

**A Teacher's Manual  
For The Study of  
The Doctrines Of Grace**

Based On  
The Westminster Confession of Faith  
The Book, "Unlocking Grace" by Smalling

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Third Millennium Editor's Note: We happily pass this sizable resource on to the Internet community on behalf of Rev. Smalling. We have only edited this course slightly, believing that most people will cut and paste from this complete source of lecture notes, tests, student instructions, and handouts that are presented here, thus muddling up our ordinarily impeccable work of formatting.

## Doctrines of Grace Prospectus

### **The Manual**

This is a teachers' manual designed to help teach the Reformed Doctrines of Grace. It contains lesson plans, group exercises and quizzes...all the nuts and bolts necessary for a teacher, familiar with the material, to teach the course.

It follows the general outline of the book "Unlocking Grace" by Roger Smalling, available from *Deo Volente* Publishers. The course is **NOT** based on this book. *Unlocking Grace* is for homework reading to familiarize the student with the general course content before coming to class. The Bible is the only textbook we use during the classroom sessions.

We recommend also as homework reading selected portions of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, or the *London Baptist Confession of 1689* for homework reading. These may be downloaded from various Internet sites.

Verses quote are from the New King James, since this is the text used in *Unlocking Grace*.

### **The Purpose Of The Course**

The Doctrine of Salvation course is designed to give the student a clear perspective of the Reformed view of salvation, so that he may see it as a defensible system in accord with Scripture and reason. "Grace" will become clearly defined. This in turn should have practical consequences in the student's life as he sees better how his relationship with God is meant to function.

The course will examine eight doctrines in particular.

- Sovereignty of God
- Depravity of Man
- Justification
- Election
- Atonement
- Unity of the Church
- Security of the Believer
- Covenant Relationship with God of the Believer

### **Group Exercises**

These break up the monotony of lecture, allowing the students to interact with the material and with one another. This way, the students often convince themselves before the teacher convinces them. (Note: Some of these group exercises were written by Rev. Emiliano Donoso of Ecuador.)

For teachers involved in training leaders, these exercises give an opportunity to see how people relate to one another in a group setting.

### **Final Exam**

There is a sample Final Exam at the end. We suggest administering an exam of this sort at the end of the course, including informal settings such as Sunday School or home Bible studies. Tell the students that they do not need to turn the exam back in if they don't want to. It is only to help them see weak areas in their understanding. After administering the exam, discuss the answers. Usually it turns out the students enjoy this more than they thought they would. HINT: *Never* tell students in advance that they are going to do this.

### **Overheads**

There is a separate file that goes with this manual for overhead transparency templates.

### **Handouts and Verse Lists**

The links called **handout** are usually files or articles by other authors that explain more fully the point under discussion. Some have been extracted from Internet sites. Copyright laws permit educators to use such material in a limited fashion for educational purposes as long as they are not sold or used for any commercial purpose.

The links called **Verse Lists** go to the full texts of a list of references. This helps the teacher avoid having to look up lists of verses.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you want to print *only* the manual with *none* of the additional material above, then when you must be careful to find the end of the manual and print only those pages. That is why all the overheads, handouts and verse lists are at the end. Use the 'FIND' on your word processor to search for **END OF MANUAL**. That will tell you how many pages you need to print to get the manual only.

For MINTS Students Only

## Lesson

### Orientation to Class

#### Intro to The Doctrines of Grace/Importance of Doctrine in General

I. Welcome Speech: This is the teacher's opportunity to communicate to the students why he is excited about the doctrines of grace. This is the first thing he should communicate rather than class mechanics. Some students will assume that the class will be dry theology or boring philosophy irrelevant to real life. The teacher will have about 10 minutes to convince the students. Otherwise, he may lose them.

A good way to do this is for the teacher to explain what the Doctrines of Grace have meant in his life. This varies from teacher to teacher. As a sample, I'm including the outline of my own speech. Overhead

I am excited about the Doctrines of Grace because:

A. They are the **strongest confirmation of the Christian faith** I've ever encountered. At a certain point I realized that these doctrines, as a system, were not human. No human being would have invented a system so damaging to the pride of man. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that a book like the Bible, composed by many authors in different languages and cultures over a 1600 year period, would accidentally reflect a teaching so philosophically profound, logically consistent and supremely glorifying to God. Yet small children can grasp the essentials of it. such a feat this requires an intellect beyond human.

B. They give a **unity to the Bible** that does not exist in any other theological system.

C. They **accommodate more Biblical data** than any other view.

D. I discovered that the Doctrines of Grace are **provable and defensible** with certainty and nothing else is.

E. I discovered that they **do not contain the logic fallacies** as other views do.

F. They make sense of many passages of **Scripture that are otherwise obscure**.

G. While they do not explain all the mysteries, at least they **place the mysteries where the Bible places them**. This will become clearer when we study the doctrine of Election.

H. They provide the only possible basis for **security of salvation**.

I. They **silence the voice of self-condemnation**.

#### Doctrine, Importance of

Show here the Overhead on the centrality of Doctrine in the life of the believer. Explain why the Apostles consistently placed much emphasis on right doctrine. 1Tim. 4:16;2Tim. 4:3; Titus 1:9;Titus 2:1 Also, use handout, "Why Study Doctrine."

#### II. Class Mechanics

A. **Distribute Prospectus**. This is the boring part of the orientation in which the teacher gives out the syllabus or prospectus to the students. Give time for them to read the prospectus then ask for questions. Important: Clarify your class procedure especially these points:

1. Each class will contain three parts: lecture, group dynamics, discussion. These will vary in length and order according to the desires of the teacher.

2. You prefer that students not interrupt you during the lecture period. There will be time for questions afterwards. Some teachers do not mind this. But I recommend that this policy be followed.

B. Explanations about the nature of the material:

1. Explain that this is **one of the most practical courses they will take**. Reason: An improved perception of God and of ourselves has effects more far-reaching than any ‘how-to’ practicum. After this course, you will never pray quite the same, worship quite the same or think about yourself quite the same, or even evangelize quite the same.

2. Explain that this material will involve **occasional comparisons with other evangelical groups**. Mention politely that some people are so constituted emotionally that they cannot tolerate criticism of other evangelical groups and consider doing so inappropriate. You recognize that are people like this. If the student is one of them, this class is not for them because the nature of the material is such that occasional critiques of other movements are unavoidable. We always make comparisons in the kindest manner possible. But the reality is that we are Presbyterians, not Baptists, Pentecostals, Methodists or Catholics, for good reasons. One of those reasons is that these groups do not do well against us in formal debates. There is a time and place for everything. There are circumstances in which such analysis may not be appropriate. But we do not consider it unloving, unkind or inappropriate to discuss these distinctives in this class, because that is one of many reasons for this class in the first place. By so doing, we are NOT suggesting that these other groups are insincere or evil. Theology teachers consider themselves free to say that others are wrong. We are NOT saying by this that they are BAD.

Depending on the maturity level of the students, you as a teacher may want to clarify why certain kinds of comments are inappropriate for this class. These include comments about how sincere others are, or how sad it is that are divisions in the Body of Christ over doctrine, etc. These speechettes are irrational and irrelevant, wasting valuable class time.

3. We have found, by experience, that some people react negatively to **the word “System.”** This reaction is entirely emotional. They seem to feel that the word “system” means a set of man-invented concepts imposed on the Scripture from outside. Clarify that we believe that God is a God of system. WE, as humans, are systems...just ask your doctor! The earth we live on is a system. The whole universe is a system. It is clear that the Bible itself is organized as a system...Old Testament, New Testament, etc. If God is a God of systems, and he inspires the Bible, we must expect it to contain a system of belief that God wants us to discover. Biblical theology therefore is the attempt to discover what is that system.

It may help to explain that Soteriology is part of a larger study called Systematic Theology, in which the entire purpose is to compare theological systems to see which best fits the Biblical data and why.

III. Group Exercise: See next page for Group Exercise for Lesson One. (If there are more than three groups of 3-4 people, go ahead and give the same exercises to another group.)

IV. Assign Homework: Read Unlocking Grace: Preface to end of Chapter One on Sovereignty of God. Read WCF Chapter 3.

Group Exercise  
For Lesson One, Orientation/ Sovereignty of God

## Lesson

### Sovereignty of God

#### Part one: God's Attributes as the basis of Sovereignty

##### Introduction:

In this introductory lesson you will the definition of the Sovereignty of God and begin to show how the concept of Sovereignty is based on certain of His attributes. First, the interplay between Omnipotence and Omniscience. Then, His immutability.

Definition: The Sovereignty of God states that God is in control of everything that happens and of all that is created without exception.

##### Omniscience and Omnipotence (Knows all..Is able to do all)

As a teacher, you may need to 'prove' that these are indeed divine attributes, depending upon the level of his students. Experience shows that Bible teachers often assume that Christians understand more than they do. Christians often say they understand these attributes and are even able to define them, as in the definition above. But when it comes to questions of God's relationship to mankind, to evil or even to the details of life they soon show that they do not really understand these attributes. This writer has even heard preachers say, "God can do anything...except stop you from sinning if you want to."

You may need to clarify that these definitions are *inclusive*. They include *everything* to do with man, including his thoughts, will and sins.

Remember that many Christians have an anthropomorphic view of God...a big benevolent grandfather image...with a body and beard who surely would never do harm to anybody. Even Christians decades old in the Lord think this way. As a teacher, you must make every effort to uproot this kind of thinking because it will cause resistance to other doctrines further on.

##### Omniscience

God's understand is perfect. Job 37:16.

He knows the 'hearts' of all. Jer.17:10; Ps.139:1-4; 1Sa.16:7; 1John 3:20

He knows all "contingencies", i.e., what would happen in any given circumstance. 1 Sam.23:10-13; 2Kings13:19; ps.81:14, 15; Is.42:7; 48:18

All that people do: Dt.2:7; Job 23:10; 24:23; 31:4; Ps.1:6; 119:168 Verse List

##### Omnipotence

In General: Gen.18:14; Jer.32:27; Job 9:12; Ps.115:3; Jer.32:17; Mt.19:26; Rom.1:20; Eph..1:19; Rev. 1:8; 4:8;11:17;19:6 Verse List

Explain here why these two attributes together prove the Sovereignty of God. If He knows all and can do all, then He is Sovereign.

##### Immutability:

General Verses: Heb.1:11; Heb. 1:12; Heb. 6:17-18 James 1:17 Verse List

Some translations use the term 'unchangeable'. Explain here how God would not be sovereign if He could be changed by anything.

##### Immutability of His Decrees.

This is probably the most important part of the lesson. It is here that you make it clear that reality is the way it is because that is how God decreed it to be. All of reality is the product of his decrees made before the foundation of the world. Psa. 33:11;Is. 46:10; Acts 2:23; Eph. 3:11;Eph. 1:11; Rev.4:11 Verse List

Show that when God decrees something, it is unchangeable, infallible and irresistible. Use the Overhead here to illustrate the difference between his commands, such as the 10 Commandments and his decrees. He allows his commands to be broken. He does not allow his decrees to be broken. Sometimes scripture uses the terms 'counsel' and sometimes, 'purposes' to express this same concept.

#### God Owns Everything

The Earth: Ge.14:19,22; Le.25:23; Ex.9:29 19:5; Deut:14; Jos.3:11,13, 2:11; IChr.29:11; Job 41:11; Ps.24:1, 89:11; Is.54:5; Lu.10:21

Animals: Ps.50:10;

People: Ez.18:4; Ps. 24:1; 22:28; Acts 17:24

Riches: Hab. 2:8 Verse List

#### God's Name is "Sovereign"

In the Old Testament, the term ADONAI is used 429 times. *Adon* means a controller, one who is in charge. *Ai* is an emphatic suffix, implying *really* in control. Or 'My Lord.' In the NKJV it is rendered "Lord GOD". In the NIV, more correctly as, "Sovereign Lord."

