

# Sovereignty of God and man's salvation

(a study from Steve Gregg's lectures)

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# 1) Case for Calvinism: Lecture 1

## a) *Terms*

### i) Calvinism

- (1) Term used to describe views of John Calvin.
  - (a) Institutes written when he was 26 or 27 years old.
    - (i) Remarkably, he had not changed any of the specifics of those views at all in his lifetime.
      1. This means his theology was either perfect very young or that he was not open to growth.
- (2) Represents views of St Augustine in 4<sup>th</sup> century
  - (a) All scholars recognize this
  - (b) This means debate has actually been around for over 1500 years.
  - (c) Augustine was debating these issues with Pelagius.
    - (i) Pelagius lost and was branded and remembered as a heretic.
      1. Charles Finney follows Pelagian views in his systematic theology
    - (ii) Winner writes history.
      1. winning a debate doesn't necessarily mean you have the truth.
      2. Councils of "men" decided these things.
  - (d) Problem is that this goes against the Protestant idea of *Sola scriptura*.
- (3) Those that hold it believe it speaks of orthodoxy itself
  - (a) Puritans
  - (b) Most of the Reformers
    - (i) In fact sometimes referred to as "reformed theology".
  - (c) Better Christian writers
  - (d) Many of the popular commentators and scholars
    - (i) Charles Spurgeon
    - (ii) FF Bruce (self-described as "unrepentant Augustinian Calvinist")
    - (iii) Etc.
  - (e)
- (4) Almost all Calvinists look to Calvin himself as the enunciator of their belief system.
  - (a) Not so for Armeneists.
- (5) Popularized today by people like:
  - (a) RC Sproul
  - (b)

### ii) Armenianism

- (1) Term used to describe a non-Calvinist (usually label is given by Calvinists)
- (2) Named after Jacob Arminius (a dutch reformer)
- (3) Unfortunate term:
  - (a) Most people don't even know who Arminius was.
  - (b) Most non-Calvinists have never read Arminian writings
    - (i) Don't know what his views are on some subjects.
    - (ii) They do not follow him and his doctrine specifically
    - (iii) Formed theology from bible itself most likely.
  - (c) Some are probably members of some Arminian based denomination.
    - (i) Methodists
    - (ii) Wesleyan
  - (d) Probable that more people are influenced by Armeneists like John Wesley or Charles Finney than by Arminius.
  - (e) Not all non-Calvinists have the same idea of election.
  - (f) Some people agree with 1 or more of the 5 points of Calvinism (3-point Calvinists, etc).
- (4) This term to Calvinist is the same as saying "heretic".

- (a) Especially the older reformist and puritan writers.
  - (i) John Owens – A display of Armenianism
  - (ii) Christopher Ness – An antidote to Armenianism.
  - (iii) Charles Spurgeon
    - 1. These men say that Armenianism is from the pit of hell.

b) *5-points of Calvinism (positive arguments for)*

- i) Not originated with Calvin himself, but his ideas were condensed into these 5 points by his followers as an answer to Armenian followers 5 point system.
  - (1) John Calvin was French and therefore would not have spelled out an English acrostic for his points (TULIP)
    - (a) Total Depravity
    - (b) Unconditional Election
    - (c) Limited Atonement
    - (d) Irresistible Grace
    - (e) Perseverance of the Saints.
- ii) Total Depravity (or total inability)
  - (1) Fall has left man totally dead, blind, and deaf, to the things of God.
    - (a) Incapable of responding to the gospel unless God 1<sup>st</sup> regenerates new life in that person.
    - (b) God must decide to save the individual for him.
      - (i) This is God's gift to the sinner, not a work of the sinner.
  - (2) Scriptural evidence:

*Gen 6:5-6*

*5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

*NKJV*

- (a) If his thoughts are only evil, how can he have a good thought like repenting and believing and obeying.
- (b) God would have to birth that thought in him

*Jer 13:23*

*23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots?  
Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.*

*NKJV*

- (c) A fallen man to do the right thing is as impossible as a leopard changing his spots.

*Jer 17:9*

*9 "The heart is deceitful above all things,  
And desperately wicked;  
Who can know it?*

*NKJV*

- (d) Again, the heart of man is inclined to evil

*Matt 11:25-28*

*25 At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. 26 Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. 27 All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.*

NKJV

- (e) Man in fallen state can't know the Father unless the Son wills to reveal Him to that person.
  - (i) Argument is that God doesn't will to reveal Himself to everyone and therefore doesn't to some people.
  - (ii) It has to be God who reveals.

*Rom 7:18*

*18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.*

NKJV

- (f) Natural state has nothing good in it.
  - (i) Doing good things like: repenting, trusting, obeying God are impossible for man naturally.

*Rom 8:7-9*

*7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

NKJV

- (g) Those in flesh (natural state) cannot please God.
  - (i) Including turning to God.

*Eph 2:1-3*

*2:1 And you He made alive, who were **dead** in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature **children of wrath**, just as the others.*

NKJV

- (h) Again, we're **dead** in trespasses and by nature children of wrath.
  - (i) Person can't go against his nature.
  - (i) Person can't reach out for a lifeline because dead people can't reach.
    - (i) Indeed, they make no responses at all

*Eph 4:17-20*

*17 This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, 18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; 19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*

NKJV

- (j) State of unregenerate:
  - (i) Mind is futile
  - (ii) Understanding is darkened
  - (iii) Alienated from light of God (therefore dead)
  - (iv) Ignorant
  - (v) Heart is hardened
  - (vi) Past feeling
- (k) How can such a person even have conviction of sin?

*Rom 3:9-12*

9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. 10 As it is written:

*“There is none righteous, no, not one;  
11 There is none who understands;  
There is none who seeks after God.  
12 They have all turned aside;  
They have together become unprofitable;  
There is none who does good, no, not one.”*  
NKJV

- (l) All are wicked
- (m) Are we better than they?
  - (i) Calvinists believe that if faith was a choice for the individual, then some credit should be merited to the ones who believe. This flies in the face of these kinds of scriptures.
    1. some congratulations due to those who turn over those who don't

*John 6:44  
44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him;*  
NKJV

- (n) Powerless to come unless drawn.

*John 6:65-66  
65 And He said, “Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.”*  
NKJV

- (o) Must be granted to come.

*John 8:44  
44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.*  
NKJV

- (p) Unbelievers only want to do what the devil wants them to do.
  - (i) They can't even want to repent.

*Phil 2:13-14  
13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*  
NKJV

- (q) Calvinists don't believe God drags people to Him against their will, but changes their will altogether.

*John 15:5  
5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.*  
NKJV

- (r) Without Christ there is total inability to do anything.

*1 Cor 2:14*

*14 But 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.  
NKJV*

(s) Things of the Spirit are foolish to the unregenerate, why would he want them?

iii) Unconditional Election

(1) Election simply means choice

(a) God's election of the Christian

(i) God chose certain sinners to be saved before the foundation of the world solely based on 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 sinners He has chosen. These are the result of God's choice, not it's cause.

(b) Very clear in scripture that believers are chosen by God.

*Eph 1:4-5*

*4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,  
NKJV*

(c) Debate is, on what basis does God choose one person over the other.

(i) Not everyone is chosen

(ii) Calvinist position – there is no reason at all except that which resides in the hidden council of God's sovereign providence.

1. his purposes and good pleasure

2. no conditions to be met to qualify for this other than God chooses them.

a. In fact there couldn't be because of the first principle of Total depravity.

(d) Scriptural evidence cited:

*John 1:12-13*

*12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, **but of God.**  
NKJV*

(e) Not human free will but God's choice

*John 6:35-40*

*35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. 36 But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. 37 **All that the Father gives Me will come to Me**, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all **He has given Me** I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. 40 And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."  
NKJV*

(f) The Father gives Jesus some people.

(g) None of them will be lost.

- (i) Supporting also the Perseverance of saints principle.

*John 15:16*

*16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain,  
NKJV*

- (h) You didn't choose God, He chose you.

*Acts 13:48-49*

*48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.  
NKJV*

- (i) Believed because God appointed them to.

*Rom 8:28-30*

*28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.  
NKJV*

- (j) God calls people according to His purpose.

*Rom 9:10-16*

*10 And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac 11(for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), 12 it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." 13 As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."*

*14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! 15 For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." 16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.  
NKJV*

- (k) Unconditional (before they did any good or evil)

- (l) God's prerogative, not ours (I will have mercy on whom I will..)

*Eph 1:4-7*

*4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.  
NKJV*

*Eph 1:11-12*

*11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,  
NKJV*

- (m) God works all things to the council of His will

- (i) Therefore it is argued that God sovereignly controls all things that happen.

- (ii) This includes salvation.
  - 1. Some were predestined to be adopted as sons (vs. 5)
    - a. Since this was before the foundation of the world, then it was determined before they could do anything to affect that decision.

*2 Thess 2:13*

*13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,  
NKJV*

- (n) One of the strongest arguments for election.
  - (i) It was God's choice for them to believe, not them.

*James 1:18*

*18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.  
NKJV*

- (o) It was by His will, not ours that they would be firstfruits.

iv) Limited Atonement or "Particular Redemption"

- (1) Usually the 1<sup>st</sup> thing to be rejected by 3 or 4 point Calvinists.
  - (a) Very difficult to prove biblically.
  - (b) Sounds like it demeans Jesus' work on the cross (Limited).
- (2) The doctrine is that Jesus did not intend to die for anyone but the elect.
  - (a) The debt that was paid or merit that was accrued at the cross only equaled enough to pay for the sins of the elect, not the world.
- (3) This builds on the previous 2 points.
  - (a) If man is totally depraved, then God must choose him to be saved.
  - (b) If God is choosing some to be saved, that salvation is unconditional on anything man can do.
  - (c) Since God is only choosing some, there's no point in Jesus dieing for those who will be damned.
    - (i) Why would He pay for their sins when He has no intention of saving them?
    - (d) If the first two are correct, this is only a logical conclusion of that.
- (4) His death not only made available the atonement for the elect, but it secured it particularly thus guaranteeing their salvation.
  - (a) In contrast to the non-Calvinist notion that Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world, but it's up to the individual to decide whether he benefits by it or not.
  - (b) Jesus will receive everything He purchased in the end.
- (5) Scriptural support:

*John 10:11-12*

*11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.  
NKJV*

- (a) Jesus gives His life only for His sheep, not others' sheep.
  - (i) Not for losers but winners.

*John 10:14-18*

*14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. 15 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd. 17 Therefore My Father*

*loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. 18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”*  
NKJV

- (b) Same thing, He has power to lay down and take up His life, but He does so only for His sheep (the elect.)

*John 10:24-30*

*24 Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, “How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.” 25 Jesus answered them, “I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me. 26 But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. 27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand.*

NKJV

- (c) These particular Jews were not His sheep so He wasn’t laying down His life for them.  
(d) This verse also used in the argument for the perseverance of the saints.

*John 15:13*

*13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.*

NKJV

- (e) Only His friends are the one’s He lays down His life for.

*John 17:9-10*

*9 I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.*

NKJV

- (f) He prays only for the elect, He’s not concerned for the salvation of the world.  
(i) If He won’t pray for them, He certainly wouldn’t die for them.

*Acts 20:28-29*

*28 Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.*

NKJV

- (g) He purchased the **church** of God with His blood, not the whole world.

*Eph 1:6-7*

*7 In Him we have redemption through His blood,*

NKJV

- (h) “we” is referring to the church (the elect), not sinners.

*Eph 5:25-28*

*25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

NKJV

- (i) Again, He gave His life for “her” (church)

2 Cor 5:18-20

*18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

NKJV

- (j) “World” here would mean “the elect around the world”, not just the Jews.
- (k) Important point here is the God reconciled the world to Himself.
  - (i) This supports the notion that the cross secured the salvation of the elect, not just making it available.

Heb 9:12

*12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.*

NKJV

- (l) He “**obtained**” it, not just making it a possibility.
- (6) The overall argument is that Jesus died only for His elect, and in doing so, He procured the salvation for that elect unconditionally apart from anything the elect would choose.
- v) Irresistible Grace or the “Efficacious call”
  - (1) If you are of the elect, then God will call you in a way that you will be guaranteed to respond.
    - (a) Inevitable and infallible
    - (b) This is the proof that you are of the elect, because you’ve been called and you responded.
    - (c) God works in your heart to make you want to come.
      - (i) This without doing violence to the free-will of man.
        - 1. How? It’s a mystery of God’s secret councils. (mysteries are very important to Calvinism)
  - (2) General Call
    - (a) The Call God gives to all people (although they can’t respond).
      - (i) just so He can say that He has.
  - (3) Efficacious call
    - (a) The Call that is irresistible.
    - (b) This is an “inward” call that God only gives to the elect.
      - (i) It works in their heart to preclude any possibility of resistance.
  - (4) Scriptural support:

John 6:37

*37 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me.*

NKJV

- (a) Jesus said they will come...period.

John 6:44-46

*44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, ‘And they shall all be taught by God.’ Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.*

NKJV

- (b) The word for draw literally means “to drag”
- (c) NT:1670 **helkuo** (hel-koo’-o); or helko (hel’-ko); probably akin to NT:138; to drag (literally or figuratively): KJV – draw. Compare NT:1667.
  - (i) Used elsewhere to describe those who are being hauled off to prison.
- (d) If the Father wants you, you’ll come.
  - (i) Which means if you don’t come, the Father didn’t want you in the first place.

*John 6:64-66*

*64 But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. 65 And He said, “Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.”*

*NKJV*

- (e) Same as above.

*Acts 13:48-49*

*48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.*

*NKJV*

- (f) Those appointed **believed**.

*Rom 8:30*

*30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.*

*NKJV*

- (g) All who were “called” got justified, so it must be an effectual call.

vi) Perseverance of the saints.

- (1) If you are one of the elect, you will never lose your salvation. This follows from the 3 previous points.
  - (a) Election is proven by the fact that you persevere faithful to the end.
  - (b) If you don’t persevere, you were never saved to begin with.
  - (c) It is guaranteed that you will persevere because election is unconditional and irresistible.
- (2) Not same as Eternal Security doctrine that’s popular today (once saved always saved)
  - (a) This doctrine says that if you said the sinners prayer yet live your life in sin, you’re still saved.
- (3) Scriptural support:

*2 Peter 1:5-10*

*5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;*

*NKJV*

- (a) The only way you can be sure if you are of the elect is if you persevere in these things
  - (i) Growth

- (ii) Continuing in the faith.
- (iii) Faithfulness
- (b) Living a holy life is the evidence.

*John 10:27-30*

*27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. 30 I and My Father are one."*  
NKJV

- (c) Nobody can snatch you out of God's hand
  - (i) If anyone does, you were never there to begin with.

*Rom 8:32-39*

*33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written:*

*"For Your sake we are killed all day long;  
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."*

*37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*  
NKJV

- (d) How can anyone condemn you if God has justified you?
  - (i) Christ is interceding for the elect
  - (ii) If you conquer, you're one of us (the elect). If you don't you never were.

*Phil 1:6*

*6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;*  
NKJV

- (e) Suggests that if God started something in you, He's not going to quit until He's done.
  - (i) He has a time investment in the believer.

*Phil 2:13*

*13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*  
NKJV

- (f) God causes your will to persevere.

*Eph 4:30*

*30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*  
NKJV

- (g) The seal of God is on the elect, you can't get it off if you're elect

*1 Peter 1:3-5*

*3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

*NKJV*

- (h) The inheritance is reserved for the believer.
- (i) We are being kept by the power of God
  - (i) NT:5432 **phroureo** (froo-reh'-o); from a compound of NT:4253 and NT:3708; to be a watcher in advance, i.e. to mount guard as a sentinel (post spies at gates); figuratively, to hem in, protect: KJV – keep (with a garrison). Compare NT:5083.
  - (ii) Word also used in 2 Cor. To speak of guarding.

*2 Cor 11:32-33*

*32 In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me;*

*NKJV*

(iii) If God is keeping us, who can pluck us away from Him.

- 1. How can He be overwhelmed by any force that would cause us to lose salvation.

*1 John 2:19-20*

*19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.*

*NKJV*

- (j) These people defected from Christianity proving that they were never one of us at all.
  - (i) It was the fact that they defected that demonstrated they were never the elect.

vii) All 5 points are seamlessly linked together logically

- (1) If you believe one of them, it's hard to deny any of the others.
  - (a) If you grant the first premise (total depravity), the rest logically follow.

## 2) Case for Calvinism critiqued (pt 1): Lecture 2 and 3

### a) *Scriptures that don't easily fit into Calvinistic view*

- i) Both views cannot be right.
  - (1) They are mutually exclusive and therefore to say that both are right would be a contradiction.
  - (2) There are scriptures that seem to support each of the views.
    - (a) However, someone must be interpreting the scriptures wrongly.

### b) *5 counter-points of Armenianism*

- i) Man's free will (opposite of Total Depravity)
  - (1) Not completely opposite though.
    - (a) Not trying to clear man of responsibility.
    - (b) Trying to clear God of the charge that He's responsible for people sinning and ending up in Hell.
      - (i) Calvin himself believed this to be true.
        - 1. God is the only real free will in the universe and causes all things that come to pass.
        - 2. God ordains all things, including evil.
          - a. Yet that he does so without taking away free will from man.
  - (2) Armenian view of this is often misunderstood by Calvinists
    - (a) Can't have cake and eat it too...it's a contradiction
    - (b) Likewise, you can't have God ordaining all things that come to pass and still have man responsible for his own actions.
      - (i) There is no responsibility where there is no choice.
    - (c) God has power and authority to ordain all things if He wishes, but what He can't do is make something true and not true at the same time.
  - (3) The very fact that responsibility is laid upon man by God to choose good or evil demands that man has the ability to do so.
    - (a) Not puppets or robots
    - (b) Not necessarily on their own.
      - (i) If God urges or persuades through grace, man is able to choose to obey or choose not to.
      - (ii) Influence rather than making the decision for you.
    - (c) Even unsaved people are able to make the moral choice some of the time.
      - (i) Can choose not to rob his employer.
      - (ii) Can choose not to have affair with secretary.
      - (iii) Can choose not to kill his annoying neighbor.
      - (iv) Can't live a completely holy lifestyle, but can make the right decisions much of the time.
        - 1. Objection is often raised that these decisions are out of self-interest.
        - 2. However, even if that is so, it doesn't negate the fact.
          - a. God appeals to our self-interest in the very gospel message and blessings and cursings.
          - b. Not a virtuous thing, shouldn't be considered such.
        - 3. God can exploit our self-centered nature to make us do what is right and what is in our best interest.
          - a. Doesn't mean we have the power to live a holy life apart from God, only that we have the power to realize that we are desperately in need of salvation and decide that the gospel is true and choose it.

*Deut 30:19*

*19 I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;*  
NKJV

- b. Moses said the Israelites had two options to choose from, life or death, blessings or cursings.
- c. He even made a recommendation.

*Gen 4:6-8*

*6 So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."*  
NKJV

- d. Cain not one of the elect. NT calls him child of devil (1 John 3:12)
- e. Why would God say this to him if he was predestined to hell? Was He playing cruel games with Cain?

*Josh 24:15-16*

*15 And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*  
NKJV

- f. Joshua believed that these people had the ability to choose as he was choosing.
  - i. Speaking to whole assembly of Israel, not just the elect.
  - ii. Some did choose, some didn't

*Prov 1:24-33*

*24 Because I have called and you refused,  
I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded,  
25 Because you despised all my counsel,  
And would have none of my rebuke,  
26 I also will laugh at your calamity;  
I will mock when your terror comes,  
27 When your terror comes like a storm,  
And your destruction comes like a whirlwind,  
When distress and anguish come upon you.*

*28 "Then they will call on me, but I will not answer;  
They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.  
29 Because they hated knowledge  
**And did not choose the fear of the LORD,**  
30 They would have none of my counsel  
And despised my every rebuke.  
31 Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way,  
And be filled to the full with their own fancies.  
32 For the turning away of the simple will slay them,  
And the complacency of fools will destroy them;  
33 But whoever listens to me will dwell safely,  
And will be secure, without fear of evil."*  
NKJV

- g. They had a choice between fearing the Lord and not fearing
- h. Why would God mock and laugh at their calamity if he chose it for them?
  - i. Is He vindictive? Does He take pleasure in randomly destroying creatures?
  - ii. If this is true, we have a situation where God calls people who cannot respond positively to Him and choose Him and then laughs at them because of it. Does that make sense?
  - iii. No, He gives them a free choice.
  - iv. Jesus didn't laugh at sinners, He called them to repentance.
- i. Oversimplification of Calvinism? No. Read quotes from:
  - i. John Calvin: in "*Eternal Predestination of God*"
- j. Cannot hold any form of Calvinism without drawing the conclusion of double predestination (which all but hyper Calvinists deny).
  - i. If God chooses some to go to heaven, then it necessarily follows that He chooses some to go to hell.
  - ii. This was the view of Calvin himself.

*Isa 7:15-17*

*15 Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. 16 For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings.*

*NKJV*

- k. Talking about a child that is going to be born and before he reaches the age of accountability, these kings will be gone.
  - i. Presupposes that a child reaches a certain age at which they are capable of choosing good.

*Isa 56:4-5*

*4 For thus says the LORD:*

*"To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths,  
And choose what pleases Me,  
 And hold fast My covenant,  
 5 Even to them I will give in My house  
 And within My walls a place and a name  
 Better than that of sons and daughters;  
 I will give them an everlasting name  
 That shall not be cut off.*

*NKJV*

- l. Salvation is available to Eunuchs (or anyone else) that **choose** what pleases God.
- m. Although man cannot save himself, or by himself seek it, the non-Calvinist says that he is indeed capable of choosing to receive it when it is revealed to him.
  - i. Man still needs God's work within him to even have a desire to make this choice.
  - ii. Different than saying that God makes the choice for him.

*Rom 1:20-22*

*20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,*

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NKJV

- n. They are without excuse because they had opportunity.
  - i. If they couldn't choose, they would have an excuse...they can't do it.
- o. God has revealed Himself, but they don't want Him.

*Rom 1:18-19*

*18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.*

NKJV

- p. **They** suppress the truth. God doesn't suppress it, they do.
- q. If God ordained that they would suppress the truth, than they are without responsibility for that truth. How could God be angry with them?
  - i. That would go against what God has said is good.
  - ii. Bible says we are to be just like God.

*Eph 5:1*

*5:1 Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.*

NKJV

- r. If man is incapable of choosing to receive Christ and then is punished because he doesn't, that makes God out to be very irrational.
  - i. God could do so if He wished, but that's not what the bible makes Him out to be.
  - ii. The question is not whether God has the right to be that way, the question is: is He that way, revealed in scripture? No.
- s. This is not judging God, it's a matter of interpreting scripture correctly.
  - i. What has God declared Himself to be?

*Acts 2:40-41*

*40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."*

NKJV

- t. Peter is exhorting people to "be saved"
  - i. This implies that they have the ability to choose that.

ii) Conditional Election (conditioned upon faith)

- (1) Non-Calvinists say God wants everyone to be saved.
  - (a) God foreknows who will choose to be saved, and elects them based on that foreknowledge.
    - (i) Pelagians would disagree even with this notion. They believe that God does not foreknow
      - 1. God chose the categories, but does not know who will be in those categories.
  - (b) There are things that are not possible for God to do.
    - (i) Cannot lie
    - (ii) Cannot deny Himself
    - (iii) Cannot violate truth (law of non-contradiction)
      - 1. Cannot create someone who has a choice and at the same time doesn't have a choice.
      - 2. Since He created a certain reality, He cannot also make it not reality.

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- 3. The opposite of truth cannot be true also.
- (iv) Cannot make a rock He cannot move simply because it goes against His nature to do so.
  - 1. This doesn't take away from God's omnipotence.
- (c) Human freewill is part of His divine plan.
  - (i) People that share with Him the freedom of moral responsibility.
  - (ii) There is a cost to this.
    - 1. Some will choose not to love Him.

(2) Scriptures:

*1 Tim 2:3-4*

*3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

*NKJV*

- (a) From the Calvinist view, if God really desired all men to be saved, He could just do it since His is the only true will in the universe.
  - (i) All men are not going to be saved however.
  - (ii) Calvinist says this really means that God wants all the "elect" to be saved.
    - 1. Doesn't work for context of this passage.
      - a. Doesn't limit "all" men to just the "elect."
      - b. Would this also mean that God is only commanding the elect to repent in Acts 17?

*Acts 17:30-31*

*30 Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,*

*NKJV*

- i. This can't apply to just the elect any more then can the passage in 1 Tim. Otherwise how can someone be accused of doing wrong by not repenting?
- c. Burden of proof lies on the Calvinist.
- d. What's the point of commanding people to do something they are unable to do?
- e. Paul talking to Greeks here:
  - i. Plato and Socrates originated this idea of fatalistic determinism
  - ii. Augustine and Calvin borrowed these ideas from them
  - iii. Augustine used to be a Manichean which held many of these ideas. Platonic ideas mixed with Christianity became orthodoxy.

*Ezek 33:11*

*11 "Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'*

*NKJV*

- (b) Did they turn? No. But God commanded them to.
- (c) Calvinism teaches that it is God's good pleasure who does and doesn't come to repentance.
  - (i) God says He takes NO pleasure in the death of the wicked.
- (d) It doesn't sound like God is playing games with their minds.
- (e) If God has this "irresistible grace" in His back pocket, why doesn't He just use it instead of begging these people to turn (repent)?

2 Peter 3:9

9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, **not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.**

NKJV

- (f) To say this means that God is not willing that any of the “elect” shall perish is merely an interpretation of necessity.
  - (i) Isogesis: Imposing an idea on the scripture instead of letting it speak for itself.
- (g) Calvinist has to say that it really doesn’t mean this because it doesn’t fit their model.

Rom 8:28-29

29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son,

NKJV

- (h) Calvinist would say that this “knowing” is one of approbation or approval, not simply knowing what someone would choose.
  - (i) Like I know a friend
  - (ii) Jesus told some “I never knew you”
  - (iii) NT:1097 ***ginosko*** (ghin-ocē'-ko); a prolonged form of a primary verb; to "know" (absolutely) in a great variety of applications and with many implications (as follow, with others not thus clearly expressed): KJV - allow, be aware (of), feel, (have) know (-ledge), perceived, be resolved, can speak, be sure, understand.
  - (iv) Some will say that this word is only used in the bible when speaking about the elect.
  - (v) Wrong:

John 5:42

42 But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you.

NKJV

- (vi) Jesus meant “I know what is in you”
- (vii) When God says He foreknew certain people, it can easily mean He knew what would be in them.
  1. Before they were born He knew that there were some that would in fact respond to His general call to repentance.
  2. To that **category** of people, He predestined to be conformed into the likeness of His Son.

1 Peter 1:1-2

1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 **elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father,** in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:

NKJV

- (i) We are chosen according what God foreknew.
  - (i) All church fathers until Augustine believed that.
- (3) The problem Calvinists have with conditional salvation is that they think that a person choosing God gives them some sort of credit or merit for their salvation.
  - (a) Armenian says “No, just because there is condition doesn’t mean you merit it.”
- (4) Is faith a meritorious good work? Calvinists believe so.
  - (a) See quotes from:

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- (i) John Calvin: “*Institutes*”.
  - (ii) GC Berkhour: “*Divine election*”
  - (iii) Kenneth Talbot and Gary Crampton: “*Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism, and Armenianism*”
  - (iv) Christopher Ness: “*An antedote against Armenianism*”
  - (v) RC Sproul: in one of his tapes on “*Romans*” no. 48.
- (b) What did Paul say?

*Eph 2:7-9*

8 For by grace you have been saved **through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.  
NKJV

- (i) It is through faith so that nobody can boast.

*Rom 3:27*

27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.  
NKJV

- (ii) If it were by works I could boast, but not if by faith.

*Rom 4:4-5*

4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.

5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,  
NKJV

- (iii) It’s not working, but believing.

*Rom 4:16*

16 Therefore it is of faith **that** it might be according to grace,  
NKJV

- (iv) Of faith so that...
- (v) FAITH IS NOT A WORK
- (vi) Quote from Clark Pinnock: “*Grace unlimited*”
- (vii) Faith is simply the surrender of the will to God
  1. Stretching out an empty hand to receive a free gift.
  2. Faith not a condition of grace, it’s a response to grace.

iii) Christ died for all and made salvation available to all

- (1) However, does not infallibly secure the salvation of anyone in particular.
- (2) Scriptures:

*John 1:29-30*

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the **world!**”  
NKJV

- (a) What does it mean if not the whole world?

*Rom 5:18*

*18 Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to **all men**, resulting in justification of life.*

*NKJV*

- (b) The gift comes to all men, but they are capable of rejecting it.
  - (i) Why all people are not saved.
  - (ii) Some people would rather stay in their sin.
- (c) Conditions are not the same things as merits.
- (d) Calvinist would say that “all men” only means elect.

*1 John 2:2*

*2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the **whole world**.*

*NKJV*

- (e) Calvinist would say: Whole world is in contrast to the Jewish race (“our” sins)
  - (i) Not only the elect of the Jewish race but also the elect of all other races.
- (f) However, where is this distinction even made in John's epistles (Gentile vs. Jews)
  - (i) Some feel that John's ministry was only to Jews.
    - 1. Because Paul was only apostle commissioned to the Gentiles
  - (ii) However, Peter wrote to Gentiles in 1 Peter.
  - (iii) Paul wrote to Jews.
  - (iv) John wrote book of Revelation, which is to Gentile churches.
  - (v) Calvinist has to read this into the text (eisogesis)

*Titus 2:11*

*11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to **all men**,*

*NKJV*

*1 Tim 2:3-6*

*3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who **desires all men to be saved and** to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself a **ransom for all**, to be testified in due time,*

*NKJV*

- (g) Clarifies Mark 10:45

*Mark 10:45*

*45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for **many**."*

*NKJV*

- (h) Calvinists use this verse for limited atonement.
  - (i) Not all, but **many**
  - (ii) They would take Paul's statement in 1Tim 2 and measure it by this one to say that Paul simply meant “all the elect”.
- (i) Non-Calvinists settle the difference the opposite way.
  - (i) “many” in Mark means that there are many in the category of “all”. Contrasted with few or one. Not one for one, or one for few, but one for many.
  - (ii) “all men” means all men, women, children (human race)
  - (iii) Jesus didn't contrast many with everyone.
  - (iv) This harmonizes with the statement Paul made that He “desires all men to be saved”
  - (v) It also harmonizes with what Paul says in the very same epistle:

*1 Tim 4:10*

*10 For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of **all men, especially of those who believe.***

*NKJV*

- (j) “All men” again
- (k) But this time Paul contrasts “all men” with “those who believe”.
  - (i) He is Savior of all men but...
  - (ii) The elect are those who believe.
  - (iii) There is a difference between all men and those who believe.
- (l) Jesus has done everything necessary to save all men, but the ball is in the court of the individual to believe in or to benefit from that work.

*2 Cor 5:18-19*

*18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling **the world to Himself,** not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

*NKJV*

- (m) This verse was given in support of Ltd atonement.
- (n) God paid the price, but it doesn't mean that others enjoy that privilege.
  - (i) God forgives them as far as His attitude toward them, but they may not be interested in relationship with Him and therefore it does not profit them. Like it says in Hebrews:

*Heb 4:2*

*2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them,*

*NKJV*

- (ii) They heard the same gospel.
  - 1. Because of unbelief, they did not profit from it.

*Heb 2:9*

*9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for **everyone.***

*NKJV*

- (o) Jesus tasted death for everyone.

*Heb 10:29-30*

*29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?*

*NKJV*

- (p) Talking about a person for whom there is no further sacrifice.
  - (i) The person trampling the Son of God or insulting the Spirit of grace under foot is not saved.
  - (ii) The blood that sanctified **him** he counted a common thing.
    - 1. He was among those for whom Christ died, but he didn't benefit from it.
    - 2. This points out that not everyone for whom Christ died gets saved.
    - 3. It's made available, but not always taken.

2 Peter 2:1-3

2:1 *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed.*  
NKJV

- (q) When did the Lord buy anybody?
  - (i) When He died on the cross.
- (r) These people deny Him, they're not saved.
  - (i) The atonement extends to them too.
    - 1. either these people are the elect and defect. (in which case you lose the doctrine of Perseverance) or...
    - 2. these people never were elect (which means you lose the doctrine of limited atonement.)
    - 3. Both points cannot be sustained...clearly.

(3) Issues to consider:

- (a) Calvinist arguments listed above

John 17:9

9 *I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.*

NKJV

- (i) If Jesus wouldn't even pray for the world, why would you think He'd die for it.
- (ii) But this seems to be in contradiction to:

John 1:29

29 *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God **who takes away the sin of the world!***

NKJV

John 3:16

16 *For God so **loved the world** that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

NKJV

- 1. Either the world is the world or something else.
  - a. God loves the world
  - b. Or the world is the elect.
- (iii) Jesus is not saying in John 17 that He would never pray for the world in any way, just that He's not praying for the world in this particular prayer.
  - 1. He's praying that His disciples might have unity.
  - 2. Their lives would glorify God.
  - 3. It's not surprising that He's not applying this prayer to the world.
- (b) Other scriptures listed also do not say that He gave His life for the world. (John 10:11-12, 14-18, 24-30, 15:13, Acts 20:28, Eph 1:6, 5:25-28, 2Cor 5:18-20, Heb 9:12)
  - (i) Answer to John 10 verses:
    - 1. Of course He died for His sheep, but it doesn't say that He didn't die for His enemies as well. In fact, scripture specifically say He did.

Rom 5:7-10

7 *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we*

*were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. 10 **For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son,** much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*

*NKJV*

2. Acknowledging of course that the people Paul is addressing are now Christians. However, Paul is still saying that these Christians were atoned for back when they were still enemies.
  - a. However, it is a sting against the notion that Christ only died for His friends and His sheep at the time He uttered the words in John 10.
3. The John 10 verses cannot be taken as a denial that Jesus died for His enemies, only that He did die for at least His friends.
  - (ii) An interesting parable to look.

*Matt 13:44*

*44 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.*

*NKJV*

1. The man had to buy the whole field to get the treasure, even though that's all he really wanted.
  - a. Some believe that the man is Jesus, the field is the world, and the treasure is the church.
  - b. He gave all that He had to buy the world to obtain the church.
  - c. Whatever it's saying, the context suggests that someone is buying a larger entity to obtain a smaller entity within the larger one.
- (c) Limited atonement is quite probably the weakest point of the 5 points. However, if any of the points are wrong, all of them are also necessarily wrong.

iv) Grace is resistible by man (answer to irresistible grace)

- (1) We can accept mysteries in scripture (i.e. trinity) if they're clearly taught. But we don't need to accept absurdities and contradictions that are only seemingly taught.
- (2) Bible clearly teaches that God calls people and is disappointed when they do not come.
  - (a) No way to understand this unless God is unable to get them to come.
  - (b) God can't have an irresistible tractor beam on souls and get upset when they don't come.
  - (c) If God makes all the decisions and people don't come, that would mean He really didn't want them to come. But to get upset about His own decision would make him irrational. That's not the God of Scripture.
  - (d) Bible indicates over and over again that there are things people do that God doesn't want them to do, and He gets angry about it.
- (3) Calvinists say that you challenging the sovereignty of God if you give man a vote.
  - (a) But man doesn't really have a vote in the final analysis
    - (i) Man can choose to resist God, but God has the final word about it.
      1. God can punish that resistance and the punishment is the thing that cannot be resisted.
      - (ii) A king can have sovereign control over his kingdom without controlling every action of his subjects. So long as he has the power to enforce his wishes.
  - (4) According to Non-Calvinists, the drawing of God is persuasive but does not preclude the resistance of sinful and rebellious man.
    - (a) Not all who are drawn will decide to yield.
- (5) Scriptures:

*Isa 43:21-24*

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21 This people I have formed **for Myself**;  
They shall declare My praise.

22 "But you have not called upon Me, O Jacob;  
And you have been weary of Me, O Israel.  
23 You have not brought Me the sheep for your burnt offerings,  
Nor have you honored Me with your sacrifices.  
I have not caused you to serve with grain offerings,  
Nor wearied you with incense.  
24 You have bought Me no sweet cane with money,  
Nor have you satisfied Me with the fat of your sacrifices;  
But you have burdened Me with your sins,  
You have wearied Me with your iniquities.  
NKJV

- (a) They were created to bring glory and praise to God but they didn't do it.
- (b) God ordained it, but they resisted

Isa 59:1-2  
Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened,  
That it cannot save;  
Nor His ear heavy,  
That it cannot hear.  
2 But **your iniquities** have separated you from your God;  
And your sins have hidden His face from you,  
So that He will not hear.  
NKJV

- (c) God says He could save and could hear, but their iniquities are preventing Him from doing so.

Isa 65:12  
12 Therefore I will number you for the sword,  
And you shall all bow down to the slaughter;  
Because, when I called, you did not answer;  
When I spoke, you did not hear,  
But did evil before My eyes,  
And **chose that in which I do not delight.**"  
NKJV

- (d) God called but they did not answer
  - (i) Calvinist would say this refers to outward call only.
  - (ii) If so, why would God complain about them not coming? Why would He not use the "inward" irresistible call?
- (e) They "chose" what was evil, not God.

Isa 66:3-4  
Just as they have chosen their own ways,  
And their soul delights in their abominations,  
4 So will I choose their delusions,  
And bring their fears on them;  
Because, when I called, no one answered,  
When I spoke they did not hear;  
But they did evil before My eyes,  
And chose that in which I do not delight."  
NKJV

- (f) They can choose things that God has not ordained, but God is still sovereign
  - (i) God chooses the delusions that bring fear upon them in judgment.
  - (ii) Man chooses his ways, God chooses the results of those ways.
  - (iii) God doesn't prevent people from doing things He doesn't want them to do, but He does prevent them from getting away with it.

*Jer 7:13-15*

*13 And now, because you have done all these works," says the LORD, "and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you, but you did not answer, 14 therefore I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to this place which I gave to you and your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. 15 And I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren--the whole posterity of Ephraim.*

*NKJV*

- (g) God called them, they wouldn't answer.
  - (i) Why would God say He "rose early" if he didn't want them to respond.
- (h) God clearly is faulting these people for not responding.

*Matt 20:16*

*16 "So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen."*

*NKJV*

- (i) The number of people called is different from the number ultimately chosen.
  - (i) Christians are chosen, the elect.
  - (ii) Non-calvinists say that God chooses to elect those who meet the condition...choosing to believe.
    - 1. God elects them to be conformed to the image of His Son.
  - (iii) Who are the many?
    - 1. Not elect.
    - 2. Anybody whoever hears the command to repent. Anyone who hears the gospel.
      - a. Not all accept the call and therefore are not the elect.
      - b. Not included in the chosen category.
  - (iv) If God calls many but few come, He must not be able to force them to come.
    - 1. There are limits to what He can do.
      - a. He can persuade mightily by conviction.
      - b. He can persuade mightily by calamity and circumstances.
      - c. But He doesn't always succeed in softening the hearts of people.
    - 2. The rebel has the God-given right to rebel.

*Isa 5:1-4*

*Now let me sing to my Well-beloved*

*A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard:*

*My Well-beloved has a vineyard*

*On a very fruitful hill.*

*2 He dug it up and cleared out its stones,*

*And planted it with the choicest vine.*

*He built a tower in its midst,*

*And also made a winepress in it;*

*So He expected it to bring forth good grapes,*

*But it brought forth wild grapes.*

3 "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah,  
Judge, please, between Me and My vineyard.

**4 What more could have been done to My vineyard**

**That I have not done in it?**

Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes,  
Did it bring forth wild grapes?

NKJV

- (j) He looked for justice but got oppression
- (k) He looked for righteousness but got weeping
- (l) Why didn't He get what He wanted?
  - (i) There was nothing else He could have done.
  - (ii) It was because of the rebelliousness of His people.
  - (iii) He exhausted all of His options except....Irresistible Grace (because the principle is not true).
- (m) God created a universe in which people have free choice...it's a part of His larger will.

*Matt 23:37-38*

37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, **but you were not willing!**

NKJV

- (n) Was it God's will that they should come? YES!
- (o) Why didn't they?
  - (i) "you were not willing!"
  - (ii) Their will overrode His
    - 1. They win, and therefore they lose.

*Matt 13:57-58*

58 Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

NKJV

- (p) This verse is talking about Jesus trying to do miracles in His own community, but He couldn't because of their lack of faith.
- (q) Calvinists like to suggest that these verses refer to communities and not individuals.
  - (i) The problem with that notion is, communities are made up of individuals.
  - (ii) If God can't get the fruit out of Israel, it's because He can't get the fruit out of the Israelites.
  - (iii) It's not the walls of Jerusalem, but the people that were rebellious.

*Luke 7:30*

30 But the Pharisees and lawyers **rejected the will of God** for themselves, not having been baptized by him.

NKJV

- (r) Word for will is:
  - (i) NT:1012 ***boule*** (boo-lay'); from NT:1014; volition, i.e. (objectively) advice, or (by implication) purpose: KJV - + advise, counsel, will.
  - (ii) Same word found in Eph 1:11

*Eph 1:11-12*

11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the **counsel** of His will,

NKJV

(s) Next scripture.

*John 3:19-20*

*19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, **and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.***

*NKJV*

- (t) They were capable of receiving light but didn't. So they were condemned.
  - (i) Turning to the light is not meritorious.
  - (ii) But turning from the light is condemnable.

*Heb 10:29*

*29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?*

*NKJV*

*2 Peter 2:1*

*2:1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.*

*NKJV*

- (u) He bought them, apparently He wanted them.
  - (i) But they were able to and did resist His desire to save them.
- (6) Scriptures that appear to teach irresistible grace:

*John 6:37*

*37 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*

*NKJV*

- (a) Those that the Father gives Him.
  - (i) Who are they?
  - (ii) Answer given later in the same book.

*John 17:6*

*6 "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.*

*NKJV*

- (iii) They were already God's people, given to Jesus when He came.
  - 1. The loyal, believing remnant.
  - 2. Not those predisposed to reject God.
- (iv) Pretty predictable that all who the Father gives Jesus will come, because they've already decided to accept God. They're already committed to Him.

*John 6:44*

*44 No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

*NKJV*

- (b) Thought to prove that nobody ever successfully resisted the grace of God.
- (c) Thought that God drags a person to salvation
  - (i) True in one sense.

1. God drags a person to the well of living water through circumstance after circumstance.
2. What they do there is their own choice.
  - a. Person can choose to drink or not to drink.
- (ii) This scripture does not say that He drags them irresistibly.
  1. have to read that into verse.

v) Election is conditional (as opposed to perseverance of the saints)

- (1) Non-calvinists concede that there is such a thing as false conversions
- (2) Also, it is almost inconceivable that a true believer would allow such a wedge between them and Christ as to fall away.
- (3) But it is possible for a true believer to fall away. (scripturally speaking)
- (4) Would people who fall away be considered “elect” at some time.
  - (a) If you look at Christ being the elect one and all who are saved are elect in Him.

*Eph 1:4*  
*4 just as He chose us in Him*  
*NKJV*

- (b) If we’re in Him, we’re elect. If we’re no longer in Him, we’re no longer elect.
  - (i) That’s why Christ told His disciples to abide in Him (John 15).

*John 15:1-8*  
*15:1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 **Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away;** and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 **If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.** 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.*  
*NKJV*

- (c) If we are in Him, we share in His holiness, righteousness, and electness.

*1 John 5:11-13*  
*11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, **and this life is in His Son.** 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*  
*NKJV*

- (d) The life is in Jesus, not the individual.
- (e) If I, by my own choice, defect from Christ (apostasy), I no longer have life.
- (f) There are indeed scriptures that suggest that He will no cast us out or nobody will snatch us from His hand. But they do not address the individual casting himself out.

*Rom 11:16-23*  
*16 For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. 17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, 18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. 19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." 20 Well said. Because of*

unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, **but fear.** 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, **He may not spare you either.** 22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, **if you continue in His goodness.** Otherwise you also will be cut off.  
NKJV

- (g) Who is “you” in vs. 21 referring to?
  - (i) The believing gentile that has been grafted in by faith. This is a convert.
- (h) Continuation in His goodness is a requirement for remaining on the tree.
- (i) You can be saved and then no longer saved.

Rev 3:5

5 **He who overcomes** shall be clothed in white garments, and **I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life;**

NKJV

- (j) Can a name be in the book of life if it is not saved/elect?
- (k) Jesus suggests in this verse that a name can be blotted out (unsaved). Talking to those who do not overcome (or remain in Him).
- (l) Jesus elsewhere told the disciples to rejoice because their names are in this book.

Luke 10:20

20 Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

NKJV

- (m) Book of Life contains saved people only. How do we know that?

Rev 20:15

15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

NKJV

- (n) Also suggests elsewhere that people can be blotted out.

Rev 22:19

19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, **God shall take away his part from the Book of Life,** from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

NKJV

- (o) God says you can lose it. No theological system can argue with that.
  - (i) Why would their names be written there if they were just going to be removed?
- (p) Book of Hebrews has many warnings about falling away.
  - (i) Why would there be warnings if it couldn't happen?
- (q) Bible predicts that many will fall away.

1 Tim 4:1

4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times **some will depart from the faith,**

NKJV

- (r) Cannot depart from somewhere you never were.

Gal 5:4

4 You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; **you have fallen from grace.**

NKJV

(s) What else can you make of this passage?

### 3) Sovereignty of God (Lecture 4, 5, 6)

#### a) *The crux of the debate*

- i) Sovereignty of God is the crux of the issue for both systems.
  - (1) The idea relates to God not being answerable to anyone for what He does.
    - (a) Being able to rightly do whatever He wants.
    - (b) A king is sovereign if under no other authority.
    - (c) Nations are sovereign if not under control of another nation.
  - (2) Term doesn't appear in scripture. (some translations notwithstanding)
    - (a) Some translations interpret Adonai as "Sovereign Lord"
    - (b) Doesn't mean it's not a biblical concept. Other concepts share this distinction:
      - (i) Trinity
      - (ii) Rapture
      - (iii) It's just a label describing a broader concept.
  - (3) Sometimes thought that the Calvinist system gives the highest honor to the sovereignty of God.
    - (a) In this system, God makes all the choices.
      - (i) All decisions in universe made by God by some layer of His will (permissive, etc.)
      - (ii) Some decisions appear to be made by men but even these are ordained by God.
    - (b) Salvation of every individual is decreed by God
      - (i) Not based on anything that man does or does not do.
      - (ii) According to God's good pleasure
      - (iii) We would call this arbitrary if done by us. In Calvinist theology, it's called Sovereignty (and a mystery)
  - (4) The non-Calvinist system is characterized by the inclusion of free-will of man.
    - (a) Oversimplification to say that the debate is between Sovereignty of God vs. Free-will of man.
      - (i) Non-Calvinists would say that it's not necessarily a "high view" of God's sovereignty to say more about it than the Bible says.
        1. A corrupted view does not make a higher view.

#### b) *Calvinist (or Classical view) view of God's sovereignty*

- i) From the Westminster Confession "of God's eternal decree"

*1. 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, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.*

- (1) This is an attempt to have your cake and eat it too
  - (a) It is possible and conceivable for God to ordain all things that come to pass.
  - (b) However, if that's true you can't have the rest of the sentence also. God cannot logically ordain all things and not be the author of sin and not do violence to the will of the creature.
- (2) The Westminster confession must necessarily put the second part of the sentence in because the Bible clearly teaches it. However, does the Bible teach the first part is the main question?

- ii) From RC Sproul's book "Chosen by God"

*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 everything that comes to pass is simply to say that God is sovereign over His whole creation. If God refused to permit something to*

*happen and it happened anyway, then whatever caused it to happen would have more authority 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.*

- (1) This is classic Calvinist statement
  - (a) He also tells his students that everyone who doesn't believe God foreordains all things must be an atheist.
    - (i) This would include all church fathers prior to Augustine.
      1. Justin Martyr, Iraneaus, Tertullian, etc.
  - (b) They win debate by creating the definitions.
    - (i) Theirs is the only one that makes sense.
    - (ii) By saying that if God doesn't ordain all things that come to pass then He is not sovereign, he's setting the definition of what sovereignty is on his own terms.
      1. does a king over a land lose his sovereignty over that land if he doesn't ordain every movement of his subjects? Preposterous.
      2. How about a sovereign leader of a home (dad)?
        - a. Does dad pre-ordain all things his kids do? Of course not.
    - (iii) Sovereignty in and of itself does not require ordaining all thing that come to pass. This is s definition created by Calvinists to win this particular point.
    - (iv) Calvinists go so far that if God doesn't meet their definition of sovereignty, then He isn't God at all.
      1. Is this a valid way to think?
      2. Is sovereignty the essence of deity?
        - a. Where in the Bible do we get this notion?
      3. Let the Bible determine these kinds of definitions, not a theological system.
  - (c) Non-calvinists do not deny that God has all power and all authority.
    - (i) God can do all things and has the right to do all things.
      1. Calvinists and Armeniaists both agree on this point.
    - (ii) But the real issue is about God's policies for intervention
      1. God has sovereignly chosen to leave some things in the hands of those He has made in His own image.
        - a. Unlike animals who have no free choice or will but do what their instincts tell them to do.
        - b. This doesn't take away from God's sovereignty.
        - c. One of the aspects of being made in God's own image is this freedom of creativity and expression.
- iii) Not only has God ordained everything, but He has infallibly decreed them.
  - (1) Sub-lapsarians believe that God decreed who would be saved or lost before the fall.
  - (2) Super-lapsarians believe that God decreed it after the fall.
  - (3) John Calvin "Institutes" 321-5

*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 pre-ordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation. And accordingly as each has been given one or the other of these ends, we say that he has been predestined to life or death.*

- (a) John Calvin is what modern Calvinists would call a "hyper-Calvinist"
- (4) Most Calvinists (except Hyper-calvs) feel uncomfortable saying that God pre-ordained some to go to hell.
  - (a) They prefer to say that everyone is already going to hell, and that God pre-ordained to save some of them and leaves the others to their fate.
  - (b) However, Calvin, Luther, and Augustine all knew that this theology would not allow this kind of double-talk and simply believed unabashedly that some are pre-ordained for hell.

- (i) God's apparent arbitrary choice to choose to save some is in itself a choice to condemn some to hell by His own choice.
  - (ii) God can make those choices, but does the bible say that He does?
    - 1. If God says "I called you and you didn't come" and they don't, it seems to suggest that God doesn't make all the decisions.
    - 2. there are some people He wanted to save, but didn't get saved.
- (5) John Calvin "Eternal predestination of God" 8-5

*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 for 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.*

- (a) In other words, God didn't just leave them that way, He made them that way and ordained for them to be lost.
- (6) Westminster Confession of faith. Chapter III (source copied from: [http://opc.org/documents/WCF\\_chapters.html](http://opc.org/documents/WCF_chapters.html))

*V. 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,<sup>[9]</sup> 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;<sup>[10]</sup> and all to the praise of his glorious grace.<sup>[11]</sup>*

- (a) Supporting scriptures used for this:

<sup>[9]</sup> **Ephesians 1:4, 9, 11.** *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:... Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:... In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. **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. **2 Timothy 1:9.** Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. **1 Thessalonians 5:9.** For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.*

<sup>[10]</sup> **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;)... 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. **Ephesians 1:4, 9.** According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.*

<sup>[11]</sup> **Ephesians 1:6, 12.** *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.... That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.*

- (b) Good statement about Unconditional election.
    - (i) God chose people without any foreseen faith on their part, good works, or perseverance.
  - (c) This is purposely stated this way to contradict what the Armenians taught.
    - (i) They believe that God chose people based on His foreknowledge of whether they would believe or not.
- (7) Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism, and Armenianism Kenneth Talbot and W. Gary Crampton 1990

*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 very own existence?*

- (a) Common rhetorical argument
    - (i) The obvious answer is that it can't be. Man doesn't choose his salvation.
    - (ii) The problem is, the bible doesn't say that God foreordains "all things" and decreed the salvation of every individual based on nothing but His good pleasure to do so
      - 1. They are taking for granted the 1<sup>st</sup> part of the sentence and making an argument from that basis rather than the bible.
      - 2. God chooses, in His sovereignty, to allow His creatures to exercise choice.
        - a. Not a denial of His sovereignty, but an exercise of it.
- c) *Historical survey of the doctrine of Human free will*
- i) Calvinists often say that the church needs to get back to the faith of the reformers.
    - (1) Faith of reformers needs to be examined just like any other human being.
  - ii) Even in days of the reformers, there were those (Anabaptists) that said we need to get back to the faith of Jesus and the Apostles.
    - (1) Let us get back to the faith of the early church.
    - (2) For 300 years after the death of the last apostle, nobody believed that the view of Calvin/Augustine was correct.
  - iii) Quotes from church fathers:
    - (1) Justin Martyr: 100AD – 165AD in "Dialogues"

*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 actually wicked, but not because God created them so. So if they repent, **all who wish for it can obtain mercy from God**.*

- (a) Church fathers are not the decider of our doctrines, but it's clear that Justin Martyr believed in human free will for salvation.
- (2) Justin Martyr: "1<sup>st</sup> apology" Ch 43

*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 happened by fate, then nothing is in our own power. For if it be predestined 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.*

- (a) It may not be directly from scripture, but nobody can say he's not speaking logically.
- (b) Without choice, there is no morality in moral creatures.

- (3) Florinus: 180AD published a claim that God was the author of sin.
- (a) Ireneus immediately published a discourse that declared the God was not the author of sin.
  - (b) Florinus' doctrine reappeared in Manicheanism and was always considered by the church to be a dangerous doctrine.
  - (c) Manicheanism (which Augustine once held) is much like later Augustinianism that says God ordains everything (including bad).
  - (d) Early church fathers saw this as a heresy, but it became orthodox with Augustine.
- (4) Ireneus: "Against heresies"

*This expression "how often would I have gathered my children together, and thou would'st not" set forth the ancient law of human liberty. Because God made a 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 council to do some things and to abstain from others.*

- (5) If God ordained all things, then what's the point of Paul wasting his ink or Jesus wasting His breath as if there was some decision to be made on our parts?
- (a) Choice would be a cruel illusion in this case.
  - (b) Also, if God ordained all things, He's also responsible for them.
- (6) ATHENAGORUS: 150AD – 190AD "Embassy for Christians"

*Men have freedom of choice, as far as 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 them and others faithless.*

- (a) Basically the same idea.
    - (i) If the scripture reveals that God does not make all the choices, then man by necessity must have free will.
    - (ii) If God does make the choices, man does not have free will.
  - (b) All these church fathers are acknowledging the fact that you can't have it both ways.
    - (i) Responsibility and freedom are two sides of the same coin, you can't separate them.
- (7) Clement of Alexandria: 150 – 200AD "Miscellaneous" book 1, ch. 17.

*Neither praise nor condemnations, neither rewards or punishments are right if the soul does not have the power of choice and avoidance, if evil, in other words, is involuntary.*

- (8) Bardasius of Syria: 154-222AD "Fragments of survival"

*How is it that God did not so make us so 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 a man differ from a harp on which another plays or from a ship which another guides, where the praise and 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 to do so to man, **but by freedom, He exalted him above all His creatures.***

- (9) Tertullian 155-225AD "Against Marcian" book 2, chap 5

*I find then that a man, by God, was constituted free, master of his own will and power, indicating the presence of God's image and the likeness in Him by nothing so well as by this constitution of his nature.*

- (a) By “God’s image”, the church fathers apparently believed that God made man different than animals.
  - (i) Animals do what they’re programmed to do.
  - (ii) Tertullian thought that in no respect better than this does man bear the image of God.
    - 1. He is a moral being, meaning he can choose this way or the other.
  - (iii) God says in Isaiah Ch.1 and Jeremiah that animals do the right thing, but Israel does not do the right thing.
    - 1. Sounds like He’s saying that men and animals are not the same things.
      - a. Animals act as they’re programmed to, man chooses to act in a way that displeases God.

(10) Origen: 185-254AD “De princepiis” preface.

*This also is clearly defined in the teaching of the church that every rational soul is possessed of free will and volition.*

(11) And in book 3, chap 1

*There are indeed innumerable passages in the scripture which establish with exceeding clearness the existence of freedom of the will*

- (a) Every scripture where God blames someone for not making the right decision implies this principle.

(12) Archileus – 250-300AD “Disputation with Manees” (founder of Manicheanism)

*There can be no doubt, that every individual in using his own proper will, may shape his course in any direction he chooses.*

- (a) Some feel this gives too much credit to man.
  - (i) But the real issue is, does God make **all** the decisions?
    - 1. In a positive sense, it makes God totally responsible for salvation and He gets all the credit.
    - 2. In a negative sense, it also gives God all the responsibility for evil and for those who go to hell.
  - (ii) If we’re going to make man responsible for his actions, then he has to be a creature that makes free choices.
    - 1. free choices involve two possibilities, repent or not to repent.

(13) Methodius – 260-315AD

*Those pagans, who decide that a 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 and making Him out to be the cause and author of human evils.*

- (a) Not talking about Calvinists, because they didn’t exist yet.
- (b) This was the view of the pagans back then.
- (c) Augustine got this out of Greek philosophy
  - (i) Nobody can doubt this.

(14) Cyril of Jerusalem – 312-386AD in “Lecture 4”

*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 reject it. For if thou werest a fornicator by necessity, then for what cause did God prepare hell? And if you*

*were a doer of righteousness by nature, and not by will, wherefore did God prepare crowns of inevitable glory? The sheep is gentle, but never was crowned for its gentleness.*

- (a) It's gentle not by choice, but by nature.
  - (i) Sheep is gentle animal
  - (ii) Goat is aggressive animal
  - (iii) We neither give credit or blame to the animals because that is their nature.
    - 1. It's not a moral issue with them.
- (b) Is man like an animal?
  - (i) Man is a moral creature.

(15) John Chrisostem – 347-407AD

*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.*

- (a) In this sense, he is even further from Calvinism than Arminianism is.
  - (i) Arminians would say that our choice is preceded by God.
    - 1. Prevenient grace
      - a. He urges, persuades, pleads, and convicts us to turn to Him.
      - b. Eventually, some of us submit to Him.
      - c. But it's because He's working in us.
  - (ii) Calvinists would say that not only is He working in us, but God made the decision for us.
  - (iii) This church father says that God doesn't even work in us beforehand, but that we choose Him first, then He helps us.

d) Enter Augustine.

- (1) Augustine – 354-430AD
  - (a) Born in Roman north Africa.
  - (b) Mother (Monica) a devout Christian
  - (c) He departed from his Christian roots to pursue philosophy at about 20.
  - (d) He embraced Manicheism for more than 10 years.
    - (i) Idea of total determinism by the gods
      - 1. Emphasis on election and Asceticism.
  - (e) He was converted to Neo-Christian Platonism. In 386AD at age 32.
    - (i) Mixes ideas from Christ and Plato
    - (ii) Dualism of matter vs. the divine principle like Gnosticism
  - (f) Made Bishop of Hippo in 396AD.
    - (i) Began writing against Manicheism.
  - (g) Gradually began replacing neo-Christian Platonism with more biblical diagnosis of man and history.
    - (i) Lived and advocated monastic life.
    - (ii) In writing against Manicheism, he promoted more the free will of man.
      - 1. Seemed to deny this later in his conflicts with Pelagius.
      - 2. Pelagius over rated the power of human nature to live good apart from grace.
        - a. Man makes the decision for salvation and God's grace is not involved at all.
  - (h) Augustine was true originator of ideas associated with Calvinism.
    - (i) Every Calvinist would agree with this.

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1. RC Sproul in “Chosen by God” said:

*There is nothing in Calvin’s view of predestination that was not earlier profounded by Luther and Augustine before him.*

- (ii) Augustine in response to Palagius began to under-rate man’s free will and eventually denied it.
- (i) It is said by many theologians that there has been no theologian more influential in the last 2000 years than Augustine.
  - (i) Both Catholics and Protestants look to him as the founder of most of their theological points of view.
  - (ii) Some even say that he was even more influential than Paul the apostle.
  - (iii) His views strongly colored the view of orthodoxy, even though it was exactly opposite of what the church taught up until this time.

e) *The Reformers*

- i) Martin Luther and the reformers
  - (1) Augustinian monk
    - (a) Follower of Augustine.
  - (2) Wrote a book called “The Bondage of the will”
    - (a) On p.70 he wrote:

*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.*

- (i) He’s saying that this takes tremendous faith on our part to believe that the God Who does this is merciful.
- (b) In same book on pages 43-44 he wrote:

*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 to 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?*

*Quotes:*

*All things stand by unchangeable law.*

*Again,*

*Fixed is the day of every man*

*Again,*

*If the fates summon you.*

*Again,*

*If you will break the binding chain of fate*

*The aim of this poet is to show that the destruction of Troy and of raising up of the Roman empire, fate did more than all the devoted efforts of men. From which we can see that the knowledge of predestination in the foreknowledge of God was no less left in the world than divinity itself.*

- (i) Luther admits that this idea of predestination is the same that the pagans taught. He thinks it strange that Christians resist it.
- (ii) He interprets the fact that pagans taught it to mean that not only did God leave in the minds of men the consciousness of His existence, but also the fact of God's sovereignty and predestination.
- (iii) Non-Calvinists would say that these are strictly pagan ideas that never existed in the church until Augustine brought them in.

(c) On page 44 he wrote:

*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 is well known to not 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, 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.*

- (i) On this view, you cannot be saved if you deny that God foreordains all things. This is equivalent to denying God to Luther.
  - 1. So Luther would consign to hell, all persons in the church before Augustine.
  - 2. Looking at the scriptures themselves, we'd have to say that Jesus and the apostles also did not agree with Augustines views.
- (d) It is well known that this view came out of the pagan world. The only difference is that the Calvinist would say that it is because there was residual knowledge of God in all men's minds.

ii) John Calvin – 1509 - 1564

- (1) French
- (2) 2<sup>nd</sup> generation reformer
- (3) 1<sup>st</sup> great theologian of the reformation
- (4) "Institutes of the Christian religion" written when he was 26 or 27 years old.
  - (a) His opinions about election in this book were essentially the views of Augustine restated for his time.
- (5) 5 years after writing the book, he settled in Geneva.
  - (a) Became a leading figure and sought to make the city a Christian commonwealth.
- (6) His doctrines became the official views of the churches in the following:
  - (a) French
  - (b) Scotland
  - (c) Netherlands
- (7) His influence has been great in Protestant churches ever since.
  - (a) Presbyterianism has it's roots in John Calvin.
    - (i) Most staunch advocates of Calvinism.
- (8) Lutherans after Luther didn't quite follow Luther on this bondage of the will stuff so they are not as Calvinistic as Presbyterians.

iii) Catholic Church

- (1) Council of Trent was held in 1545 – 1563
  - (a) This issue was discussed.
  - (b) Dispute between the Dominicans and the Franciscans.
    - (i) Dominicans following Thomas Aquinas believed that God unconditionally elected some for glory, their means of obtaining it, that their number is determined and could not be added to.
      - 1. Sought to prove this by Paul's and Augustine's writings.

- (ii) Franciscans (St. Francis of Assisi) said that this view is injurious to the attributes of God.
        - 1. He would be acting with partiality.
        - 2. Without cause, He would be rejecting one and electing the other.
        - 3. Unjustly damn men for His own will rather than their own faults.
        - 4. Creating a multitude of men for the mere purpose of condemning them.
      - (2) Another voice (Catarinas) tried to find a happy medium between these views. He said: The truth lies somewhere in between these two extremes.
        - (a) He admitted that it had not been in the church prior to Augustine and that Augustine himself acknowledged that it had not been in any previous writers as well.
  - iv) Jacobus Armenius – 1560 – 1609
    - (1) Dutch Reformer in Holland where Calvinism dominated church.
    - (2) Pastored a reformed church in Amsterdam
    - (3) Began questioning some of the tenets of Calvinism.
      - (a) Led to disputes
      - (b) Left his pastorate to become a professor of theology and the University of Laden.
    - (4) He was continually badgered and harassed about his doctrine.
    - (5) He died very young, leaving 9 orphaned children.
    - (6) Considered a very mellow person, not contentious.
      - (a) Called the quiet dutchman.
    - (7) Almost all non-Calvinists are called Armenian by Calvinists.
    - (8) Around the year 1610, the year after he died, his followers put together called the “Remonstrance of 1610”
    - (9) They laid out 5 major points to Armenianism:
      - (a) In reference to his salvation, each man has freedom of choice. The Holy Spirit, however, must help men.
        - (i) This agreed largely with what church fathers taught.
      - (b) Decree of salvation applies to all those that believe in Christ and persevere in obedience and faith.
      - (c) Christ died for all men.
      - (d) God’s saving grace is not irresistible.
      - (e) It is possible for those who are Christians to fall from grace.
    - (10) When this was written, Calvinism had not been distilled into 5 points.
      - (a) Calvin never spoke of the 5 points to his theology.
      - (b) It was a response to Armenianism that Calvin’s followers came up with the 5 points.
        - (i) This happened 8 years later at the Sinot of Dortsch.
          - 1. They condemned Armenianism and came up with the 5 points of Calvinism.
  - v) There was no dispute on this issue prior to Augustine.
- f) *Questions raised from the Classical Calvinist approach.*
  - i) If there is only 1 will in the universe, how can man be held responsible?
  - ii) If God’s will is always done, why does He so frequently complain in the bible?
  - iii) Is God the author of sin? If so, why does He object to it?
  - iv) Does prayer really affect anything?
  - v) Why are evangelism (and persuasion) necessary?
    - (1) If God is creating the decisions, who can be persuaded?
  - vi) Why do actual events not always conform to God’s stated will?
  - vii) Does this model of God’s sovereignty have any biblical basis?
    - (1) Ultimate question.
    - (2) If it can be demonstrated that it does, then the rest of these questions are irrelevant.
- g) *Scriptural teaching on God’s Sovereignty*
  - i) Calvinists often ask “how can God be God if He doesn’t make all the decisions?”

- (1) But this is forcing an unnecessary definition of God upon Him that the bible does not teach.
  - (2) On what basis can this definition be made?
  - (3) Let's agree to say the God is whatever the bible says He is.
  - ii) Non-Calvinist position holds that God is indeed sovereign in every way that the bible says He is.
    - (1) Not necessarily sovereign in ways that the bible doesn't say He is.
    - (2) Doesn't decide every moral decision a person makes.
    - (3) This is often referred to as a "low" view of the sovereignty of God.
      - (a) But the highest view is to say precisely what the bible says on the subject.
      - (b) To add or take away from it is to weaken it.
      - (c) Highest view is not the most extreme view, but what the bible says.
  - iii) 3 concepts or aspects about God's sovereignty
    - (1) His authority
    - (2) His power
    - (3) His intervention (or policies for intervention)
    - (4) Closest earthly example is that of a king, owner of slaves, or a father of children.
      - (a) All these terms are used of God.
        - (i) King, shepherd, Lord, Father.
        - (ii) Each of these terms depict **authority**.
- (5) God's Authority:**
- (a) The right to rule and make the decisions.
  - (b) Anyone who violates those decisions is in the wrong.
  - (c) Doesn't mean that everything you decide happens.
    - (i) But it is wrong if it doesn't.
  - (d) Anything that God says should be done, then it should be done.
    - (i) But doesn't necessarily mean it will be done.
  - (e) Transgression of the law is a universal thing among people, but that doesn't challenge God's authority.
  - (f) Jesus claimed **all** authority:

*Matt 28:17-18*

*18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*

*NKJV*

- (i) All creation is bound to do everything Jesus said.
  - 1. If we don't, we are in the wrong and punishable. (authority also gives right to punish for wrongs.)
- (g) Wrongs are punishable by the law of the governing authority, but subjects still have capability to disobey.
  - (i) Criminals may break laws, but the authorities have right to punish them.
  - (ii) Slaves may disobey their masters, but the master can punish them.
  - (iii) Children may disobey their fathers and violate their will, but not escape their authority to punish them.
  - (iv) In no case is the authority nullified, it is simply ignored.
- (h) God has all authority
  - (i) He is the Creator
    - 1. Creator has right to control what He creates.
    - 2. Acknowledged by us in many ways.
      - a. Copyright laws.
      - b. Patents.
      - c. People who create it are considered **owners** of it.
        - i. It wouldn't exist if he didn't create it.

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*Rev 4:11*

*11 "You are worthy, O Lord,  
To receive glory and honor and power;  
For You created all things,  
And by Your will they exist and were created."  
NKJV*

*Ps 100:3*

*3 Know that the LORD, He is God;  
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;  
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.  
NKJV*

3. We did not make ourselves and therefore do not own ourselves.
  - a. We are His people (all of us).

*Rom 9:19-21*

*19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" 20 But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?  
NKJV*

4. Paul is answering an anticipated rhetorical objection to the ability to resist God's will.
  - a. But he points out that by the very objection, the person is resisting His will and therefore it can be done.
  - b. Irresistible grace (and condemnation) is the doctrine of the objector, not of Paul. Paul points out the fallacy of that doctrine.
  - c. Paul is saying that you have the power to resist God's will, but you don't have the right to.
5. Paul is also saying that God, like the potter, has the **right** to do whatever He wants to His own clay.
  - a. He is certainly not agreeing with the detractor.
6. Calvinists take this verse to mean that Paul is affirming what is said in verse 19.
  - a. They say that the 1<sup>st</sup> part is wrong ("Why does He still find fault")
  - b. But the 2<sup>nd</sup> part is right ("For who has resisted His will?")
  - c. In other words, it may not be reasonable. But God doesn't have to give any reasons because He's the boss.
    - i. God is not obligated to make sense.
  - d. They say that Paul is saying that we have no right to even ask the question of why God saves some and condemns others.
    - i. It's God's prerogative and if we don't like it, tough luck.
7. However, who says that Paul is affirming any part of the detraction at all?
  - a. The part that Paul is refuting is the 2<sup>nd</sup> part. He says "who are you?". As if to say: "What about you, you're resisting His will right now dummy."
  - b. It's an affirmation of God's authority. But it doesn't tell us the degree at which God enforces His authority at all.
    - i. He has the right to command, but it doesn't guarantee that the command is obeyed.

(ii) He is the owner of all things.

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1. An illustration can be found in the parable of the land owner.

*Matt 20:1-16*

*20:1 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, 4 and said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. 5 Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?' 7 "They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right you will receive.' 8 "So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the laborers and give them their wages, beginning with the last to the first.' 9 "And when those came who were hired about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. 10 But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius. 11 And when they had received it, they complained against the landowner, 12 saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.' 13 "But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? 14 Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. **15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things?** Or is your eye evil because I am good?' 16 "So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen."*

*NKJV*

2. He says "My things are Mine to do with what I will"
3. Also the title given Him:

*Rev 19:16*

*16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.***

*NKJV*

(iii) He is the redeemer of all things:

1. Purchased by the blood of Jesus.
  - a. Once something is purchased, the purchaser has the right to do with it what He wills.
2. Calvinists believe He only purchased the elect.
3. Non-Calvinists believe He purchased the whole world.

*Rev 5:9-10*

*9 And they sang a new song, saying:*

*"You are worthy to take the scroll,*

*And to open its seals;*

***For You were slain,***

***And have redeemed us to God by Your blood***

*Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,*

*10 And have made us kings and priests to our God;*

*And we shall reign on the earth."*

*NKJV*

4. Jesus is worthy to have authority because He has purchased it.

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(6) **God's Power: Omnipotence**

- (a) God can do anything that is consistent with His own nature.
  - (i) Can't lie or sin.
  - (ii) Can't make a stone He can't move. (not because He lacks the power, but He cannot violate His own character).
    - 1. Making a stone He can't move would create something more powerful than Himself which would go against His own sovereignty.
- (b) An earthly king only has sovereignty if he has power to thwart and punish the efforts of those who rebel against him.
- (c) Bible affirms that God has both authority and power to do what He will.

*Gen 18:14*

*14 "Is anything too hard for the LORD?*

*NKJV*

*Jer 32:27*

*27 "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me?*

*NKJV*

*Jer 32:17*

*17 "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You.*

*NKJV*

- (d) God has shown His omnipotence and authority in many ways.
  - (i) Parting the Red Sea.
  - (ii) Jesus calming the storm.
- (e) God can create something that He cannot control if that wasn't contrary to His will.
  - (i) God can create creatures with free will if He chooses to.
    - 1. Is this a mountain God can't move?
      - a. He can try hard, and give heavy influence, but there are human wills that God would bend, but can't.
      - b. He can choose to make a will that cannot be violated even by Him.
    - 2. This is not contrary to God's sovereignty.
      - a. Except Augustine's version of it.
    - 3. Sovereignty of God does not mean that He is not free to give human's free will.
  - (ii) God's sovereignty allows him to exploit even bad decisions and make them turn out the way He wants (good).
- (f) There are things that even God can't do.

*2 Tim 2:13*

*13 If we are faithless,*

*He remains faithful;*

***He cannot deny Himself.***

*NKJV*

*Titus 1:2*

*2 in hope of eternal life which God, **who cannot lie,** promised before time began,*

*NKJV*

*James 1:13*

*13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for **God cannot be tempted** by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.*

NKJV

Gen 19:22

22 Hurry, escape there. For **I cannot do anything until you arrive there.**" Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

NKJV

- (i) God speaking to Lot while he was still in Sodom.

Matt 13:58

58 Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

NKJV

- (ii) Unbelief prevented Jesus from doing many mighty things.
- (iii) God has the right to choose on what basis he will do something and not violate His own policy.
  - 1. A father has the physical power to kill his children, but it could be said (in most cases) that he can't do it, because he lacks the will to.
  - 2. God cannot make things true that are absurdities.
    - a.  $2+2=5$
    - b. Circle is also a square.
    - c. Must change definitions to make these truth.
    - d. God is bound by truth because He is a truthful God.
  - 3. He cannot create a contradiction.
    - a. Can't make something true and untrue at the same time.
    - b. Can't make something exist and not exist simultaneously.
    - c. Can't make a man free to choose and not free to choose at the same time.
    - d. Can't make all the decisions in the universe and make man responsible at the same time.
    - e. These are all opposites, violating law of non-contradiction.
      - i. This was known universally in early church until the Greek mystery philosophies infiltrated it.
  - 4. It's not a high view of sovereignty to say that God can do anything, it's an unbiblical one.
- (iv) In conclusion, God's omnipotence means He has all power.
  - 1. But He's restrained by truth and His character.

**(7) God's intervention: His own policies on intervening**

- (a) God has right and power to make men puppets, but does He do it?
  - (i) Every thought, decision, and action.
  - (ii) He knows and judges those thoughts, but does He author them?
  - (iii) Has He decreed that certain men will sin, and others will repent?
  - (iv) This would be adding another dimension of the sovereignty of God beyond what the Bible teaches.
- (b) Calvinist would bring up Eph 1:11

Eph 1:11-12

11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

NKJV

- (i) This taken to mean that everything that happens is something that God brings to pass because it's His will.
  - 1. Will = NT:2307 ***thelema*** (thel'-ay-mah); from the prolonged form of NT:2309; a determination (properly, the thing), i.e. (actively) choice

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(specially, purpose, decree; abstractly, volition) or (passively) inclination:  
KJV - desire, pleasure, **will**.

2. Counsel = NT:1012 *boule* (boo-lay'); from NT:1014; volition, i.e. (objectively) advice, or (by implication) purpose: KJV - + advise, **counsel**, will.
  - a. Same word used elsewhere:

*Luke 7:30*

*30 But the Pharisees and lawyers **rejected the will** of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.*

*NKJV*

- i. They rejected the will of God and did not do it.
  - ii. How are we to reconcile this with Paul's statement?
- (ii) The most sensible way to understand Eph 1:11 is to say: "Everything that God does, He does according to the counsel of His own will"
1. He's consistent
  2. Always acts consistently with His character, never contrary to it.
    - a. Example: "George does everything slowly"
      - i. Are we saying "George does everything"?
      - ii. No, we're saying that everything he does, he does slowly.
  3. This seems to be the best way to harmonize those two thoughts.
- (iii) If we're to say that everything that happens is God's will, it would contradict other scriptures that say that there are things that are not His will but they happen anyway.
- (c) The question comes down to: "To what degree does God ordain and enforce every thought and action in the universe?"
- (i) Calvinist would say every action, thought, deed, etc.
  - (ii) Non-calvinist would say not necessarily.
  - (iii) God limits his intervention according to His own policies.

*Isa 5:1-8*

*5:1*

*Now let me sing to my Well-beloved A song of my Beloved regarding His vineyard: My Well-beloved has a vineyard On a very fruitful hill. 2 He dug it up and cleared out its stones, And planted it with the choicest vine. He built a tower in its midst, And also made a winepress in it; So He expected it to bring forth good grapes, But it brought forth wild grapes.*

*3 "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, Judge, please, between Me and My vineyard. 4 What more could have been done to My vineyard That I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, Did it bring forth wild grapes? 5 And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned; And break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. 6 I will lay it waste; It shall not be pruned or dug, But there shall come up briars and thorns. I will also command the clouds That they rain no rain on it." 7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant. He looked for justice, but behold, oppression; For righteousness, but behold, a cry for help.*

*NKJV*

- (iv) Obvious God did not get what He wanted.
- (v) He took great pains to get what He wanted but didn't get it.
- (vi) He could move in like a tyrant and change the will and get what His way, but that's not what He wants.
  1. Not forced obedience, but willing obedience.

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- (vii) God, as Sovereign, has the right to choose what is important to Him.
    1. He wants people to obey Him because they love Him.
    2. It is greater value to Him that they want to obey than it is that they simply obey.
  - (viii) This leaves God vulnerable to injury and disappointment and hurt from His subjects, kind of like all personal relationships.
  - (ix) Difference between beasts and men:
    1. Animals obey God because they're programmed to.
    2. Men obey God (sometimes) because they choose to.
      - a. He doesn't force their hand because it's His sovereign preference not to.
        - i. God can give His people many chances to obey if He wants to. It's His sovereign prerogative to do so.
        - b. He doesn't have to impose his will if He doesn't want to.
    3. God made people because he wanted sons and daughters, not puppets.
- (d) Prayer, faith, and action has a role in causing results according to scripture
- (i) Things that would have been done if man had only prayed.

*James 4:2-3*

*Yet you do not have because you do not ask.  
NKJV*

- (ii) Things that could have been done if man simply believed.

*Matt 13:58*

*58 Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.  
NKJV*

- (iii) Parents want their children to grow and have more responsibility.
  1. If not, buy puppets.
  2. We are never compared with God's puppets, but children.
- (iv) God is not a puppet-master, but a Father.
  1. He doesn't cause all moves of every man.

- (e) God, generally speaking, does not override man's ability to rebel.
  - (i) God has the right to.
    1. We hear of God opening someone's heart to hear the gospel.
      - a. Like Saul of Tarsus (Paul) in (Acts 9)
        - i. But in final analysis, Saul made his own choice to repent.
        - ii. God made it an easy choice, but it was still Saul's choice. He later said:

*Acts 26:19-20*

*19 "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,  
NKJV*

- 2. Sodom would have repented if they seen what Jesus did (Matt 11:23).
- 3. God does not give everyone the exact same amount of revelation (something we don't understand), but that's his choice.
  - a. He intervenes more in some cases than in others.
- (ii) He nourished Israel, but let them rebel

*Isa 1:2*

*2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!*

*For the LORD has spoken:  
"I have nourished and brought up children,  
And they have rebelled against Me;  
NKJV*

- (f) God's allowing man to choose does not defeat His overall purpose in history.
  - (i) Although He allows man to make his little choices, that doesn't mean that man will thwart God's efforts in the final analysis.
    - 1. Illustration: The captain at the helm gets the ship there no matter what the passengers decide to do on the ship.
  - (ii) God has determined how history will end up.
    - 1. Christ rules forever.
    - 2. Kingdoms of the earth will become the kingdoms of Christ.
    - 3. All that ultimately rebel will burn.
    - 4. All that turn to Him will be saved.

*Ps 115:3  
3 But our God is in heaven;  
He does whatever He pleases.  
NKJV*

*Dan 4:35  
35 All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing;  
He does according to His will in the army of heaven  
And among the inhabitants of the earth.  
No one can restrain His hand  
Or say to Him, "What have You done?"  
NKJV*

- (iii) Again, this doesn't say that what God wants is to not give anyone free will.
- (iv) God's going to do what God's going to do no matter how many rebel.

*Prov 11:21  
21 Though they join forces, the wicked will not go unpunished;  
But the posterity of the righteous will be delivered.  
NKJV*

- (v) God works all things together for good.

*Rom 8:28-29  
28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.  
NKJV*

- 1. That's the genius of God.
- 2. It takes a lot less ingenuity to simply ordain every movement, but working things outside of your influence together to get the result you want, is much more brilliant.

- (vi) God's ultimate purpose is that He and His people will be glorified.

**(8) Aspects of God's sovereignty:**

- (a) Sovereignty over creation
- (b) Sovereignty over history and nations.
  - (i) King of Kings, Lord of Lords, ruler of nations.
  - (ii) Course of nations are determined by Him

- (iii) Very different then saying that people go to heaven or hell because He wanted them to.
- (iv) Example:

*Rom 9:10-18*

*10 And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac 11(for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), 12 it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." 13 As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."*

*14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! 15 For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." 16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." 18 Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.*

*NKJV*

1. Considered by Calvinists (and therefore, much of the church) to be the most potent scripture regarding divine election of individuals.
  - a. They don't believe that it's talking about nation selection.
    - i. They say even if it was, it's simply pointing out that it's still individuals on a higher scale. Armenians (they say) still have same problem.
    - ii. The apostle (they say) is laboring the fact that the choice is over individuals, by naming them (Jacob over Esau).
2. However, we have to ask the question: God did choose Jacob over Esau, but for what? Salvation? Paul quotes two verses to answer this and make his point.

*Gen 25:22-23*

*22 But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If all is well, why am I like this?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. 23 And the LORD said to her:*

*"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."*

*NKJV*

*-AND-*

*Mal 1:1-4*

*1:1 The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.*

*2 "I have loved you," says the LORD.  
"Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved **us**?'"*

*Was not Esau Jacob's brother?"  
Says the LORD.  
"Yet **Jacob I have loved;**  
**3 But Esau I have hated,**  
And laid waste **his** mountains and **his** heritage*

*For the jackals of the wilderness."*

*4 Even though **Edom** has said,  
"We have been impoverished,  
But we will return and build the desolate places,"*

*Thus says the LORD of hosts:*

*"They may build, but I will throw down;  
They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness,  
And the **people** against whom the LORD will have indignation forever.  
NKJV*

3. In the Genesis passage, there does indeed show unconditional election. But it doesn't have to do with individual salvation, but nations and people.
4. Nation of Israel (Jacob) was chosen to be God's functioning agent on earth, Edom (Esau) was not.
  - a. To serve His temporal purposes, not eternal salvation.
  - b. Can't be about salvation of the nation.
    - i. Some Israelites are lost and some Edomites are saved.
    - ii. Job may have been an Edomite (good evidence for that).
5. If you want to make this a prophesy about individuals, it's an untrue one.
  - a. Esau never served Jacob.
  - b. However, the Edomites did serve the Israelites.

*2 Sam 8:14*

*4 He also put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom he put garrisons, and all the **Edomites became David's servants.**  
NKJV*

- c. Even if Esau did serve Jacob, that doesn't mean that one was saved and the other lost.
    - i. Same with nations. You can't say that all Israelites are going to heaven and all Edomites are going to hell.
    - ii. Most of the Jews were not saved.
    - iii. Some of the Edomites were (Job, Eunuch in Jeremiah, etc.)
6. In the Malachi passage, this was not during Esau's lifetime, it was during the Babylonian exile.
  - a. God did not restore Edom, but He did restore Israel.
  - b. Paul quotes this verse as the proof of God's favor of one nation (Israel) over another (Edom).
7. In the context of Romans 9, Paul is talking about Israel and why most of them are not Christians and heirs of the promise.
  - a. There's a remnant that is.
  - b. God elects groups that He favors and individuals decide which group they are in.
    - i. He has elected the church (Israel of God) to be in the favored category.
8. Paul uses the analogy of God hardening Pharaoh's heart to show how God judged Egypt (a nation).
  - a. Egypt was a sinful nation so God judged them by giving them an obstinate leader (Pharaoh).

*Gen 15:13-15*

*13 Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years.*

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14 And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions.  
NKJV

- b. God judged the nation of Egypt, not just 1 individual.
  - c. Sure Pharaoh was lost, but he had already hardened his own heart way before God ever did.
    - i. Killed Jewish babies
    - ii. Oppressed the Jewish people.
    - iii. Very bad man
    - iv. This hardening didn't happen when Pharaoh was a baby, it happened when he was toward the end of his life.
    - v. God simply sealed his current condition. Could have killed him, but He kept him around to serve His own purposes. That is God's judgment on him.
  - d. Cannot apply this passage to individual salvation.
9. When Paul says:

16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy

- a. Paul is merely saying that yes, God shows mercy on Israel to use them for His divine purposes.
    - i. Namely, bringing forth the messiah.
    - ii. For him to pick Israel over Edom and Egypt.
    - iii. To show mercy to Israel and not to Egypt, that's God's sovereign choice.
    - iv. Nothing to do with heaven or hell.
10. You have to take this passage way out of context of the bigger discussion of Romans 9-11 to make it a discussion about Calvinism.
- a. It's talking about whether the promises to Israel had effect or not. (Rom 9:6)
  - b. You have to ignore the scriptures Paul quoted and the points he ultimately makes to turn it into a discussion about individual salvation.
  - c. It's a very different thing to say that God chose 1 nation over another to be prosperous then to say that God chose 1 individual for salvation and another for eternal damnation.
11. God has the divine, sovereign, right to direct nations to meet His purposes.

Prov 21:1

*The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD,*

*Like the rivers of water;*

*He turns it wherever He wishes.*

NKJV

- a. Notice it doesn't say that the heart of every man is in the hand of God.
- b. Why? The decisions of Kings affect history.
- c. Some kings come under judgment of God, and also that same nation comes under judgment as a result.

Ex 4:21-22

*21 And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.*

NKJV

- i. God's telling Pharaoh that he is perfect for the job He has for him. To be the instrument He uses to judge pagan Egypt.

*Rev 17:16-18*

*16 And the ten horns which you saw on the beast, these will hate the harlot, make her desolate and naked, eat her flesh and burn her with fire. 17 For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God are fulfilled.*

*NKJV*

- d. These ten horns are earlier said to be ten kings. (vs. 12)
  - e. God put it in their minds and hearts to hate the whore.
    - i. God directs the actions of wicked kings to fulfill His earthly will.
    - ii. He can also choose good kings to bless a nation
  - f. What God doesn't do is choose a neutral king and make him bad.
    - i. He doesn't have to. There's enough bad ones around already.
12. Even though God can, and often does, direct rulers, He's not the author of every political development.
- a. Not a micro-manager.
  - b. He makes sure that the macro developments are according to His plan.

*Hos 8:4*

*4 "They set up kings, but not by Me;  
They made princes, but I did not acknowledge them.*

*NKJV*

- c. People can set up rulers that God doesn't approve of.
  - i. Though He does remain sovereign in the ultimate outcome.

*Ps 46:6*

*6 The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved;  
He uttered His voice, the earth melted.*

*NKJV*

- d. The nations can rage all they want, God simply utters His voice and they melt.
- e. He allows freedom of movement, but ultimately He's got a plan and that plan will be carried out.

*Isa 54:14-17*

*14 In righteousness you shall be established;  
You shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear;  
And from terror, for it shall not come near you.  
15 Indeed they shall surely assemble, but not because of Me.  
Whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake.*

*16 "Behold, I have created the blacksmith  
Who blows the coals in the fire,  
Who brings forth an instrument for his work;  
And I have created the spoiler to destroy.  
17 No weapon formed against you shall prosper,  
And every tongue which rises against you in judgment  
You shall condemn.*

*This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,  
And their righteousness is from Me,"  
Says the LORD.*

NKJV

- f. People make the choice to do bad things, but God makes the choice of whether they succeed or not. Big difference.

*Isa 37:36*

*36 Then the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses--all dead.*

NKJV

- g. This passage shows that God has sovereignty over even the most powerful nation in the world.
- h. Calvinists often ask: If God doesn't make all the choices, then how can He be sure that His purposes will be fulfilled?
  - i. God is not at the mercy of man
  - ii. He has the resources to alter history, He can do anything.
  - iii. It doesn't mean He has to make all the choices though.

(v) Sovereignty over creation or natural forces.

- 1. Jesus demonstrated this.

*Mark 4:39-41*

*39 Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?" 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that **even the wind and the sea obey Him!**"*

NKJV

- a. Storms sometimes determine history.

(vi) Sovereignty over success of evil men.

*Ps 21:11*

*11 For they intended evil against You;  
They devised a plot which they are not able to perform.*

NKJV

- 1. The fact that it was against God shows that He didn't author it. He resisted it and they couldn't perform it.
  - a. Who cares about conspiracies?
  - b. You don't have to have God ordaining every decision. He can intervene whenever He sees fit.

*Acts 23:14*

*14 They came to the chief priests and elders, and said, "We have bound ourselves under a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul.*

NKJV

- 2. What happened here:
  - a. A little boy overhears their plot, happens to be Paul's nephew.
  - b. This is a sovereign act of God to thwart this plot.

(vii) God can sovereignly exploit wicked deeds for His purposes

- 1. Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery. But what did Joseph say to them?

*Gen 50:18-21*

*19 Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? 20 But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.*

*NKJV*

2. Even the wickedness of man can serve His purposes.

*Ps 76:10*

*O Surely the wrath of man shall praise You;*

*NKJV*

3. Judas was wicked
4. The Sanhedrin were wicked
5. Herod and Pilate were wicked.
6. God didn't make them wicked, but He allowed them to carry out their evil plans for the His ultimate purpose.
  - a. What marvelous ingenuity and sovereignty of our God!!!

*h) How does God work on the heart.*

- i) Total depravity suggests that an un-regenerated person can not even have an inkling of goodness in them or ability to want to seek God.
  - (1) By nature children of wrath
    - (a) They want to do nothing but evil.
  - (2) God must disregard their will and superimpose His on theirs.
    - (a) Chooses to do so in some on no other basis but that it's His good pleasure to.
    - (b) He has to put a different "want" or "will" in them than their own.
    - (c) But somehow (according to Calvinists) He does this without violating their free will.
- ii) However, the "will" is not a thing.
  - (1) Just like faith is simply believing, thoughts are simply thinking, so a will is simply wanting.
- iii) 2 parts to the answer: His work in believers' will and His work in unbelievers' will.
- iv) **How He works in believers:**

*Phil 2:13*

*13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*

*NKJV*

- (1) Clearly there is a working in the will of the believer.
- (2) However, Christians still sin so everything a believer does is not the will of God.
- (3) But God intends to fulfill His ultimate purpose in a believer.

*1 Thess 4:3*

*3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification:*

*NKJV*

- (a) That means holiness.
- (b) When a person sins, they are not being holy.
- (c) This proves that not everything that happens in the life of a believer is the will of God.
- (4) The fact that someone is a believer means that there is repentance.
  - (a) There has been a voluntary change of the mind to live for the will of God.
  - (b) A true Christian is one who wants to please God (despite struggles)
    - (i) Ruling this person's life is much easier than someone who doesn't want this.

- (c) For God to place something in a believer's heart is not a violation of their will because that is what they already want, have chosen.
- (5) God rules in various ways
  - (a) #1 - Gives commands
    - (i) Prescriptive but not necessarily descriptive.
      - 1. Tells believers what they must, not will, do.
      - 2. Tells about how things should be, not necessarily are.
      - 3. The command "thou shalt not kill" does not mean that nobody will kill.
    - (ii) This is one way God exercises His sovereignty in believers.
      - 1. And how we know if people are believers

*John 8:31-32*

*31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.*

*NKJV*

*Matt 28:19-20*

*19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;*

*NKJV*

- (b) #2 – Inward direction

*Jer 31:31-33*

*31 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-- 32 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*

*NKJV*

- (i) Law not just written outwardly, but also internally to the believer.
- (ii) When external commands come to us from the bible, our spirit agrees with them because God has given us that heart to comply.
  - 1. Like a program written in our hearts to agree with God.
    - a. Programs don't always work.
- (iii) This is why we're taught inwardly by the Holy Spirit to love one another and to seek righteousness.

*Titus 2:11-13*

*11 For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age,*

*NKJV*

- 1. He only does this in Christians.

*Phil 2:13*

*13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.*

*NKJV*

- (iv) However, it's not absolute and overbearing.
  - 1. God works in us to do His will, puts that desire in our heart.

2. But it's not overbearing, it's still a choice for us to make.
- (v) There are 2 sets of desires in Christians:
  1. One that God has made in us.
  2. One that our flesh has already.

*Rom 7:22-23*

*22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

*NKJV*

- (vi) Only when we walk in the Spirit do we satisfy the desire that God has put in us.
  1. Who decides whether we will do that or not?
    - a. Can't be God because He'd have us do it all the time.
    - b. We decide. That's why we're commanded to do it.

*Gal 5:16-17*

*16 I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh;*

*NKJV*

2. The flesh wins out sometimes
  - a. Never without grief and repentance because our spirit doesn't agree to it.
  - b. This is the difference between believer and unbeliever
    - i. Unbeliever sins and his heart agrees with it.
- (c) #3 – His providences
  - (i) God brings certain things to pass in our circumstances.
    1. Finances, health, and many other things in our lives can prevent or enable us to do what He wants us to do.
    2. Paul knew of this phenomenon:

*1 Cor 16:7-9*

*7 For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits. 8 But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. 9 **For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.***

*NKJV*

- a. He also wished to go to Spain, but never did.

(d) #4 – His chastening

- (i) Like a king punishes criminals or a father his children.

*1 Cor 11:31-32*

*31 For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.*

*NKJV*

1. God sovereignly interposes judgments to bring us to repentance so that we won't be condemned like the rest of the world.
2. If God made every decision for us, we'd never sin.
- (e) So God's sovereign will in the life of a believer is powerful, but not absolute.

**v) How He works in the unbeliever:**

- (1) Must be different than how He works in the heart of a believer.
  - (a) Believer has already turned around.

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- (2) God has many tools at His disposal to help people make the right choice
  - (a) But doesn't make it for them.
- (3) Calvinists present a false dichotomy
  - (a) They say that they believe that God's intervention is necessary for man to choose God and that Armenians do not.
  - (b) However, this is not what Armenians (non-Calvinists) believe at all.
- (4) Biblical assessment, and one that Armenians would agree with.
  - (a) #1 God wants all people to be saved.

1 John 2:2

2 *And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the **whole world.***  
NKJV

1 Tim 2:3-6

3 *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 **who desires all men to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself a **ransom for all,** to be testified in due time,*  
NKJV

2 Peter 3:8-9

9 *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, **not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.***  
NKJV

- (b) #2 God's will is not the only will in the universe. Man has a will also.
  - (i) God knows how to put pressure and incentives on unbelievers.
    - 1. Jonah is a good example of this.
      - a. He fled against God's will
      - b. However, God knew how to twist his arm just enough.
      - c. Jonah complied, but he also complained when they got saved.
        - i. He obeyed because he was pressured to. He wasn't changed.
    - 2. Jesus did not explain what form the "drawing" takes in John 6:44

John 6:44-45

44 *No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.*  
NKJV

- a. Calvinists say that it's irresistible.
- b. Non-Calvinists would suggest that God attempts to coax them, but that all sinners do not come.
- (ii) How does God go about giving these "pressures and incentives"
  - 1. His grace and mercy. He appeals to our hearts.
    - a. He makes us want to serve Him out of love because He loves us.

Ps 145:9

9 *The LORD is good to **all,***  
*And His tender mercies are over all His works.*  
NKJV

Matt 5:45

*for He makes His sun rise **on the evil and on the good,** and sends rain **on the just and on the unjust.***  
NKJV

- b. Not just the elect, but to all.

*Rom 2:4-5*

*4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?*

*NKJV*

(iii) Manifestation of the truth.

*Rom 1:18-21*

*18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,*

*NKJV*

1. Some people are attracted to nothing but truth.
2. some people are inclined to suppress the truth.
  - a. They are without excuse because they had a choice to not suppress the truth.

*2 Cor 4:2*

*2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

*NKJV*

3. He commends himself to them by manifesting the truth.
  - a. He presents the truth to the individual conscience who is then left to deal with the truth presented.

(iv) Conviction of sin.

1. Also a function of revealing truth in one sense.
2. Making people know their guilt.

*John 16:7-12*

*7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. 8 And when He has come, **He will convict the world of sin**, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; 11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*

*NKJV*

*Acts 2:36-37*

*36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." 37 Now when they heard this, they were **cut to the heart**, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"*

*NKJV*

3. In contrast, the same message revealed draws and opposite response from some.

Acts 7:54-55

54 When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth.

NKJV

(v) Appeals to man's self-interest

1. Fallen man can't make any decision that is not in his best interest, generally.
2. God continually appeals to this idea of rewards and punishments.

Ezek 33:11

11 "Say to them: 'As I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?'

NKJV

- a. He can't make them turn, but He can tell them it's in their best interest.
3. He uses persuasion

Acts 2:40

40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."

NKJV

Luke 13:1-3

13:1 There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? 3 I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.

NKJV

Acts 9:4-6

4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" 5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" And the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."

NKJV

- a. The Lord was not forcing Paul, but using extremely persuasive methods.
  - i. Blinding
  - ii. Vision of Himself
  - iii. Pain, etc.
4. Pressure of circumstances
  - a. Jonah
  - b. The prodigal son
5. Encourages a Godly sorrow

2 Cor 7:10-11

10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

NKJV

Acts 11:18

18 When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also **granted to the Gentiles repentance** to life."

NKJV

- a. God grants repentance

*2 Tim 2:23-26*

*24 And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, 25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will **grant them repentance**, so that they may know the truth, 26 and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.*

*NKJV*

- b. He does this by giving them a godly sorrow so that the only rational way to respond is to repent.
  - c. When a person repents of their sin, it because God did everything in His power to make that person see that it was the only way to go.
    - i. Gift of God in that He caused the circumstances.
6. He helps weak faith.
- a. He sees people moving in the right direction and He encourages it to its conclusion of a full saving power.

*Mark 9:24*

*24 Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"*

*NKJV*

7. All of these things is how God draws sinners.
  - a. None of them suggest that He draws them irresistibly however.
  - b. He's not the only deciding agent, it requires cooperation from the sinner.

(vi) God draws animals irresistibly, but not man. That's the difference between man and beast.

*Jer 8:7*

*7 "Even the stork in the heavens  
Knows her appointed times;  
And the turtledove, the swift, and the swallow  
Observe the time of their coming.  
But My people do not know the judgment of the LORD.*

*NKJV*

*Isa 1:3*

*3 The ox knows its owner  
And the donkey its master's crib;  
But Israel does not know,  
My people do not consider."*

*NKJV*

1. Animals are programmed by God, but people are not or we would see the same reaction of man.

(vii) What about John 6:37?

*John 6:37*

*37 All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*

NKJV

1. Later Jesus says that those people were already the Fathers' people.

*John 17:6-7*

*6 "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. **They were Yours, You gave them to Me**, and they have kept Your word.*

NKJV

- a. There is no suggestion that these people were Satan's people and the Father irresistibly turned them around to love Jesus.
  - b. These were people that already followed God, they just lived at a time before Jesus was revealed.
    - i. It was predictable that they would come.
- (c) #3 Even those that are given can fall away (opposite the perseverance doctrine)  
(i) Jesus said at least one had.

*John 17:12*

*12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost **except the son of perdition**, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.*

NKJV

1. Judas had fallen away. There's at least one.
  - a. He was among those that the Father had given Him.
2. Where a rule has an exception, there is likely another.
  - a. That makes the rule not absolute.
3. If Judas was just an exception to the rule so that scripture would be fulfilled, what's to stop others falling away today to also fulfill scripture?

*1 Tim 4:1*

*4:1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith,*

NKJV

- a. You can't have one without the other.
- (d) #4 God's predestination did not determine man's choices, but the consequences of those choices
1. Predestination is only mentioned twice in scripture (Rom 8, Eph 1)
    - a. We are predestined to be Holy
    - b. To be inserted into God's family (adopted sons)
    - c. Conformed to the likeness of Christ
  2. It doesn't say that people are predestined to become believers.
  3. What about 2 Thess 2:13

*2 Thess 2:13-14*

*13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, 14 to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

NKJV

- a. This does not necessarily speak of individual election.

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- b. He's writing to a church, corporately (you plural)
  - i. You who fit this description
  - ii. Who are in this category, etc.
- 4. The bible clearly indicates that individuals make their own choices, but God sovereignly chooses the end result.
  - a. God is often disappointed in man's rebellion, but not ultimately. He still gets the last word.

#### 4) Reasoning from scripture (Lecture #7)

- a) *Who has the bible on their side?*
- i) Both the Calvinist arguments and the Armenian arguments cannot be true at the same time.
    - (1) The bible doesn't teach contradictory things.
    - (2) One side or the other (or both) must be incorrect.
  - ii) Both sides have intelligent advocates and wish to honor God.
    - (1) Yet we have to determine which is right by some objective means.
    - (2) That fact that you can have multiple interpretations of a passage suggests that there must be a right way and a wrong way to interpret scripture.
      - (a) Following the right methods will bring us to right conclusions
      - (b) Either the Calvinist or the non-Calvinist is using the scripture incorrectly.
    - (3) Not a salvation issue, but a fairly important one since it deals with character of God.
      - (a) Whether He wants everyone saved or not.
      - (b) Whether He is the author of evil or not.
      - (c) Etc.
- b) *What is at stake?*
- i) Some objections **not** valid like:
    - (1) Believing in eternal security causes you to live in sin.
      - (a) Calvinism does not teach this, but rather perseverance of saints (if you are saved, it will show itself by your not falling away).
    - (2) Not believing in eternal security makes you insecure (leading to legalism)
      - (a) Non-Calvinists do not believe this either.
  - ii) Valid issues.
    - (1) View of God.
      - (a) Will unbelievers they object to God based on His choosing some to go to hell?
      - (b) This is a different kind of God than what non-Calvinists believe in.
        - (i) If the bible teaches that, fine. But does it?
    - (2) Love of God
      - (a) The Calvinist God is one to be feared, but is He easily loved?
        - (i) If He creates people just to damn them, is that something we would find lovely?
      - (b) Read the ministers daughter by John Greenleaf Whittier
      - (c) The God of the bible is not portrayed as less loving than earthly fathers.

*Luke 11:11-13*

*11 If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"*

*NKJV*

- (d) The idea Jesus was trying to get across is that God is more loving and generous than earthly fathers, not less.
- (e) The nature of the God of Calvinism offends Christians and non-Christians alike.
  - (i) More like the Levite and the Priest that passed by than the good Samaritan.
    - 1. He sees people dying and beaten up by Satan, yet He passes by when He could have helped them.
    - 2. Robert Shank "Elect in the Son" p.193

*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 same God that desires all men to be 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 James*

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 saying “look to Me and be 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 Titus 2:11”. Such an arbitrary God is not the God we worship and adore, the God in whom we trust.

3. Calvinist would say that God is like the good samaritan, but that the man badly beaten is like one of the elect.
  - a. But the Samaritan was not a friend to the Jew, they were sworn enemies by nationality.
    - i. That’s the whole point. Jesus told the story because He said that you must love your neighbor as yourself. He was showing that everyone in need is your neighbor.
- (f) Calvinism suggests that God commands us to be more loving than Him.
  - (i) If God hates sinners and doesn’t want them saved.
- (g) Jay Adams (5-point Calvinist) in “competent to counsel” (and many other good books on counseling) said:

*When you’re counseling a person, you should never tell them that Jesus died for them. Because we don’t know if the person you’re counseling is one of the elect or not. And if they are not one of the elect, it would be untrue to suggest the Christ died for them.*

- (i) This is where Calvinism brings you.
- (ii) Jay Adams is correct if Calvinism is correct.
- (iii) You could never tell anyone with certainty that God loves you and the Jesus died for you.
  1. The best you could say is Jesus died for you if you are one of the elect, but you can’t know that until you persevere to the end.
  2. This is the gospel of Calvinism, but not the gospel of scripture.
- (h) Clark Pinnock “Grace unlimited” p. 11

*We consent to Paul’s judgment, that God desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, and to Peter’s conviction that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 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.***

- (i) Doesn’t this emasculate the evangelist?
- (ii) Calvinist would counter that sure we can know, we’re the elect.
  1. But how do you know you are the elect?
    - a. Maybe it’s true that a non-Calvinist has no assurance that he will die saved, but being a Calvinist gives you no assurance that you’re saved now.
    - b. If the only way a person proves he is saved by enduring to the end, then you won’t know until you die.
      - i. Many people have had evidences of loving the Lord in their life, but they fell away.

- ii. How can we be sure about our own salvation when these people seem to have just as much evidence that they are saved as we do?
- 2. Story of the man who wrote “it is well with my soul”
  - a. Lived in Chicago, owned a lot of property
    - i. Impoverished by the great fire of Chicago.
  - b. Worked with D.L.Moody
  - c. Because of all the troubles he was going through, he was going to take a vacation with his family
    - i. Something came up and last minute so he couldn't go.
    - ii. Sent his family (wife and 4 daughters) to England for vacation by ship.
  - d. Ship was hit by another ship and sank.
    - i. Received telegram from England from his wife saying that she was the only survivor of the family, 4 daughters drowned.
  - e. He left to England by ship to meet his wife.
  - f. When he got to the approximate spot of the accident, he stood by the railing of the ship.
    - i. Here he thought up the song:

*When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
 When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
 Whatever my lot, Thou has taught me to say,  
 It is well, it is well, with my soul.*

- g. The problem is that this man, went to Israel in his later years and proclaimed himself to be the Messiah.
  - i. This would appear that this man did not persevere.
  - ii. Calvinists would say that he was never saved.
  - iii. How does this account for the incredible grace of God that was upon him?
  - iv. How about being such a close associate with DL Moody and Moody never noticing he wasn't real?
- 3. How could one possibly know that they are elect until their dying breath (under the Calvinist system)?
- (iii) The Bible says we can know...if we have faith.

*1 Peter 1:3-6*

*3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are **kept by the power of God through faith for salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time.*

*NKJV*

- 1. We are kept by the power of God (not our own power), but it's through faith.
- 2. If we believe God, His strength will be a continuous source of strength for us.
- 3. We could fall away, but why would we want to?
- 4. If we think we stand by our own strength, we're just asking God to knock us down.
  - a. The builder of the Titanic said that “not even God can sink this ship”

*1 Cor 10:12*

*12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

*NKJV*

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5. The believer can know if he/she is saved by knowing where their trust is.
  - a. Continued trust in Jesus is our eternal security.
  - b. Don't have to worry about falling away or overpowered by temptation so long as we're looking to Jesus.
  - c. More security than a Calvinist could ever have.
- (iv) Most true Christians who are Calvinists don't live out their beliefs. They think like Calvin, but live like an Armenian.
  1. AW Tozer said: "*I'm a Calvinist when I pray, and an Armenian when I preach*"

c) *Understanding scripture properly*

*Prov 3:5*  
*5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart,*  
*And lean not on your own understanding;*  
 NKJV

- i) Knowing what God said so we can trust in Him.
  - (1) No grounds for being anti-intellectual
  - (2) God gave us something that He didn't give any other creature on the planet...tools for spiritual discernment.
    - (a) Brain
    - (b) Spirit
    - (c) Bible.
- ii) How is a mind to be used?
  - (1) Submit to scripture.
    - (a) Scripture is only useful if you use it scripturally.
- iii) Rules
  - (1) Scripture is final authority for the Christian.
    - (a) Doesn't matter how firmly entrenched a tradition might be.
    - (b) Doesn't matter how historic or heroic its adherents.
    - (c) It is the final arbiter of all contrary opinions.

*Gal 1:7-9*  
*8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.*  
 NKJV

- (d) Wonderful, Godly men can be wrong too. (even Angels)
  - (i) God uses imperfect men to do His work.
  - (ii) We don't have to agree w/everything they say.
- (e) Ref to earlier quote by John Owens.
- (2) Where two opposite opinions appear to be found in scripture one or the other must be interpreting the passage wrongly.
  - (a) Two mutually exclusive viewpoints can't both be right lest scripture is found to be contradictory to itself.
- (3) A passage that can be used to support both sides, cannot add strength to either side of the dispute.
  - (a) If proof text for one position is used also by the opposite position, it is of no value in settling the disagreement.
  - (b) Example:

*Rom 8:29*  
*29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined*

NKJV

*Eph 1:4*

*4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world,*

NKJV

- (i) Both camps love these scriptures to prove their point.
- (ii) Must have scriptures that don't fit into both paradigms equally to settle the argument.
- (iii) Not who has the most scriptures, but who has scripture on their side that cannot be fit into the other view?
- (4) Attention must be given not only to the ability to present supporting scripture, but also to ability to refute the opposite position.
  - (a) Anyone can rattle off the proof texts for their position.
  - (b) How does one handle the scriptures the opposite side quotes?
    - (i) Calvinists:
      - 1. John Owens "A display of Armenianism"
      - 2. Christopher Ness "An antidote against Armenianism"
    - (ii) Armenian
      - 1. Robert Shank "Life in the Son"
- (5) Basic scriptural rules of interpretation must be observed
  - (a) Words accurately examined in original language
    - (i) Some very important points rest on the meaning of a greek word
    - (ii) Example:

*Acts 13:48*

*48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord.*

*And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.*

NKJV

- 1. Some Greek scholars say that the word "appointed" here is better translated "disposed". Doesn't say who disposed them but the previous verse says:

*Acts 13:46*

*"It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.*

NKJV

- a. Suggesting the disposed themselves to believe or not.
- (b) Verse must be examined by its micro and macro context.
  - (i) The passage it's in
  - (ii) What the rest of scripture says on the topic.
- (c) The meaning of a passage cannot contradict the properly understood meaning of another passage.
  - (i) Best interpretation is that which accommodates all the rest of the biblical data.
  - (ii) The bible needs to be harmonized with itself.
  - (iii) Obscure statements must be interpreted in light of plain statements.
    - 1. example:

*John 10:11*

*The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.*

NKJV

- a. Doesn't have to mean that He died only for His sheep. Especially in light of other passages that say He died for all men and the sins of the world, etc. (see above discussion).

- (6) Cannot misrepresent the opposite position.
  - (a) Gives the impression that the opposite position cannot be refuted without the substitution of a caricature of itself.
  - (b) Arguments also weakened when there are logical fallacies
    - (i) Begging the question:
      - 1. means you presume (take as a given) as the starting point of your argument the actual point that is under dispute.
      - 2. Example:

*How could the immutable decrees from a sovereign God be undermined by finite mortal man?*

- a. This is begging the question, because there are disagreements about whether everything is under an immutable decree of God (everything happens according to his will, foreordained from all eternity).
  - i. If you take this as a starting point, then obviously Armenianism can't be true.
  - ii. This is true if you start from any of the Calvinist viewpoints.
  - iii. But why not start with something that all can agree on? There must be something (inspiration of scripture.)
- (ii) Excluded middle:
  - 1. False dichotomy (Either this or that, no other options).
  - 2. Naming two extremes and suggesting there is no middle ground.
  - 3. Example:

*Either God is the first cause for salvation by His sovereign will or man is the first cause for salvation by his sovereign will.*

- a. If those are the only two options, we have to choose God.
- b. But those aren't the only two options.
  - i. Armenianism doesn't teach that man is the first cause, only that man has a vote in his salvation. Calvinism denies this.
  - ii. God starts it, but man finishes it.
- (iii) Abusive ad hominem argument:
  - 1. Cheap shot.
  - 2. Not relevant to the point.
    - a. Does not address the view, but the person who holds it.
  - 3. Example:

*All Calvinists have an IQ under 70.*

- (iv) Non-secatur:
  - 1. Does not follow necessarily
  - 2. Example:

*If God is sovereign, then it must be that He foreordains all things.*

- a. This statement is not necessarily true.
  - i. It gives the debater an illusion of having the advantage in the debate, but it's a false illusion.
- b. Playing fast and loose with definitions of words and logic.
- (v) Cavalier dismissal:
  - 1. Hears a good argument against his case and doesn't give it any consideration. He moves on to something else.
    - a. Happens with JW's all the time.
  - 2. As if you didn't make a valid point.

3. Example:

*Romans 9 passage about Esau and Jacob not being about individuals for salvation, but about nations. The whole context shows that's not true...Next point.*

- a. The person saying this is dismissing the claim without an examination of the claim.

(vi) False analogy:

1. Example:

*The Armenian sometimes preaches as though the sinner is a drowning man, and the gospel is a life preserver thrown to him and all he has to do is reach out by faith and grab the life preserver.*

- a. The person saying this would argue a false analogy because in his view the sinner is a dead man at the bottom of the ocean. He can't grab anything.
- b. The Armenian would counter saying that the scripture being used to say we are dead in our trespasses is being applied more literally than it can logically be applied.
  - i. Sinners are not literally dead, they make choices everyday.
  - ii. The Calvinist is using the false analogy here.

(7) Burden of proof

- (a) The party has to prove his point or he loses.
  - (i) It's not the case that if he doesn't prove his point it's a draw.
- (b) There are debates where neither side can prove it's point and it is a draw.
- (c) There are other points that seem arbitrary or ridiculous or against initial evidence that have the burden to prove itself true, or it loses.
- (d) On the party whose view would naturally be rejected unless it can be proven otherwise.
  - (i) What does common sense or plain ordinary evidence suggest?
    1. The burden of proof lies on the side that goes against that.
    2. Sometimes that position is true, but the burden of proof still lies in the side that has the unconventional wisdom.
    3. Example:
      - a. If conventional wisdom suggests that God cannot be sovereign without making all decisions in the universe, the burden is on the Armenian.
      - b. If conventional wisdom says that God is not the author of sin, then the burden of proof is on the Calvinist to prove that He can make all the decisions without being responsible for sin in the world.
    4. Calvinism suggests many things that go against normal logic and calls these things "mysteries". The burden of proof is on the Calvinist for these points.

## 5) Calvinist Challenges Answered (pt 1 and 2: lectures 8 and 9)

- a) *Can a man dead in trespasses and sin make a choice to repent and believe?*
- i) Possibly the most harped on point in the Calvinist camp.
    - (1) Paul says we're dead. Not sick, weak, etc..we're dead.
      - (a) How can a dead man do anything towards his own salvation?
    - ii) Counter: If a man is dead, how can he do anything at all (work, play, watch TV, etc.) or make any choices at all.
      - (1) Natural conclusion to that point if we're to take those verses literally.
      - (2) Why is that the one thing that he can't make a choice about? Un-regenerate men make all kinds of choices all the time, and many of a moral nature.
      - (3) This is arbitrary to insist on this **metaphor** and therefore this point cannot stand.
    - iii) Confidence in the power of the gospel
      - (1) Calvinists believe gospel is powerless unless preceded by regeneration.
        - (a) Just preaching to dead people.
      - (2) The Bible's assessment of the power of the gospel

*Rom 1:16*

*16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, **for it is the power of God to salvation** for everyone who believes,  
NKJV*

*John 6:63-64*

*63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. **The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.**  
NKJV*

*1 Thess 1:5*

*5 For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.  
NKJV*

- (a) The gospel comes in power. Why shouldn't one have confidence in the power of the gospel.

*Rom 10:17-18*

*17 So then **faith comes by hearing**, and hearing by the word of God.  
NKJV*

- (b) Faith is brought about by hearing the word.

*John 8:32*

*32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.  
NKJV*

*1 Peter 1:23-24*

*23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God **which lives and abides forever**,  
NKJV*

*Heb 4:2-3*

*2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, **not being mixed with faith** in those who heard it.  
NKJV*

(c) Faith in the word of God is sufficient to produce salvation.

iv) How can a dead man repent and have faith?

(1) Where is the reference to being dead?

*Eph 2:1-2*

*2:1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,  
NKJV*

*Eph 2:5-6*

*5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),  
NKJV*

*Col 2:13*

*13 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  
NKJV*

(2) Paul using metaphor as he has elsewhere:

*Heb 11:12*

*12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude--innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.  
NKJV*

*Compare*

*Rom 4:19*

*19 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.  
NKJV*

(a) "Good as dead" is being used synonymously as "already dead".

(b) Dead men don't sleep with their wives, but obviously Abraham did.

(i) In terms of having children, he was as good as dead.

(c) So we see the scripture using the term dead in a non-literal way to say as good as dead or doomed to death (like being on death row).

(3) Elsewhere:

*Gen 20:3*

*3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife."  
NKJV*

(a) Abimelech wasn't dead. God implied he was doomed to die if he didn't repent.

*2 Sam 9:8*

*8 Then he bowed himself, and said, "What is your servant, that you should look upon such a dead dog as I?"  
NKJV*

*2 Sam 19:28*

*28 For all my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king. Yet you set your servant among those who eat at your own table.*

NKJV

- (b) Mephibesheth wasn't dead. He was the grandson of Saul and all of Saul's descendants had been wiped out except for him. He would expected to die under the hands of the new administration.

*Matt 9:18-19*

*18 While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live."*

NKJV

- (c) Jairus' daughter was not dead when he left. He was indicating that she is going to die, unless Jesus intervenes.

*Luke 15:24*

*24 for this my son was dead and is alive again;*

NKJV

- (d) Prodigal son was not dead. And, it was while in this "dead" state that he came to himself (vs.17).

*Rom 7:9-11*

*9 I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. 10 And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me.*

NKJV

- (e) He's saying that when he became aware of the law, it condemned him to die.
  - (i) Not literally dead, but figuratively.

*Rom 8:10*

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

NKJV

- (f) Describing Christians, living Christians. Not really dead yet.
  - (i) We are destined do die. Same figurative usage.
- (4) The same is true on the other side of the coin.

*Rom 6:2*

*How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?*

NKJV

- (a) How can we still sin if we're dead to it? It's figurative.

*Gal 6:14-15*

*14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

NKJV

- (b) Paul is saying that he is crucified to the world. Again, not literal. He's not saying that he can't make a choice to sin, only that he's on death row. Sin is destined to die in him.
- (5) Therefore, Dead men (figurative) can and do make decisions.

- b) *What came 1<sup>st</sup>, regeneration or saving faith?*
- i) Did you believe God and then were born again? Or were you born again and then believe as a result?
  - ii) Everything in this debate hinges on this one question.
    - (1) If you want to know if someone is a Calvinist or non-calvinist, ask this question of them.
    - (2) Calvinists believe that man is dead and therefore must be born again before he can have faith.
    - (3) Non-calvinists believe the opposite.
      - (a) Regeneration is a result of faith, not the cause.
  - iii) Calvinists Kenneth Talbot and Gary Crampton "Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism, and Armenianism." Wrote:

*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 of salvation by his sovereign will. Either regeneration precedes faith, or faith precedes regeneration. Both systems cannot be correct.*

- (1) 1<sup>st</sup> statement doesn't accurately reflect the issues of the debate (false dichotomy). The 2<sup>nd</sup> one does.
  - (a) Armenians do not believe that man is the 1<sup>st</sup> cause of salvation by his own sovereign will. (mischaracterization).
  - (b) Palagians believe man is sovereign, but not Armenians.
  - (c) Not the only other option as presented in that statement.
  - (d) In fact, most Armenians would agree with the 1<sup>st</sup> part of the 1<sup>st</sup> statement in that God is the 1<sup>st</sup> cause of salvation. God sent Jesus before any of us believed in Him. God sent the Holy Spirit to convict of sin before we ever believe.
    - (i) However, Armenians would say that man is the last cause. God does all the first things, and man decides to believe.
- (2) Why would someone believe that regeneration precedes faith?
  - (a) In the Calvinist system it is necessary since man is dead in his sins.
    - (i) Must be brought to life before he can have faith.
    - (ii) Some scriptures to deal with are: John 10:26, Acts 13:49-49, Acts 16:14-15, Acts 18:26-27, 2 Thess 2:13-14, 2 Cor 2:14.
    - (iii) If these were the only verses in the bible on this topic, we might justly conclude that the Calvinist is correct.
      1. However, there are other verses that suggest the opposite:

*Eph 1:13*

*13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, **having believed**, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,  
NKJV*

*Eph 2:8-9*

*8 For by grace you have been saved **through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.  
NKJV*

*Rom 5:2*

*2 through whom also we have access **by faith** into this grace in which we stand,  
NKJV*

*Rom 10:13-15*

*13 For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."*

14 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? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent?  
NKJV

Acts 19:2  
2 he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"  
NKJV

Col 2:11-12  
11 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.  
NKJV

- (iv) Must discern between the two positions.
  - 1. Which is the cause of which?
  - 2. Non-calvinists believe that God chose the category of those who would be saved.
    - a. The believer chooses whether he will be in that category.
  - 3. Calvinists say that God not only chose that, but also who would be in the category.
- (v) A closer look at the Calvinist verses in question:

John 10:26  
26 But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep,  
NKJV

- 1. Calvinists would suggest that they don't believe because they are not yet His sheep. They must become sheep first by regeneration, then they can believe.

Acts 13:46-47 (VERY IMPORTANT VERSE)  
46 Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us:

*'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles,  
That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'*

48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.  
NKJV

- 2. Sounds like God ordained certain people for their belief. (in fact KJV actually uses "ordained")
- 3. Paul in Pisidian Antioch where his message was largely rejected by Jews, but received by Gentiles.
- 4. Non-calvinists would say that God has ordained that those in a certain class (believers in Christ) are ordained to be saved. Therefore, these people in Pisidian Antioch were among those appointed because they believed.
  - a. Would be much more difficult for the non-calvinist if it is said "those who were appointed to believe" rather than "appointed to eternal life".
- 5. The greek word for appointed here is: NT:5021 *tasso* (tas'-so); a prolonged form of a primary verb (which latter appears only in certain tenses); to

arrange in an orderly manner, i.e. assign or dispose (to a certain position or lot): KJV - appoint, determine, ordain, set.

- a. Many scholars suggest it should be translated “disposed”
  - i. Alford, Wordsworth, Meyer, Rotherham, Bloomfield, Thayer, Bartlett.
  - ii. These people were disposed to eternal life without saying who disposed them to it.
6. Verse 46 says that the Jews that rejected it judged **themselves** unworthy of everlasting life.
  - a. Suggesting the other group did not judge themselves unworthy of it.
    - i. Seems to put the responsibility on the person either believing or unbelieving.
7. Tyndale commentary (Calvinist) by EM Blakelock (professor of classics at Auckland university in New Zealand) says:

*Extreme Calvinism has sought a foothold in this verse. But in so doing takes insufficient notice of context or language: Note:*

- i. *The Jews had already judged **themselves** unworthy (vs 46). They had in other words exercised their will and made their choice. Turning to the gentiles the apostles found faith among those who had ranged themselves for eternal life.*
- ii. *The verb, as the translation given immediately above suggests, is middle (middle and passive coincide in this tense) and thus implies some personal action. The metaphor is military. The gentiles had set themselves in place by faith for eternal life. “Ordained” is not necessarily indicative of a Calvinist bias.*
- b. Appears that either Blakelock is not a Calvinist or at least not a hyper-calvinist.
  - i. He said that the verb is in middle voice (as opposed to active “I appoint” or passive “were appointed”). Middle voice is where you are acting upon yourself. (I decided for myself, etc.).
  - ii. Calvinist assume that it can only be passive (decided by someone else to believe).
  - iii. “ranged themselves” is a military term for set in order.
8. A.T. Robinson (Calvinist), one of the most respected greek scholars, in his Word Studies of the New Testament said about this verse:

*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 decreedum (absolute decree) of personal salvation.*

- a. This is from a Calvinist who leans to the more passive voice.
- b. This word is usually used in the sense of one person appointing another person. However, it only appears 8 times in the new testament. At least 1 time (1 Cor 15:16) where the same verb is used, but translated differently.

*1 Cor 16:15*

*15 I urge you, brethren--you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have **devoted themselves** to the ministry of the saints—*

*NKJV*

- i. Word “devoted” is same greek word.

- ii. Whatever we choose for the English word, we have to admit that it doesn't necessitate that we interpret it that someone else did it to you.
- 9. It would seem that Luke is contrasting those who did not count themselves worthy of eternal life, and those who did.

*Acts 16:14-15*

*14 Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.*

*NKJV*

- 10. She didn't open her own heart, God did.

*Acts 18:26-27*

*27 And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace;*

*NKJV*

- 11. Through grace they believed.

*2 Thess 2:13-14*

*13 But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth,*

*NKJV*

- 12. Sounds like God chose them to believe, not just because they would believe. (very important verse).
  - a. Paul could mean that God chose to save and sanctify all those who would believe through receiving the truth. Christians are among that category and thus chosen for salvation by means of being in the category.
  - b. Not necessarily saying that God chose all who would believe, but that those who do believe would be saved.

*1 Cor 2:14*

*14 But 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.*

*NKJV*

- 13. Cannot receive salvation or faith because he needs a new nature first.

c) *Who chooses whom?*

- i) Calvinists often claim that Arminians say that man chooses himself which takes away Sovereignty from God.
  - (1) Makes God respond to man's choice.
  - (2) However, scripture often has God responding to man's choice.
    - (a) Man sins, God punishes.
    - (b) Man repents, God forgives.
    - (c) Where in the Bible does it say that God cannot respond to man's choices?

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- (i) God complains, punishes, forgives, etc. over man's choices.
- ii) Non-Calvinists believe in a God that is more personal and interactive with His creatures.
  - (1) Does respond to man.
  - (2) God still Sovereign
    - (a) Man is not free to make all kinds of choices.
      - (i) Can't fly or blow up world with a command.
      - (b) God can sovereignly allow His creatures to choose.
      - (c) Not Calvinists definition, but the natural definition of sovereignty.
  - (3) God made a choice.

*John 3:16*

*16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

*NKJV*

- (a) Nobody compelled God to make this decision. He sovereignly made it Himself.
- (b) Whoever believes in God can be said to be saved by God's sovereign choice.
  - (i) Not that God made the decision for him/her to believe, but that He chose the means by which he/she could be saved...believing.
- (c) Chosen not as an individual, but as a part of a saintly community in Christ.

*Eph 1:4*

*4 just as **He chose us in Him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,*

*NKJV*

- (d) "In Christ" is a term frequently found in Paul's writings
  - (i) We died..""
  - (ii) We've risen..""
  - (iii) We are seated in heavenly places..""
  - (iv) We are righteous..""
- (e) This means these things are true of Him. And we also since we are supernaturally incorporated into His body by the act of regeneration share of these things.
  - (i) Like organs in a body.
  - (ii) We are part of Christ.

*Eph 1:22-23*

*22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is **His body**, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

*NKJV*

- (iii) We are elect **IN HIM**.

*Eph 1:20-21*

*He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,*

*NKJV*

*Compare*

*Eph 2:4-6*

*4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*

NKJV

1. Christ is the chosen one, we are elect (or chosen) **in Him**. We share in the benefit of His chosenness.
  2. Eph 1:4 does not answer the question of how we came to be chosen, it just says that we are chosen **IN HIM**.
    - a. Now that we are in Him, we belong to the class called “chosen”.
    - b. It’s not telling us that God chose certain individuals to become Christians.
    - c. It is telling us that Christians are chosen in Christ. Christ is chosen, we share in His election.
- (f) The question is, were we personally chosen by God to be in Him?
- (i) God does give advantages to some for accepting the gift.
    1. Some given more opportunities than others.
    2. This is indeed a mystery which God is entitled to make because He is God.
    3. Saul had a “Damascus road” experience with Jesus.
      - a. Saul was kicking against the goads until then.
      - b. Could have decided to still not obey Christ.
  - (ii) God chose Israel for many things
    1. Not necessarily for salvation, many died lost.
    2. He chose the nation
      - a. Inherit the land of Canaan.
      - b. Bring forth the Messiah
      - c. Bring forth the prophets and scriptures
    3. Illustrates that being in or out of Israel was the thing that made someone a chosen people or not.
      - a. Israel was the chosen people. To be in Israel was the choice of the individual.
        - i. Could be born in Israel and defect and become a Moabite.
        - ii. Conversely, a Moabite could convert and become a Jew (Ruth, Rahab, etc).
      - b. Chosenness is a choice of being part of a category.
    4. Christ is the new Israel.
      - a. Those of us who choose to be in Him are thereby chosen.
- d) *Abiding in Christ*
- i) Just as God chose the category of salvation, He also set the terms of remaining saved.

*John 15:1-7*

*15:1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.*

NKJV

(1) Jesus leaves this choice to us, His disciples. Otherwise He wouldn’t have to urge us.

e) *Does believing make a man better than another?*

- i) Calvinists claim that Arminians think this because one person chooses to believe and therefore he is a better man because of it.
  - (1) Must have some better thing in him that inclines him to believe that another doesn’t.
  - (2) Argument goes:

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(a) In the book “Calvinism, Hyper-calvinism and Armenianism”.

If Armenianism were true, then salvation would not be by grace. It would be merited by the free choice of fallen man.

(b) This is a misrepresentation. Armenians don't believe salvation is merited by choice, but rather by the blood of Christ. It is acquired by choice.

(i) To say choice is a condition for receiving is not the same as saying it merits something.

(ii) A beggar that holds out his hand to receive a free gift did not earn the gift by reaching out his hand.

(iii) There's nothing for the person saved to boast about (Again see Eph 2:8-9, Rom 3:27, 4:4-5)

*Eph 2:8-9*

*8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

*NKJV*

*Rom 3:27*

*27 Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.*

*NKJV*

*Rom 4:4-5*

*4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. 5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,*

*NKJV*

*Rom 4:16*

*16 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed,*

*NKJV*

1. faith is an exclusion of boasting, not something to boast about.

(iv) Quote from Clark Pinnock: “*Grace unlimited*”

*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 of 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 the grace God calls for through which salvation becomes a reality to the individual concerned. We're saved by God's grace through faith.*

f) *Does Christ's death guarantee and procure the salvation of the elect.*

i) It's often argued that the cross not only made it possible, but also guaranteed the salvation of the elect.

(1) The criticism is that if the Armenian is true, Jesus only made salvation available but didn't guarantee anyone would be saved.

- (a) Theoretically, God could end up without any people.
- (2) Technically, that is true.
  - (a) However, God is not a poor economist and doesn't make investments that He knows are foolish. There have always been a remnant that loved God.
  - (b) God knows that He will not likely lose all. Out of the billions of people He has created, it's very likely that some will respond favorably to His gracious and reasonable gift.
  - (c) Plus, God is all-knowing and therefore has foreknowledge of those who would come to Him. There's no risk for Him, he knows the outcome of the game He's betting on in advance.

g) *Is being born something you choose?*

- i) Calvinist argument similar to the "dead man" argument.
  - (1) If born again is a true metaphor, then someone else must be doing the deciding to make us born.
  - (2) One verse that is often used to prove this is:

*John 1:12-13*

*12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

*NKJV*

- (a) However, notice that the condition of this right is receiving and believing Him.
  - (i) There is an action on the part of the believer.
- (3) Therefore "birth" is not an exact analogy. A good one, but not exact.
- (4) What does it mean that they were not born of blood or the will of the flesh but of God?
  - (a) Not saying they were not physically born, but additionally born (of the spirit). They have two births.
  - (b) This is a Hebraism called a limited negative.
    - (i) Statement says "not this, but that" but means "not **only** this, but **also** that". (see Matt 10:34, )
  - (c) The will of the flesh or the will of man simply means the will they were born with. Their natural descent.
    - (i) But additional to this, they were born of God.
- ii) Also, with reference to perseverance, they say you can't be "unborn".
  - (1) True you can't be unborn. But by your own actions, you can cease to be alive (suicide).

h) *Did God ordain evil?*

- i) Armenian says that someone cannot ordain something and simultaneously hold someone else accountable for it, justly.
  - (1) However, if the bible teaches it, we would have to acknowledge it and live with it.
  - (2) Armenian gets a lot of mileage out of the assumption that whoever causes an action, is responsible for the action.
    - (a) How can a person be responsible if he is not able to choose his response?
- ii) Calvinists respond by saying that the bible does indeed punish evil and that God ordained them to be evil.
  - (1) This is just one of those "mysteries" of God's justice that we are not entitled to challenge.
  - (2) RC Sproul "Chosen by God" pp 142-143

*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 since 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.*

- (a) He is not willing to admit that equal ultimacy is exactly what Calvinism teaches.
- (3) John Calvin “Institutes of the Christian religion” 321.5

*By predestination we mean, in 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 preordained to eternal damnation. And accordingly as each has been created for one or the other of these ends we say that he has been predestined to life or to death.*

- (a) Calvin himself seems to have taught the view that RC Sproul denies he believed.
  - (i) He must then be “sub-Calvinistic”
- (4) He also said in 321.7

*We say then, that scripture clearly proves this much, that God by His eternal and immutable counsel determined once for all, those who it was His pleasure to one day admit to salvation, and those who, on the other hand, it was His pleasure to doom to destruction.*

- (5) RC Sproul again in “Chosen by God” p. 147

*To understand the Reformed view of the matter, we must pay close attention to the crucial distinction between the 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 ensure their salvation. The rest of mankind God leaves to themselves.*

- (a) This is how the modern Calvinist deals with the inevitable logical conclusion that Calvinism draws.
- (b) Calvin himself would sharply disagree with Sproul and other moderate Calvinists today.
- (c) Isn’t His “negative” choosing still a choice to damn some?
  - (i) He could have made a different choice. Therefore He is positively reprobating some under this thinking.
- (6) Calvin again in “Institutes” 323.1

*Those, therefore, who God passes by, He reprobates.*

- (a) Calvin is consistent with his own theology, Calvinists today are not.

- (7) Robert Shank “Elect in the Son”

*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:*

*James 4:17*

*17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.*

*NKJV*

*A God so heartless 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 :*

Isa 45:22  
22 "Look to Me, and be saved,  
All you ends of the earth!  
For I am God, and there is no other.  
NKJV

*He cannot be the God whose "grace has appeared for the salvation of all men" (Titus 2:11).  
Such an arbitrary God is not the God we worship and adore. The God in whom we trust.*

- (a) The Calvinist objection to this would be that Armenians are deciding for themselves what God can and cannot do. We need to let God be God.
    - (i) If God wants to reprobate some, who are we to criticize?
  - (b) However, nobody is saying God doesn't have the right to do this. Armenians are saying that the God of the bible is not that God.
    - (i) Everything the God reveals Himself to be in His Word is contrary to one who chooses some for reprobation.
- (8) Clark Pinnock "Grace Unlimited"

*We have referred already to soteriological predestination, the view of election, first brought about by Augustine, which is part of 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.*

- (a) God of Calvinism acts in a way that the God of the bible commands us not to act.
  - (i) Not to be a respecter of persons
  - (ii) To love our enemies as much as our friends.
  - (iii) To make no distinction between people.
  - (iv) To love all men.
  - (v) To try to reach all men.
  - (vi) To lay down our lives for all men.
- (b) This fact alone should call into serious question whether the Calvinist conception of God can possibly be biblical.
  - (i) We're commanded to be like God.

Eph 5:1-2  
5:1 Therefore be **imitators of God** as dear children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.  
NKJV

- (ii) To pass by a brother in need, when you can help, is sin.
  - 1. Yet we're expected to believe that God does this all the time?

- i) *Verses that sound as if God ordains some to be lost*
  - i) Many of these verses unpalatable even to the Calvinist.
    - (1) Suggests that God ordains, or is the author of, evil.
    - (2) Suggests a double-predestination
    - (3) Seems to contradict other scriptures that say God is sinless, cannot be tempted with evil, or tempt any man (James)
  - ii) How is this worked out?
    - (1) Concept juggling on the Calvinist part
    - (2) John Calvin "Eternal predestination of God" 10.11

*How foolish and frail is the support of divine justice, purported by the suggestion that evils come to be not by His will, but by His permission. It is quite a frivolous refuge to say that God odiously permits them when scripture shows Him not only willing, but the author of*

*them. Who does not tremble at His judgments with which God works in the hearts of even the wicked whatever He wills, rewarding them nonetheless according to their desserts. Again it is quite clear from the evidence of scripture that God works in the hearts of men to incline their wills to just as He will, whether to good for His mercy's sake, or to evil according to their merits.*

- (a) Calvin at least sees the logical conclusion of his doctrine unashamedly.
  - (i) Calvin is addressing Sproul's view that God is not the cause of evil, but that He only allows it. (watered down version of Calvinism).

(3) In same book in 8.5

*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.*

(4) Christopher Ness "Anti-dote against Armenianism" written in 1700.

*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.*

- (a) What obvious double-talk. God determines out of man's "free will" what he will do?
  - (i) How is this so? It's a mystery.

(5) The authors of "Calvinism, Hyper-calvinism, and Armenianism" say

*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 is not brought about by a direct divine act.*

- (a) So God ordains sin by a decree that renders sin absolute certainty (He guarantees it).
  - (i) Divine "first cause", but not the author?

iii) Look at the verses often quoted:

*Rom 9:18*

*18 Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and **whom He wills He hardens.***  
NKJV

- (1) This sounds very much like a positive act on God's part to harden their hearts.
- (2) However, let's look at the scripture in broader context:

*Rom 9:17-24*

*17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." 18 Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. 19 You will*

*say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" 20 But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? 22 What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory,*  
*NKJV*

- (3) God shows His power in Pharaoh by judging him.
  - (a) Hardening his heart was a judgment on him he already deserved for his past sins.
- (4) Paul is not even talking about salvation in this passage.
  - (a) He's talking about God's sovereign choices for raising up Israel to serve His purposes on earth.
- (5) Pharaoh represents Egypt, he was their national leader.
  - (a) Still talking about tension between two peoples.
  - (b) Paul's point was not to argue the finer points of Calvinism and Armenianism here.
    - (i) Not talking about God choosing a man to go to hell, but choosing to use His judgment on him (and therefore on Egypt) to serve His purposes for the nation of Israel.
      1. Pharaoh picked his own wicked path long before God ever hardened him for His own purposes.
      2. God did not choose to harden Pharaoh from his infancy to make sure he was going to hell.
- (6) Paul in this chapter is pointing out how God chose the nation of Israel over other nations (Edom, Egypt, etc.).
  - (a) He even almost chose the people of Moses over the people of Israel, but Moses interceded.
  - (b) None of it is about personal salvation. It's about promises made to Israel and the fulfillment of those promises.
- (7) Having mercy on whom He wills, and hardening who He wills is not a statement about making people good or bad.
  - (a) It's about choosing what *type* of people He will have mercy on and what *type* He will judge through hardening.
- (8) What about the potter and clay business?
  - (a) Paul not affirming 2<sup>nd</sup> question "Who has resisted His will" like he appears to be in most people's minds.
    - (i) Not saying, "yes, it's seems like a logical conclusion, but you have no right to challenge God".
    - (ii) Or "just grin a bear it and shut up. Who do you think you are to judge God?"
  - (b) Paul is anticipating an objector who would want to say that God's will is not resisted with his rhetorical question "who has resisted His will?"
    - (i) "**you will say** to me then"
    - (ii) He is pointing out that the conclusion that God cannot justly find fault with people is a wrong one, not because the logic is wrong, but because the premise it's built on is wrong.
      1. Right premise + Right logic = Right conclusion
      2. Wrong premise + Right logic = Wrong conclusion
      3. Right premise + Wrong logic = Wrong conclusion
      4. They wrongly start with the premise that nobody has ever resisted God's will.
  - (c) Paul demolishes the logic by saying "who are you O man".
    - (i) Saying if nobody can talk back to God because He made us like this, then what do you think you're doing right now by talking back to God. You're resisting His will and therefore, proving your own argument to be absurd.

- (ii) Isn't talking back to God a form of resisting His will?
- (d) Look at the parallel phraseology he uses.
  - (i) "who has resisted His will?"... "who are you?"
  - (ii) The rhetorical question is answered with the same pronoun pointing back to the anticipated questioner.
- (e) He's pointing out that it's easy to reach a wrong assumption and he's putting the objection to rest before it's raised.
  - (i) Objector wrongly extrapolating from the fact that God chooses nations and hardens the hearts of leaders, that it must be also the case that He makes other choices for them as well.
  - (ii) Paul is saying that it's not the case that nobody resists God's will and using the very words that someone might use in objection to prove it.
  - (iii) Objector goes to far in saying that nobody resists God's will just because God chooses to harden some as a judgment on them and to serve His purposes.
- (f) This same kind of tactic of answering an anticipated detractor is used throughout the book of Romans. (Ch 3, 6, etc.)
  - (i) Paul is continuously aware that his words might be misunderstood and he answers objections before they are raised.
- (9) God endures vessels of wrath prepared for destruction (vs 22)
  - (a) Doesn't mean He **makes** them vessels of wrath.
- (10) Taking from one lump vessels for honor and some for dishonor.
  - (a) Allusion to Jer 18:1-6 and Isaiah 45:9, 64:6-8

**Jer 18:1-6**

*18:1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: 2 "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words." 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel. 4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.*

*5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the LORD. "Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel!"*  
NKJV

**Isa 45:9-10**

*9 "Woe to him who strives with his Maker!  
Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth!  
Shall the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?'  
Or shall your handiwork say, 'He has no hands'?  
10 Woe to him who says to his father, 'What are you begetting?'  
Or to the woman, 'What have you brought forth?'"*  
NKJV

**Isa 64:6-8**

*6 But we are all like an unclean thing,  
And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;  
We all fade as a leaf,  
And our iniquities, like the wind,  
Have taken us away.  
7 And there is no one who calls on Your name,  
Who stirs himself up to take hold of You;  
For You have hidden Your face from us,  
And have consumed us because of our iniquities.*

*8 But now, O LORD,*

*You are our Father;  
We are the clay, and You our potter;  
And all we are the work of Your hand.  
NKJV*

- (b) Paul is using the same imagery
  - (i) Israel (the nation) is the lump.
  - (ii) Potter has right to make from that one lump, two vessels.
    - 1. Just as He chose in Isaac one branch of the family (Jacob) to be the people He would carry out His purposes through, so He has the right to do that in Israel as well.
      - a. One used for honorable purposes, the other not.
      - b. Those He uses for honorable purposes are the elect, the remnant, those who are in Israel that receive Christ, those in that category are used for honorable purposes.
      - c. Those who reject Christ, belong to the dishonorable part of the lump.
      - d. Whether individuals choose to be a part of this vessel or that is not discussed.
      - e. Compare this to 2Tim 2:20

*2 Tim 2:19-22*

*20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. 21 Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. 2  
NKJV*

- i. Paul clearly impressing that the individual has the choice to be in the category of being a vessel of honor or not.
      - 2. Paul in the Romans passage does not say that God makes a zillion vessels, but two.
        - a. There are two categories. Vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor.
          - i. Those who receive Christ are part of the honorable in Israel.
          - ii. Those who reject Him, belong to the other branch of the family. God chooses not to use them, but to rather use the elect.
- (11) Therefore, there is not one thing in this entire chapter that is addressing individual salvation.
  - (a) Looking at meaning of each individual verse will give you the meaning of what the flow of thought actually is.
  - (b) Need to look at the verses Paul is quoting to get his meaning, that's why he quotes them.
  - (c) God chooses nations for His earthly purposes, not to determine who will be saved and who won't.
    - (i) Paul discussing the choice of Israel the nation and the elect remnant within it to be the people He honors now. It happens to be the group that is also saved, the believing remnant that accepts the Messiah.

*1 Peter 2:7-8*

*7 Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient,*

*"The stone which the builders rejected  
Has become the chief cornerstone,"*

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8 and

"A stone of stumbling  
And a rock of offense."

*They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.*  
NKJV

- (12) Sounds like they stumbled because they were appointed to.
- (13) However, it first says they were disobedient.
- (14) An equally plausible interpretation is:
  - (a) As a result of their disobedience, they stumbled.
  - (b) The result of stumbling at the Word was ordained by God.
    - (i) If you disobey, you will stumble at the word.
    - (ii) Stumbling is a judgment for disobedience.

Jude 4

*4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.*  
NKJV

- (15) Sounds like God "marked them out for condemnation" a long time ago.
- (16) However, again, this could mean that God foreordained long ago to condemn wicked men.
  - (a) Doesn't need to mean that God foreordained a man to be wicked.
  - (b) God's sovereign choice is to condemn men if they are ungodly.
  - (c) Not the same as picking some to be ungodly so that He could condemn them.
- (17) Need to compare with the rest of scripture to harmonize these passages. Can't take them in a vacuum.

Isa 45:7

*7 I form the light and create darkness,  
I make peace and create calamity;  
I, the LORD, do all these things.'*  
NKJV

- (18) KJV says God creates "evil".
  - (a) Evil used more than one way in scripture.
    - (i) Not moral evil, but calamity or disaster.
    - (ii) Opposite of peace (same verse), same way light is opposite darkness.
    - (iii) Doesn't say He creates good and evil (morally)
  - (b) Not author of sin, but the judgment of the sin.

Prov 16:4

*4 The LORD has made all for Himself,  
Yes, even the wicked for the day of doom.*

NKJV

- (c) God made all things because He willed for them to exist.
  - (i) Not necessary to assume they do everything He wills for them to do.
  - (ii) We can't say for sure that this passage says that He creates things evil, only that He created all things, even the things that are evil (men, devil, etc).
- (d) He said He made all things "for Himself", that is, for His purposes.
  - (i) Simply means that He remains sovereign, even if these things don't do what He wants them to do.
    - 1. Evil will eventually be doomed. Everything will conform to His purpose.
    - 2. Men will rebel, but even so, they won't escape His ultimate judgment (the day of doom).
      - a. If they don't conform to His 1<sup>st</sup> purpose, they will to His 2<sup>nd</sup>.
  - (e) The rest of scripture contradicts this statement (no pleasure in death of wicked, desires that all men come to repentance, desires the wicked man to turn and live, etc.)
    - (i) Therefore, it can't mean what the Calvinists says it means.
    - (ii) Ok to say that God didn't ordain sin, but He did ordain punishment for sin.
- iv) If there were no other way to understand these verses than the way the Calvinist does, we'd have to say that this is the God of the Bible. But since we are able to understand them another way, a way that harmonizes with other statements that seem to contradict them, then we should take the view that does not make the bible contradict itself.
  - (1) God ordains the ends, man decides which end he will take
    - (a) Wide road, or narrow path.
      - (i) We are exhorted to choose one or the other.
- j) *Eternal Security / Perseverance of the saints.*
  - i) How is it that the Armenian believes that someone who believes, and has everlasting life, may someday not believe and lose that life? If its "everlasting", how can it stop?
  - ii) Calvinists believe that the very term eternal life is a proof of the perseverance doctrine.
  - iii) Again, there seems to be confusion about the actual meaning of having eternal life.

*1 John 5:11-13*

*11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*

NKJV

- (1) The life is in Christ. (eternal life)
  - (a) Those that have Christ also have life, those that don't ...don't
- (2) Suppose choosing to be in Christ, was the same as choosing to be in a place (like Israel)
  - (a) Jesus uses this imagery, except as an attachment to a vine.

*John 15:4-7*

*4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.*

NKJV

- (3) If it is true (as Armenians suggest) that Christ, and therefore eternal life, is there and available to all, but not all come into Him, those that do come into Him also have that eternal life.

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- (a) Those that depart from Christ, no longer have it.
- (b) The life is still there and is no less eternal, the person has simply ceased to participate in the life.
- (c) The Son has not changed, the “branch” has, and is therefore, cut off and burned.
  - (i) The sap is still in the vine, but the branch receives no benefit from it.
- (4) So verses like John 3:16 are saying that whosoever believes (present tense), has the eternal life.
  - (a) Not saying whosoever believed (past tense).
    - (i) Scripture nowhere says that someone who used to believe has it.
- (5) What about verses that suggest that he who believes once shall never die?

*John 6:35*

*35 And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*

*NKJV*

*John 8:51-52*

*51 Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."*

*NKJV*

*John 10:28*

*28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.*

*NKJV*

*John 11:26*

*26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.*

*NKJV*

- (a) It sounds like once you believe, you can't lose that belief and die.
- (b) However, consider a similar verse in the same book of same construction.

*John 3:36*

*36 He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."*

*NKJV*

- (c) If we apply this principle consistently, then an unbeliever can never be a believer.
  - (i) If they won't ever see life because they do not believe, then that person is stuck in a state of non-life forever if we see it this way.
  - (ii) This is obviously something that is talking about somebody's status while they are under a certain condition (believing or unbelieving)
    - 1. As long as you persist in unbelief, you will not see life.
- (d) However, if we see Jesus as saying “whoever is coming, believing, keeps, etc. to Me shall never hunger, thirst, etc.,” then it makes more sense.
  - (i) There is no prediction about whether the condition they are in now will continue.

- (e) Another few verses that are similar:

*John 6:51*

*51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."*

*NKJV*

*John 6:58*

*58 This is the bread which came down from heaven--not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."*

*NKJV*

- (i) The word "eats" in these verses is in the present tense.
  - 1. Whoever is eating, continues eating, will indeed maintain the state of living forever.

(f) Can a sheep of Christ ever cease to be a sheep?

- (i) Nobody can pluck them out of His hand, but sheep can wander off.

*Isa 53:6*

*6 All we like sheep have gone astray;*

*We have turned, every one, to his own way;*

*NKJV*

- (ii) That's the whole nation of Israel.
- (g) Jesus is saying that as long as we are His sheep, we are secure. No external influence can change that. But we can choose to stop being His sheep.
  - (i) It's God's doing, our believing

*1 Peter 1:5*

*5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation*

*NKJV*

- (ii) Faith is not an achievement, work, virtue, or anything meritorious in the least.
  - 1. It's simply trusting God
  - 2. It's submission

k) *What about God "granting repentance" and "appointing" those to eternal life?*

(1) How about Acts 13:48?

*Acts 13:48-49*

*48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.*

*NKJV*

- (a) As stated before, this could also as easily be translated "as many as were pre-disposed to eternal life"
  - (i) That would harmonize better with scripture.
  - (ii) That would also solve the problem of everybody in that town who would ever be saved got saved that day. Doesn't seem like a likely scenario.
    - 1. No need for further evangelism in that town
    - 2. How would Luke know if it's in the secret counsels of God?

(2) What about God granting repentance to people?

*Acts 11:18*

*"Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."*

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NKJV

*2 Tim 2:25*

*25 in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,*

NKJV

(a) Same thing said about faith:

*Phil 1:29-30*

*29 For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,*

NKJV

*Eph 2:8-10*

*8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

NKJV

- (b) For the Ephesians passage, the “that” is not referring to faith.
  - (i) Faith is a feminine word and “it” is in the neuter
  - (ii) Greek grammar requires feminine to be with feminine.
- (c) Salvation is the “gift of God”
  - (i) Nobody has suggested that faith came by works
  - (ii) Many have suggested that salvation has come by works.
  - (iii) Paul is not refuting that faith is not of yourselves, but that salvation is not of yourselves.
- (d) Likewise, God grants repentance in that He grants us the option of repentance unto salvation.
  - (i) We repent, but God decides that repentance is good enough for salvation.
  - (ii) God did many things towards this end.
    1. He made Himself known
    2. He sent Jesus
    3. He sent the gospel
    4. He persuaded me that it was in my best interest.

*Rom 10:14-15*

*14 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? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent?*

NKJV

- (iii) We did nothing, God did all the work and gave us the gift
  1. We only stretch out our hand to receive it.