

God's Sovereignty

And

Man's Salvation

(Calvinism)

*Comparative Charts
For evaluating the
Biblical Basis for
Calvinist and Non-Calvinist
Theological Constructs*

Compiled and arranged by Steve Gregg

Works Consulted in the Preparation of This Material

(listed alphabetically)

1. *A Display of Arminianism* (John Owen)
2. *An Antidote Against Arminianism* (Christopher Ness)
3. *Battle of the Gods*, (Robert Morey)
4. *Biblical Predestination*, (Gordon H. Clark)
5. *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism & Arminianism*, (Kenneth Talbot and W. Gary Crampton)
6. *Chosen By God*, (R.C. Sproul)
7. *The Complete Green Letters*, (Miles J. Sanford)
8. *Elect in the Son*, (Robert Shank)
9. *The Eternal Predestination of God*, John Calvin
10. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, (W.A. Elwell, Ed.), article: *Arminianism*
11. *Grace Unlimited* (Clark Pinnock, ed.)
12. *God's Strategy in Human History*, (Roger T. Forster & V. Paul Marston)
13. *The History and Character of Calvinism*, John T. McNeill
14. *If Ye Continue*, (Guy Duty)
15. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin
16. *Life in the Son*, (Robert Shank)
17. *Predestination and Free Will: Four Views of Divine Sovereignty & Human Freedom*, (David & Randall Basinger, eds.)
18. *Systematic Theology*, (Charles Hodge)
19. *Will the Real Heretics Please Stand Up?*, (David Bercot)
20. *The Works of Arminius*, 3 Volumes (translated by James and William Nichols)

Rules of Reasoning from the Scriptures

1. The Scripture is the final authority for the Christian. Regardless how firmly entrenched a tradition may be, or how respected or heroic are its historical advocates, the direct testimony of Scripture overrules all contrary testimony and opinion—even if the contrary opinion comes from "an angel from heaven" (Gal.1:8).
2. Where two opposite opinions appear to find support from Scripture, those on one side of the debate or the other must be misinterpreting the passages that seem to support their position.
3. A passage that can be used for the support of both sides cannot support either of the two. Thus, if a proof-text for one position is as easily and naturally accommodated by the opposite system as well, it is of no value in settling the question under discussion.
4. It is thus instructive to pay close and critical attention, not only to a debater's explanation of those scriptures that appear to establish his cause, but more especially his ability to soundly expound upon those which appear to contradict his position.
5. Some basic rules of interpretation must be observed in the handling of Scripture
 - a. The words of the original languages (Greek and Hebrew) must be accurately translated.
 - b. The meaning of a statement must be understood by consideration of both its micro and the macro contexts
 - c. The meaning of a passage of Scripture cannot contradict the properly understood meaning of another passage of Scripture.
 - d. The best interpretation is that which most naturally accommodates all of the biblical data
 - e. Obscure statements in the Scriptures should be interpreted in the light of plain statements in the same
6. In reasoning from scripture, as in all reasoning, one's position is weakened when one resorts to misrepresentation of the opposite position—giving the impression that the actual position of the opponent cannot be refuted until it has been substituted with a caricature of itself. Argument is also weakened by resort to logical fallacies such as:
 - a. *petitio principii* (begging the question, or circular reasoning)
 - b. winning by arbitrary definition of terms
 - c. abusive *ad hominem* ("cheap shot")
 - d. the *non sequitur* (does not follow necessarily)
 - f. cavalier dismissal
 - g. the false analogy
7. The burden of proof:
 - 1) The obligation to offer evidence which the court or the jury could reasonably believe, in support of a contention, failing which the party will lose its case.
 - 2) the obligation to establish an alleged fact by convincing a tribunal of its probable truth. (*The American College Dictionary*)

The burden of proof usually falls more heavily upon one side of an argument than upon the other. It rests predominantly upon the side that is challenging what common sense, conventional wisdom, or plain initial evidence would ordinarily suggest.

For example: If common sense or plain evidence suggests that a God who did not control all human decisions could not be God, then the burden of proof would fall upon the Non-Calvinist debater to show convincingly that God could still be God while deferring to man's free choices.

On the other hand, if conventional wisdom and common sense suggest that God could not inevitably ordain sin without becoming the responsible party for sin, or that God could not at the same time will that all men be saved, while willing for some to be reprobate, then the burden of proof in the discussion would necessarily rest most heavily upon the Calvinist debater to show conclusively that the Scriptures nonetheless affirm such things.

The Distinctive Points of Calvinism and of Arminianism

Arminianism

1. Free Will or Human Ability

Though no man can come to God without God's first drawing him, yet, man's free will allows him to decide whether to cooperate with the prevenient drawing of God or to resist it. The fall has affected man's nature significantly, but not to the point of rendering him incapable of choosing to receive the grace of God.

2. Election Conditioned upon Faith

Though God has elected to save all who are "in Christ," He has not determined which persons will actually come to be in Christ. This decision rests with the individual. God foreknows which individuals will choose to believe and to persevere in Christ, and elects to include them as His children based upon that foreknowledge.

3. Universal Redemption or General Atonement

Christ's death makes salvation available to every man, but in itself does not secure the salvation of any. It provides a means of reconciliation between man and God, but does not guarantee that any particular person will be in fact agree to the terms of reconciliation.

4. The Holy Spirit can be Resisted

The drawing of God is persuasive, but does not preclude the resistance of sinful and rebellious man, so that not all whom God would draw to salvation actually realize this salvation in experience.

5. Falling From Grace

Salvation is by faith alone. It is possible to cast off faith and a person, having done so, is not in a state of grace.

Calvinism

1. Total Depravity or Total Inability

The fall has left man totally dead, blind and deaf to the things of God, and thus incapable of responding to the gospel. Faith in God is out of the question unless God sovereignly creates a new life in (regenerates) the sinner. Thus regeneration precedes faith. Faith is not what man contributes to salvation, but it is God's gift to the sinner.

2. Unconditional Election

God chose certain sinners to be saved before the foundation of the world solely by an exercise of His sovereign will. God's choice was not conditioned upon any foreseen response of faith, repentance or obedience on the part of the sinner, since the sinner is incapable of such actions. In fact, God provides faith and repentance to the individuals that He has chosen. These acts are the result of God's choice— not its cause.

3. Limited Atonement or Particular Redemption

Since God never intended that all men should be saved, Christ died only to redeem the foreknown elect. His death did not only make salvation available to the elect, but actually secured everything for their salvation particularly, thus guaranteeing their particular redemption and salvation.

4. Irresistible Grace or the Efficacious Call

Though the outward call of the Gospel goes out to all men and can be resisted, there is a special inward call that God extends only to the elect, and which is never resisted. This call works in the sinner the ability and the desire to come to faith and repentance, thus precluding any possibility of resistance.

5. Perseverance of the Saints

All the elect will necessarily persevere in saving faith, since that faith was never in their power to generate in the first place, but was from first to last God's gracious gift. Whom God has chosen as His own, He mightily preserves in the faith, so that the salvation of the elect is eternally secure.

The Doctrine of Human Free Will: A Historical Survey

(or "how the 'Non-Calvinistic' beliefs of the first four centuries were replaced by 'Calvinistic' beliefs")

The modern advocates of Calvinism frequently appeal to the Protestant community to "return to the faith of the reformers." However, it would seem more appropriate to call Christians (including Calvinists) to "return to the faith of Christ, of the apostles and of the church for its first four centuries." Though the views of the apostles may be debated, there is no room to debate the fact that the "Reformed faith" was not that of the Christian church until the fifth century AD:

1519-1605 :Theodore Beza (Calvin's successor in Geneva, commenting on Romans 11:2—"God hath not cast away his people whom he foreknew.")

*"Nor are we on any account to listen to the Fathers, who refer this to **faith foreseen.**"*

100-165 AD : Justin Martyr

*"God, wishing men and angels to follow his will, resolved to create them free to do righteousness. But if the word of God foretells that some angels and men shall certainly be punished, it did so because it foreknew that they would be unchangeably (wicked), but not because God created them so. So if they repent all who wish for it can obtain mercy from God." (*Dialogue CXLi*)*

100-165 AD : Justin Martyr

*"We have learned from the prophets, and we hold it to be true, that punishments, chastisements, and rewards are rendered according to the merit of each man's actions. Otherwise, if all things happen by fate, then nothing is in our own power. For if it be predestinated that one man be good and another man evil, then the first is not deserving of praise or the other to be blamed. Unless humans have the power of avoiding evil and choosing good by free choice, they are not accountable for their actions—whatever they may be." (*First Apology ch.43*)*

[About the year 180, Florinus had affirmed that God is the author of sin, which notion was immediately attacked by Irenaeus, who published a discourse entitled: "God, not the Author of Sin." Florinus' doctrine reappeared in another form later in Manichaeism, and was always considered to be a dangerous heresy by the early fathers of the church.]

130-200 AD : Irenaeus

*"This expression, 'How often would I have gathered thy children together, and thou wouldst not,' set forth the ancient law of human liberty, because God made man a free (agent) from the beginning, possessing his own soul to obey the behests of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God...And in man as well as in angels, He has placed the power of choice...If then it were not in our power to do or not to do these things, what reason had the apostle, and much more the Lord Himself, to give us counsel to do some things and to abstain from others?" (*Against Heresies XXXVII*)*

150-190 AD : Athenagoras

*"men...have freedom of choice as to both virtue and vice (for you would not either honor the good or punish the bad; unless vice and virtue were in their own power, and some are diligent in the matters entrusted to them, and others faithless)..."(*Embassy for Christians XXIV*)*

150-200 AD : Clement of Alexandria

*"Neither praise nor condemnation, neither rewards nor punishments, are right if the soul does not have the power of choice and avoidance, if evil is involuntary." (*Miscellanies, book 1, ch.17*)*

154-222 AD : Bardaisan of Syria

*"How is it that God did not so make us that we should not sin and incur condemnation? —if man had been made so, he would not have belonged to himself but would have been the instrument of him that moved him...And how in that case, would man differ from a harp, on which another plays; or from a ship, which another guides: where the praise and the blame reside in the hand of the performer or the steersman...they being only instruments made for the use of him in whom is the skill? But God, in His benignity, chose not so to make man; but by freedom He exalted him above many of His creatures." (*Fragments*)*

155-225 AD : Tertullian

"I find, then, that man was by God constituted free, master of his own will and power; indicating the presence of God's image and likeness in him by nothing so well as by this constitution of his nature." (*Against Marcion, Book II ch.5*)

185-254 AD : Origin

"This also is clearly defined in the teaching of the church that every rational soul is possessed of free-will and volition." (*De Principiis, Preface*)

185-254 AD : Origin

"There are, indeed, innumerable passages in the Scriptures which establish with exceeding clearness the existence of freedom of will." (*De Principiis, Book 3, ch.1*)

250-300 AD : Archelaus

"There can be no doubt that every individual, in using his own proper power of will, may shape his course in whatever direction he chooses." (*Disputation with Manes, secs.32,33*)

260-315 AD : Methodius

"Those [pagans] who decide that man does not have free will, but say that he is governed by the unavoidable necessities of fate, are guilty of impiety toward God Himself, making Him out to be the cause and author of human evils." (*The Banquet of the Ten Virgins, discourse 8, chapter 16*)

312-386 AD : Cyril of Jerusalem

"The soul is self-governed: and though the Devil can suggest, he has not the power to compel against the will. He pictures to thee the thought of fornication: if thou wilt, thou rejectest. For if thou wert a fornicator by necessity then for what cause did God prepare hell? If thou wert a doer of righteousness by nature and not by will, wherefore did God prepare crowns of ineffable glory? The sheep is gentle, but never was it crowned for its gentleness; since its gentle quality belongs to it not from choice but by nature." (*Lecture IV 18*)

347-407 AD : John Chrysostom

"All is in God's power, but so that our free-will is not lost...it depends therefore on us and on Him. We must first choose the good, and then He adds what belongs to Him. He does not precede our willing, that our free-will may not suffer. But when we have chosen, then He affords us much help...It is ours to choose beforehand and to will, but God's to perfect and bring to the end." (*On Hebrews, Homily 12*)

354-430 AD : Augustine

Born in Roman North Africa of a devout Christian mother (Monica), Augustine departed from his Christian roots to pursue philosophy at age 19 or 20. He embraced Manichaeism for more than 10 years, which emphasizes election and asceticism. He was converted to "Christian" Neoplatonism—which held to a dualism of matter versus the divine principle, much like gnosticism—in 386. Made bishop of Hippo in 396, he began writing against Manichaeism, gradually replaced his Neoplatonism with "a more biblically radical diagnosis of man and history," but lived and advocated a monastic life. His theology ripened in controversy: in conflicts against Manichaeism, he taught that man had free will, but seemed to deny this in later conflicts with Pelagius, who overrated the power of human nature to live perfectly apart from grace. Augustine was the true originator of the ideas later associated with Calvinism. "There is nothing in Calvin's view of predestination that was not earlier propounded by Luther and Augustine before him." (R.C. Sproul, *Chosen by God*, p.15)

1517 : Martin Luther (The Bondage of the Will)

"This is the highest degree of faith—to believe that He is merciful, the very One who saves so few and damns so many. To believe that He is just, the One who, according to His own will, makes us necessarily damnable." (p.70)

"But why should these things be difficult for we Christians to understand, so that it should be considered irreligious, curious, and vain to discuss and know them, when heathen poets, and the common people themselves, have them in their mouths in the most frequent use? How often does Virgil alone make mention of fate? 'All things stand fixed by unchangeable law.' Again, 'Fixed is the day of every man.' Again, 'If the Fates summon you.' And again, 'If you will break the binding chain of Fate.' The aim of this poet is to show that in the destruction of Troy, and in raising up the Roman

empire, Fate did more than all the devoted efforts of men...From which we can see that the knowledge of predestination and of the foreknowledge of God was no less left in the world than the notion of divinity itself." (pp.43, 44)

"For if this is not known, there can be neither faith nor worship of God. Actually, to not know this is to be ignorant of God. And with this ignorance salvation—it is well known—cannot exist. For if you doubt, or disdain to know, that God foreknows and wills all things, not contingently, but necessarily and unchangeably, how can you confidently believe, trust in, and depend upon His promises?...You will regard Him as neither true nor faithful—which is unbelief, the greatest of wickedness, and a denial of the Most High God!" (p.44)

1509-1564: John Calvin

French, second-generation, reformer. He was the first great theologian of the Reformation, writing his famous work *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* when he was only 26 or 27 years old. With reference to doctrines of God's sovereignty, grace and election, his views were largely a reestablishment of the later opinions of Augustine, restated for a new generation. Five years later, he settled in Geneva, Switzerland, where he became the leading figure and sought to make the city a Christian commonwealth. Calvin's views became the official position of the French churches, the Church of Scotland, and the churches of the Netherlands. His influence has been great in Protestant churches ever since.