Greek= Despotes, from which the term Despot is derived, but without the negative connotations. It means *one who holds complete power or authority over another* ( Lexicon definition from Louw&Nida), correctly translated as "Sovereign Lord" in the NIV. Used in Luke 2:29; Acts 4:24 ; Jude 4; Rev. 6:10

#### IV. Questions and Answers

Group Exercise  
For Lesson One: Orientation/ Sovereignty of God

**Instructions To The Teacher:** Divide the class into three or more groups of no more than 3-4 persons per group. Give them 15 minutes to complete the exercise then call them back to order. While they study, roam around the class and observe the interactions of the students with one another. This will tell you a lot about the students such as potential leaders, etc.

Group One: Look up all the verses below, then answer the question associated. After that, agree on one or two of the verses to represent biblical teaching on regarding the answer.

Question: “Does God own the earth and everything in it? Or, Did God give the earth to Adam and then lose ownership of it when Adam fell?”

Ge.14:19,22; Le.25:23; Ex.9:29; 19:5; Jos.3:13, 2:11; 1Chr.29:11; Job 41:11; Ps.24:1, 89:11; Is.54:5; Lu.10:21

Group Two: Look up all the verses below, then answer the question associated. After that, agree on one or two of the verses as best representative of the biblical teaching on regarding the answer.

Question: “Does God own and control all nations? Or, does He own and control only His people?”

Deut. 7:22 Psa. 33:10; Psa. 47:8; Psa. 82:8; Psa. 113:4; Psa. 98:2; Psa. 102:15; Dan. 4:35; Acts 17:26

Group Three: Look up all the verses below, then answer the question associated. After that, agree on one or two of the verses as best representative of the biblical teaching on regarding the answer.

Question: “What is God’s relationship to humanity in general in terms of authority and control? Does He have authority and control over mankind in general or only over His own people?”

Psa.33:10; Psa.33:11; Is.43:13; Is.45:9; Dan.2:21; Dan.4:17; Dan.4:35; Acts17:26

## Lesson

### Sovereignty of God

#### Part Two: The Doctrine of Means/ Over Evil

Handout: Piper's Article "Why I Do Not Say...". Handout: Smalling's Article, "How Can A Good God..."

The Doctrine Of Means. (God uses *things* to accomplish His will.)

This point is *extremely* important. The students *must* grasp that there is a balance between the fact of God's Sovereignty and the way He out that Sovereign control. This is to avoid the conclusion of fatalism or conceiving of God as a puppet-master.

Establish here in the minds of the students the concept that everything God does, except exceptional creative miracles, He does *indirectly*. Do this by giving in series of examples from Scripture such as:

God opened the Red Sea by a strong east wind that blew all night. Ex.14. God used Joshua to conquer the Promised Land. God used Esther to save the Jews from extinction. God could have sent His written word down directly, but used prophets to write it.

The Doctrine of Means has a name...Providence. Luther said that God is the hidden God who reveals Himself.

In this lesson, you will deal with the difficult and controversial problem of the Sovereignty of God and the problem of evil. Sound philosophical arguments exist to answer the question, "If God is good, how can he permit evil?" You can explain some of these answers at the *end* of the lesson, if your students are advanced enough intellectually to handle them. However, everything you do in this lesson will be aimed toward establishing the *scriptural* answer. This answer is that God uses evil as a tool to produce a greater good.

All of the points of the lesson are the foundation to lead up to that conclusion.

Sovereignty of God Over Evil:

Give out the dynamic on the Sovereignty of God and Evil.

After they answer, explain the conclusion: The Bible implies by numerous examples that God permits evil to produce a greater good. We do not always see the greater good. But we have enough scriptural examples to take the principle by faith at the times and places where we are unable to see the outcome. This is the bible answer to the question of Sovereignty of God and evil.

You may invite the students to download from Smalling's web site the article titled. 'Sovereignty of God and Suffering.' This is for a more pastoral approach to the subject as opposed to theological.

Give out here the excerpts from the WCF, Chapters 3&5 and read the first paragraph of Chapter Three.

Nobody is going to understand this paragraph upon first exposure. You can make a joke about that here if you wish.

Read here Chapter 5 of the WCF statement on Divine Decrees and permission. Emphasize the article 4, which denies a certain kind of ‘*permission*’ of evil. It denies *permission* in the sense of ‘passivity,’ but affirms *permission* in the sense of allowing evil to be done within the limits He prescribes and controls. He is active in the control of those limits and all the circumstances involved including the evil done and the degree of damage. He does not DO the evil, nor grants approve to anyone to do evil. But the evil done is still part of his eternal decrees.

We use this word *permission* to avoid casting pearls before swine. But the term is inadequate because it has the idea that God is passive in some events and active in others. It suggest that sometimes God sort of sits back and waits for things to happen, with His hands off. This contradicts both Scripture and reason. Make sure the students understand that God is never passive in anything.

Show that the idea of *permission*, in the sense of passivity, contradicts Scripture by having the students read the texts one by one.

Job 38:1 (Entire Chapter. Read a few verses);Psa.135:6; Prov.15:3;Dan. 4:34;Matt. 6:26;Matt. 10:30;Acts 17:25-28

Afterwards, summarize it like this: God is active in everything and passive in nothing. He sustains, controls and governs all things. He uses ‘means’, I.e., secondary causes, chains of events, to accomplish his will. This is show by Scripture. See Job 38, Psa.135:6;Prov.15:3;Dan. 4:34;Matt. 6:26;Matt. 10:30; and Acts 17:25-28.

Reason. Here you can illustrate. Example: An automobile accident. Someone would say, “God allowed it to happen,” but had nothing to do with it. Yet we assert that God created the atoms composing the car, the gasoline in the trunk, the condition of the windshield, the body of the driver, the condition of the road via the weather, etc. But apart from that, He just sort of *allowed* it to happen? That’s ridiculous. He was there and He was involved.

Philosophical Arguments. Use these if the students are interested and if they are mentally able to deal with them.

“God-the great Creator of all things- upholds, directs, disposes and governs all creatures, actions and things, from the greatest to the least....” WCF 5-4

## Summary

From these lessons on the Sovereignty of God, we learned that:

God’s Sovereignty is proven by

His attributes of Omniscience, Omnipotence and Immutability,

Verses showing His control over all creation,

Texts using the Greek and Hebrew terms for “Sovereign Lord”

His ownership of everything.

God normally expresses His sovereign control over all things *indirectly*. This is called, ‘The Doctrine of Means.’”

God is even in control over the evil in the world, permitting it to produce a greater good.

Philosophical answers attempting to show that a good God could not exist are insubstantial and self-contradictory.

GROUP DYNAMIC N° 3  
SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD  
ATTACK AND DEFENSE

INSTRUCTIONS: Divide the group into pairs. Below you will find three objections to the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God. One person will read the first objection and the other will defend against the objection. Afterwards the second person will read the second objection and the first will defend against it. In this way, successively, both persons will have had the opportunity to read the objection and defend the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God.

Objections

Using the Bible, each defense should take no more than one minute. Do NOT preach.

Objection 1. God is sovereign over all except the will of man.

Objection 2. If God is absolutely sovereign, then he must be the author of sin.

Objection 3. The Sovereignty of God is a doctrine that denies the free will of man.

Objection 4. God is not in control of evil.

## Lesson

### Historical Background

Handout: Excerpts from the Canons of Orange

Handout: Historical Chronology of Doctrines of Grace

**Theme:** Historical Background of Reformed Theology/ Sovereignty of God over Evil/ Sov.of God continued with the four theological bases reviewed.

**Lecture: Part One.** The historical background of the doctrines of grace.

**Introduction:** Why teach this lesson here?

Few evangelical denominations object to the teachings about the Sovereignty of God. The other doctrines produce the controversy. Inserting the history part here gives the students time to absorb the salient aspects of the lesson on God's Sovereignty.

More importantly, this lesson undermines the notion that these teachings are the inventions of the Reformers. Neither Calvin nor Luther invented them. They were taught in Scripture and taught (albeit imperfectly) by many of the Fathers.

The impression you need to give is that sovereign grace teaching is the truth; it has been and always will be. Every other system less rooted in Scripture and in need of the correctives of Scripture.

Early Church Fathers of the first four centuries taught these doctrines, though with less clarity than we have now. The book Cause Of God and Truth by John Gill was written to prove this. It is a classic of the reformed faith. (Show the students a copy of you have one.)

Augustine and Pelagius. Explain briefly the rise of Pelagius, British monk and how he invented certain doctrines. Then explain how Augustine answered him in a series of treatises on grace. These include "On Grace and Free Will" & "Predestination of the Saints."

After the death of Augustine, the Council of Orange in 529 met to pronounce on the teachings Augustine. The Canons of Orange clearly declare these doctrines.

(The Handout: of excerpts serves to prove to the students that what you are teaching is the historic Christian faith, held by the church universal until the intellectual and spiritual struggles of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. Arminians sometimes spread the idea that our doctrines were invented during the Reformation period. This document disproves this lie and exposes Arminianism as the deviation from the historic Christian faith.)

From Augustine to Calvin: St. Thomas Aquinas; Summa Teologica. Contains elements of these teachings. Theologians during this period were called Augustinians and sometimes Johannians because John is one Bible writers referred to in their teachings.

## John Calvin

Explain influence of Augustine on Calvin. He was converted through the reading of Augustine. Wrote *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the most important reformed work ever written. Martin Luther eventually evolved to a 'Calvinist' position. His work *Bondage Of The Will* shows this.

The Arminian Controversy, Sixteenth Century to Present.

Who was Jacob Arminius

The five points of Arminianism (Remonstrances, so called because Arminius' followers were 'rebuking' the reformers for their 'errors'.) Use Overhead for This/Arminian-Calvinist Comparison Chart.

The five points of Arminianism.

- Freedom of the Will
- Conditional Election
- Universal Atonement
- Resistible Grace
- Loss of the Salvation

The Response of the Synod of Dort, 1618. They debated the issues 15 months and the Arminian position was shown to be unscriptural. The Canons of Dort written afterwards. The Five Points of Calvinism defined as:

- Total Depravity
- Unconditional Election
- Limited Atonement
- Irresistible Grace
- Preservation and Perseverance of the Elect

The Influence of John Wesley

Wesley, the fiery British evangelist of the 18th century, founder of Methodism, boasted that he had never read a theology textbook. It shows in his theology and his revival of Arminianism. From his movement sprang others...the Nazarenes and from them the Pentecostals. The controversy continues to today for the same reason that Wesley revived it: human nature's desire to be self-sufficient and independent rather than trust in God alone.

The Westminster Assembly of the reformed movement of England 1643-1648. This resulted in the Westminster Standards, used today by Presbyterians, and with some revisions, by the major Baptist denominations. These standards are The Westminster Confession, The Larger Catechism and the Shorter Catechism.

## Chronological Outline

[Return]

100-400 A.D. Comments by early church fathers in their 'epistles' expressing these doctrines. Irenaeus, Polycarp, Crisostom, etc. Puritan writer John Gill writes "Cause of God and Truth", 1735 documenting this.

C.400 A.D.- Pelagian-Augustinian controversy. Augustine writes dissertations on grace Against Pelagius and Echiridion manual of doctrine.

529 A.D.- Council of Orange. Augustinian theology vindicated. Strong statements favoring Sovereign Grace.

Dark Ages- 500-1500 A.D. Scholars holding to Doctrines of Grace sometimes called Augustians, or Johannians.

Thomas Aquinas, C.1300, Summa Teologica contains elements of these.

1517- Luther begins Reformation. Erasmus-Luther dispute over free will. His Opus Magnum "The Bondage of the Will" refutes Erasmus.

1559-Calvin publishes "Institutes of the Christian Religion"

1560-1609 James Arminius & the Arminian Controversy

1618- Synod of Dort/ Arminianism refuted/ Five Points of Calvinism established. Canons of Dort.

1643-1648- Westminster Assembly writes Westminster Standards. End of Reformation period.

1689- Baptists adopt Westminster Confession, with changes= London Baptist Confession

1703-1791- John Wesley and the resurgence of Arminianism. Leads to Methodism-Nazarene-Pentecostalism.

1823- Southern Baptist Convention adopts Westminster Confession at Philadelphia, with changes= Philadelphia Confession.

1862-1877 John Darby of the Brethren churches of Scotland invents and propagates dispensationalism in contrast to the Covenantal theology of the reformation.

C.1896- C.I. Scofield, an American Baptist, visits Scotland and picks up dispensationalism. He publishes his famous Scofield Bible that becomes standard orthodoxy in Baptist circles.

1904- Pentecostalism starts in a revival with Nazarenes in Los Angeles, California. The Arminian basis of the Nazarene church, with its roots in Wesleyanism, provide the theology of the new

Pentecostal moment which becomes standard doctrine in the Assemblies of God and other denominations born out the movement.

From this lesson we have learned that:

What are popularly called today 'the Doctrines of Grace' or, 'Reformed Theology' were taken by granted as standard orthodoxy in the early church throughout the first four centuries.

While Rome apostatized from the Christian faith, remnants of these doctrines re-surfaced periodically throughout the dark ages.

A full revival of these doctrines occurred during the reformation period.

Arminianism was invented toward the end of the reformation period by a dutch heretic. It was refuted by Reformed theologians at the Synod of Dort in 1618 and proved to be unscriptural.

Arminianism was revived by the English evangelist John Wesley and thus spread again through Christendom. Arminianism is strong today because it is a religious form of humanism and the western world is experiencing a strong wave of secular humanism.

Arminians do not fare well in debates with Calvinists.

The Doctrines of Grace today are unpopular because we are in the midst of a strong wave of humanism.

## Group Dynamic for Lesson Two On Sovereignty God and Evil

Instructions to the teacher: This dynamic is a bit difficult. The idea is to have the students look at some scriptural incidents in which God was involved with using evil actions in some way, to show that He is sovereign even over evil. The students are required only to answer the questions “What was the evil intended? What way was God involved? What was the result?”

The answers are:

Group One= Betrayal of Christ by Judas./ Betrayal of Christ by the whole gang.

Group Two= Unbelief of the Jews was ordained of God./Accidental homicides are acts of God.

Group Three= Betrayal of Joseph by his brothers./Rebellion of the Canaanites against Israel.

Group Four= Rebellion of the Canaanites./ Evil spirits controlled of God.

Group Five= Incest of Absalom/

**Group One:** The Theme of this study is God’s Sovereignty and the problem of evil. Do NOT attempt to resolve the dilemma in this study. We will discuss the dilemmas in the class afterwards. Your only task is to answer the questions for each text (a verse or series of verses.) The questions are: A. What was the evil done and by whom? B. In what way was God involved? C. What was the end result? (Examination of the context may be necessary for clarification.)

Text: Mt. 21:42; 26:31; Acts 2:23

Text: Jn.19:10-11 Acts 4:27-28

**Group Two:** The Theme of this study is God’s Sovereignty and the problem of evil. Do NOT attempt to resolve the dilemma in this study. We will discuss the dilemmas in the class afterwards. Your only task is to answer the questions for each text (a verse or series of verses.) The questions are: A. What was the evil done and by whom? B. In what way was God involved? C. What was the end result? (Examination of the context may be necessary for clarification.)

Text: Ro.11:7-11

Text: Ex.21:13; Deut.19:5

**Group Three:** The theme of this study is God’s Sovereignty and the problem of evil. Do NOT attempt to resolve the dilemma in this study. We will discuss the dilemmas in the class afterwards. Your only task is to answer the questions for each text (a verse or series of verses.) The questions are: A. What was the evil done and by whom? B. In what way was God involved? C. What was the end result? (Examination of the context may be necessary for clarification.)

Text: Ge.45:5, 8; 50:20

**Group Four:** The theme of this study is God’s Sovereignty and the problem of evil. Do NOT attempt to resolve the dilemma in this study. We will discuss the dilemmas in the class afterwards. Your only task is to answer the questions for each text (a verse or series of verses.) The questions are: A. What was the evil done and by whom? B. In what way was God involved? C. What was the end result? (Examination of the context may be necessary for clarification.)

Text: Josh.11:20; Deut.2:36

Text: IK.22:20-23

**Group Five** The theme of this study is God's Sovereignty and the problem of evil. Do NOT attempt to resolve the dilemma in this study. We will discuss the dilemmas in the class afterwards. Your only task is to answer the questions for each text (a verse or series of verses.) The questions are: A. What was the evil done and by whom? B. In what way was God involved? C. What was the end result? (Examination of the context may be necessary for clarification.)s

Text: 2Sa.12:12,Cf. 2Sa.16:21-22

Text: Ex.21:13; Deut.19:5

## Pre Class Exam//Intro To Sovereignty of God

Name \_\_\_\_\_

As regards God's ownership of the earth:

- \_\_\_\_\_ God owns the entire earth but not the people in it because they have free will.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God owns the entire earth and everything in it, without exception.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God used to own the entire earth but lost ownership when Adam fell into sin.

As regards God's control over the nations:

- \_\_\_\_\_ God controls Christian nations and the devil controls the non-Christian ones.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God controls all nations as political entities, in a general sense, but not necessarily the individuals within them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God controls all nations and everything in them.

As regards God's authority,:

- \_\_\_\_\_ God's authority extends to all those who are in voluntary submission to Him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God's authority extends to mankind in general regardless of whether they are in submission to Him or not.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The question is unanswerable because it is an obscure theological point, unclear in Scripture.

The study of Doctrines in general:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Has some importance but is certainly not central to Christian living.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is central to Christian living.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is primarily for distinguishing ourselves from other Christian groups.

## Lesson

### Total Depravity, Introduction

**Theme:** Definition of Terms/Doctrine of Original Sin

Handout: Chapters 9&10, WCF

Handout: Sproul's *Captive Church*

Total Depravity: Explain what we mean and do not mean. Overhead

We do NOT mean that the unregenerate:

Are bad as they can be or that they would like to be worse. By Total Depravity, we do not mean Utter Depravity, that is, as bad as possible.

People are incapable of appreciating virtue or recognizing virtues when they see them.

Possess no external virtues.

Have a conscience, will or reason that are dysfunctional. They function, though not well.

Incapable of sincere religious devotion.

We DO mean:

All parts of the human being are under the control and dominion of Satan.

The will of the unregenerate is not morally neutral. It is as bound in sin as any other faculty. Likewise, the entire concept of the moral neutrality of the will of anybody, God, man or devil is irrational and unbiblical.

The unregenerate are incapable of willing or doing anything that could attract the grace of God or contribute to their salvation in any way.

None of the works of the unregenerate are, however good, including those in conformity to the law of God, are acceptable to God because they proceed from a corrupted source. All the works of the unregenerate are therefore sinful, however good they may be in and of themselves.

Some clarifications:

Sometimes we use the term Total Inability. In recent years this term has become popular in reformed circles for fear of offending people. But the use of the term *inability* rather than *depravity* insinuates that the person is merely sick morally, rather than dead; sick with sin, but it is not a fatal disease. The unregenerate thinks he has it under control. If *inability*, then Christ becomes a mere assistant to our salvation rather than our very salvation itself. The term *inability* contains nothing in it that explains the *why* of our inability. The idea of *depravity* explains why man is *unable*.

In our humanistic culture, this doctrine is essential for breaking the pride of man.

We are going to take plenty of time for the next month to explore the entire question of free will and depravity because it is the basis of everything else that follows. We will touch on two aspects: The moral condition of man & the concept of free will.

First Basis Of The Reformed Doctrine Of Total Depravity: ORIGINAL SIN

Doctrine Defined: Read This. WCF Ch.9 Art.3 *Man, by his fall into a state of sin, has completely lost all ability to choose any spiritual good that accompanies salvation. Therefore, an*

*unregenerate man, because he is opposed to that good and is dead in sin, is unable by his own strength to convert himself or to prepare himself to be converted.*

We'll now break this down into its component parts and see if it is scripturally justified

Man's Fall Into A State Of Sin: The Doctrine of Original Sin

Have them read Rom5:12-19 and answer the question. What are the four things we inherit from Adam? Give them time to do these, and write these on the board.

**Death v. 12,**

**Judgment v. 16,**

**Condemnation v.16,**

**Trespass of Adam v.20** (This latter is by inference. There would be no need to add the law to increase the trespass in us, if we had not inherited the very sin of Adam.)

Mention that the Arminian view is that man inherits a sinful *nature* only, which is a predisposition to sin. The child is 'innocent' until a supposed 'age of accountability'. This is a theological fiction based on the feeling that it is not *fair* to be guilty of someone else's sin. You /might want to explain here that neither is it *fair* to inherit the free gift of the righteousness of Christ since we are not personally meritorious. The parallelism between Adam's guilt on us and the righteousness of Christ on us is in view here.

The concept of FEDERALISM<sup>1</sup> is taught throughout Scripture and we can deal with that in the next lesson if it is not clear. A clearer way to put this is the idea of *inheritance* through scripture. We are *heirs* of *somebody*. We are all heirs of Adam. But the saved are also heirs of Christ. The latter supersedes the former.

Objections to the Doctrine of Original Sin are invariably based on the assumption of moral neutrality of the will. It is understandable to people that we cannot help inheriting baldness. But it is not acceptable that we inherit sin or its consequences, because we have the feeling that somehow this is not very democratic. This feeling is justified, but it fails to note that the idea of *representation* is very democratic indeed. Adam was our representative, having advantages none since have ever had. His representation of us was therefore very fair indeed.

It is very clear from this text that we are *personally* culpable and morally responsible for the sin of Adam and all its consequences.

There is, however, no scriptural evidence that anybody has ever been sent to hell on this grounds alone although it would be logical to do so. The problem here is one of logic. However personally culpable we may be of the sin of Adam, we are also culpable of our own sins.

Loss Of Spiritual Ability. Start going through the verses below one by one. Take your time and discuss them. Don't worry if you haven't finished by the end of the class.

Eph.4:18; 1Cor.2:14; Rom.8:7; Col.1:21; 2Cor.4:4; Eph.2:1-3;Tit.2:26; Jn.6:44, 65 Verse List

**HOMEWORK: READ CHAPTER 9 & 10 of the WCF**

In this lesson we have learned that:

The unregenerate are enslaved by sin in every part of their being, including their wills.  
The Original Sin of Adam is the initial cause of this enslavement.  
Through Original Sin, we inherit four things: Sin, death, judgment and condemnation.

Fallen man has therefore lost any ability to contribute anything at all toward his salvation, whether good will or good works.

GROUP DYNAMIC N° 4  
TOTAL DEPRAVITY/ PART ONE

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Divide the class into groups of four.
2. Each group should be assigned on the following questions based on the respective biblical texts.
  - a. Question: What rules a man: His heart or his will?  
GROUP I: Ge.6:5;1 K. 3:9; Ps. 141:4; Prov.4:23.  
GROUP II: Prov.16:9; Mt.12:33-37; Mt.15:18-19.
  - b. Question: Is an unsaved man spiritually dead or merely sick?  
GROUP III: Ge.2:17; Rom.5:12;6:23; Rom.7:13; 8:7  
GROUP IV: Rom.3:9-18; 7:24; Eph. 2:1-3
3. Each group ought to chose a spokesperson to explain what these texts mean.

## Pre-Class Quiz

### Historical Background

The controversy between Augustine and Pelagius was disputed at:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ The synod of Dort
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ The Westminster Assembly
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ The Council of Orange.

The Controversy between Arminianism and Calvinism was disputed at:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ The Synod of Dort
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ The Westminster Assembly
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ The Council of Orange.

The controversy between Luther and Erasmus was decided at:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ The Synod of Dort
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ The Westminster Assembly
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ Neither of these.

The one most influential book produced during the Reformation period was:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Bondage of the Will
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ Calvin's Institutes
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ Canons of Dort

The man who taught that Original Sin means only that man follows Adam's bad example was:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Arminius.
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ Pelagius
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ Luther

The first theologian in history to write systematically about grace was:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Calvin
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ Augustine
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ Luther

The Baptists in 1689 & 1823 adopted as their doctrinal standards the essentials of the:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Canons of Dort
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ The Institutes of Calvin
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ The Westminster Confession

The book Freedom of the Will was written by:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Luther
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ Erasmus
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ Calvin

Scholars during the middle ages who held to the Doctrines of Grace in some form were sometimes called:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Pelagians
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ Augustinians
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ Calvins

The resurgence of Arminianism began in the mid 1700's through:

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ Wesley
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ The Southern Baptist Convention
- C. \_\_\_\_\_ Erasmus

## **Total Depravity, Con't.// Free Will and Responsibility**

Handout: Arminian Logic Fallacies

Review: The moral condition of the unregenerate.

Original Sin: Review with the students the four things we inherited from Adam/ Sin, death, judgment and condemnation. Remind them that we sin because we are sinners. We are not sinners because we sin.

The effect of original sin. To what degree is man hindered from contributing to his salvation?

Overhead: Adam fell beyond inability.

Show how the Arminian view asserts that God stopped Adam in the fall before Adam fell so far that he could not contribute to his salvation. The Reformed view shows he fell farther than that...beyond any ability on his part to stop his fall. He can't turn around and reverse his steps. He cannot convert himself.

Every aspect of man is controlled by sin. The sinner neither understands nor seeks after God. (Ro.3:11). His understanding is darkened. (Ef.4:18). He is blind to spiritual things and considers them foolishness. (I Cor.2:14). His mind cannot submit to God, (Ro.8:7) he is God's enemy (Col.1:21) and blinded by Satan, (II Cor.4:4). The thoughts of his heart are evil continually. (Ge.6:5). P.22 Unlocking Grace book.

Dead, not sick. Review Eph. 2:1-3 Use illustration of the dead body and the various preachers. (A dead body is on the floor. In comes a Rabbi and says to it, "Sir, if you will only keep the Ten Commandments you will live." A Catholic priest comes in and sprinkles holy water on him and says, "Sir, if you will follow the sacraments of the church, be baptized and confess your sins, then you will live." The Arminian preacher comes in and says, "Sir, all you have to do is exercise your free will by making a decision for Christ and you will live." Jesus comes in and touches him and says, "Live!", and raises him from the dead.)

### **The Moral State of the Sinner**

Romans 3: 9-20 Exegete this text completely, showing especially that sinners are incapable of any good works that please God. None are righteous, none do any good. Show also that sinners are incapable of seeking God. If they say or appear to be seeking God it is for one of two reasons:

Either they are being drawn by God and are still resisting that drawing.

They are really seeking their own righteousness. Rom. 10:1-4

### **Eph., 2:1-3 Dead in Sin**

Explain here the difference between the Arminian view of man and the Reformed. The Arminian views man as morally sick. The Bible says he is morally dead. The Arminian often uses illustrations about illness and medicine.

A good illustration to use here is of the corpse on the floor. A Rabbi comes in and says, "Keep the 10 commandments and you shall live." A Catholic priest comes in and sprinkles holy

water on him and says, "Submit to the authority of the church and you shall live." The Arminian comes in and says, "You need to exercise your free will and you will live." Then Christ comes in and says, "LIVE!", and he rises and walks.

The Virtues and Works of the Unregenerate/ His good works are sinful.

Read here the WCF Chapter 16 on this point, Art.1&7 Bible texts: Is.64:6; Ro.3:11-12; Rom.14:23; Jn.6:28

What is a good work? God alone defines as a good work Mic. 6:8; Matt.15:9  
Matt.15:9;Rom. 10:2i;Sam. 15:22 Works are not good unless motivated by a desire to please God. 1Cor. 10:31

*Mic. 6:8 He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

*Matt. 15:9 They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."*

*Rom. 10:21 But concerning Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people."*

*1Sam. 15:22 ¶ But Samuel replied: "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams.*

They do their good works with the self still enthroned.

Their works are therefore substitutes for submission rather than signs of submission.

When they appear to pursue righteousness, it is their own self-righteousness they are pursuing. (With some it may be a drawing from God in process. Sometimes it is hard to distinguish the difference.)

If sinners had any motivation for pleasing God, then why do they not do the first thing God commanded...repent.

### The Question Of Free Will And Responsibility

In this section the teacher may begin to deal with the philosophical problems involved in the concept of free will. What is a will? What is it to be free? Start with WCF Ch.9 first.

At this point, use the graphic showing man's assumption about himself... he is between good and evil, and in control of both with the ability to chose what he wants at any time. This is the entire basis of Arminian theology. It is unscriptural and irrational. We've already shown the unscriptural nature of this. The irrationality of it is this:

If the will is neutral, then on the basis of *what* can it make choices? The choices made would be arbitrary. The will makes choices based on *something*. What else than the nature of the creature it is in? The idea that the will must be suspended in some sort of neutral territory is patently absurd.

First Question: Is it the will that determines choices? Answer: NO.

It is the nature of a being that determines its choices. This nature in turn influences desires and perceptions. You may show some verses here on the subject of the heart governing man.

Use here the illustration of the two plates of food. Suppose you were imprisoned and obliged to chose between two plates of food for a hundred days. On your right is a plate with steak and potatoes, fresh vegetables and a nice desert. On the left is monkey brains with garbage

and flies. Which will you chose? If you NEVER choose the left side, it is not because you have no free will, it is because of your internal desires. The will chooses what the person desires. <sup>2</sup>

The Second Question: Responsibility versus Ability.

Lay out the chart on Responsibility - Inability from Unlocking Grace. Go through the verses one by one and show that there is no *necessary* connection between the responsibility to do a thing and the ability to do it.

Bring out here Rom.3:20...the real purpose of the Law was to expose man's moral inability. God required the Jews to keep it. Did He imagine that they would? No. He gave it for two reasons...first, because it is right. It reflects His character and man's *lack* thereof.

IMPORTANT: Right here is where you stop and expose the classical Arminian logic fallacy upon which the *entire* Arminian structure is based...the assumption that a command to do a thing proves freedom of the will.

Here, I like to use Luther's statement from Bondage of the Will. He said to Erasmus that after Erasmus had finished with all his commands and exhortations from the Old Testament to prove free will, then Luther would write Ro 3:20 over the top of it. If the Law was therefore given to expose sin, why would anybody want to use the Law to prove free will?! Luther went on to say to Erasmus, Go ahead, bring out all the commands and exhortations you want. Every time you do, you prove my point. The whole purpose of the Law is to prove that the unregenerate have no such ability as Arminians say they have.

God commands man to vindicate His righteousness....NOT OURS! ...and to show what HE can do, not what WE can do.

HOMEWORK: READ CHAPTER 9 & 10 of the WCF

From this lesson we have learned that:

Fallen man is morally dead, not just morally sick. He contributes nothing to his salvation.

God does not recognize any work as good unless it fulfills two requirements: It is something He has commanded; it proceeds from a pure heart and pure motive.

No unregenerate person has ever done a good work or ever could. The good works of sinners are sins because they proceed from a rebellious heart that insists on maintain its own autonomy rather than repentance and conversion.

Man is responsible for his sinful state and sinful actions even though he is unable to do otherwise.

God commands mankind to obey his moral Law to vindicate HIS righteousness, not because man is able to comply.

## **Group Dynamic: Doctrine of Providence**

**Instructions to the Teacher:** This exercise serves to introduce the concept of Providence. The goal is to refute and undermine the concept that God is passive in some things, such as comments that “God *allowed* this to happen,” in the sense of complete passivity. After the students have done the exercises and discussed the issues, read WCF Chapter 5, Art.1-4, modern version and explain what is meant by ‘not a *bare* permission’. You may also the illogic of the ‘passive’ position by showing that if everything is a product of divine decrees made before the foundation of the world, then how could there be such a thing as a ‘passive’ degree? You may also want to exegete Heb.11:3 and point out that ‘aionos’, ‘ages’ means that history has turned out the way it has because God’s ‘word’ has so decreed that it should. This logically must include all events, both significant and insignificant.

**Group One:** In Job 7:20, and other verses, Job complains to God about how he is being treated. Skim through Chapter 38 and answer the question: “What does God say in response to Job’s complaint?”

**Group Two:** Compare Job 2:3-7 with Job 42:11 and come to a conclusion as to what who was responsible for what happened to Job. Who or what were the means involved?

**Group Three:** Two views of God’s Providence exist in Christendom today. One says that God is present and active in some things but not in others. The other says that God is present and active in everything, without exception. Which of these views do the following verses seem to support? Pick out two representative verses. Psa.135:6; Dan.4:34-35; Matt. 6:26; Matt.10:30; Acts 17:25-28

Quotes from Chapter 5 of WCF on Providence, Modern Version.  
Hand this out to the students *after* they have completed the group exercise above.

Chapter 5  
Providence

1. God-the great Creator of all things-upholds, directs, disposes, and governs all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least. He exercises this most wise and holy providence according to his infallible foreknowledge and the free and unchangeable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.
2. Although-in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first Cause-all things come to pass unchangeably and infallibly; yet, by the same providence, he orders them to occur according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.
3. In his ordinary providence, God makes use of means, yet he is free to work without, above, and against them as he pleases.
4. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God manifest themselves so completely in his providence that it extends even to the first fall and all other sins of angels and men-not by a bare permission, but by a permission which has joined with it most wise and powerful limiting, and otherwise ordering and governing of them in a varied administration, for his own holy purposes. However, the sinfulness comes from the creatures alone and not from God, who, because he is most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin.

**Review questions**  
**These can be given orally if the class is informal in nature.**

Explain one of the theological basis for believing that God is sovereign.

*Omniscience/omnipotence- immutability- His name- Reality Is A Product Of God's Will  
God Owns Everything*

What is meant by the Biblical term Immutability of His counsel, found in Hebrews 6? *That God's will cannot be thwarted when He determines to accomplish something.*

What is the difference between God's will of Purpose and will of command?

*The first is immutable and irresistible. The second refers to commands to men, such as the 10 commandments, which he allows to be broken.*

In what way does God's two attributes of omniscience and omnipotence prove his sovereignty? If an event were not part of His decrees, then either he did not know about it or was unable to prevent it. Hence, either not omniscient or not omnipotent.

What is the Doctrine of Means? *God normally expresses his Sovereign control through circumstances and people rather than direct intervention (miracles)*

Did God lose control and authority over the earth when Adam fell? *NO. Numerous texts show He still owns and controls everything.*

What does the WCF mean when it says that God's providence extends to the sin of Adam and all other sins of angels and men, NOT by a bare permission...? *God controls all the circumstances surrounding any given act, thus decreeing the limits thereof, yet is not the author of the sin.*

Who was the first Christian theologian to write systematically about the Doctrines of Grace.

*Augustine*

Who was the Reformer who wrote the first protestant systematic theology textbook? What was the name of the book?

*Calvin/ The institutes.*

Who wrote Bondage of the Will and why?

*Luther, in response to Erasmus' Freedom of the Will.*

Who won the argument? *Luther*

Who was Arminius? *The sixteenth century dutch heretic that invented a theological system contrary to the teachings of the reformers.*

What was the Synod of Dort?

Who was the Arminian English evangelist who revived Arminianism? *Wesley*

What happened at the Westminster Assembly? *The writing of the Westminster standards.*

What are the five points of Calvinism? *Total depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace and Preservation of the Elect.*

## Lesson

### Total depravity, cont/ Faith As A Gift/

#### Review

Original Sin shows us we sin because we are sinners' not, 'we are sinners because we sin.'

Review thoroughly Jn.6:44. Ask the students to deduce how many doctrines are found, implied or can be deduced from this verse.

Some review questions to ask the students verbally.

How does God regard the good works of the unregenerate? Answer: He does not regard them at all because they are corrupted with impure motives.

What are the elements of a good work according to Scripture?

Only what God commands to be done.

Done with the right motive, to demonstrate submission to and obedience to God.

Name a key text that describes man's spiritual death. Eph.2

What are the four things we inherit from Adam? Sin, death, judgment and condemnation.

Where is this found? Rom.5

Are the unregenerate able to seek God without His drawing them? No

Where is the scriptural proof of this? Rom. 3

#### What Governs a Man?

In this part you will show that man is governed by his nature not his will. The will merely reflects the desires of the heart. You can begin to show the key Arminian logic fallacies here.

Show that our desires influence our decisions. The nature of a creature determines what he desires. His desires determines his choices. See Mt. 12:33-37; Mt.15:18-19 & Prov.4:23.

Note especially Mt.12:33-37. This entire discourse is designed to show that the internal nature of a person governs his faculty of speech. The tree is the heart and the fruit is what comes out of the mouth. The 'heart' governs our conversation. We are not made evil by what we say. We say evil because we ARE evil, or good because we ARE good.

Example: We have presented a plate of fine cuisine and a plate of garbage. We have no desire for the garbage and therefore do not choose it. This is not a denial of the functioning of the will. If we were flies, we might choose the garbage because the stronger odor would be attractive to us.

Example: The Coyote is an animal that cannot be domesticated. By nature it will always be wild, even if raised by humans. If you offered it a home and it refuses, does this mean it has no free will?

Example: A duck chooses between a sand pile and a pond. Why? That is its nature.

Answer: No, its will is not free in the sense that it is able to choose to be domesticated. Yes, its will is free in the sense that the choice is a reflection of its true nature.

Discuss Arminian Logic Fallacies Here. Use Overhead.

Saving Faith Is A Gift Of Grace

Show here the chart or Overhead from Unlocking Grace on Cause and Effect regarding faith. Deal with the key texts that teach that Faith is a gift of grace. Act 13:48; 18:27; Eph.2:8; Phil. 1:29; Jn.6:65; 1Ti.1:14

(Note: on Acts 13:48 you can quote from the Translator's Handbook, used by Wycliffe translators around the world.)

From A TRANSLATOR'S HANDBOOK on THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES by BARCLAY M. NEWMAN and EUGENE A. NIDA, Copyright 1972 by the United Bible Societies: Acts 13.48

*"Those who had been chosen for eternal life* is a phrase which occurs frequently in rabbinic literature. The meaning is clearly that those whom God had chosen became believers, and the translator must not attempt to weaken this meaning.

*Chosen for eternal life* may thus be rendered as "whom God had selected in order that they would have eternal life."

Ordo Salutis: Which Comes First, Faith Or Regeneration?

God's will is active in regeneration. Man's will is passive. Jn.1:13; James 1:18. This point is usually a surprise to the student because of the heavy influence of Arminian theology today which asserts that regeneration is an activity of the will of man. Show from these verse that it is God's will which dominates the scene. These verses do NOT teach that God is merely willing to regenerate people based on a response from man. His will is the active cause of regeneration. Therefore it is God that takes the initiative and man is the sinner, dead in his sins. Jn.3:3; Jer.24:7; Ez.16:62,63; James 1:18

Correct order: Election, Effectual Call, Regeneration, Faith, Justification, Sanctification, Glorification. Jn.3:3; Jer. 24:7; Ez/16:62-63; Rom.8:30

The Arminian considers faith to come first and ignores election and effectual call altogether.

Effectual Call

Introduce the subject by a review of Jn.6:44, showing that there must exist a drawing to Christ that is effectual versus one that is not.

Use the group exercise that follows here. Give a copy of all of the exercises to each person so all will have the verses. Have each group read a representative verse of their answers and write the answers on the board.

From this lesson we have learned:

Man is governed by his heart, not his will.

A command or exhortation to obedience does not prove the ability to comply.

God's commands and exhortations exist to prove man's enslavement to sin, not to prove man's free will.

Regeneration precedes faith, not vice versa.

God calls his elect people to himself throughout the gospel in an irresistible manner. This is the 'Effectual Call'.

## Group Exercise for Effectual Call

### Group One

On what is the Effectual Call based? Ro.8:30; Ro.9:11; 2Ti.1:9

How can it be revoked? Ro.11.29; Jn.6:37 Cf. 44, 65; Rev.19:9

What is the difference between Effectual Call and General Call? ICo.1:23-24; Ro.9:24

### Group Two

What is the result of the Effectual Call? Jn.6:44, 65

Who decides who receives it? I Co.1:26-29

What is guaranteed based on it? 1Th. 5:23-25; 2Th.2:13-14; Jude 1

What other event in the life of the believer is a result of Effectual Call? Ro.8:30

### Group Three

What promise is for the called only? Heb.9:15; ITi.6:12; 2Th.2:13-14; Rev.19:9

What is another promise for the called? Jude 1; I Co.1:8-9

What is the evidence of it in the life of the believer? Eph.4:1&4; IPe.1:15;2Pe.1:10

What else accompanies the Effectual Call? IPe.2:21; 3:9; 5:10

## Answers For The Teacher For Group Exercise

### **Effectual Call**

**Based On Predestination:** Ro.8:30; Ro.9:11; 2Ti.1:9

**Irrevocable:** Ro.11.29; Jn.6:37 Cf. 44, 65; Rev.19:9

**Difference Between Effectual Call And General Call:** ICo.1:23-24; Ro.9:24

**Result of Effectual Call is salvation.** Jn.6:44, 65

**God Decides Who Receives It:** I Co.1:26-29

**Sanctification Guaranteed Based On It:** 1Th. 5:23-25; 2Th.2:13-14; Jude 1

**Basis Of Justification:** Ro.8:30

**Eternal Life Is For The Called Only:** Heb.9:15; ITi.6:12; 2Th.2:13-14; Rev.19:9

**Basis Of Preservation:** Jude 1; I Co.1:8-9

**Evidence Of Reality Of It Is Holy Living:** Eph.4:1&4; IPe.1:15; 2Pe.1:10

**Suffering For Christ Is Part Of The Effectual Call:** IPe.2:21; 3:9; 5:10

## Lesson

### Justification

Handout: What Is Sanctification? (Give this out as homework reading.)

### Introduction

The key focus of scripture is the question, “How can I be right with God?” Not, “How can I be prosperous?” Or, “How can I be happy?” These things are assumed to be by products of Justification.

Definition: Justification means ‘declare righteous’, or ‘vindicate’. It does NOT mean ‘be MADE righteous.’ (Being MADE righteous is the process of sanctification.) We know this because of the word used in greek, ‘DIKAIIO’. A good example of the difference here is Rom. 3:4. God is ‘justified’, i.e. Vindicated in His statements. God is not MADE righteous here. He is declared to be so.

### **Principle One: Justification is based on the of Covenant and is inseparable from it.**

Justification is always associated in Scripture with the idea of Covenant and the Covenant of Abraham in particular. Being right with God is never disassociated from Covenant.

We don’t have time to go into Covenant thoroughly. We will do that in the last chapter which is on that subject. For now, Covenant means... “An agreement initiated by God in which He promises to bless those who trust in him.”

The Covenant of Abraham, which is called in theology the Covenant of Grace, contained a condition to be fulfilled by man. What is that condition according to Ge.17:1-2 (Answer: Perfection. Hebrew: TEMIM = perfect, blameless,)

Question: Did Abraham fulfill this condition? (Answer: No. He goofed. Lied about being married to Sarah. He was a sinner like us all.)

Problem: Nobody has ever fulfilled this condition. The Law was given to prove that man cannot fulfill the terms of the covenant because of moral weakness. *Rom. 5:20 The law was added so that the trespass might increase.*

Review of principle number one: Justification is based on the idea of Covenant relationship. The condition required is perfection.

### **Principle Two: God requires the righteousness of the Law to be fulfilled in the believer.**

Rom. 8:4; 2:13

A good way to introduce this is to ask the students, “Does God require the righteousness of the Law to be fulfilled in the believer?” Some will assume ‘no.’ The text, of course, says ‘yes’.

Here, the teacher can take a brief detour and explain the problem of dispensationalism. The dispensationalist believes in 7 ‘dispensations’ or epochs of history in which God tries out different means of salvation, each progressively less demanding, until nothing is left but to save man by his faith.

### **A good illustration is a track and field coach trying to teach kids to jump hurdles.**

The kids keep falling over them, so the coach keeps lowering them. Finally he lowers them down to an inch and says, “All you have to do is just step over this and we will count that as having

jumped the hurdle.” This is the dispensationalist idea of how we got to the concept of grace. God kept lowering his standards because man kept failing and finally He just opted for faith alone, because after all, this is something that man can do out of his own free will (supposedly).

This idea has several defects: One, it assumes that God would lower his standards. God could never lower his standards because that would be unholy. No evidence in Scripture indicates that He has ever done that. Second, it assumes that man is able to generate saving faith out of his own free will. This is an Arminian idea which contradicts plain scriptural teachings that saving faith is work of grace.

**Principle Three: Christ is our substitute under the Law** both in His life and in His death.  
Gal.4:4-5

He was born under the law to keep the law in our place.

He died under the Law to fulfill its judicial requirements.

**Principle Four: Imputation of the righteousness of Christ through faith.** Rom. 4.

The teacher can go through this chapter with the students, pointing out the texts that use the concept of imputation. In the NIV, the word used is ‘credited’. This is an adequate translation of LOGIZOMAI, the basic meaning of which is ‘to keep a record of something.’

Back to the illustration of the hurdles: In this case, God has not lowered the hurdles at all. Instead, Christ runs the hurdles for us as our substitute. His victory is, credited to us.

This is a legal standing, not an experiential standing. There is no discussion in the chapter on whether or not Abraham lived up to it or not. This is irrelevant. This is why it is important to understand that Justification does not mean ‘MADE’ righteous, but ‘declared’ righteous.

**Principle Five: Justification is permanent.**

Here the teacher needs to emphasize that Justification is not a process. It is a once and for all event. Rom.8:30 says so. All those who are called, are justified. All the justified are glorified.

It is a legal declaration.

The righteousness of Christ never changes.

There is no doctrine of de-Justification in the Bible. No record of anyone being justified who then was declared unjustified. Nor is there any statement implying that this is possible.

Conclusions:

From this lesson, we have learned:

Justification means ‘*declared* to be righteous’, not *made* righteous.’

Justification is based on the idea of “Covenant” and is inseparable from it.

God requires the righteousness of the Law to be fulfilled in the believer.

Christ is our substitute under the Law.

The righteous requirement of the Law is imputed to us by faith.

Justification is a once-and-for-all decree of God. It is not a process.

Justification is permanent and absolute.



## Lesson Predestination

Handout: Smalling's Paper on Foreknowledge.

### Introduction

#### Definition of Terms

Decree: A decision of God made in eternity to cause something to happen. Remind the students that the divine decrees are immutable.

Predestination: To destine beforehand. PROORIZO, Greek means '*set the limits beforehand*'. This refers principally to the arrangement of time and circumstances to effect the divine decree.

Election: The divine choice as to who is the object of his saving grace.

The presentation of this subject will follow four parts:

First, the importance of the doctrine.

It illustrates the meaning of the term 'grace' as a sovereign faculty in God. Without it, someone could think that grace is dependent on a condition or factor in man. This, of course, is the Arminian view but predestination refutes this.

It is a powerful comfort and security for the believer. Our salvation is not rooted in our 'decision' for Christ. It is rooted in a decree of God made before time. Our reference point in salvation is outside of the time and space continuum in which we live.

Second, exegesis of the key texts Romans 9, Ephesians 1 and parts of John which use the phrase, "Those whom the Father has given me."

Third, refutation of the Arminian concept of foreknowledge with the key texts they use: Rom. 8:29, 1Pet.1:2 Argument from Sanctification.

### Romans 9: Exegesis

Since the students will have read the chapter in Unlocking Grace on Election, they will be familiar with the basic paradox proofs. Go over them anyway because they need to be rooted in their minds. Show that these two Arminian arguments are, in fact, "Paradox Proofs": Their intent is to refute us but they backfire. They constitute in fact the strongest possible evidence for Reformed theology.

Argument from Injustice. "God would not be so unjust as to chose some and not others."

The key text is v.19 One of you will say to me: *Rom. 9:20 But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'"*Show here that Paul anticipates the argument and rejects it as carnal and presumptuous. It is an arrogant attack on God's right to do as pleases with His own creation. This alone proves the intent of Paul's doctrine. The Biblical answer to the Arminian objection is a rebuke.

Show that this is really merit-thinking in disguise. It assumes that God owes something to mankind. The only thing he 'owes', from a purely judicial standpoint, is condemnation. If God had left us in condemnation, he would have committed no injustice.

Argument from Foreknowledge.

NOTE: At the end of this lesson are two documents to give the students. (Give out here Smalling's paper on Foreknowledge. This should help the students see the superficiality of Arminian thinking at this point.

Show how this contradicts V.16 This verse is the conclusion to a long illustration about Jacob and Esau. Conclusion is that Election has no basis at all in man. Both our will and our works are excluded as factors in God's decree of Election. This is why Paul makes the point that God made His choice before any works had been done by them. (Note: the NIV is insipid here.) A literal translation: *So then, it is not of the one who wills nor of the one who runs, but of the God who shows mercy.* Any argument therefore that bases election on foreknowledge, contradicts this verse and the illustration involved. The whole intent of the illustration Jacob and Esau is to show that their will and works are irrelevant to the question of election.

Show that there is nothing good in man to foresee.

We already saw this under the doctrine of total depravity and bondage of will. When asked 'what is it that God foresaw in man', some answer, "Faith". Remind the students that faith is based on election and on grace. Acts 18:27;13:47;Jn.6:65 Foreseen works don't count either because otherwise we would have works-righteousness salvation.

Argument on the grounds of 'nations.'

Note: Arminians often try to defend against the doctrine of Election by saying that Paul is referring to *nations* not *individuals*, in this chapter. Jacob represents Israel and Esau represents gentile nations. To refute this twisted interpretation:

A. Ask the Arminian what is meant by v.6-8 and v.24. These obviously clarify that the election of nations is used to illustrate the election of individuals.

B. Ask the Arminian what is a nation composed of? It is composed of individuals. Does the election of nations have any effect at all on the people living there?

Use This outline if useful:

### **Foreknowledge Means Foreordained**

Declarative, Not Predictive: Pr.16:33; Is.46:10; Acts 2:23&4:27-28; Ro.11:36&13:1; Eph.1:11; Heb.6:17,11:3

Example Of Christ: Acts 2:23; 4:27-28;1Pe.1:20;2:4Cf2:9

No Consistent Relationship Between Foreknowledge And Predestination:

Israel Chosen Despite Divine Foreknowledge Of Rebellion: Ro.10:20-11:2

Some Rejected Despite Foreknowledge Of Potential Obedience: Mt.11:21-23;

ICo.2:7-8; Ez.3:6; Is.28:9-13

Nothing Positive In Man To Foreknow. Faith Itself Is A Gift. Acts 13:48; 18:27; Jn.6:65; Ro.3:9-11 Verse List

Arminians differ on what virtue is foreseen, and use certain verses as support. the refutation of these interpretations is the same in each case. The interpretation involves circular reasoning. Examples:

Foreseen Faith. "To each is given faith." Romans 12:3. Here, Arminians claim that every human being has a measure of faith. the problem with man is that he puts faith in the wrong things, such as himself or his money, rather than in Christ. The Gospel is designed to do no more than convince man to put in Christ the faith he already. The difficulty: The context refers to

spiritual gifts exercised by Christians, not to saving faith. Further, other Bible texts show that saving faith is a gift of God's grace and is found in no one without His intervention. (See previous texts on Faith A Gift.)

Foreseen As Being In Christ: Eph.1:4 "*For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.*" The Arminian argues here that God chooses people because he foresees beforehand who is going to be 'in Christ'. Two problems present themselves here. First, who puts us in Christ? It is God himself who does this. Second, it makes the phrase, "*to be holy and blameless*" equivalent to "*FORESEEN to be holy and blameless*". The Arminian interpretation, to be consistent, would imply that God foresaw that we would be holy and blameless and this is why He chose to put us in Christ. This amounts to a works-righteousness concept. The grammar of the text is clear: Being in Christ results in being holy and blameless. The Arminian interpretation reverses the grammatical cause and effect relationships in the text.

Foreseen Sanctification: 1Thess.2:13 - "*God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.*" The Arminian argument here fails for two reasons: First, who does the sanctifying and how? God the Father Himself is the one doing the sanctifying. *1Thess.5:23*: God himself does the sanctifying. Thus, the Arminian interpretation again fails on the grounds of circular reasoning.

Review the two 'proof texts' Arminians use to try to prove their foreknowledge doctrine.

These are Rom.8:29 and 1Pet.1.2. Refer to those sections in *Unlocking Grace* which refute these interpretations.

Remind them that Ephesians One teaches that grace is a mystery. Any doctrine that takes the mystery out of grace and explains it is *ipso facto* false.

At this point you may reiterate the concept of 'Where is the mystery?' In any theological system there are points at which we come to a point in which we must say, "I don't know." Both Calvinist and Arminians have such a point.

The Arminian point of mystery is, "Why did God, who loves everybody and wants everybody to be saved and foreknows who is going to chose Him, create mankind knowing that the majority would not be saved?" The Arminian cannot escape this question if he is going to insist on his own doctrine of election by foreknowledge.

The Arminian system answers the question of why some are elect and some are not.

But it does not explain why God created people whom he foreknew would reject him.

Did not Jesus Himself say that it would have better for such a person not to have been born?

The Calvinist point of mystery is, 'Knowing that God is not arbitrary in anything He does, on what basis then did He chose some and not others?'

Calvinists adequately answer the question as to God created some knowing that they would be lost. (Revelation of His attributes.) But it does not answer the question of how God could be just in condemning people whom He created for that purpose.

Calvinism does not explain how election could NOT be arbitrary.

The choice as to which system is the correct one does not depend on the ability to resolve the mystery. It depends rather on discerning where the Bible acknowledges the mystery to be. The

question as to where the Bible puts the mystery is found in Romans 9:19-26. This settles the matter nicely.

Dealing with Humanism: The illustration of the Potter.

This is a great place to undermine the religious humanist assumption that the welfare of man is God's highest priority. Show here that the purpose of man is to glorify God's attributes; either the attribute of mercy, or of judgment. You could mention that Shakespeare was wrong when he said that all the world is a stage and we are but players. The world is a stage, indeed. But God is the player and mankind is merely the backdrop.

The Love of God

Deal with the delicate issue of who God loves at the point where the students ask about it. This will probably occur during the exegesis of Romans 9 when you get to V.13. The teacher need not take a definitive position on this if he does not wish to. After all, no Reformed confession has ever dealt with the question. Use the circle diagrams to show the three positions held in Christendom.

God loves everybody equally. (This is the Arminian/Baptist view. Few Reformed theologians hold to this because of Ro.9:13.) Those holding this view use Jn.3:16 as support, interpreting the term 'world' to mean all mankind without exception of person, i.e., every human being who ever lived.

God loves everybody but not equally. (He loves all mankind in His capacity as Creator. But has a special love for his elect people. This view seems to be the one held by most Reformed theologians today.) Those who hold this use texts dealing with God's common grace on mankind as a whole, such as *Acts 14:17* "Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." And, *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. These point out that the Greek word 'hate' is sometimes a comparative, meaning 'love less', as in loving Jesus more than father and mother.

God loves the Elect and hates the Reprobate. (The view held by Calvin.) Those holding this view cite Ro.9:13 and argue that the meaning of 'hate' in this text is decided by God's annihilation of Esau and his descendants. CF Mal. 1:3

## GROUP DYNAMIC N° 8

### OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION/PARTE 2

INSTRUCTIONS: Divide the class into groups of four. Each group should do one of the dynamics below. Practice defending our position against the objections below. Each group may take a section.

GROUP I: Some opponents of Election use 2Pet.3:9 “*not willing that any should perish*”, to try to prove that there is no doctrine of Election. Refute this interpretation. Refer to Col3:12

GROUP II: Some opponents of Election use 1Tim.2:4 “who wishes all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” Show why the context refutes this interpretation. Use also Tit.2:11 & 1 Tim.2:7.

GROUP III: Some opponents of Election say, “If Election is true, why evangelize?”

GROUP IV: Some opponents of Election say, “If Election is true, why pray to God to save souls?” Answer this objection.

3. A spokesperson for the group should present a one minute conclusion before the class.

## Lesson Reprobation

Introduction: Review the key points on Election before proceeding with Reprobation. It is essential to do this because if election is not firmly rooted, then students will misunderstand reprobation.

Key point: **Reprobation is not the exact opposite of Election.**

The students need to see that Reprobation does not function the same way as does Election. The differences are:

**Mankind is already condemned** in sin and therefore God needs to do nothing at all for them to be condemned.

**God is entirely active in Election** because there are many things He must do to bring an Elect person to Himself. In Reprobation, he need not do anything at all. God is therefore active in Election but *may* be passive in Reprobation.

**The same means** that God uses to save the elect is also the means He uses to confirm the justice of His decree of Reprobation.

**The nature of the divine decree is different.** Both Election and Reprobation are products of divine decrees made in eternity, just like everything else. But the nature of the two decrees is different. In Election, God decrees that certain chosen people should be drawn to Christ via His irresistible grace. In Reprobation, however, He decrees that sinners should be condemned for their sins. There is a radical difference that is a paradox. The Elect received the last thing they wanted...union with Christ; and they are grateful forever. The Reprobate receives the one thing he most deeply desires...independence from God; and will regret it forever.

As C.S. Lewis put it in "The Problem Of Pain", condemned people said to God, 'Leave me alone' and He answered their prayer.

### Review Of Romans 9.

Example of Pharaoh: Although you dealt with Election in the previous lesson using Romans 9, go over it again, this time pointing out Pharaoh and the repeated text, *Rom. 9:18 Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.*

Potter and the clay. Show here that the verbs 'prepared' in both cases is active.

The Means Of Reprobation: Righteousness itself, and the gospel.

The gospel is like the sun. Just as same sun can melt a block of ice, so it can harden clay. Thus, the Westminster Standards state that, "*As for those wicked and ungodly man whom God, as a righteous judge, blinds and hardens because of their past sins, God withholds his grace, by which their minds might have been enlightened and their hearts and affected. He also sometimes takes away the gifts which they had, and exposes them to such things as their corrupt nature makes into occasions for sinning. Moreover, he gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations of the world, and the power of Satan, by which they hardened themselves even under the same means which God uses to soften others.*" Chapter 5, Art.7

**Nobody Receives Injustice.** The Elect receive mercy. The Reprobate receive justice.

Sometimes people ask Calvinists, “Do you believe in double predestination?” It is always wise to ask them what they mean by this. Sometimes they mean that God arbitrarily chooses some to be condemned, without regard to their sins. Others think that Election and Reprobation proceed as equal and opposites. A good way to answer the question is to say, “I believe God chooses some condemned sinners to be objects of His grace. Others, he leaves in the sinful condition that they themselves have chosen and like.” Usually this kind of answer is satisfactory.

**Dealing with Humanism:** The illustration of the Potter.

This is a great place to undermine the religious humanist assumption that the welfare of man is God’s highest priority. Show here that the purpose of man is to glorify God’s attributes; either the attribute of mercy, or of judgment. You could mention that Shakespeare was wrong when he said that all the world is a stage and we are but players. The world is a stage, indeed. But God is the player and mankind is merely the backdrop. It is a story about His glory, not ours.

Hard Ball Vs Soft Ball: Two views of Reprobation

The traditional Calvinist view of Reprobation states that God is just as active in Reprobation as He is in Election. He does things actively to ensure that His decree of Reprobation will be carried out.

The Presbyterian (puritan) view is the soft ball version. God is passive in Reprobation. He simply ‘withholds’ His grace and ‘passes by’ the Reprobate. This view is reflected in *Westminster Confession Chapters 3, article 7*

*“The rest of mankind God was pleased-according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extends or withholds mercy as he pleases, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by; and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.”*

**Election And Reprobation Are Not Arbitrary.** See **disclaimers of Dort.** Below is a composite of sentence portions that illustrate the rebuke of the commissioners of Dort against the Arminian slander that the doctrines of Election and Reprobation are ‘arbitrary’.

It is almost impossible to discuss these subjects with any Arminian without them using this word ‘arbitrary’ to describe Reformed theology. Yet the disclaimer below has existed since 1618 and it is therefore pure ignorance to repeat it. Election and Reprobation are a mystery. This alone does not make it arbitrary.

**Disclaimer: Canons of Dort, 1618**

*“Whence, it clearly appears that some ... have violated all truth, equity, and charity, in wishing to persuade the public ... that the doctrine of the Reformed churches concerning Predestination.... teaches that God, by a mere arbitrary act of his will, without the least respect or view to any sin, has predestined it the greatest part of the world to eternal damnation, and has created them out for this very purpose;”*

Summary: There is never any other cause of salvation than the Sovereign Grace of God. There is never any other cause of condemnation than the sinfulness of man.

**General Texts On Reprobation:** Deut.2:30; Ps.5:5; Is.63:17; Pr.16:4; Mt.11:25-26; 13:11; Jn.10:26;12:37; Ro.9:11-14; 17-22; 11:7; I Pe.2:8; 2; Pe.2:12 Verse List

## Lesson Plan

### Limited Atonement

**Introduction:** Mention that this doctrine is sometimes called “Particular Redemption” or “Particular Atonement” in contrast to its opposite, “Universal Atonement.”

#### Sufficiency Vs Intent

Some students are shocked for the first time when they hear the Reformed view of LA. They assume we are saying that the Cross was insufficient to save all mankind or that there was no ‘provision’ for anyone else but the Elect. While some Calvinists hold to this, the Presbyterian position is generally that the Cross would have been enough to save a galaxy full of sinners if that had been the intent of the Father. To assuage the blow, it is a good idea to broach the subject by stating that we, like all Christians, believe that the Cross is sufficient to save all of mankind.

In fact, at the Synod of Dort, the question as to the sufficiency of the Cross was never an issue.

Arminians assume that sufficiency and intent are the same kind. Calvinists separate the two on the grounds that the Arminian assumption is a logical fallacy.

A good illustration: Suppose for example, there existed a village of 100 houses. In one of the houses lives a man with 100 loaves of bread. What can we suppose to be his intentions based upon the fact of 100 loaves of bread and 100 houses?

Now this is a tricky question. One could assume his intention is to offer one loaf per house.

But this is an assumption only. He could be a miser who wants to keep all the bread for himself. Or, perhaps the bread is destined for some other village. One can think of a dozen other options than distributing one loaf per house. The only way to know his intentions is to ask him.

From this we can see that no necessary relationship exists between sufficiency and intention. This is equally true with the Atonement. The issue is resolved if we ask ourselves, what were the intentions of the Father in sending Jesus. Did he send Jesus to save as many as he could, depending upon how many he could persuade through his church? Or, did he send Jesus to save a particular group of people?

**The State of the Question:** What is meant by ‘efficacious’ and where is the limitation?

All believers, except universalists, believe in a limited atonement. If any are lost, then there must be a limitation somewhere, either in the extent of it, or its power. Either Christ did not die for all, or the Cross was insufficient to save any one without something being added to it.

Efficacious: A thing is ‘efficacious’ if it fulfills the function for which it was designed. In what sense is the Cross efficacious for any who perish?

There are two ways we can settle the question:

First, what do the Scriptures teach about who Jesus came to save?

Second, for whom do the benefits of the Cross accrue?

Third, is the condition for receiving the benefits in the Cross, or outside of it?

#### Arguments From John

Who are the sheep and what did Christ do for them? John Chapter 10

Point out that Christ gave his life for His sheep, not the goats. Use the illustration in Unlocking Grace about sheep never changing into goats. V.15

Point out V.26 that faith is given to the sheep. They believe because they are sheep. They are not sheep because they believe.

For whom does Christ intercede? Is His intercession as efficacious as His sacrifice? What benefits accrue to them? Jn.17 Who did Jesus come to save? Jn.17

Here, use the verse-list after this lesson from the Gospel of John about ‘those whom the Father gave’ to show that Christ came to save only those whom the Father had given Him. Take your time with Jn.17 and show that the entire chapter is a prayer for those the Father had given him. Show what the benefits of Christ’s intercession are. Be sure and point out V.9 in which Christ said specifically that He did not pray for the world. Mention that in no place in Scripture is there any indication that Christ interceded for the whole world.

This is the perfect place to use the argument from the High Priestly ministry of Christ, as in the book, *Unlocking Grace*. A good way to introduce this is to ask the students, ‘In what way can it be said that the Gospel of John and the Book of Hebrews are sister-books?’ The answer is that John portrays Christ as the Lamb sacrifice. Hebrews portrays Him as the Priest who offers the sacrifice. A High Priest never interceded for anybody except those for whom the sacrifice was made.

### **For whom do the benefits accrue? Rom. 8:30-34**

Exegete this text and take your time. A good group dynamic here is to ask them to enumerate what are the benefits for those for whom Christ died? What are the ‘all things’ in V.32? Who is he talking about in the context?

Answers: The entire point, culminating in V.34 is that it is impossible for any of those from whom Christ died to fail to receive the benefits of His sacrifice. He is talking about the elect in V.30. The benefits are: They get ‘glorified’, God is *for* them, they have no ‘charges’ against them (i.e. justified), because they are the chosen ones, they are not condemned and Christ is interceding for them.

### **Is The Condition, (Faith), Contained In The Cross As A Benefit? Or Does It Come From Somewhere Else?**

This is an inferential argument only. Ask the students if Christ died for the sin of unbelief also. If they say yes, then ask them how could anyone be condemned for unbelief?

Illustrations: Draw on the board two boxes with open lids. In one box is iron filings. In the other box is a powerful magnet. When you move the boxes together, the magnet attracts the filings and they are transferred to the other box. This is an illustration of how the Arminian perceives the transfer of benefits. The box with the filings represents the benefits of the Cross. The other box with the magnet represents man. The magnet is his free will. To the Arminian, man has the power of will to attract the benefits of the Cross.

The Calvinist rejects this illustration on the grounds that man’s will has no such power. (Ro.3)

Another illustration you might want to use: Draw the two boxes, leaving the left one (man) empty. Draw a bridge between the two boxes. This is the bridge of faith. We all agree that faith must bridge the gap between man and the Cross. The question is, from which box did the bridge come? Arminians say it came from man’s box. Calvinists declare it came from the box representing the Cross.

### **Christ died for:** (Use the list from *Unlocking*. *His people, His Sheep, Elect, the church, etc.*)

A Number Of **Associated Evidences** Also Exist To Use If Teaching Theology Students In Depth. These Include:

Argument from Covenant. (See *Unlocking* on this point.) The Covenant was for an elect people only, the Jews. The sacrifices were for them only. Never is sacrifice made for anyone else but Covenant people.

Argument from Mediator. Heb. 9:14-15 Christ's death gained him the office of mediator on behalf of the Covenant, for those called to it. His blood cleanses these only.

Answering Objections (See Unlocking on This for details.)

The key 'Arminian' text is 1Jn.2:2

Remind students that we have never denied the sufficiency of the Cross for all. Therefore this verse is irrelevant.

Point out that 'propitiation' means 'appeasement of wrath' or 'expiation'. The Arminian argument proves more than intended because if God's wrath is appeased toward all, then it is clear that no one could be lost. Therefore, the term '*not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*' cannot refer to any one else than *believers* throughout the whole world, in contrast to the Jewish believers to whom he was writing. Note: This is a Jewish epistle as proven by:

John was an Apostle to the Jews. Gal. 2:9

John speaks in 1Jn.2 of a commandment that 'you heard from the beginning.' Gentiles had no commandments at any time.

John normally uses the term 'world' in the sense of all classes and ethnic groups of people, not just Jews only.

### **Quotes From Selected Authors.**

Quote from Spurgeon:

"We are often told that we limit the atonement of Christ...We ask them ... Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of any man in particular? They answer 'No.'...We say Christ so died that he infallibly secured the salvation of a multitude that no man can number, who through Christ's death not only may be saved, but are saved, must be saved and cannot by any possibility run the hazard of being anything but saved.

Quotes from Packer (See below)

## Lesson

### Preservation

Handout: Verses Using The Word 'Preserve'.

Handout: Smalling's Paper On Preservation

#### Introduction:

Much of the evidence for the doctrine of Preservation is inferential, rather than directly stated in Scripture. The question of whether or not a christian can lose his salvation depends indirectly therefore on other doctrines. Explain again why Inferential theology is valid. You might quote from the Westminster Confession here, as you did in the first part of the course, *Chapter 1, Art. 6* "The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly stated in Scripture, or by good and necessary inference may be deduced from Scripture." Remind them that several important doctrines are largely inferential, such as the Deity of Christ and the Trinity.

The full name of the doctrine is "The Doctrine of the Preservation and Perseverance of the Saints." It is defined as: *God preserves His elect people by grace, through their own perseverance.* These two words, Preservation and Perseverance, indicate the two parts of the doctrine. Preservation indicates the work of grace via the sovereign will of God. Preservation is therefore an expression of sovereign grace, indicating that God alone is the ultimate and final cause of the salvation of His people. The second part, *perseverance*, indicates the role we play in our own preservation. This is where the *doctrine of means* comes in.

Remind them here what the *doctrine of means* indicates. God is sovereign in everything, but does *most* of what He does indirectly, by means of commonplace circumstances, instruments and people. He is hidden, yet revealed.

The means of Preservation are called the Means Of Grace. Scripture recognizes three: The Word, Prayer and the ministries of Church. (This also is inferential. It is hard to find anything that does not fit into these categories.)

Within these categories are admonitions, rebukes, corrections, and encouragements.

Group Exercises: Instead of preaching to the students about the security in each of these doctrines, divide the class into groups and have them study these group exercises. After the group is finished, discuss each of these doctrines and their relationship to Preservation. Some points:

Justification: Mention here that there is no doctrine of *de-justification* in the Bible. No such thing as a person who has been justified who has had their justification removed. The reason here is that Justification is based on the imputed righteousness of Christ as gift. Rom. 5:17. If God removes the gift on the grounds of our demerits, then it was never a gift in the first place.

Answers to the dynamic:

1= Justification 2=Election 3=Sacrifice of Christ 4=Effectual Call 5=Immutable will of God.  
6=Intercessory Ministry of Christ

#### The Key Objection to Preservation: "License To Sin" & The Book of Hebrews

Explain to the class that the main reason Arminians object to the doctrine of Preservation is because they believe it is a license to sin. Refute this with 1Jn.3:3; 1Jn.3:9

1Jn.3:3 This verse shows the believer's motivation in the face of his own impurities. He desires to purify himself. He does not *want* a license to sin. The Arminian asks, "Can a Christian go out and live a life of sin and still go to heaven?" Curiously, Calvinist responds NO, but for a different reason than the Arminian expects. The word 'can' is the key. 'Can' might mean either

‘permission’ or ‘ability’. The question becomes meaningless when we see that no such kind of Christian could exist.

1Jn.3:9 Show here that the Apostles do not recognize the existence of sinful saints, any more than they recognize the existence of holy sinners. While Christians may fall into sins, they do not live a sinful life. If they did, we could question that they were Christians at all.

B. Logical evidence: The Arminian problem of Venial vs Mortal sins. Show here why the Arminian traps himself with his ‘license to sin’ argument. The reasoning is as follows:

The Arminian must hold to some sort of doctrine of venial versus mortal sins. This is an old Roman Catholic doctrine that categorizes sins into minor and major ones. The major ones, ‘Mortal’ result in condemnation to hell from which there is no escape. The venial ones send a person to purgatory where he must expiate them himself through sufferings, since suffering is meritorious...according to Roman Catholic doctrine. ‘Mortal’ sins include adultery, murder, theft, etc.

While the Arminian may differ from the Roman Catholic on which sins are major, he nevertheless *has* a list, whether he realizes it or not. A way to approach this question is this:

“If I tell you that I like your suit, when in fact I detest it, does this small lie cause me to lose my salvation?” If he says yes, then we may point out that nobody can be saved. Or, worse, we lose our salvation daily. If he says no, then we may ask, “If I commit a murder, does this cause me to lose my salvation?” As soon as he reveals that he distinguishes between sins that condemn and those which do not, we can give the punch line. “What then is to prevent me from take the list of venial sins, and going out and committing all of them I wish, knowing that I will not be condemned because off them?” Whatever answer he gives to this, will do fine for the Calvinist also.

The Arminian falls into his own pit, yet again. As with other doctrines, every time he tries to shut in the Calvinist in a cage, he finds himself locking in himself. Whatever key he uses to escape, releases the Calvinist also.

The Arminian reasons that for the Christian, sin condemns.

The Calvinist reasons that for the Christian, sin is condemned. “***And so he condemned sin in sinful man.***” Ro.8:4

The Christian is not condemned by sin because sin itself is condemned by the Cross.

Summary of the point: There exist only three possible options with regard to the christian the issue of sin.

All sin condemns

Some sins condemn and some do not.

No sins condemn

If a., all sin condemns, then it follows that a christian loses his salvation many times daily. If b., some sins condemn and some do not, then we are left with the question of what sins fit into which category. Further, we have no scriptural warrant for any such doctrine as this. If c., then a Christian is never condemned regardless of what sin he may fall into. This is not intended to give permission to sin but to communicate hope when one does.

The resolution as to which of these is correct is clarified by the entirety of Romans Chapter 8.

Use “Security of Salvation” chart here.

Arminians claim that the Book of Hebrews contain many passages showing that a Christian can lose his salvation. Refute this by pointing out:

The entire point of the book is to show the security we have in Christ our High Priest. Show students Heb. 8:1 ¶ *The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven,* Mention that chapters 8

through 10 are a dissertation on why Christ's ministry, both in his sacrifice and in his intercession, is designed to give SINCERE believers the utmost security. It is therefore absurd to take verses out of Hebrews to show the precise opposite of the intention of the author of the book. Doing that is like taking a verse out of Romans to try to prove justification by works!

Show again that commands and exhortations do not prove what happens, but only what *could* happen under given terms. Mention that for Arminians to prove their point, they must show from Scripture that there are genuine believers whom God did not preserve because they did not respond to his commands and exhortations. They cannot prove this.

Deal with Hebrews 6, the key text of opponents. Use the arguments given in Unlocking Grace.

In addition: Use Heb.8:1 to show that the entire point of the book of Hebrews is that we have an effective High Priest through whom we have a secure salvation. He offered an efficacious sacrifice for all those who are called (9:15), and lives to ensure that they will be preserved. If this is 'The point...', as the author of Hebrews says, why does it make sense to take verses out of Hebrews to prove the exact opposite? One might as well take verses out of Romans to try to prove justification by works!

**Dynamic  
Preservation**

Below are a series of verses on Preservation. Read the verses and decide with which doctrine these sets verses are associated.

Ro.5:9; Rom. 8:33 \_\_\_\_\_

Matt. 24:31; 2John 1:1-2 \_\_\_\_\_

Heb. 10:14; Heb.13:20-21 \_\_\_\_\_

Heb. 9:15; Jude 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Heb. 6:17-18 \_\_\_\_\_

Heb.7:23-25 \_\_\_\_\_

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## Lesson

### False Faith

Purpose of Lesson: The purpose of this lesson is to clarify to the students that it is difficult to discern the truly saved from those who are not. It is not easy to tell. In some cases it is impossible to tell. If it were easy, the epistle of 1 John would not exist. John goes to a great deal of trouble to give criteria for telling the difference and in one place, Chapter two, he intimates that even he cannot tell sometimes.

A good way to show this is to explain from scripture the phenomenon of the false believer.

These are people who are not saved and think that they are. They are not consciously hypocritical.

Finish the lesson with reassurance from 1 John, showing that we have the witness of the Spirit in us to assure us that we are of God. This is subjective and personal data. We cannot always have assurance for others, but we can have it for ourselves.

Examples of false faith: Things that do not prove salvation.

Gifts and manifestations of the Holy Spirit: Mt. 7:21-23

Show in this text that Jesus never denies the prophesy or miracles of these people. They even cast out demons. Yet He says "I NEVER knew you. Depart from me, you workers of iniquity." Notice he did not refer to them as backslidden. He NEVER knew them. Further, he made it clear that his rejection of them was on the basis of their iniquity. They were unforgiven, unjustified people.

Simon: Acts 8:13, 18-24

Superficial faith: Mt. 13. The parable of the sower. Show here how the influence of the Word of God can be powerful, without being regenerative. People can be heavily influenced by the Word without being saved; reformed but not regenerate; externally moral without the Spirit.

NOTE: These people may not be apostate in their theology. Genuine apostates are dealt with next.

Examples of Apostates in the church.

These are similar to those above, but differ in that they have attained to authority in the church, including even teaching functions.

The entire book of Jude was written on this theme alone. It is worth going over to show the difference between genuine believers and some who merely profess to be so. See the comments on this in the section below.

False teachers who have been morally reformed but not regenerated. 2Pet. 2.

Start by bringing out V.1-2 and show who is the subject of the discourse here. It is false teachers who have infiltrated themselves into the church. The use of the pronouns "they" and "their" throughout the entire chapter can be traced back to their original noun in V.1-2, and refer to these ungodly, unsaved professors who have never been saved. Then show V.20 to show that these have experienced moral influences of the gospel which have liberated them at least superficially.

Do we have a right to judge, with regard to heretics? Yes. There is such a thing as heretics. It is not politically correct to call people names like heretic. But they exist and they exist in the church sometimes and have to be dealt with and called what they are by name. Titus 3:10-11 and Rom. 16.

Finish the lesson with the last few verses of Jude to leave the class with a positive atmosphere.



## COMMENTS ON JUDE

V.1- Notice that Jude opens with the positive reassurance to genuine Christians. He addresses the book to the called, loved by God, and kept by Jesus Christ. What doctrines are here: Effectual Call, election, preservation. Nothing in the text is designed to remove from Christians their assurance of salvation. Nothing in this book may be taken therefore in this sense. God's mercy, peace and love are ours in abundance.

V. 2 He prefers to deal with something more positive, but realizes that sometimes it is necessary to address some very negative realities. This, today, is one of these. The truth of the gospel has been given 'once for all'. The revelation is final and nothing can be added to it.

V.3- sometimes we are called upon to contend for the faith...IN THE CHURCH.

"Entrusted to the saints".. To the holy ones. The Christian faith is not the prosperity of the ungodly. It is not the business of Bible denying liberals. It is a book that does not belong to them and they have no right to speak anything of it.

V.17-18 the apostles foretold of this phenomenon and it ought not to surprise us when it happens. Gk verb showed continuous action. The apostles repeatedly warned.

V. These have entered unawares. 'Secretly slipped in among you.'

Question: Do we have a right to judge? Yes. Otherwise, why this epistle? Final excommunication is the business of the ministers according to tit.3:10-11. But judge... We can, we should and we must. Romans 16

They are ungodly

They have a libertine view of grace. To them, grace is the freedom to practice their favorite sins. In the name of grace, they practice vices. This may involve some form of antinomianism...denial that the Law of God has any reference to Christian living.

They deny the sovereignty and lordship of Christ. (V. 4). This text does not mean that they deny Christ overtly. Otherwise they would be thrown out of the church. They deny two of his attributes... His lordship and his sovereignty.

They have an authority problem and are arrogant, boastful, selfish and critical of others. **Though they like to be around other Christians, they are divisive. They are very persuasive and charming.**

Final remarks: We are to keep ourselves holy. V.24&25

## Lesson Covenant Of Grace

Introduction: In the last lesson you dealt with the problem of false believers and the difficulty of telling them from the true. Hebrews chapter 6 is the favorite text of Arminians and since you dealt with this, it is natural to use the last half of the chapter to introduce the concept of Covenant. Have the students read the chapter from V.13 to end.

Exegesis of Hebrews 6:13-20: Introductory elements to the covenant.

Presentation: Have these students read the text and explain back to you what are the key elements involved here. Let them discover the key elements for themselves rather than lecture to them. Before doing that, explain the two points below.

Definition: A covenant is a binding agreement.

Start by explaining what are the logical necessary elements in any agreement, particularly contracts. These are:

Identification of the parties involved in the agreement.

The terms of the contract. Statement of the benefits and responsibilities.

Time-frame of the agreement. When does it begin? When does it end?

How is it confirmed. (Signed or sealed)

Who is the guarantor? (Guarantor: Party who enforces the terms.)

Now ask the students to read the text and find out which of these elements are mentioned.

Explain here that in the Bible there exists two kinds of covenant. You need not use the two Greek words unless you are dealing with seminary students, who need to know them.

Suntheke: This is more like a business contract between equal parties in which each has responsibilities and benefits. Covenants of this sort are NOT the covenant of grace.

Diatheke: Corresponds more to the idea of Adoption. It is a legal declaration, binding on the superior, for the benefit of the inferior. The adopted child has nothing to contribute. Nothing in our modern usage corresponds to this, except the adoption of children. This covenant is the one the author meant in Heb.6. The term "New Testament" is taken from Heb.9:15 to describe this.

He Kaine Diatheke: (Implies something like: the fresh, refreshing, gracious adoption agreement of a generous benefactor.)

The obvious questions to ask the students here are:

**Who are the parties involved?** The human instrument with which it was first initiated was Abraham. It is called in theology the Abrahamic Covenant, or the covenant of Grace. Gen.17. (Note: In actual fact, the Covenant of Grace began in heaven with an agreement between the Father and the Son. This is called *The Covenant of Redemption*. With seminary students you can go into this. The lesson on this is in the Systematic Theology manual. Berkhof has a superb study on this.)

**What is the nature of the covenant?** Immutability. Modern translations use "unchanging nature." The covenant cannot change in any aspect.

**Who is the guarantor?** Jesus is the guarantor.

**What is the time frame?** The covenant is eternal because it is not grounded in our present time-frame. It *relates* to this time frame, but its origin and end is not here. Both ends of the rope begin and end in God. We cannot end it any more than we could initiate it.

**How did God confirm the covenant?** By an oath. Explain here that signatures are the modern way to 'confirm' agreements. In Bible times, it was by oaths. In later centuries by a 'seal' such as a signet ring. The oaths were normally taken in the name of a dignitary who could act as guarantor. God is the highest authority in the universe. The covenant is based on God's own character.

Background of the Covenant. Gen.17&Gal.3

Go through Gen.17 and let students pick out the key elements of the Covenant on their own. Once they see this, go to Gal.3 and have them do the same thing again.

Make *sure* they notice that the people involved are the believer and his immediate family. Emphasize that there is the *family* element in the issue. Doing this helps build the platform later on for our doctrine of baptism during the Sacraments course. Note that the children received the sign and seal of the Covenant.

Go through Gal.3 and let the students pick out the key elements there.

Note especially V.8 where Paul calls the covenant 'the gospel'. (Gr. Euangellion=gospel.) The entire point of Paul's message is that the covenant made with Abraham is also our Covenant.

Note that the Holy Spirit is part of the covenant promise. V.14.

Discuss the application: What application should this make in our lives?

Degree of security.

Grounds for approaching God. Heb.4:16 We approach boldly because Covenant people have this right. We have the 'right' to be called the Sons of God because it is a covenant for sons. Jn.1:12.

Promises to parents regarding their children.

Material provision.

Ministry to others. (Make you a blessing.)

All of the above is *in Christ* as our High Priest. (Last verse of Heb.9)

You may refer to the Doctrine Outline below as an alternate way of presenting the Covenant. If you are going to teach Sacraments after this course, you might leave this until then, because it is a part of the introduction to Sacraments.

### **Continuity Of The Covenant Proven By:**

The mediator is the same: Acts 4:12; 10:43; 15:10-11; Ga. 3:16; I Ti.2:5-6; I Pe.1:9-12

Condition is the same (faith) under OLD TESTAMENT & NEW TESTAMENT: Ge.15:6 cf. Ro.4:3; Ps.32:10; Heb.2:4; Acts 10:43 Jn.12:38-39; Ro.1:17 (Cf. