is worthy of ultimate glorification. (Nevertheless, God will also glorify all believers at the resurrection when He finally conforms us to the image of His Son. But even God's act of glorifying others will bring greater glory to Himself)

1 Chronicles 29:11-12 "Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the splendor and the majesty, for everything in the heavens and on earth belongs to You. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom, and You are exalted as head over all. Riches and honor come from You, and **You are the ruler of everything**. Power and might are in Your hand, and it is in Your hand to make great and to give strength to all."

1 Tim. 6:15 "God will bring this about in His own time. **He is the blessed and only Sovereign**, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords."

Predestination/Foreknowledge

Foreknowledge

Foreknowledge is knowing things or events before they exist or happen. In Greek, the term for “foreknowledge” is *prognosis*, which expresses the idea of knowing reality before it is real and events before they occur. In Christian theology, *foreknowledge* (or **Prescience**) refers to the all knowing, **omniscient** nature of God whereby He knows reality before it is real, all things and events before they happen, and all people before they exist. Moreso, the Bible teaches that the foreknowledge of God also indicates a real love relationship and spiritual intimacy with a person even before they are created/born. God loves all of His creation, especially those He created for eternity (Ps. 139). Thus, to foreknow a creature is to “forelove” a creature and to have God’s loving design unfold in that life (Eph. 3:19; 1 Jn 4:19; Col. 3:12-14).

David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas add:

“Many times in Scripture ‘know’ has a pregnant meaning which goes beyond that of mere cognition. It is used in a sense practically synonymous with ‘**love**’, to set regard upon, to know with peculiar interest, delight, affection, and action (cf. Gen 18:19; Exod. 2:25; Ps.lm 1:6; 144:3; Jer.. 1:5; Amos 3:2; Hosea 13:5; Matt 7:23; I Cor. 8:3; Gal. 4:9; II Tim. 2:19; I John 3:1).* There is no reason why this import of the word ‘know’ should not be applied to ‘foreknow’ in this passage, as also in 11:2 where it also occurs in the same kind of construction and where the thought of election is patently present (cf. 11:5,6). When this import is appreciated, then there is no reason for adding any qualifying notion and ‘whom He foreknew’ is seen to contain within itself the differentiating element required. It means ‘whom he set regard upon’ or ‘whom he knew from eternity with distinguishing affection and delight’ and is virtually equivalent to ‘**whom he foreloved**’.

Both Old and New Testaments speak of God’s foreknowledge. Nothing in the future is hidden from God’s eyes (Isaiah 41:23; 42:9; 44:6–8; 46:10). God sees our lives, our bodies, and our days even before we are conceived: “My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” (Ps.lm 139:15–16).

God promised to bless future peoples through Abraham (Genesis 12:3). God told Moses what would happen with Pharaoh (Exodus 3:19). Through God’s foreknowledge, the prophets spoke of a coming Messiah (Isaiah 9:1–7; Jer.emiah 23:5–6). Through Daniel, God made known the future rise and fall of kingdoms (Daniel 2:31–45; 7). And in many New Testament passages, Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus Christ’s ministry and in the formation of the church (Matthew 1:22; 4:14; 8:17; John 12:38–41; Acts 2:17–21; 3:22–25; Galatians 3:8; Hebrews 5:6; 1 Peter 1:10–12).

The apostle Peter teaches that God had foreknowledge of His Son’s sacrificial death long before Jesus died (1 Peter 1:20; see also Revelation 13:8). Jesus’ death on the cross was part of God’s eternal plan of salvation before the creation of the world. On the day of Pentecost, Peter condemns those who put Christ to death but at the same time points to the sovereignty of God: they had been given free rein to do as they wished with Christ because of “God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge” (Acts 2:23). Although evil rulers had conspired to kill the

Lord Jesus, His death had been decided by God beforehand (Acts 4:28).

The Bible teaches that God's children were chosen beforehand, and God's foreknowledge was involved. The elect are those "who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (1 Peter 1:2). "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters" (Romans 8:29).

But God's choice of the elect was not simply based on His foreknowledge of events; **it was based on His good pleasure**: "For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. *In love* He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with *His pleasure and will*" (Ephesians 1:4–5). In Romans 11:2, divine foreknowledge suggests an eternal connection between God and His chosen or "foreknown" people because of His loving faithfulness: "God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew."

The foreknowledge of God is far more than His ability to "see the future"; His foreknowledge is a true "knowing" of what will come to pass, based on **His** free choice. He decrees what will come to pass. In other words, foreknowledge is not just intellectual; it is personal, relational, and based in God's perfect knowledge within Himself. "Whom did he consult, and who made him understand? Who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?" (Is. 40:14). That is to say, God's knowledge is grounded in Himself and in His own determinations, and He is thus eternally omniscient. There never was a time when God looked ahead to learn or discover what anyone would do (Ps. 139:16).

The Meaning of God's "Foreknowledge" in Scripture

Moreover, we must determine the meaning of "foreknow" as it is used by the biblical writers. Although "foreknowledge" *on the part of men* carries the simple significance of "perceiving in advance" (Acts 26:5; 2Pet. 3:17), Scripture's use of this word *with reference to God* entails a specific theological nuance. Scripture of course affirms that God knows all things ahead of time (Isa. 46:9-10; Acts 15:18), but its use of this term ("foreknow") entails notions of foreordination also (Acts 2:23; Rom. 8:29; 11:2; 1Pet. 1:20; 1Pet. 1:2). Similarly, in biblical usage the verb *to know*, when used of God, can signify "to elect" or "to set his favor on" (Gen. 18:19; Deut. 9:24; Jer.. 1:5) or "to regard with favor" (Ps.. 1:6; Matt. 7:23; 1Cor. 8:3; Gal. 4:9; 2Tim. 2:19). The connotations of God's *foreknowledge* follow similarly, only adding the idea of pretemporal intention (i.e., decree).

Let us survey the relevant biblical passages. In Romans 11:2 Paul asserts that "God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew" – an obvious echo of Amos 3:2, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." It would be a misunderstanding to infer from this ("You only have I known") that God was unaware of other nations. The obvious meaning is that God "knew" Israel *in a particular way*. The overtones of relationship and favor are prominent. So also God "knew in advance" the destinies of all nations, but Romans 11:2 / Amos 3:2 assert that God "foreknew" Israel in a more particular sense: he knew them with electing favor (cf. the connection with "election" in Rom. 11:5, 7, 16, 28). That "foreknow" carries this sense seems evident in Romans 8:29 also, where it is used in connection with the concept of predestination. The concepts are distinguished ("whom he foreknew he predestined"), the sense being that "foreknew" connotes a pre-temporal regarding with divine favor, while "predestined" denotes the divine decree itself.

These predestinarian overtones inform the significance of foreknowledge in all its New Testament occurrences. In Acts 2:23 God's foreknowledge is explicitly **causative**: Jesus was "delivered over [to death] by the predestinating purpose and foreknowledge of God." So also in 1 Peter 1:19-20 we read that Jesus the Lamb was "foreknown before the foundation of the world"; the causative connotation of "foreknown," here, is so obvious that in various translations it is in some versions rendered "foreordained" (KJV) or "chosen." And in 1 Peter 1:2 it again is associated with election (as in Rom. 8:29).

Romans 8:29 and Romans 9

We should also note that the context following Paul's statement points explicitly to a predestinarian understanding of Romans 8:29. In Romans 9:6-24 Paul argues at length that the success of God's saving program is due to his sovereign election. That God's promise belonged to Isaac and not Ishmael was due solely to God's own choice (vv. 6-9). Similarly, God's choice of Jacob over Esau had nothing whatever to do with the behavior of either (vv. 10-13); indeed, any notion of foreseen activity as a ground of his choice is specifically denied. God's determination was made "though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad," and this was "in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls" (v. 11). And from this Paul draws the broader application: "So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy" (v. 16). In context, Paul's view of election excludes anything from the human side.

Romans 8:29 in Immediate Context

Coming closer, it is evident that the immediate context of Romans 8:29 itself requires a predestinarian understanding

"And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom He called he also justified, and those whom He justified He also glorified" (Rom. 8:28-30).

Paul's intent here is manifestly to encourage believers in light of our weaknesses and the troubles that surround us in a fallen, cursed world that often opposes. Our confidence that God will "work all things together for good" is grounded in the fact that he has called us "according to his [not our] purpose" (v. 28). This purpose stretches from eternity to eternity, securing his people in grace forever (vv. 29-30). The assurance Paul offers stems from nothing about us but from God's side entirely – his own choice and purpose. From eternity past God has initiated a saving work for us that he will infallibly carry out to our final glorification. Here, Paul says, is solid ground for assurance – not that God saw something in us and responded accordingly but that in grace he set his love on us and determined to make us his forever.

Finally, we should also note that the object of God's foreknowledge here is His people themselves, not their behavior or actions – "*whom* [not *what*] He foreknew He predestinated." The notions of divine favor and initiative—**electing love**—remain evident.

WHAT IS PREDESTINATION?

Predestination is doctrine which teaches that God (having sovereignly elected men to salvation -or not) then predetermined who *would* actually go to heaven and who would spend eternity in hell. Predestination is the ordaining work of God whereby what determines to occur in eternity past (i.e. what God decrees) will actually come to pass *exactly* as He foreknew it and preplanned it. The election of God reveals God's intention to save; predestination reveals God's commitment to follow through on what, whom, and how He chooses to enact His sovereign purposes. Predestination is also called **Foreordination**.

As previously mentioned, the words translated "predestined" in the Scriptures referenced above are from the Greek word *proorizo*, which carries the meaning of "determining beforehand," "ordaining," "deciding ahead of time." So, predestination is God determining certain things to occur ahead of time. What did God determine ahead of time? According to Romans 8:29-30, God predetermined that certain individuals would be conformed to the likeness of His Son, be called, justified, and glorified. Numerous scriptures refer to believers in Christ being chosen (Matthew 24:22, 31; Mark 13:20, 27; Romans 8:33, 9:11, 11:5-7, 28; Ephesians 1:11; Colossians 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; 1 Timothy 5:21; 2 Timothy 2:10; Titus 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1-2, 2:9; 2 Peter 1:10). Predestination is the biblical doctrine that God in His sovereignty chooses certain individuals to be saved.

Predestination is an explicitly biblical doctrine! Yet the determination of predestination is not disconnected from the rest of God's unchanging character (Malachi 3:6). It is connected to His foreknowledge (Romans 8:29, 11:2), His love (Ephesians 1:4-5), and His plan and pleasure (Ephesians 1:5). God's desire is that all would be saved and come to repentance (1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Peter 3:9). Predestination, like election, is personal and relational, not capricious.

*The most common objection to the doctrine of predestination is that it is **unfair** (the **Arminian** perspective). They contend "Why would God choose certain individuals and not others?" "Why would God create people who would never actually have a chance to go to heaven, especially if they are not chosen by God?" YET, we must remember that no one deserves to be saved. No one in Scripture is specifically promised that they are good enough or deserving to go to heaven. Rather, the Bible is crystal clear that we have all sinned (Romans 3:23) and are all worthy of eternal punishment (Romans 6:23). As a result, God would be perfectly just in allowing *all of us* to spend eternity in hell. No one is promised that God has to save us or that He even will save us because of something we do to gain His favor. However, **the fact that God chooses to save any of us is truly miraculous.** God is *not* being unfair to those who are not chosen, because they are receiving what they deserve. God's choosing to be gracious to some is not unfair to the others. **No one deserves anything from God; therefore, no one can object if he does not receive anything from God.** An illustration would be a man randomly handing out money to only five people in a crowd of twenty. Would the fifteen people who did not receive money be upset? Probably so. Do they have a right to be upset? No, they do not. Why? Because the man did not owe or promise anyone money. He simply decided to be gracious to some.

Arminians teach that predestination refers simply to that which was God's *plan* (or *scheme*) for salvation through Jesus for those who accept it. Therefore, if one willingly accepts that Jesus died for their sins and make Him Lord of their life then, then they are a part of the predetermined plan. God predestined that Jesus would save sinners. Everyone decides for themselves yes or no.

Reformers and Theologians of the Protestant Faith on Predestination:

- **John Calvin (1509-1564):**

“God preordained, for His own glory and the display of His attributes of mercy and justice, a part of the human race, without any merit of their own, to eternal salvation, and another part, in just punishment of their sin, to eternal damnation.”

“We proved above that something not subject to free choice is nevertheless voluntarily done.”
Some are predestined to salvation, others to damnation. God “saves whom he wills of His mere good pleasure.” Regarding the lost: “it was his good pleasure to doom to destruction.”

“Since the disposition of all things is in the hands of God and he can give life or death at his pleasure, he dispenses and ordains by his judgment that some, from their mother’s womb, are destined irrevocably to eternal death in order to glorify his name in their perdition.”

“All are not created on equal terms, but some are predestined to eternal life, others to eternal damnation...”

- **Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892):** *“I believe that nothing happens apart from divine determination and decree. We shall never be able to escape from the doctrine of divine predestination - the doctrine that God has foreordained certain people unto eternal life.*
- **Loraine Boettner (1901-1990):** *Even the fall of Adam, and through him the fall of the race, was not by chance or accident, but was so ordained in the secret counsels of God. *
- **Edwin Palmer:** *“All things that happen in all the world at any time and in all history— whether inorganic matter, vegetation, animal, man or angels (both good and evil ones-- come to pass because God ordained them, Even sin- the fall of the devil from heaven, the fall of Adam, and every evil thought, word, and deed in all of history.”*

FREE WILL

WHAT IS FREE WILL AND IS MAN TRULY FREE?

The doctrine of Free Will (as it relates to salvation) teaches that when presented with a genuine offer of the gospel (the facts of God’s plan for salvation) that every individual person has a *real* choice to make, to either accept or reject God’s gift of salvation. The Bible teaches that God desires that *every person* accept His gift of salvation and desires all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:3-4). The Bible indicates as well that man is called by God to actually (freely) choose Christ:

Jesus Christ: *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*

Apostle Peter: *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

Apostle Paul: *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.*

Apostle Paul: *This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved.*

The phrase “**free will**” is found in the Bible 16 times. All 16 times it means “voluntary” (*voluntas* = Latin for ‘will’). Fifteen of those times it’s used of a freewill (voluntary) offering. Not one of those 16 times does “free will” refer to salvation (or man’s ability to choose God).

***How does one define Freewill?**

A) Man is truly Free: As a divinely created moral agent, man can freely choose, will, and desire whatever he pleases (conceives) independent of any other being; A free man is uncoerced and unforcedly capable.

B) Free will is the power of acting without the constraint of necessity or fate; the ability to act at one's own discretion. As an adjective: voluntary (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2011).

*The idea that man has a “free will” *independent* from God’s rule had its origin in heathen, Greek philosophy (Michael Frede, *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought*, 2012)

C) Free will is man’s ability to choose anything voluntarily (by his own desire, from his own willful action and with mental ability, while assuming the natural consequences for said action). Thus, biblically, “free” will is an uncoerced (non-forced) will to choose freely between given options- the process by which we choose is manifest in ourselves [mind, emotion, & will] and is completely unforced by God (or any other factor); our free will is a gift of freedom to act within a moral environment created and overseen by God

As a part of God’s perfect and sovereign creation, He enabled man to be able to choose (morally and rationally) between two or more (given) options; to be able to logically consider, willfully desire, and exercise the power of contrary choice (2 Cor. 9:7; 1 Peter 5:2). The ability for man to freely choose something specific communicates his own voluntary (non-compulsive) capacity. **Acts 27:20-34:**

However, basic to man’s freedom is the universe in which man is to exercise that freedom. Man is bound by physical laws (i.e. gravity) and just because he feels “free” to defy the laws of gravity does not mean man can fly unaided. Gravity limits man’s freedom. Many other physical laws limits man’s freedom and potential. Man cannot create matter from nothing. Man cannot create life from inanimate objects or compounds. Man cannot make atoms and molecules change their natural function, design, or composition though he may try to manipulate them or create compounds. Just as man is limited by the physical universe in which he lives, so man is limited spiritually by the spiritual reality in which he lives.

-However, after the fall, man’s spiritual essence died (Gen. 2:17). He lives condemned to an eternity without God or without hope, UNLESS God intervenes (Eph. 2:1, 5).

-Since man is severely (totally) depraved, his willful functions, desires, and yearnings are bent toward evil and sin. When man chooses and acts on those desires, man actually sins and has earned eternal punishment (Rom. 3:23; 6:23)

-However, though man is depraved and spiritually lost, and though his mind, will, and emotions are bent toward sin since the fall, man still has the capacity to “freely” or voluntarily (uncoerced) choose between given options. However, no person has access to “all options.” In

other words, there is NO such thing as unlimited free will – whereas a person can choose between unlimited options – since man is naturally limited by the laws of nature & God's spiritual/moral laws.

Axioms of Free will:

- God created a sovereign universe where man is truly a “free” creature
- Freedom is not canceled out by sovereignty, autonomy is!
- Man is truly “free” in all things except for His own sinful nature, the physical environment (i.e. gravity), His own physiology, History, laws of nature, and providence.
- Free choices infer inclination; we choose based on our desire (greatest inclination); we are bound to choose according to our nature (mind & will) = both are marred by sin; in a sinful state, man voluntarily chooses based on highest urge. Man's greatest desire & highest urge are rebellion from God
- God alone is absolutely Free; God alone is Autonomous; God alone is independent (non-contingent) of all things; therefore, man alone enjoys *limited* freedom & voluntarily acts w/in universe.

***I want to contest as unbiblical** three widely-accepted concepts in terms of man's ability.

Libertarian free will holds that:

- Man is an autonomous creature and can live independently of outside forces, nature, environment, physical laws, including social and emotional laws (pretexts) or supernatural/metaphysical laws of the heart and soul.
- Man has and can employ libertarian free will, such that man can choose to do whatever and be whatever he decides whenever he wants
- Man can choose to or not to respond to God's presence or salvation – at man's prompting or completion.

Human Responsibility and Accountability for Saving Faith in *their* Salvation

The biblical doctrine of divine sovereignty in salvation is as prevalent as human responsibility. The twin truth (paradox) of God's sovereignty and man's moral responsibility and accountability for faith in Christ indicates that nowhere does God give a “pass” to the elect or non-elect *to not* demonstrate saving faith for salvation. Man cannot be saved unconsciously. Man is required by God to exercise saving faith (trust, belief, acceptance) in the Person of Jesus Christ *in order to* be saved. For instance, Romans 9 (God's sovereignty) is not complete without Romans 10 (human responsibility): “For the scripture says, ‘*Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.*’ For there is no distinction between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all, who richly blesses all who call on him. For *everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved*” (Rom. 10:11-13).

Scriptures on Human Responsibility to Come to Christ

“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve” (Josh. 24:15)

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” (Mt. 11:28)

“If anyone **wills** to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God.”
(Jn. 7:17)

“If anyone thirsts, **let him come** to Me and drink.” (Jn. 7:37)

Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized” (Acts 2:38)

“Repent therefore and **be converted**” (Acts 3:19)

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31)

“but now God commands all men everywhere to **repent**” (Acts 17:30)

“Whoever **wills**, let him take the water of life freely.” (Rev. 22:17)

“Whosoever believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life.” Jn. 3:16

King Saul furnishes a good example of the reality of human responsibility. His disobedience cost him a kingdom that would have been everlasting: “the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever” (1 Sam. 13:13). God later said of Saul, “I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned away from me and has not done what I said” (1 Sam. 15:11). The Bible makes it clear that we are not pawns in the hands of a deterministic and fatalistic universe. Every command in the Old and New Testaments is proof of the reality of human responsibility from God’s perspective.

A number of passages neatly juxtapose the twin truths (paradoxes) of God’s complete sovereignty and man’s responsibility. Consider, for instance, the Crucifixion of the Son of God. Men were responsible for putting Jesus to death even though He was “handed over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23). Those who were gathered together against Jesus simply did what God’s hand and God’s purpose predestined to occur, (Acts 4:27-28). This biblical tension/mystery also relates directly to Judas Iscariot and his betrayal of Christ: “For the Son of Man is to go just as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed” (Luke 22:22)!

God is the divine Potter who has “right to make from the same lump of clay one vessel for special use and another for ordinary use” according to His own purpose (Rom. 9:21). Yet this “clay” has a will and is responsible for the choices it freely makes. (Jer.. 18:1-12).

God is omniscient. Even when He “changes His mind” (as in Jer.. 18:8, 10), it is because He had planned to do so from eternity. In His omniscience He also knew the Jews would not turn back from their sins (indeed, He had even hardened their hearts: Is. 63:17). Yet, His appeal to Judah to repent and be saved was a genuine, valid offer (Jer.. 18:11). Another Old Testament passage that combines the two themes of God’s control and man’s responsibility is Isaiah

63:15-64:12 with 65:1-2.

Philippians 2:12-13 is also a very practical passage in which we may observe a perfect balance of these two twin truths. Paul is talking about the outworking of the Christian life. He emphasizes the aspect of human responsibility in this process (v. 12), and he also emphasizes God's sovereign control (v. 13). God is controlling and man is responsible. Neither of these two verses should be quoted without the other because the **Bible keeps both truths in perfect balance.**

Synthesis of Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility

God is the supreme Ruler over this universe He created. His plan affects every detail of this creation. This plan is eternal, and there never was another plan. Thus, terms like purpose, foreknowledge, predestination, and election are logically related, and they are equally timeless. God's complete control over His creation is based on His omniscience and omnipotence. Since God has knowledge of all things actual and possible (**prescience**), His eternal plan is not based upon blind choice. Instead, God has wisely chosen a plan in which all details will finally work together to bring about the greatest glory of God and the best possible good for mankind. Since God is the absolute of truth, goodness, and love, His plan and purpose are a direct reflection of His own Being and nature.

Not only has God chosen the best possible plan, He also has the power (omnipotence) and authority (sovereignty) to bring it about. When God promises to do something, there is no question that it will be done. This is why every biblical prophecy will be perfectly fulfilled. Nevertheless, God carries out His all-inclusive plan by a variety of means. God may directly intervene or He may achieve His purpose by an indirect agency (e.g., the laws of nature). He may even fulfill His plan by taking His "hands off" in a given situation (the phrase "God gave them over" appears three times in Rom. 1:24-28). But God is in control regardless of what means He chooses to use to accomplish His greater plan.

The Bible also makes it clear that God's work in predestination and election is **loving** (Eph. 1:4-5; 1 John 4:7), **wise** (Rom. 11:33; 16:27), and **just** (Gen. 18:25; Rom. 3:4-6). "The Lord is just in all His actions, and exhibits love in all He does" (Ps.145:17). In some inexplicable way, God has seen fit to incorporate real (genuine) human freedom and responsibility into His all-inclusive plan. Man is free in many aspects since man was created with moral agency. Yet, man cannot exercise unlimited freewill since every part of humanity is limited and governed divinely and naturally by "natural" laws and "spiritual" laws. Even though the Lord is in sovereign control of the details in His creation, He never forces any man to do anything against his will. God is able to remain completely sovereign and accomplish His predetermined plan in humanity while keeping mankind free to exercise their individual (but limited) free will. The fact that He judges sin means that He is not responsible for the commission of the sins He judges. When a person sins willfully and willingly, it is because that person has freely chosen to do so. Similarly, when someone is confronted with the universal offer and terms of the gospel, (from a human perspective in time/space), that person can freely choose to accept or reject Christ's offer of forgiveness of sins. Because it is still a free choice (an uncoerced and non-forced choice) to accept or reject the genuine offer of salvation, every human being will be held responsible for the decision he or she makes (John 12:48; Luke 10:16; Acts 17:31; Rom 1:20).

In my view, personal and moral responsibility actually insinuates and require free will/free moral agency to decide or reject. In biblical terms this whole mystery can be summed up by saying that **God is both King and Judge**: Scripture teaches that, as King, God orders and

controls all things, human action among them, in accordance with His own eternal purpose. Scripture also teaches that, as Judge, God also holds every man responsible for the choices he makes and the courses of action he pursues (Is. 33:22).

Finally, *God's plan is not always the same as His expressed "desires."* Although God's plan controls what men will be, the product often is not what He desires. This is partly because God has chosen to allow human will to operate. For instance, God "wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). Yet, God has not elected all men: "...The elect obtained it. The rest were hardened" (Rom. 11:7).

Thus, God's purposes and predetermined plan and His express desires (as seen in Scripture) are two differing, yet congruent aspects of His divine will. He has revealed His desire (what men *ought* to do -what they *should* do- and what He *would want* that all men do), YET, His purposed plan for what specific men *will* do has for the most part been hidden. This is almost a mystery within a mystery, because there is no way we can rightly conceive (in our finite minds) of *how* these two aspects of God's will relate together in His mind. The Bible allows that tension to exist and we have to deal with it (Dt. 29:29). J. I. Packer captures the essence of this mystery when he writes, "Man is a responsible moral agent, though he is *also* divinely controlled; man is divinely controlled, though he is *also* a responsible moral agent."

Thus, when God calls us to repent and come to Him, even though we cannot (in and of ourselves), He is demanding and providing the means by which we are responsible to respond in faith to Him;

1) God is demanding faith (Heb. 11:6)

2) God provides faith to man for belief (Eph. 2:8-9)

3) Man is responsible to exercise his own 'real' free and uncoerced faith in God as a (external and human) means by which God saves man. [*God sovereignly created man to exercise that which He gave man to exercise*] *God is completely sovereign and simultaneously He providentially allows man real freedom (voluntary) to act or choose.* The means of the free 'choosing' on behalf of man is the basis for man's responsibility and consequence of choice.

In other words, God uses the command "to repent," as the means to granting repentance. And, He uses the command to believe, as the means to giving the gift of faith. And, He uses the invitation to come to Christ, as the means to give the **desire and ability** to come.

Here's a clear example where God used warning as the means to the end of fulfilling His promise: **Promises of Divine Security:** "there will be no loss of life among you..." (Acts 27:22) "God has granted you all those...with you." (Acts 27:24) "not a hair will fall from the head of any..." (Acts 27:34) While simultaneously:

Warning of Human Responsibility: "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved" (Acts 27:31). God used the warning of death to keep them in the ship, to preserve them from death. Likewise, He uses the command to repent, as the means to grant repentance.

Therefore concerning Human Responsibility and God's Sovereignty :

- God created a sovereign universe where man is truly a "free" creature
- Freedom is not canceled out by sovereignty, autonomy is!
- Man is truly "free" in all things except for his own sinful nature, the physical environment (i.e. gravity), his own physiology, history, laws of nature, providence
- Free choices infer inclination; we choose based on our desire (greatest inclination); we are bound to choose according to our nature (mind & will) = both are marred by sin; in a sinful state, man voluntarily chooses based on highest urge.
- God is absolutely Free; God is Autonomous; God is independent (non-contingent) of all things; therefore, man enjoys *limited* freedom & voluntarily acts in nature.

Though external forces can severely limit our options, they can't destroy our real power of choice! Our choices (free will) are real, just not unlimited.

Verses which demonstrate Freewill as a voluntary action – an uncoerced moral decision:

"The LORD will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, *if* you keep the commands of the LORD your God and walk in his ways." Deuteronomy 28:9 **NIV**

"But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD." **Joshua 24:15 NIV**

"Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waiver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him, but if Baal is god, follow him." **1 King 18:21**

***Repentance involves a conscious change on our part. It must be sincere; therefore it must also be made freely by our own choice.** Therefore, thus says the LORD, "If you return, then I will restore you— Jer.emiah 15:19 **NASB**

Thus says the Lord GOD, "Repent and turn away from your idols, and turn your faces away from all your abominations. Ezekiel 14:6 **NASB**

Say to them, "'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways!" Ezekiel 33:11 **NIV**

But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Luke 13:3 **NIV**

...if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9 **NIV**

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9

In TESTING:

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

“When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.” James 1:12-14 **NIV**

If one cannot pass or fail a test because God fixed the outcome, then it is no longer a test, but a pointless exercise. A test has a purpose and both success and failure must both be an option.

-The LORD tests the righteous and the wicked... Ps.lm 5:11 **NASB**

-Test me, O LORD, and try me, examine my heart and my mind... Ps.lm 26:2 **NIV**

The Bible commands us, multiple times, that people are **to seek Him**: Exodus 18:15; Deuteronomy 4:29; 1 Kings 22:5; 1 Chronicles 28:9; 2 Chronicles 7:14; 2 Chronicles 15:2; 2 Chronicles 20:4; Ps.lm 9:10; Ps.lm 69:6; 69:32; Isaiah 55:6; Jer.emiah 29:13

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33 **NIV**

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Matthew 7:7-8 **NIV**

God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. Acts 17:27 **NIV**

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. Hebrews 11:6

Conclusion

The Bible never describes God rejecting anyone who believes in Him or turning away anyone who is seeking Him (Deuteronomy 4:29). The truths of God's sovereign predestination and also man's responsibility are not mutually exclusive. Somehow, in the mystery of God, predestination works hand-in-hand with a person being drawn by God (John 6:44) and believing unto salvation (Romans 1:16). God predestines who will be saved, and we must choose Christ in order to be saved. Both facts are equally true.

Romans 11:33 proclaims, “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable His judgments, and His paths beyond tracing out!”

Determinism (Fatalism)

Determinism holds that all things are caused by something else, or nothing can be different from the way it was before.

We are born into a specific culture, society has shaped us in a specific way or even our genetic makeup. These are all matters beyond your control.

For example, if you are playing billiards, and you set the ball up directly in front of the corner pocket, the fact that the next player will sink the ball is determined by your placement of the ball.

Hard Determinism

Hard determinists believe that social forces outside our control shape everything we do.

The basic argument of hard determinism is as follows:

Premise 1: No action is free *if it must occur*.

Premise 2: For any event X there are antecedent causes that ensure the occurrence of X in accordance with impersonal, mechanical causal laws.

Conclusion: No action is free.

The hard determinist defends each premise as follows:

If hard determinism is correct, then,

- There can be no freedom in the sense required for morality.
- There is no point in punishing or blaming or putting down those who do “wrong,” since they cannot help it. Indeed, there is no point in making value judgments of any kind about other people. People are not “better” or “worse”; they are only different. And if you differ from someone else, you differ, period. If you change, it's because you “have it in you” already to change; if you don't change, you simply “don't have it in you” and can't be blamed.
- The notion of sin becomes incoherent. If sin is incoherent, then fundamental doctrines of Christianity (e.g., redemption from sin) are pointless.
- Persons cannot be thought of as in any way “special” or “higher” than other animal species or physical objects. Thus, the interests of humans should not necessarily automatically be thought to override the interests of animals or plants.

Soft Determinism (Compatibilism)

Soft Determinism (SD) is the view that our actions are free if they proceed out of our own volition.

- Thus, soft determinism contends that while *determinism is true* - we cannot control the myriad inputs that prompt the complex of desires and aversions we may have at any particular time...

- Therefore, we still act freely when we are directed by them, and not under some obvious compulsion or constraint.
- So, soft determinism holds that free actions, *for which we are morally responsible*, are those that proceed from our own volition.
- BUT... we do not have *freedom of will* in the strict sense of being able to will other than we do.

Consider the following actions:

-Robbing a bank because you feel like it -OR- Leaving the building to get some fresh air.

-Robbing a bank because someone straps a bomb to you and orders you to do so

-OR- Getting dragged out of the building by security.

In both cases, the 'action' is similar, but the prompt for the action is different. On one hand, the action proceeds from personal desire; on the other, the action proceeds from external compulsions.

Soft determinism and hard determinism agree that the inputs that precede a course of action are predetermined. Where they differ is that soft determinists believe that an individual still can struggle to make a decision based on those inputs, which is compatible with our notion of **morality**.

Questions to Consider:

If all things are determined, are we truly free?

How does the notion of intent factor into determinism? Consider the examples of charges of *manslaughter* as compared with *first-degree murder*. The outcome, but the result is very different. How would a determinist approach this issue?

The Alternatives and Extremes of understanding/explaining Free will vs. Sovereignty

As with other biblical mysteries, three alternatives are possible. One can accept the mystery, reject it as untrue, or rationalize it. To rationalize it, one must overemphasize one truth and minimize the other, and this leads to the two extremes.

The correct approach is to learn to live with the mystery by accepting both truths as truly biblical truths and holding them in tension because of the authority of God's Word. This means that the principles should be regarded as *apparent* contradictions (paradoxes) and not ultimate contradictions. God's revelation in the Bible is always self-consistent. The only problem is that human understanding is sometimes deficient. If we could raise our thoughts to the level of God's thoughts, there would be no mysteries (Dt. 29:29).

Because so many people refuse to let God be wiser than men, they insist on rationalizing the principles of the divine sovereignty/human responsibility mystery. Some are exclusively concerned with the former, others with the latter. Either error can lead to very practical problems. Those hung up on human responsibility may overemphasize methods and develop guilt feelings about not witnessing to everyone they meet. Their counterparts may minimize

missions and evangelism, saying, “Why bother? The elect are going to get saved anyway.” Prayer also depends on balancing both principles. If God is not sovereign, there is no point in praying because He is unable to answer most prayers. And if men have no responsibility, there is no point in praying because nothing we ask or do will affect God’s plan in the least. From a practical standpoint, it seems more objectionable for a Christian to overemphasize the divine sovereignty and minimize human responsibility than *vice versa*. Since human responsibility relates to our role, we need to attend to it. God will take care of His own sovereignty!

Yet, either error is harmful, and neither error needs to be embraced. Some confuse divine sovereignty with **fatalism**-the idea that as humans nothing is within our control (not even our limited choices) so why choose anything or do anything since God will decide for us. However, Christianity is *not* fatalistic, because the Bible teaches that human responsibility is just as real as divine sovereignty. Furthermore, what is behind fatalism (fate) is not what is behind divine sovereignty (a living, wise, sinless God who has our best interest at heart =more of Him in our lives).

Another objection that keeps people from accepting this mystery is the problem of evil. Many feel that it is an insult to our intelligence to assert that all things occur for the “best” as the result of a human providence. If God is sovereign, is He not the author of the evil all about us?

It comes as no surprise that this mystery has precipitated heated controversies and extreme viewpoints throughout the course of church history. One notable example was Augustine’s controversy with the Pelagians. Pelagianism emphasized human freedom to the exclusion of divine sovereignty, and this led to a concept of self-salvation without the need of divine grace. In recent centuries, the two extreme viewpoints have been ultra-Calvinism (divine sovereignty carried to pure determinism) and certain extreme forms of Arminianism (human responsibility overemphasized).

CALVINISM AND ARMINIANISM

The "Five Points" of Arminianism	The "Five Points" of Calvinism
<p>1. Free Will or Human Ability</p> <p>Although human nature was seriously affected by the fall, man has not been left in a state of total spiritual helplessness. God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but He does not interfere with man's freedom. Each sinner possesses a free will, and his eternal destiny depends on how he uses it. Man's freedom consists of his ability to choose good over evil in spiritual matters; his will is not enslaved to his sinful nature. The sinner has the power to either cooperate with God's Spirit and be regenerated or resist God's grace and perish. The lost sinner needs the Spirit's assistance, but he does not have to be regenerated by the Spirit before he can believe, for faith is man's act and precedes the new birth. Faith is the sinner's gift to God; it is man's contribution to salvation.</p>	<p>1. Total Inability or Total Depravity</p> <p>Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature, therefore, he will not--indeed he cannot--choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently, it takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ--it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is not something man contributes to salvation but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation--it is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God.</p>
<p>2. Conditional Election</p> <p>God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world was based upon His foreseeing that they would respond to His call. He selected only those whom He knew would of themselves freely believe the gospel. Election therefore was determined by or conditioned upon what man would do. The faith which God foresaw and upon which He based His choice was not given to the sinner by God (it was not created by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit) but resulted solely from man's will. It was left entirely up to man as to who would believe and therefore as to who would be elected unto salvation. God chose those whom He knew would, of their own free will, choose Christ. Thus the sinner's choice of Christ, not God's choice of the sinner, is the ultimate cause of salvation.</p>	<p>2. Unconditional Election</p> <p>God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc. On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected. These acts are the result, not the cause of God's choice. Election therefore was not determined by or conditioned upon any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man. Those whom God sovereignly elected He brings through the power of the Spirit to a willing acceptance of Christ. Thus God's choice of the sinner, not the sinner's choice of Christ, is the ultimate cause of salvation.</p>
<p>3. Universal Redemption or General Atonement</p> <p>Christ's redeeming work made it possible for everyone to be saved but did not actually secure the salvation of anyone. Although Christ died for all men and for every man, only those who believe on Him are saved. His death</p>	<p>3. Limited Atonement or Particular Redemption</p> <p>Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them. His death was a substitutionary endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. In addition to putting</p>

<p>enabled God to pardon sinners on the condition that they believe, but it did not actually put away anyone's sins. Christ's redemption becomes effective only if man chooses to accept it.</p>	<p>away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation, including faith which unites them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, therefore guaranteeing their salvation.</p>
<p>4. The Holy Spirit Can be Effectually Resisted</p> <p>The Spirit calls inwardly all those who are called outwardly by the gospel invitation; He does all that He can to bring every sinner to salvation. But inasmuch as man is free, he can successfully resist the Spirit's call. The Spirit cannot regenerate the sinner until he believes; faith (which is man's contribution) precedes and makes possible the new birth. Thus, man's free will limits the Spirit in the application of Christ's saving work. The Holy Spirit can only draw to Christ those who allow Him to have His way with them. Until the sinner responds, the Spirit cannot give life. God's grace, therefore, is not invincible; it can be, and often is, resisted and thwarted by man.</p>	<p>4. Irresistible Grace or The Efficacious Call of the Spirit</p> <p>In addition to the outward general call to salvation which is made to everyone who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. The external call (which is made to all without distinction) can be, and often is, rejected; whereas the internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in conversion. By means of this special call the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ. He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependent upon man's cooperation for success. The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ. God's grace, therefore, is invincible; it never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended.</p>
<p>5. Falling from Grace</p> <p>Those who believe and are truly saved can lose their salvation by failing to keep up their faith, etc. All Arminians have not been agreed on this point; some have held that believers are eternally secure in Christ--that once a sinner is regenerated, he can never be lost.</p>	<p>5. Perseverance of the Saints</p> <p>All who are chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end.</p>
<p>REJECTED by the Synod of Dort in Holland (1619)</p> <p>This was the system of thought contained in the "Remonstrance" (though the "five points" were not originally arranged in this order). It was submitted by the Arminians to the Church of Holland in 1610 for adoption but was rejected by the Synod of Dort in 1619 on the ground that it was unscriptural.</p>	<p>REAFFIRMED by the Synod of Dort in Holland (1619)</p> <p>This system of theology was reaffirmed by the Synod of Dort in 1619 as the doctrine of salvation contained in the Holy Scriptures. The system was at that time formulated into "five points" (in answer to the five points submitted by the Arminians) and has ever since been known as the "five points of Calvinism."</p>

Arminianism**Calvinism****Man's Responsibility in Salvation****God's Sovereignty in Salvation**

1. Man is a sinner, but able to do good and to respond to God.

1. Total Depravity – Man is unable of himself to respond to God.

2. God elects on the basis of foreseen faith.

2. Unconditional Election – God elects according to His own good pleasure.

3. Christ died for all men.

3. Limited Atonement – Christ died for the elect only.

4. Man can, because of stubbornness and rebellion, resist God's call to salvation.

4. Irresistible Grace – The elect are irresistibly drawn to Christ.

5. The believer may, through persistent sin, fall from grace and be lost.

5. Perseverance of the Saints – The elect can never perish; they will surely persevere.

5 Arminian Articles of Remonstrance

Roger Nicole **summarizes** the five articles contained in the **Remonstrance** as follows:

I. God elects or reprobates on the basis of foreseen faith or unbelief.

II. Christ died for all men and for every man, although only believers are saved.

III. Man is so depraved that divine grace is necessary unto faith or any good deed.

IV. This grace may be resisted.

V. Whether all who are truly regenerate will certainly persevere in the faith is a point which needs further investigation."

5 Arminian Articles of Remonstrance

Article 1.

[Conditional Election - corresponds to the second of TULIP's five points, Unconditional Election] That God, by an eternal and unchangeable purpose in Jesus Christ his Son before the foundation of the world, has determined that out of the fallen, sinful race of men, to save in Christ, for Christ's sake, and through Christ, those who through the grace of the Holy Spirit shall believe on this his son Jesus, and shall persevere in this faith and obedience of faith, through this grace, even to the end; and, on the other hand, to leave the incorrigible and unbelieving in sin and under wrath and to condemn them as alienated from Christ, according to the word of the Gospel in John 3:36: "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that does not believe the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him," and according to other passages of Scripture also.

Article 2.

[Unlimited Atonement - corresponds to the third of TULIP's five points, Limited Atonement] That, accordingly, Jesus Christ the Savior of the world, died for all men and for every man, so that he has obtained for them all, by his death on the cross, redemption and the forgiveness of sins; yet that no one actually enjoys this forgiveness of sins except the believer, according to the word of the Gospel of John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And in the First Epistle of John 2:2: "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world."

Article 3.[Deprivation - corresponds to the first of TULIP's five points, Total Depravity]

That man does not possess saving grace of himself, nor of the energy of his free will, inasmuch as in his state of apostasy and sin he can of and by himself neither think, will, nor do any thing that is truly good (such as saving Faith eminently is); but that it is necessary that he be born again of God in Christ, through his Holy Spirit, and renewed in understanding, inclination, and will, and all his faculties, in order that he may rightly understand, think, will, and effect what is truly good, according to the Word of Christ, John 15:5, "Without me you can do nothing."

Article 4.

[Resistible Grace - corresponds to the fourth of TULIP's five points, Irresistible Grace] That this grace of God is the beginning, continuance, and accomplishment of all good, even to the extent that the regenerate man himself, without prevenient or assisting, awakening, following and cooperative grace, can neither think, will, nor do good, nor withstand any temptations to evil; so that all good deeds or movements that can be conceived must be ascribed to the grace of God in Christ. But with respect to the mode of the operation of this grace, it is not irresistible, since it is written concerning many, that they have resisted the Holy Spirit (Acts 7, and elsewhere in many places).

Article 5.

[Assurance and Security - corresponds to the fifth of TULIP's five points, Perseverance of the Saints] That those who are incorporated into Christ by true faith, and have thereby become partakers of his life-giving Spirit, as a result have full power to strive against Satan, sin, the world, and their own flesh, and to win the victory; it being well understood that it is ever through the assisting grace of the Holy Spirit; and that Jesus Christ assists them through his Spirit in all temptations, extends to them his hand, and if only they are ready for the conflict, desire his help, and are not inactive, keeps them from falling, so that they, by no deceit or power of Satan, can be misled nor plucked out of Christ's hands, according to the Word of Christ, John 10:28: "Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." But whether they are capable, through negligence, of forsaking again the first beginning of their life in Christ, of again returning to this present evil world, of turning away from the holy doctrine which was delivered them, of losing a good conscience, of neglecting grace, that must be more particularly determined out of the Holy Scripture, before we ourselves can teach it with the full confidence of our mind.

These Articles, thus set forth and taught, the Remonstrants deem agreeable to the Word of God, tending to edification, and, as regards this argument, sufficient for salvation, so that it is not necessary or edifying to rise higher or to descend deeper.

Classical Arminianism

Classical Arminianism (sometimes titled Reformed Arminianism or Reformation Arminianism) is the theological system that was presented by Jacobus Arminius and maintained by some of the Remonstrants,^[10] its influence serves as the foundation for all Arminian systems. A list of beliefs is given below:

- **Depravity is total**: Arminius states "In this [fallen] state, the free will of man towards the true good is not only wounded, infirm, bent, and weakened; but it is also imprisoned, destroyed, and lost. And its powers are not only debilitated and useless unless they be assisted by grace, but it has no powers whatever except such as are excited by Divine grace."^[11]
- **Atonement is intended for all**: Jesus's death was for all people, Jesus draws all people to himself, and all people have opportunity for salvation through faith.^[12]
- **Jesus's death satisfies God's justice**: The penalty for the sins of the elect is paid in full through Jesus's work on the cross. Thus Christ's atonement is intended for all, but requires faith to be effected. Arminius states that "Justification, when used for the act of a Judge, is either purely the imputation of righteousness through mercy... or that man is justified before God... according to the rigor of justice without any forgiveness."^[13] Stephen Ashby clarifies: "Arminius allowed for only two possible ways in which the sinner might be justified: (1) by our absolute and perfect adherence to the law, or (2) purely by God's imputation of Christ's righteousness."^[14]
- **Grace is resistible**: God takes initiative in the salvation process and His grace comes to all people. This grace (often called prevenient or pre-regenerating grace) acts on all people to convince them of the Gospel, draw them strongly towards salvation, and enable the possibility of sincere faith. Picirilli states that "indeed this grace is so close to regeneration that it inevitably leads to regeneration unless finally resisted." ^[15] The offer of salvation through grace

does not act irresistibly in a purely cause-effect, deterministic method but rather in an influence-and-response fashion that can be both freely accepted and freely denied.^[16]

- **Man has free will to respond or resist:** Free will is limited by God's sovereignty, but God's sovereignty allows all men the choice to accept the Gospel of Jesus through faith, simultaneously allowing all men to resist.
- **Election is conditional:** Arminius defined *election* as "the decree of God by which, of Himself, from eternity, He decreed to justify in Christ, believers, and to accept them unto eternal life."^[17] God alone determines who will be saved and his determination is that all who believe Jesus through faith will be justified. According to Arminius, "God regards no one in Christ unless they are engrafted in him by faith."^[17]
- **God predestines the elect to a glorious future:** Predestination is not the predetermination of who will believe, but rather the predetermination of the believer's future inheritance. The elect are therefore predestined to sonship through adoption, glorification, and eternal life.^[18]
- **Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer:** Justification is sola fide. When individuals repent and believe in Christ (saving faith), they are regenerated and brought into union with Christ, whereby the death and righteousness of Christ are imputed to them for their justification before God.^[19]
- **Eternal security is also conditional:** All believers have full assurance of salvation with the condition that they remain in Christ. Salvation is conditioned on faith, therefore perseverance is also conditioned.^[20] Apostasy (turning from Christ) is only committed through a deliberate, willful rejection of Jesus and renunciation of saving faith. Such apostasy is irremediable.^[21]

The Five articles of Remonstrance that Arminius's followers formulated in 1610 state the above beliefs regarding (I) conditional election, (II) unlimited atonement, (III) total depravity, (IV) total depravity and resistible grace, and (V) possibility of apostasy.

Note, however, that the fifth article did not completely deny perseverance of the saints; Arminius, himself, said that "I never taught that a true believer can... fall away from the faith... yet I will not conceal, that there are passages of Scripture which seem to me to wear this aspect; and those answers to them which I have been permitted to see, are not of such a kind as to approve themselves on all points to my understanding."^[22] Further, the text of the Articles of Remonstrance says that no believer can be plucked from Christ's hand, and the matter of falling away, "loss of salvation" required further study before it could be taught with any certainty.

The core beliefs of Jacobus Arminius and the Remonstrants are summarized as such by theologian Stephen Ashby:

1. Prior to being *drawn and enabled*, one is *unable to believe... able only to resist*.
2. Having been *drawn and enabled*, but prior to regeneration, one is *able to believe... able also to resist*.
3. After one *believes*, God then regenerates; one is *able to continue believing... able also to resist*.
4. Upon *resisting* to the point of *unbelief*, one is *unable again to believe... able only to resist*.

Classic Calvinism (T.U.L.I.P)

T: Total Depravity – You were dead in your sins before you knew God.

U: Unconditional Election – Through no effort on your own part, God brought you to life.

L: Limited Atonement (also called “Definitive Atonement”) – God does not bring everyone to life like this, but those He does, He fully does.

I: Irresistible Grace – He doesn’t give us new life because of our good works, but because of His great grace. And those He pours His grace on, always receive it.

P: Perseverance of the Saints – And once He brings you to life, you never die.

I. TOTAL DEPRAVITY

A. Arminian Position: Man is spiritually sick. Fallen man was seriously affected by the fall but he still has the ability to choose spiritual good. He determines his eternal destiny by either accepting or rejecting God's mercies.

B. Reformed Position: Man is spiritually dead. Because of the fall, man has become spiritually dead, blind and deaf to the things of God and is therefore unable of himself to choose spiritual good and determine his own destiny.

The fall has resulted in spiritual death to all men, who are now blind and deaf to spiritual truth.

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins. - Ephesians 2:1

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses. - Colossians 2:13

Fallen man, left in his dead state, is totally unable to repent, to believe the gospel, or to come to Christ.

No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him. - John 6:44 [NOTE: The word here translated “draws” here is translated as “drags” in other passages, such as John 21:11, Acts 21:30, and Acts 16:19.]

No one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father. - John 6:65

There is none who seeks after God. There is none who does good, no, not one. - Romans 3:11-12

DOCTRINES OF GRACE – CATEGORIZED SCRIPTURE LIST

God has recently given us the opportunity to discuss some theological issues with other Christians who believe differently than we do on a number of points, most notably the doctrines of grace. In such a circumstance, given the overwhelming supply of scriptural evidence that comes to bear on the topic, it seemed to me that the best approach would be a simple categorized scripture list: the fact that the entire paper would be scriptures, with the exception of a few brief explanatory notes, would underscore the truth that this is God's own word and teaching; and the fact that it would be categorized would facilitate the ready comparison of scripture with scripture so as to lead one to a full-orbed understanding of the biblical teaching. Although I found a few good scripture lists of that nature available online, none of them was laid out in quite the progression that I was looking for, and so I developed my own. I'm posting it here with just the scripture references. Below, for your convenience I have provided a condensed version and a full version of the study.

Unconditional Election

God is Sovereign Exo 15:18; 1Chr 29:11-12; 2Chr 20:6; Ps. 22:28

1. *He exercises that sovereignty in actively ordaining everything* Deu 32:39; 1Sam 2:6-8; Job 9:12; Job 12:6-10; Ps. 33:11; Ps. 115:3; Ps. 135:6; Isa 14:24; Isa 45:7; Act 15:18; Eph 1:11
 - Including matters of "chance" Pro 16:33; 1Ki 22:20, 34, 37
 - The wicked actions of men Gen 45:5; Gen 50:20; Exo 4:21; Jdg 14:1-4; Ps. 76:10; Pro 16:4; Isa 44:28; Amos 3:6; Act 2:22-23; Act 4:27-28
 - The actions of evil spirits 1Sam 16:14-16; 1Ki 22:19-23; 1Chr 21:1/2Sam 24:1
 - The good actions of men John 15:16; Eph 2:10; Phi 2:12-13
 - The actions of good angels Ps. 103:20; Ps. 104:4
 - The actions of animals Num 22:28; 1Ki 17:4; Ps. 29:9; Jer. 8:7; Eze 32:4; Dan 6:22
 - The operations of all creation Gen 8:22; Ps. 104:5-10; Ps. 104:13-14; Ps. 104:19-20; Mark 4:39
2. *Man is not permitted to question his sovereign acts* Job 33:12-13; Isa 29:16; Isa 45:9-10; Mat 20:1-16; Rom 9:19-24

God elects [i.e. chooses, predestines, foreordains]

1. *His angels* 1Tim 5:21
2. *His peculiar people, Israel* Exo 6:7; Deu 7:6-8; Deu 10:14-15; Ps. 33:12; Isa 43:20-21
3. *Individuals to salvation* Ps. 65:4; Mat 24:24; John 6:37; John 15:16; Act 13:48; Rom 8:28-30; Rom 9:10-24; Rom 11:5-7; Eph 1:3-6; Eph 1:11-12; 1The 1:4; 1The 5:9; 2The 2:13-14
4. *Individuals to condemnation* Exo 4:21; Rom 9:13; Rom 9:17-18; Rom 9:21-22; 1Pet 2:8

His motivation in election

1. *His own good pleasure* Eph 1:5; 2Tim 1:9
2. *The display of his glory* Isa 43:6-7; Rom 9:22-24; 1Cor 1:27-31; Eph 2:4-7; Pro 16:4
3. *His special love* Deu 7:6-8; 2The 2:13
4. *His foreknowledge* Rom 8:29; 1Pet 1:2

- Which means his special love Jer. 1:5; Amos 3:2; Mat 7:22-23; 1Cor 8:3; 2Tim 2:19; 1Pet 1:20
- But not:
- Any good [nobility, wisdom, power, choice, seeking] he foresees in anyone Dt. 7:7; Rom 9:11-13; Rom 9:16; Rom 10:20; 1Cor 1:27-29; 1Cor 4:7; 2Tim 1:9

Total Depravity

Man is constituted a sinner by his relationship with Adam Ps. 51:5; Ps. 58:3; Rom 5:18-19
He is therefore unable

1. To do anything good Gen 6:5; Job 15:14-16; Ps. 130:3; Ps. 143:2; Pro 20:9; Ec. 7:20; Isa 64:6; Jer. 13:23; John 3:19; Rom 3:9-12; Jam 3:8; 1John 1:8
2. To believe in God (or come to him) John 6:44; John 6:65; John 8:43-45; John 10:26; John 12:37-41
3. To understand the truth John 14:17; 1Cor 2:14
4. To seek God Rom 3:10-11

He is dead in sins Gen 2:16-17; John 3:5-7; Eph 2:1-3; Col 2:13 **He is blinded and corrupt in his heart** Gen 6:5; Gen 8:21; Ecc 9:3; Jer. 17:9; Mark 7:21-23; John 3:19-21; Rom 8:7-8; Eph 4:17-19; Eph 5:8 **He is captive to sin and Satan** John 8:34; John 8:44; Rom 6:20; 2Tim 2:25-26; Tit 3:3; 1John 5:19 **He performs actions freely according to his nature, but his nature is wholly evil** Job 14:4; Mat 7:16-18; Mat 12:33; Mark 7:21-23; Jam 1:13-14

Limited Atonement

God purposed to redeem a certain people and not others 1Chr 17:20-21; Mat 22:14; 1Pet 2:8-9 [see "God elects individuals to salvation"/"God elects individuals to condemnation"]

1. It is for these in particular that Christ gave his life Isa 53:10-11; Mat 1:21; John 6:35-40; John 10:3-4, 11, 14-15; Act 20:28; Eph 5:25 [we are commanded to love our wives in the same way that Christ loved the church and gave himself for it; therefore, if Christ loved and gave himself for all people in the same way, we are commanded to love all women in the same way that we love our wives]; Heb 2:17; Heb 9:15
2. It is for these in particular that Christ intercedes John 17:1-2; John 17:6-12; John 17:20-21, 24-26; Rom 8:34
3. The people for whom Christ intercedes are the same as the people for whom he offered himself up as a sacrifice Heb 7:24-27; Heb 9:12 [note context, in which entering into the holy place is explicitly for the purpose of intercession], 24-28 [For a fuller understanding of the indissoluble connection between sacrifice and intercession, read Hebrews chapters 7-10]

The atonement of Christ is effective

1. To justify Is. 53:11 [the single effective cause of justification in view here is the bearing of iniquities; all whose iniquities Christ bore must be justified]; Rom 8:34 [the argument here is that the fact of Christ's death, resurrection, and intercession is in itself an incontrovertibly effective reason for non-condemnation; if this verse is true, then no one for whom Christ died and was raised to intercede may be condemned]
2. To redeem and cleanse from sins Eph 5:25-27; Tit 2:14
3. To propitiate the Father 1John 2:2 ["propitiation" means "the turning away or appeasement of wrath"; therefore, by definition, the Father has no more wrath against those whose sins have been propitiated]; 1John 4:10
4. To raise to new life 2Cor 5:14-15 [the argument is a simple "if/then" proposition: "if" Christ died for someone, "then," with no other conditions, that person died with him and was raised again]; 1Pet 3:18

[See also, "Jesus' death purchased for his people a new heart; – faith; – repentance". Jesus died in order to establish the New Covenant (Mat. 26:26-29, etc.); the New Covenant promised faith, repentance and knowledge of God (Jer.. 31:33-34, Ez. 36:26-27, etc.); therefore, Jesus died in order to provide faith, repentance, and knowledge of God, as the fulfillment of a unilateral promise. This means that his death had a definite purpose which was intended for some and not others. His death effectively purchased faith; not all have faith; and so his death had an effective intent that was limited to certain persons.]

Those whom God purposed to redeem include all who believe John 3:16

1. From every nation Rev 5:9
2. From every class Gal 3:28; 1Tim 2:1-6 [the first "all men" is explicitly tied to all classes of men, which gives warrant for understanding the second "all men" in the same way]
3. Therefore, Christ's saving work is commonly spoken of in terms of "all," "world," etc. John 1:29; Tit 2:11-14 [in the context of "all men" is the delimiting concept of a peculiar people, zealous of good works]; Heb 2:9-10 [notice that the many sons whom Christ brings to glory gives a contextual delimiter to the term "every"]; 2Pet 3:9 [note that this desire is explicitly limited to "us" (Peter was writing to fellow-believers) in the context]; 1John 2:2 [propitiation means "appeasement of wrath"; either Jesus appeases God's wrath against all, and therefore hell (which is the place where God's wrath resides) is non-existent; or the "whole world" means something different than "every individual who ever lived". See John 11:51-52, and "The word 'world' is often used in the sense of 'many,' or 'all of a set'"]
4. The word "all" is often used to indicate all of a set, or even many representatives of a set Mat 10:22; 1Cor 6:12; 1Cor 15:22; Mat 2:3; John 4:29; Act 10:39; Act 17:21; Act 21:28; Act 26:4
5. Or, to indicate all "classes" or "nations," not all individuals Mat 5:11; Act 2:17; Act 10:12
6. The word "world" is often used in the sense of "many," or "all of a set" Luk 2:1-2; John 6:33; John 12:19; Act 19:27; Rom 1:8

Additional reasons that the atonement of Christ is not for all the sins of all people

1. God punishes people in hell, which would be unjust if their sins were atoned for Mark 9:43-44
2. If one were to say, "their sins are atoned for, but that atonement is not applied because of unbelief," he fails to realize that unbelief is likewise a sin Heb 3:12 ["The Father imposed His wrath due unto, and the Son underwent punishment for either: 1) All the sins of all men; 2) All

the sins of some men; or 3) Some of the sins of all men. In which case it may be said: 1) If the last be true all men have some sins to answer for, and so none are saved; 2) That if the second be true, then Christ, in their stead suffered for all the sins of the elect in the whole world, and this is the truth; 3) But if the first is the case, why are not all men free from the punishment due unto their sins? You answer, Because of unbelief. I ask, Is this unbelief a sin, or is it not? If it be, then Christ suffered the punishment due unto it, or He did not. If He did, why must that hinder them more than their other sins for which He died? If He did not, He did not die for all their sins!"
 – John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*]

3. God bears eternal wrath against people, which by definition means that his wrath against them has not been propitiated [appeased] 1The 2:16; 2The 1:6-9

Intentions of Christ's death other than atonement

1. To make a public display of demons Col 2:13-15
2. To rule over everyone Rom 14:9
3. To redeem creation Isa 35:1-4; Rom 8:20-23
4. To lay the foundation for a genuine gospel call John 6:39-40; John 7:37-38
5. To provide temporal mercies for the non-elect Mat 5:45; 1Tim 4:10

Irresistible Grace

Faith and Repentance (as well as the new heart which is able to produce them) are themselves gifts of God

1. A new heart Dt. 30:6; Eze 11:19; Eze 36:26-27
2. Faith John 3:27, 6:63-65; Phi 1:29; 2Pet 1:1; Act 16:14; Act 18:27; Eph 2:8-10
3. Repentance Act 5:3; Act 11:18; 2Tim 2:25-26; 1Cor 4:7

The Father writes his own word upon (places the fear of himself in, etc.) his people's hearts Jer. 31:33; Jer. 32:40; Mat 16:15-17; Lk 10:21; John 6:45; 2Cor 4:6 The beginning of salvation is the sovereign impartation of spiritual life into a heart which had been dead, thereby causing it to exercise faith 1John 5:1; Eze 37:3-6, 11-14; John 1:11-13; John 3:3-8; John 5:21; Eph 2:1-5; Jam 1:18; 1Pet 1:3; 1John 2:29 True offers of grace in the outward gospel call may be resisted by men who do not have this new heart Act 17:32-33 In fact, true offers of grace will always be resisted by such men John 10:24-26; John 12:37-40 But there are some whom God causes to come to him Ps. 65:4; Ps. 110:3; John 6:37-40; Rom 9:15

Perseverance of the Saints

What God begins, he finishes Ps. 138:8; Ec 3:14; Isa 46:4; Jer. 32:40; Rom 11:29; Phi 1:6; 2Tim 4:18 Of all whom he has called and brought to Christ, none will be lost John 6:39-40; John 10:27-29; Rom 8:28-31; Rom 8:35-39; Heb 7:25; Heb 10:14 God's preservation of the saints is not irrespective of their continuance in the faith 1Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:5; Heb 3:14; Heb 6:4-6; Heb 10:26-27; Heb 12:14; Rev 21:7-8; Rev 22:14-15 However, it is God who sanctifies us and causes us to persevere John 15:16; 1Cor 1:30-31; 1Cor 6:11; 1Cor

12:3; 1Cor 15:10; Gal 3:1-6; Eph 2:10; Phi 2:12-13; 1The 5:23-24; Heb 13:20-21; 1John 2:29; Jud 1:24-25.

REVIEW

5 Articles of Remonstrance, “TULIP,” and “ROSES” compared:

5 Articles of Remonstrance: 1610 (followers of Dutch Reformed pastor, Jacob Arminius 1560-1609) = Arminianism

1. God saves based on foreknowledge of who will believe on Christ in future
2. Jesus’s atoning death on cross was universal, providing possibility of salvation to all
3. Man is totally depraved apart from Christ’s regenerating grace and Spirit
4. Christ regenerating grace and Spirit are resistible by man who rejects God
5. Unless man remains IN Christ, he can lose his salvation

5 Articles of Dordt in response to Remonstrants, later known as 5 Points of **Calvinism** (**T.U.L.I.P**) 1618-1619:

1. Total Depravity – all are already guilty and damned, without hope
2. Unconditional Election – God chooses elect based only on His good pleasure and will
3. Limited Atonement (*Particular Redemption*) – Christ’s death paid only for the elect
4. Irresistible Grace (*Effectual Grace*) – The dead heart of man comes irresistibly to God’s gracious call
5. Perseverance of the Saints – Those who are in Christ remain always in Christ

Timothy George’s 5 Points of **R.O.S.E.S. = Easier to understand Calvinism (Reformed Theology)**

Radical Depravity -- Compared with total depravity, radical depravity agrees that every aspect of our being was damaged through the Fall and we can do nothing to save ourselves, but affirms that humans are not totally evil because we retain the image of God despite our fallenness.

Overcoming Grace – Compared with irresistible grace, overcoming grace (or effectual calling) affirms that God accomplishes salvation, but differs in that rather than salvation being a mechanical and deterministic process, it allows for even sinful, obstinate humans to respond to God’s persistent wooing by real faith.

Sovereign Election -- In contrast to the double-predestinarianism of unconditional election, - God sovereignly elects those whom He has chosen based in His good pleasure. *Election is unconditional in the sense that it is not based upon our decision for God, but rather God’s decision for us.* God then passes over (the non-elect) and leaves them in their state of depravity and eternal destruction.

Eternal Life -- The phrase “perseverance of the saints” might suggest that although we are saved by grace, we are kept by our good works. The phrase “Once saved, always saved” could suggest that we could claim Christ as *Savior* without making Him *Lord* of our lives. George prefers eternal life or eternal security to convey the scriptural truth of the assurance of the believer.

Singular Redemption -- Finally, unlike limited atonement, singular redemption communicates that Jesus’ death was sufficient to save everyone, but is efficient only for those who repent and believe. The elect will eventually believe and accept Christ, though Jesus died for all sin and for all the world (1 John 2:2)

God's DECREES of Salvation: The Order of when/How God Decreed Salvation:

Lat: Lapsis = the FALL; i.e. the fall of Adam into rebellion & sin/

Beza's Supralapsarianism: (antelapsarianism, prelapsarianism) [Election is **ABOVE** the fall]

1. The Decree of God to elect and save men who are spoken of as "creatable." /reprobate all others
 2. The decree to create man (create both elect and nonelect)
 3. The decree to permit man to fall
 4. The decree to send Christ to redeem (the elect)
 5. The decree to send the Holy Spirit to apply the chosen of God the redemption to be procured by Christ.
- (Jer.ome Zanchius, Francis Gomarus, William Perkins, William Ames, William Twisse, Gisbertus Voetius, Samuel Rutherford)

Infralapsarianism: (i.e. Sublapsarianism, postlapsarianism) [Election is **AFTER**/under the Fall]

1. The decree to create man
2. The decree to permit the fall of man
3. The decree to elect some of these fallen men and to pass by the rest
4. The decree to provide a redeemer for fallen man
5. The decree to send the Holy Spirit to apply this redemption to the elect

(alt. order of infralapsarianism)

1. Decree to create man
2. Decree to permit the fall
3. Decree to provide salvation for all mankind
4. Decree to elect some and pass by the rest
5. Decree to save the elect through Christ by faith

Amyraldian Order of Decrees: Sublapsarianism, "Post-Redemptionism" (Mine)

1. God decrees the Creation of the world
2. The salvation of all mankind through faith
3. The sending of the Holy Spirit to save the elect

(Jeffrey Johnson)

1. God permitted the Fall
2. God sent His Son to die for the sins of the world
3. God elected those who would be saved
4. God sent His Spirit to regenerate to life the elect

(Curt Daniel)

1. Decree to create man
2. Decree to allow the fall
3. Decree to send Christ to die for men
4. Decree of election and reprobation
5. *Decree to apply Christ's Redemptive benefits to the elect (via the Spirit)

*The noticeable distinction in sublapsarianism is that Election is AFTER the Atonement

This makes the atonement universal (in intention) and the application of the atonement particular through divine election.

Arminianism

1. Decree to create mankind
2. Decree to permit the fall
3. Decree to permit salvation for all mankind
4. Decree to save by foreseen human virtue/faith
5. Election is an act of God in time (not in eternity past)

Based on his insistence on conditional election, Jacobus Arminius (d. 1609) arranged the decrees as follows:

1. God's decree to create the world.
2. God's foreknowledge of the fall.
3. God's decree to send his Son as Savior for those who repent, believe, and persevere.
4. God's decree to provide means to enable repentance and faith.
5. God's foreknowledge of which individuals will repent and believe.
6. God's decree to save those who believe, do good works, and persevere, and to condemn those who do not.

ETERNAL SECURITY/ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Definitions

To be saved is to be preserved in the faith to the end. ... Perseverance is absolutely necessary to the complete saving of the soul....He that goeth to sea with a purpose to arrive at Spain, cannot arrive there if he be drowned by the way; wherefore perseverance is absolutely necessary to the saving of the soul. (John Bunyan, *Saved by Grace* as in *Complete Works*, vol. I, Banner of Truth: Edinburgh, p. 329)

The perseverance of the saints means that all those who are truly born again will be kept by God's power and will persevere as Christians until the end of their lives, and that only those who persevere until the end have been truly born again. (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 788).

Biblical Support (Jer. 32:38-40; Jn. 6:37-40; 10:27-30; Rom. 8:29-30, 38-39; Phil. 1:6; 1 Pet. 1:5; Jude 24)

Theological Arguments for Eternal Security

The nature of God's decree, God's love, and God's covenant with the elect in Christ

The nature of Christ's accomplished work The nature of Christ's applied work

The nature of Christ's mediation

The work of the Holy Spirit

The nature of eternal life

What would it take for a true believer to actually lose what God has accomplished for them by Jesus Christ and applied by the Holy Spirit?

Those whom God has accepted in the beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, and given the precious faith of His elect unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved, seeing the gifts and callings of God are without repentance, whence he still begets and nourishes in them faith, repentance, love, joy, hope, and all the graces of the Spirit unto immortality; and though many storms and floods arise and beat against them, yet they shall never be able to take them off that foundation and rock which by faith they are fastened upon; notwithstanding, through unbelief and the temptations of Satan, the sensible sight of the light and love of God may for a time be clouded and obscured from them, yet He is still the same, and they shall be sure to be kept by the power of God unto salvation, where they shall enjoy their purchased possession, they being engraven upon the palm of his hands, and their names having been written in the book of life from all eternity. (John 10:28, 29; Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 2:19; 1 John 2:19; Ps. 89:31, 32; 1 Corinthians 11:32; Malachi 3:6)

2. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ and union with him, the oath of God, the abiding of his Spirit, and the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which arises also the certainty and infallibility thereof. (Romans 8:30 Romans 9:11, 16; Romans 5:9, 10; John 14:19; Hebrews 6:17, 18; 1 John 3:9; Jeremiah 32:40)

3. And though they may, through the temptation of Satan and of the world, the prevalence of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins, and for a time continue therein, whereby they incur God's displeasure and grieve his Holy Spirit, come to have their graces and comforts impaired, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves, yet shall they renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end. (Matthew 26:70, 72, 74; Isaiah 64:5, 9; Ephesians 4:30; Ps. 51:10, 12; Ps. 32:3, 4; 2 Samuel 12:14; Luke 22:32, 61, 62)

The Fate of the Unevangelized

Consider Romans 1:20 in light of the Action and Heart of God in Acts 8:26-40 and Acts 10:1-48

Acts 4:28; John 14:6 – Is there any other “way” or road to heaven?

-What is the call of the Church to go to the whole world to evangelize? Acts 1:8; Mk 16:15 and Matthew 28:18-20.

-So what will you do??? If HELL is real, then what are you waiting for?????

CLOSING THOUGHTS ON THE NATURE OF SALVATION

1. Being wrong about salvation is eternally dangerous
2. How we think about God affects the way we think about salvation
3. How we think about man and sin affects the way we think about salvation
4. How we think about grace directly affects what we think about salvation
5. What we think about God's glory impacts our view of salvation
6. What we think about salvation will shape our worship
7. What we think about salvation will have consequences in the way we live

NOTES