1545-63: Council of Trent

There was a contest between the Dominicans and the Franciscans upon the subject of God's decrees.

The Dominicans, with St. Thomas Aquinas, believed that God had unconditionally elected some for glory, and effectually prepared the means of their obtaining it; that their number is determined and could not be added to. The others, who are not predestinated, cannot complain since God has afforded them sufficient assistance to this purpose, though only the elect could be saved. They sought to prove this doctrine by appeal to Paul's writings and those of Augustine.

The Franciscans said that this view was injurious to the attributes of God, since He would be acting with partiality, if without cause He would elect one and reject another—and unjustly, if He would damn men for His own will, rather than their own faults, and create so great a multitude of men for the purpose of condemning them.

Catarinus, who favored a medium between the two opinions, observed that the doctrine of Augustine was not heard of before his time, and that Augustine himself had confessed that it cannot be found in the works of any preceding writer.

1560-1609: Jacobus Arminius

Dutch reformer who, while pastoring a Reformed congregation in Amsterdam, began to question some of the tenets of Calvinism. Disputes arose and he left his pastorate to become professor of theology at the University of Leyden.

1610 : Arminianism: the Remonstrance of 1610

Followers of the late Arminius laid out the five major points of Arminianism:

1) With reference to his salvation, each man has freedom of choice the Holy Spirit must help men; 2) The decree of salvation applies to all who believe on Christ and who persevere in obedience and faith; 3) Christ died for all men; 4) God's saving grace is not irresistible; 5) it is possible for those who are Christians to fall from grace.

1618 Calvinism

The Synod of Dort condemned Arminianism, which was refuted point by point. Five points of Calvinism are: 1) Total depravity, 2) Unconditional election, 3) Limited atonement (or particular redemption), 4) Irresistible grace, and 5) Perseverance of the saints.

The Sovereignty of God in Scripture

(as opposed to man-made theological systems)

Condensed outline of this study :

I. Definitions and their implications

- A. The Classical approach of Augustine/Calvin/Westminster Confession
- B. Classic questions raised by the classical approach

II. What the Bible declares about God's authority, ability, and intervention

- A. God's right to rule
- B. God's omnipotence
- C. God's intervention

III. God's rule over history

- A. God's sovereignty over rulers
- B. God's rule over particular circumstances

IV. God's particular rule in the lives of believers

- A. By giving commands
- B. By inward direction
- C. By providences
- D. By chastening

V. God's "drawing" of sinners

- A. God's desire for all to be saved
- B. How God draws sinners
- C. Man's resistance of God's rule

I. Definitions and their implications

A. The Classical approach of Augustine/Calvin/Westminster Confession

1. All is foreordained by God

"God, from all eternity, did by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, neither is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established..." (Westminster Confession of Faith, III: 1)

*"When we speak of divine sovereignty we are speaking about God's authority and about God's power... That God in some sense foreordains whatever comes to pass is a necessary result of his sovereignty... To say that God foreordains all that comes to pass is simply to say that God is sovereign over his entire creation... If God refused to permit something to happen and it happened anyway, then whatever caused it to happen would have more authority and power than God himself. If there is any part of God's creation outside of God's sovereignty, then God is simply not sovereign. If God is not sovereign, then God is not God." (R.C. Sproul, *Chosen By God*, pp.24, 26)*

2. Decrees of God in election to salvation

*"By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death," (John Calvin, *Institutes*, 3:21:5)*

"If what I teach is true, that those who perish are destined to death by the eternal good pleasure of God, though the reason does not appear, then they are not found but made worthy of destruction... The eternal predestination of God, by which before the fall of Adam he decreed what should take place concerning the whole human race and every individual,

was fixed and determined...God chose out of the condemned race of Adam those whom he pleased and reprobated whom he willed." (John Calvin, *The Eternal Predestination of God*, 8:5)

"Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace." (The Westminster Confession of Faith, III: 5)

"How could a sovereign Deity, who has foreordained all things from all eternity, have his decrees changed by the wiles of man, who is a creature of God and is dependent upon Him for his own existence?" (Kenneth Talbot & W. Gary Crampton, *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism & Arminianism*, 1990, pp.11-12)

NOTE: In saying, "When we speak of divine sovereignty we are speaking about God's authority and about God's power," Sproul omits the principal distinctive of the Calvinist system as opposed to Non-Calvinist theology, namely, *God's intervention*. There is no dispute between Calvinists and non-Calvinists over the issues of "God's authority and about God's power," but the debate concerns the degree of God's intervention or the exercise of His authority and power in determining the destinies of individual men. By leaving out this key issue, Sproul insinuates that Arminians, in rejecting the Calvinist view of sovereignty are in fact denying what no Christian has ever dreamed of denying. This omission exhibits either duplicity or shallowness of thought. We would hardly suspect Sproul to suffer from the latter. -editor

B. Classic questions raised by the classical approach

1. If there is only One Will in the universe, how can man be held responsible?
2. Is God's will always done? If so why does He frequently complain?
3. Is God the author of sin? If so, why does He object to it?
4. Does prayer really affect anything?
5. Why are evangelism and, especially, *persuasion* necessary?
6. Why do actual events not always conform to God's stated will?
7. Does this model of God's sovereignty have any biblical basis?

II. What the Bible declares about God's authority, ability, and intervention

A. God's right to rule (Adonai YHWH "Sovereign Lord" - Gen.15:2)

1. As Creator/Owner of all things (Rev.4:11/Rom.9:21/Matt.20:15)
2. As King of Kings and Lord of lords (Rev.19:16/Ex.9:16/Dan.4:17)
3. As Redeemer of creation (Rev.5:9-10)

B. God's omnipotence (El Shaddai "God Almighty" - Gen.17:1/Rev.1:8)

1. Nothing is too difficult for God (Gen.18:14/Jer.32:17,27)
2. He cannot act contrary to His own nature or character (II Tim.2:13/Tit.1:2/Jas.1:13/ Gen.19:22)
3. This also means he cannot act other than according to truth. He cannot create a contradiction, as if He were to make 2 + 2 equal 5, or make something exist and not exist simultaneously, or make man both free and a puppet, or responsible and not responsible at the same time.

C. God's intervention (Eph.1:11)

1. God limits His intervention according to His own policies and purposes, and does not always get precisely what He wants in men's lives (Isaiah 5:7)
2. With reference to specific circumstances, God's intervention is often conditioned on man's exercise of faith in prayer (Matt.13:58/James 4:2)
3. With reference to man's obedience, God generally does not override man's will to rebel (Isaiah 1:2)
4. God's ability to intervene guarantees that ultimately God's macro-purposes will be fulfilled in history (Psalm 115:3/Dan. 4:35/Rom.8:28)

III. God's rule over history

A. God's sovereignty over rulers

1. He can raise up and depose rulers (Dan.2:21; 4:17) and can direct their decisions (Prov.21:1/Ex.4:21/Rev.17:16-17)

2. Though God can and often does direct rulers, He is not the author of every political development (Hos.8:4), nor does he approve every decision of rulers, though He remains sovereign over the ultimate outcome of events (Isa.54:15; 37:36/Ps.46:6).

B. God's rule over particular circumstances

1. He governs the elements of nature (Mark 4:41)
2. He can and sometimes does thwart plots of evil men (Ps.21:11/Acts 23:14)
3. He turns evil acts to good purposes (Gen.50:20/Ps. 76:10)

IV. God's particular rule in the lives of believers

- A. By giving commands (John 8:31/Matt.28:19-20)
- B. By inward direction (Phil.2:13/Jer.31:33/Rom.8:14)
- C. By providences (I Cor.16:9)
- D. By chastening (I Cor.11:32/Heb.12:7)

V. God's "drawing" of sinners

A. God's desire for all to be saved

1. He died for all (I John 2:2/I Tim.2:6; 4:10)
2. All are called to repent (Acts 2:38; 17:30)
3. He desires that all would repent (II Pet.3:9/Ezek.33:11/I Tim.2:4)

B. How God draws sinners (John 6:44)

1. By display of grace (Ps.145:9/Matt.5:45/Rom.2:4)
2. By manifestation of truth (Rom. 1:19-20/II Cor.4:2)
3. By conviction of sin (John 16:8/Acts 2:37; 7:54)
4. By appeal to man's self-interest
 - a. Persuasion (Acts 2:40/Ezek.33:11/Luke 13:3/Acts 9:5)
 - b. Pressure of circumstance (Jonah/Prodigal Son)
5. Encouraging a "godly sorrow" (II Cor.7:10/Acts 11:18/II Tim.2:25)
6. Helping a willing but weak faith (Mark 9:24)

C. Man's resistance of God's rule

1. God draws animals irresistibly, which is a major difference between men and beasts (Jer.8:7/Isa.1:2-3).
 - a. Those "given" Christ by the Father came to Jesus (John 6:37). However, they were already those who were God's faithful prior to Christ's coming (John 17:6) and were capable of falling away (John 17:12).
 - b. God's predestination did not determine man's choices, but the consequences of man's choices (Isa. 65:12; 66:3-4/Jude 4/I Pet.2:8/Rom.8:29/Eph.1:5)
 - c. Inequality of result is man's doing, not God's (Ezek.18:25)
2. Man resists God's sovereignty to his own hurt, but does so nonetheless (Prov.1: 24-25,29/Isa.65:12/Jer.32:33/Luke 7:30/Matt.22:3; 23:37/Acts 7:51)

What came first: Regenerating Grace or Saving Faith?

"The matter may be presented in this simple thesis: either God is the first cause of salvation by His sovereign will, or man is the first cause in salvation* by his sovereign will. Either regeneration precedes faith or faith precedes regeneration. Both systems cannot be correct." (Kenneth Talbot & W. Gary Crampton, *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism & Arminianism*, 1990, p.4)

Calvinist view: regenerating grace creates faith

John 10:26

But **ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep**, as I said unto you.

Acts 13:48

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and **as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.**

Acts 16:14

And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: **whose heart the Lord opened**, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

Acts 18:27

And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much **which had believed through grace**

II Thessalonians 2:13

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning **chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief** of the truth

I Corinthians 2:14

But **the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God**: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Non-Calvinist view: regeneration is the result of faith

Ephesians 1:13

In whom **ye also trusted, after that ye heard** the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also **after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit** of promise

Ephesians 2:8-9

For **by grace are ye saved through faith**; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Romans 5:2

By whom also **we have access by faith into this grace** wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 10:13-15

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and **how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?** and how shall they hear without a preacher?

Acts 19:2

He said unto them, Have ye **received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?**

Colossians 2:11-12

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye **are risen with him through the faith** of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

R. C. Sproul, emphasizing that faith and repentance are impossible prior to regeneration:

"I don't see why an Arminian...even bothers to preach the gospel. He must have a lot more confidence in the power of the gospel than I have, because I don't believe that the power of the gospel ever will bring to repentance the person who is not born again!" (R. C. Sproul, *Interact Tapes: Romans #48* [Rom.9:14-16])

The answer of Scripture: The Word of God comes "in power," enabling the hearer to believe and be saved:

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is **the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth**; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16)

"For our **gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power**, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake." (I Thessalonians 1:5)

"So then **faith cometh by hearing**, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17)

"And ye shall **know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**" (John 8:32)

"**Being born again**, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, **by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.**" (I Peter 1:23)

"For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but **the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith** in them that heard it." (Hebrews 4:2)

*Though this statement may be correct, it incorrectly states the terms of the debate. Both Calvinists and non-Calvinists agree that "God is the first cause of salvation" and none believe that "man is the first cause in salvation." The Arminian differs from the Calvinist upon the question of who is the "final cause" of man's salvation—i.e. does man even have a vote with reference to his own salvation?

Total Depravity and Inability

Calvinist view: Man is too corrupt to even respond to God's overtures and to repent or believe

Genesis 6:5

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that **every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**

Jeremiah 13:23

Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? **then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.**

Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

John 6:44, 65

No man can come to me, **except the Father which hath sent me draw him....**Therefore said I unto you, that **no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.**

John 8:44

Ye are of your father the devil, and **the lusts of your father ye will do.** He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

John 15:5

He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: **for without me ye can do nothing.**

Romans 3:10-12

As it is written, **There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.** They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Romans 7:18

For I know that **in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing:** for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Romans 8:7-8

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, **neither indeed can be.** So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

I Corinthians 2:14

But **the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God:** for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Ephesians 2:1

And you hath he quickened, **who were dead in trespasses and sins**

Ephesians 4:17-19

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, **Having the understanding darkened,** being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of **the blindness of their heart:** Who being **past feeling** have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

Non-Calvinist view: Repentance and faith are an option for any man, upon God's prior urging, to choose

Deuteronomy 30:19

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore **choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live**

Joshua 24:15

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, **choose you this day whom ye will serve;** whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell

Proverbs 1:29

For that they hated knowledge, and **did not choose the fear of the LORD**

Isaiah 7:15-16

Butter and honey shall he eat, **that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.** For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

Isaiah 56:4-5

For thus saith the LORD unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and **choose the things that please me,** and take hold of my covenant; Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off.

Matthew 11:28-29

Come unto me, **all ye that labour and are heavy laden,** and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Acts 2:40

And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, **Save yourselves** from this untoward generation.

Acts 17:30

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now **commandeth all men every where to repent**

Romans 1:20-21

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; **so that they are without excuse;** Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but **became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.**

Can a man "dead in trespasses and sins" make a choice to repent and believe?

Ephesians 2:1, 5

And you hath he quickened, **who were dead in trespasses and sins**...Even when **we were dead in sins**, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

Colossians 2:13

And you, **being dead in your sins** and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses

Question: "How can 'dead' men exercise free choice to repent and believe the Gospel?"

Technically, "dead men" can do nothing and choose nothing. However, men—both regenerate and unregenerate do things and make decisions every day of their lives. Thus unregenerate men are not "dead" in the literal sense that would preclude their making moral choices. If we are to understand the meaning of "dead in trespasses and sins," we must recognize the frequent metaphorical use of "dead" in Scripture generally, and in Paul particularly:

A. Meaning "as good as dead" for some specific purpose defined by context

Compare: Hebrews 11:12

"Therefore from one man [Abraham], **and him as good as dead**, were born as many as the stars of the sky..."

with: Romans 4:19

"[Abraham] did **not** consider his own body, **already dead (since he was about a hundred years old)**, and the **deadness of Sarah's womb**..."

B. Meaning worthy of or doomed to death

Genesis 20:3

But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, **thou art but a dead man**, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife.

Exodus 12:33

And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, **We be all dead men**.

II Samuel 9:8

And [Mephibosheth] bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon **such a dead dog as I am**?

II Samuel 19:28

For all of my father's house **were but dead men** before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?

Matthew 9:18

While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is **even now dead**: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

Luke 15:24

For this **my son was dead**, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Romans 7:9-11

For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and **I died**. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it **slew me**.

Romans 8:10

And if Christ be in you, **the body is dead because of sin**; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

Ephesians 2:1, 5

And you hath he quickened, **who were dead in trespasses and sins**...Even when **we were dead in sins**, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

Colossians 2:13

And you, **being dead in your sins** and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses

Do the metaphorical expressions "dead to sin" (Romans 6:2) and "crucified to the world" (Galatians 6:14) preclude any wrongdoing by the believer? (see also Colossians 2:20/3:3)

The Election of God: Its Ground and Its Scope

Calvinist view:

Unconditional and Individual

"Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, **without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace.**"

(The Westminster Confession of Faith [III:5])

II Thessalonians 2:13

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning **chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth**

Ephesians 1:4-5

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as **he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love...**

Romans 9:11-13, 16

For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, **The elder shall serve the younger.** As it is written, **Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated...** So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. [see treatment of this passage below, in right column]

Saving Faith as a gift to the Elect (as opposed to a free choice):

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace are ye saved through **faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:** Not of works, lest any man should boast.

II Peter 1:1

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, **to them that have obtained like precious faith with us** through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ

Acts 11:18

When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, **Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.**

II Timothy 2:25-26

In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; **if God peradventure will give them repentance** to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

The selection of Israel over Edom for the fulfillment of God's purposes is clearly in view in these passages, and the individual salvation of the twin brothers is not in any sense addressed. The prediction of Genesis 25:23 was fulfilled in the destinies of Israel and Edom—but not in the individual lives of Jacob and Esau.

Non-Calvinist view:

God has elected Christ. All who are in Him (in His Body, the Church) participate and share in His elect status:

I Peter 2:8-9

But ye are **a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people** (all corporate terminology)

Ephesians 5:27

That he might present it to himself a **glorious church** [corporate]...that it should be holy and without blemish.

Ephesians 1:4-5

...according as **he hath chosen us in him** [corporately] before the foundation of the world, **that we should be holy and without blame** before him in love...

To the individual, election "to be holy and without blame" is conditioned upon personal faith and perseverance:

Colossians 1:21-23

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the **body of his flesh** through death, to **present you holy and unblameable** and unreprouvable in his sight: if ye **continue** in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel [cf.Heb.3:6, 14]

Corporate (Unconditional): Individual (Conditional) Election :

Romans 11:16-7, 20-22

...if the **root be holy, so are the branches** ...and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the **root and fatness of the olive tree** [the tree, corporately, is elect. All branches, while abiding "in the tree," share in the election of the corporate tree].

...because of **unbelief they were broken off**, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, **take heed lest he also spare not thee.** Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but **toward thee, goodness, if thou continue** in his goodness: **otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.** [the election of individual branches is contingent upon their remaining attached to the tree]

I Thessalonians 1:1,3-4

...unto the **church of the Thessalonians** [a corporate entity] which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ... Remembering without ceasing your **work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father: **Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.**

Acts 10:34-35

Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

The election of Jacob over Esau: Individual election unto eternal salvation?—or Corporate, national election for the fulfillment of God's purposes in history?

Romans 9:11-13

For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, **The elder shall serve the younger** [Genesis 25:23]. As it is written, **Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated** [Malachi 1:2-3].

It may be safely assumed that Paul would quote Scriptures which establish the point he is seeking to prove...Let us look at the Scriptures that Paul quotes:

Genesis 25:23—"Two nations are in your womb, **two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger.**"

Malachi 1:2-3—"Yet Jacob I have loved; but Esau I have hated, **and laid waste his mountains and his heritage...**"

Is Faith a Meritorious Good Work?

Calvinist view: Faith is a meritorious work, giving occasion of boasting

(Note: There are no scriptures available to support the Calvinist view—only the assertions of the Calvinists)

"We would not give all the praise for our election to God, if it were not free and undeserved. It could not be so if God based it on the future good works of any individual." (John Calvin, *Institutes*, 21:3)

"But it is a piece of futile cunning to lay hold on the term foreknowledge, and so to use that as to pin the eternal *election* of God upon the *merits* of men, which election the apostle everywhere ascribes to the purpose of God alone..." (John Calvin *The Eternal Predestination of God*, p.48)

"...election does not find its basis in man's works and therefore not in his foreseen faith." (G.C. Berkouwer, *Divine Election*, 1960, p.42. Italics mine)

"If Arminianism were true, then salvation would not be by grace; it would be merited by the free choice of fallen man." (Kenneth Talbot & W. Gary Crampton, *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism & Arminianism*, 1990, p.20)

"If election be an act of grace...then 'tis abominable and to be rejected to make it an act of debt. If the decree be conditional (upon foreseen faith and perseverance), then is it an act of debt and not of grace..." (Christopher Ness, *An Antidote Against Arminianism*, 1700, p.40)

"Arminianism has something of which to boast. The Arminian can say, 'Well, the reason I'm a Christian and my neighbor isn't is because *I* believed,' or '*I* trusted,' or '*I* went forward,' or '*I* chose,' or '*I* made a decision,' or '*I* accepted Christ,'—'*I*', '*I*', '*I*', '*I*', '*I*', '*I*', '*I*', '*I*', '*I*'! The bottom line is upon the human act of volition. They do have something of which to boast, and that's one of the reasons why I think it is so severely in error." (R. C. Sproul, *Interact Tapes: Romans #48* [Rom.9:14-16])

Non-Calvinist view: Faith is the opposite of meritorious good works, thus eliminating any occasion of boasting

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace are ye saved **through faith**; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **Not of works, lest any man should boast.**

Romans 3:27

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but **by the law of faith.**

Romans 4:4-5

Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But **to him that worketh not, but believeth** on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Romans 4:16

Therefore **it is of faith, that it might be by grace**; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all.

"The standard criticism leveled against a theology of this kind is synergism. It is supposed to bring into the event of salvation a decisive human work, and thereby destroy its purely gracious character. But this is simply not the case. Faith is not a work at all (Rom.4:16). It is not an achievement and has no merit attaching to it. It is simply the surrender of the will to God, the stretching out of an empty hand to receive the gift of grace. In the act of faith, we renounce all our works, and repudiate completely every claim to self-righteousness. Far from encouraging conceit and self-esteem, faith utterly excludes them (Rom.3:27). Even when we speak of faith as a 'condition,' let us not misrepresent the meaning of this expression. Faith is not the condition of grace, which originates in the counsels of eternity. Faith is rather the *response* to grace God calls for through which salvation becomes a reality to the individual concerned. We are saved by God's grace *through faith.*" Clark Pinnock, *Grace Unlimited*, p.15.

Double Predestination:

Could God Unconditionally Elect Some Without Unconditionally Reprobating the Rest?

"[The concept of equal ultimacy] seeks a complete balance between election and reprobation. The key idea is this: Just as God intervenes in the lives of the elect to create faith in their hearts, so God equally intervenes in the lives of the reprobate to create or work unbelief in their hearts...Equal ultimacy is *not* the Reformed or Calvinist view of predestination. Some have called it 'hyper-Calvinism.' I prefer to call it 'sub-Calvinism' or, better yet, 'anti-Calvinism.'...The dreadful error of hyper-Calvinism is that it involves God in coercing sin. This does radical violence to the integrity of God's character." (R.C. Sproul, *Chosen By God*, pp.142-143)

"By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death" (John Calvin, *Institutes*, 3:21:5)

"We say, then, that Scripture clearly proves this much, that God by his eternal and immutable counsel determined once for all those whom it was his pleasure one day to admit to salvation, and those whom, on the other hand, it was his pleasure to doom to destruction" (John Calvin, *Institutes*, 3:21:7)

"To understand the Reformed view of the matter, we must pay close attention to the crucial distinction between *positive* and *negative* decrees of God. Positive has to do with God's active intervention in the hearts of the elect. Negative has to do with God's passing over the non-elect.

"The Reformed view teaches that God positively or actively intervenes in the lives of the elect to insure their salvation. The rest of mankind God leaves to themselves." (R.C. Sproul, *Chosen By God*, pp.142)

"Those therefore whom God passes by he reprobates, and that for no other cause but because he is pleased to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestines to his children." (John Calvin, *Institutes*, 3:23:1)

Romans 9:18

Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will **he hardeneth**.

I Peter 2:7-8

Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, **even unto them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.**

Jude 4

For there are certain men crept in unawares, **who were before of old ordained to this condemnation**, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

"But we must protest that a god who, while rescuing some, simply 'passes by' others in the same lost circumstance is so little like the Good Samaritan in our Lord's parable and so much like the priest and the Levite that he cannot be the God who desires to have all men saved and none to perish. Such a god constitutes a total contradiction to the spirit of the words of James, 'To him who knows to do good and does it not, to him it is sin' (4:17)...A god so heartless and so arbitrary cannot be the God who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to exile, sorrow, suffering, shame and death. He cannot be the God who cries with sorrowing heart and infinite compassion, 'Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none other' (Isa. 45:22). He cannot be the God whose grace has appeared for the salvation of all men (Tit.2:11 RSV). Such an arbitrary god is not the God we worship and adore, the God in whom we trust." (Robert Shank, *Elect in the Son*, p.193)

"We have referred already to *soteriological* predestination, the view of election first developed by Augustine which is part of a double predestination of human beings either to eternal life or to eternal death...it represents God as...a respecter of persons, and describes him acting in a manner which would never be pleasing to God if we did it." (Clark Pinnock, *Grace Unlimited*, p.17)

Isaiah 66:3-4

Yea, **they have chosen their own ways**, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. **I also will choose their delusions**, and will bring their fears upon them; because **when I called, none did answer**; when I spake, they did not hear: but **they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.**

Ezekiel 33:11

As I live, saith the Lord GOD, **I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live**: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

II Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, **not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.**

Did God Decree That Men Should Sin?

Calvinist view: Yes!

"...how foolish and frail is the support of divine justice afforded by the suggestion that evils come to be, not by His will but by His permission...**It is a quite frivolous refuge to say that God otiosely permits them, when Scripture shows Him not only willing, but the author of them...**Who does not tremble at these judgments with which **God works in the hearts of even the wicked whatever He will**, rewarding them nonetheless according to desert? Again it is quite clear from the evidence of Scripture that **God works in the hearts of men to incline their wills just as he will, whether to good for His mercy's sake, or to evil according to their merits.**" (John Calvin, *The Eternal Predestination of God*, 10:11)

"If what I teach is true, that those who perish are destined to death by the eternal good pleasure of God, though the reason does not appear, then **they are not found but made worthy of destruction...**The eternal predestination of God, by which **before the fall of Adam he decreed what should take place concerning the whole human race and every individual, was fixed and determined...**God chose out of the condemned race of Adam those whom he pleased and reprobated whom he willed." (John Calvin, *The Eternal Predestination of God*, 8:5)

"...that it could not be but that Adam would sin is equally true, considering Adam was subordinate to the decrees of God, determining what Adam would do out of the freedom of his own will." (Christopher Ness, *An Antidote Against Arminianism*, 1700, p.54)

"The Reformed Christian may even biblically say that **God has foreordained sin**. For if sin was outside the plan of God, then we would have to maintain that God does not control all things, and that some things come into being apart from His sovereign will...**He is not to be considered the Author of sin. God was the divine first cause**, whereas godless men were the second cause...Nothing is outside His sovereign purpose, including sin. But the decree with reference to sin is permissive, rather than an efficient decree. That is, it is a decree that renders sin an absolute certainty, but it is not brought about by a direct divine act." (Kenneth Talbot & W. Gary Crampton [Calvinists], *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism & Arminianism*, 1990, pp.67,68,70-71)

"We know that God is sovereign because we know that God is God. **Therefore we must conclude that God foreordained sin.** What else can we conclude? (R.C. Sproul, *Chosen by God*, 1986, p.31)

Isaiah 45:7

I form the light, and **create darkness**: I make peace, and **create evil**: I the LORD do all these things.

Non-Calvinist view: NO!

James 1:13-14

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither **tempteth he any man**: but **every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust**, and enticed.

Jeremiah 19:5 /32:35

They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, **which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind**

Psalms 5:4

For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.

Hebrews 10:38

Now the just shall live by faith: but if **any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.**

Isaiah 66:3-4

Yea, **they have chosen their own ways**, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. **I also will choose their delusions**, and will bring their fears upon them; because **when I called, none did answer**; when I spake, they did not hear: but **they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.**

"The Minister's Daughter"

John Greenleaf Whittier

Then up spoke the little maiden,
Treading on snow and pink:
"O father! These pretty blossoms
Are very wicked, I think.

"Had there been no Garden of Eden
There never had been a fall;
And if never a tree had blossomed
God would have loved us all."

"Hush, child!" the father answered,
"By his decree man fell;
His ways are in clouds and darkness,
But he doeth all things well.

"And whether by his ordaining
To us cometh good or ill,
Joy or pain, or light or shadow,
We must fear and love him still."

"O, I fear him!" said the daughter,
"And I try to love him too;
But I wish he was good and gentle
Kind and loving as you."

The Nature and Scope of the Atonement

Calvinist view: Intentionally limited to the Elect:

Mark 10:45

For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

John 10:11,15

I am the good shepherd: **the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep...**
As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and **I lay down my life for the sheep...**

John 15:13

Greater love hath no man than this, **that a man lay down his life for his friends.**

John 17:9

I pray for them: **I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me;** for they are thine.

Acts 20:28

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed **the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.**

Romans 8:32-33

He that spared not his own Son, but **delivered him up for us all,** how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Ephesians 1:7

In whom **we have redemption through his blood,** the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Ephesians 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also **loved the church, and gave himself for it**

Effectual toward the Elect:

II Corinthians 5:18-19

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that **God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,** not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Hebrews 9:12

Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, **having obtained eternal redemption for us.**

Non-Calvinist view: For the salvation of all men::

I Timothy 2:1, 4,6

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, **be made for all men...**[God] will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus: **Who gave himself a ransom for all,** to be testified in due time.

John 1:29

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, **which taketh away the sin of the world.**

John 3:17

For **God sent not his Son into the world** to condemn the world; but **that the world through him might be saved.**

Romans 5:18

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one **the free gift came upon all men** unto justification of life.

I 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.

I Timothy 4:10

For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, **who is the Saviour of all men,** specially of those that believe.

II Corinthians 5:19

To wit, that God was in Christ, **reconciling the world unto himself,** not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Titus 2:11 (RV)

For the grace of God hath appeared, **bringing salvation to all men...** [likewise, NASB, RSV, Goodspeed, NEB, TEV]

Hebrews 2:9

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; **that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.**

Does not guarantee the salvation of all those it encompasses:

Hebrews 10:29

Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, **wherewith he was sanctified,** an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

II Peter 2:1

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even **denying the Lord that bought them,** and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

I Corinthians 8:11

And through thy knowledge shall **the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?**

Grace and the Call of God

Calvinist view: Irresistible and Effectual:

John 6:37, 44-45, 65

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me...No man can come to me, **except the Father which hath sent me draw him...** It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me... And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

Acts 13:48

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and **as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.** *

Acts 16:14

And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: **whose heart the Lord opened**, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

Romans 8:30

Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and **whom he called, them he also justified:** and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

*The word translated "ordained" means "disposed" without specifying without specifying *by whom*. The context must determine the meaning. Two verses earlier, Paul had declared that the Jews had judged *themselves* unworthy of everlasting life (v.46). This observation is found in Alfold, Wordsworth, Meyer, Rotherham, Bloomfield, Thayer, Bartlet, and A.T. Robertson. Robertson writes: "This verse does not solve the vexed problem of divine sovereignty and human free agency. There is no evidence that Luke had in mind an *absolutum decretum* of personal salvation."

Non-Calvinist view: Resistible:

Isaiah 5:3-4

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. **What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?**

Isaiah 43:21-22

This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise. But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.

Isaiah 65:12/66:3-4

Yea, **they have chosen their own ways**, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. **I also will choose their delusions**, and will bring their fears upon them; because **when I called, none did answer**; when I spake, they did not hear: but **they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.**

Jeremiah 7:13

And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and **I called you, but ye answered not...**

Matthew 20:16/22:14

...for many be called, but few chosen.

Matthew 23:37

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, **how often would I have gathered thy children together**, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, **and ye would not!**

Luke 7:30

But the Pharisees and lawyers **rejected the counsel of God** against themselves, being not baptized of him.

Acts 7:51

Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, **ye do always resist the Holy Ghost:** as your fathers did, so do ye.

Calvinist view: unchangeable decrees

"How could a sovereign Deity, who has foreordained all things from all eternity, have his decrees changed by the wiles of man, who is a creature of God and is dependent upon Him for his own existence?"

Kenneth Talbot & W. Gary Crampton, *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism & Arminianism*, 1990, pp.11-12

[Note: There are no relevant Scriptures to establish the existence of these "decrees" that determine the salvation or the reprobation of particular individuals. The above quote thus begs the question by presupposing an unsubstantiated Calvinist assertion as a premise in the argument]

Unchangeable decrees?

Genesis 4:6-7

And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? **If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?** and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

I Samuel 2:30

Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, **I said indeed** that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: **but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me:** for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

Jeremiah 18:7-10

At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it: **If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.** And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it: **If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.**

Can an unbeliever "kick against the pricks"? Acts 9:5 / Can the call of a "sovereign" person be resisted? Matthew 22:2-14

Perseverance of the Saints

Calvinist view: Inevitable:

John 5:24

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, **hath everlasting life**, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

John 6:37

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me **I will in no wise cast out**.

John 10:27-30

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and **they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand**. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and **no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand**.

Romans 8:33ff

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that **neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God**, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Philippians 1:6

Being confident of this very thing, that **he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ**.

I Corinthians 1:7-9

So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: **who shall also confirm you unto the end**, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. *God is faithful...*

Ephesians 4:30

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby **ye are sealed unto the day of redemption**.

I Peter 1:5

Who are **kept by the power of God** through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Non-Calvinist view: Conditional:

I John 5:11-12

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and **this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life**.

John 15:6

If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

Romans 11:22

Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: **otherwise thou also shalt be cut off**.

I Corinthians 9:26-27

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: **lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway**.

Hebrews 3:6, 14

But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, **if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end**...For we are made partakers of Christ, **if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end**...

Hebrews 6:4-6

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, **if they shall fall away** [*Gr. and having fallen away*], to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. _

Hebrews 10:26-29

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment...of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

Luke 8:13

They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, **which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away**.

II Timothy 2:11-13

It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: **if we deny him, he also will deny us**: if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

I Peter 1:5

Who are **kept by the power of God** through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Revelation 3:5/22:19

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and **I will not blot out his name out of the book of life**, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels...And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, **God shall take away his part out of the book of life**, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

Individual Salvation: In the Final Analysis, Whose Choice Is It?

Calvinist view: ultimately, God's

Romans 9:11, 16

For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, **that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth...** So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.

John 1:13

Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

James 1:18

Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

John 15:16

Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain:

Matthew 11:27

All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and **he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.**

Calvinist view: unchangeable decrees

"How could a sovereign Deity, who has foreordained all things from all eternity, have his decrees changed by the wiles of man, who is a creature of God and is dependent upon Him for his own existence?" Kenneth Talbot & W. Gary Crampton, *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism & Arminianism*, 1990, pp.11-12

[Note: There are no relevant Scriptures to establish the existence of these "decrees" that determine the salvation or the reprobation of particular individuals. The above quote thus begs the question by presupposing an unsubstantiated Calvinist assertion as a premise in the argument]

Non-Calvinist view: ultimately, man's

Isaiah 59:1-2

Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

Romans 11:20-23

Well; **because of unbelief they were broken off**, and thou standest by **faith**. Be not highminded, but fear: For if **God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee**. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; **but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off**. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.

Hebrews 3:6, 14

But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, **if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end...**For we are made partakers of Christ, **if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end...**

I Peter 1:2

Who are **kept by the power of God through faith** unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time

II Peter 1:8-10

For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and **hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins**. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to **make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall...**

["sure"= *Gr. bebaios*. Same word= secure, translated "stedfast" in Hebrews 3:6,14]

Unchangeable decrees?

Genesis 4:6-7

And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? **If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?** and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

I Samuel 2:30

Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, **I said indeed** that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: **but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me:** for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.

Jeremiah 18:7-10

At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; **If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.** And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; **If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.**

Miscellaneous Quotes

Calvinist

"Who would have thought that our church would ever have given entertainment to these Belgic semi-Pelagians, who have cast dirt upon the faces and raked up the ashes of all those great and pious souls whom God magnified, in using as his instruments to reform his church; to the least of which the whole troop of Arminians shall never make themselves equal, though they swell till they break?...The sacred bond of peace compasseth only the unity of that Spirit which leadeth into all truth. We must not offer the right hand of fellowship, but rather proclaim, 'a holy war,' to such enemies of God's providence, Christ's merit, and the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit." John Owen, 1:6,7

"[The aim of the Arminians is] to clear human nature from the heavy imputation of being sinful, corrupted, wise to do evil but unable to do good; and so to vindicate unto themselves a power and ability of doing all that good which God can justly require to be done by them in the state wherein they are,—of making themselves differ from others who will not make so good use of the endowments of their natures; that so the first and chiefest part in the work of their salvation may be ascribed unto themselves;—a proud Luciferian endeavor!" John Owen, 1:13

"[Arminians] do not only...gratify the pride of man's reason, but also the pride of man's will, in extenuating and lessening both the guilt and filth of original sin...And what are the new Arminians but the varnished offspring of the old Pelagians, that makes the grace of God to lacquey it at the foot, or rather, the will of man? That makes the sheep keep the shepherd? That puts God into the same extremity with Darius, who would gladly have saved Daniel but could not (Dan.6:14)?" Christopher Ness, 2:2-3

Non-Calvinist

"Arminianism [is the] theological stance of James Arminius [sometimes called "the quiet Dutchman"] and the movement that stemmed from him. It views Christian doctrine much as the pre-Augustinian Fathers did and as did the later John Wesley...it is an important aspect of the Arminian tradition—from Arminius himself, through John Wesley, to the present—to be of tolerant spirit." J.K. Grider, 10:79-80

"We consent to Paul's judgment that God 'desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth' and to Peter's conviction that God is 'not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance' (I Tim.2:4, 2 Pet.3:9). If it seems controversial to assert this conviction boldly and unashamedly, then it ought at least to be admitted that here is a truth far more deserving of controversy than many which are debated. On it hangs, we believe, the validity of the universal offer of the gospel, and the possibility of Christian assurance. If we do not know that God loves all sinners, we do not know that God loves us, and we do not know that he loves those to whom we take the gospel." Clark Pinnock, 11:11

1. A Display of Arminianism (John Owen)
2. An Antidote Against Arminianism (Christopher Ness)
3. *Battle of the Gods*, (Robert Morey)
4. *Biblical Predestination*, (Gordon H. Clark)
5. *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism & Arminianism*, (Kenneth Talbot and W. Gary Crampton)
6. *Chosen By God*, (R.C. Sproul)
7. *The Complete Green Letters*, (Miles J. Sanford)
8. *Elect in the Son*, (Robert Shank)
9. *The Eternal Predestination of God*, John Calvin
10. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, (W.A. Elwell, Ed.), article: *Arminianism*
11. *Grace Unlimited* (Clark Pinnock, ed.)

12. *God's Strategy in Human History*, (Roger T. Forster & V. Paul Marston)
13. *The History and Character of Calvinism*, John T. McNeill
14. *If Ye Continue*, (Guy Duty)
15. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin
16. *Life in the Son*, (Robert Shank)
17. *Predestination and Free Will: Four Views of Divine Sovereignty & Human Freedom*, (David & Randall Basinger, eds.)
18. *Systematic Theology*, (Charles Hodge)
19. *Will the Real Heretics Please Stand Up?* (David Bercot)
20. *The Works of Arminius*, 3 Volumes (translated by James and William Nichols)

Sproul takes on the Arminians on Romans, chapter 9:11, 16:

"As you are probably already aware, chapter nine is that chapter which is most acutely clear with respect to the doctrine of predestination and divine sovereignty...An Arminian must hate [Romans 9] verse 11, because verse 11 destroys any rational foundation for Arminian theology!...Now some have tried to get around this position by saying, 'Well, really, all Paul's talking about here is the fact that God chooses one nation over another nation, and that these people are representatives of nations...He's merely pointing out that Judaism comes down through a certain national line, and he's not talking about the election of individuals—he's not talking about the predestination of private people, but he's talking about God's sovereign election of one nation over another nation.'

"But lets think about that for a second, because that's all it should take to dispel this idea. In the first place, if we would grant the fact that all Paul's talking about is the election of a nation—one nation over another sovereignly, by the sheer act of his own grace, without any view to the virtue or vice of a given nation—all of the problems that surround the predestination of individuals would still apply to the predestination of nations, only on a higher scale!

"But more to the point is this: that the Apostle is laboring the fact that the selection of which he is writing *is in fact of individuals—Jacob over Esau!* It may have national repercussions as a result of it, but the election here of which he speaks is: one man is elect, while another one is passed over, having nothing whatsoever to do with the virtue, foreseen or otherwise, of these two individuals...Here we have the plain teaching of Scripture that, at least in one instance, very clearly, God chose to save one, rather than the other, God gives his promises of salvation to one; he does not give the promises of salvation to the other; and he does it before they're even born...that God's electing purpose might stand." (R. C. Sproul, *Interact*

Tapes: Romans #47 [Rom.9:1-13])

"...I just have to say to my Arminian brothers: What could be more clear than verse 16? Is there something wrong with me, that I don't see something here that's not there? Paul says it specifically, explicitly, didactically: 'So then it is *not* of him who wills...' What's the Arminian do? That's the *deathblow* to Arminianism!" (R. C. Sproul, *Interact Tapes: Romans #48 [Rom.9:14-16])*

Ambiguous Statements in John's Gospel

The following verses have been taken by Calvinists and some others to teach that if a person at one time in his life meets the stated condition (comes to Christ, drinks His blood, keeps His saying, believes in Him) that person will never perish, or hunger, or thirst, or die, etc.—regardless of changes in that person's beliefs or actions. However, the active verbs in each case are in tenses that describe present, uncompleted action.

John 6:35—"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me **shall never hunger**; and he that believeth on me **shall never thirst**."

John 8:51—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he **shall never see death**."

John 10:28—"And I give unto [my sheep] eternal life; and they **shall never perish**, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

John 11:26—"And whosoever liveth and believeth in me **shall never die**."

However, consider the structure and meaning of the following verse:

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and **he that believeth not the Son shall not see life**; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36)

This verse is structured like the others, containing a verb in the present tense (believeth not) followed by a future tense (shall not see life). It is clear that it means "shall not see life" while not believing. Nothing in the verse precludes the possibility that some of those who currently do not believe might later embrace the gospel and be saved. The promise made in the future tense is conditioned upon the continuing state of the present tense verb. Thus a proper paraphrase of the statement would be: "He that is not believing in the Son shall not see life while not believing (though he may yet see life if he later believes)."

On the same principle, the other verses, identically structured, may be understood. For example:

John 6:35—"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: **he that cometh** [lit. "the one coming"] to me **shall never hunger** [while continuously coming]; and he that believeth [the continuous relation of trust] on me **shall never thirst** [while believing]."

John 8:51—"Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man **keep** [continuously] my saying, he **shall never see death** [while keeping Christ's saying]."

John 10:28—"And I give unto [**my sheep**] eternal life; and they **shall never perish**, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand [so long as they remain "my sheep"]."

John 11:26—"And **whosoever liveth** [lit. "everyone living"] and **believeth** [lit. "believing"] in me **shall never die**."

The following verses also have a similar meaning:

John 6:51—"I am the living bread which came down from heaven: **if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever**; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

John 6:58—"This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: **he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever**."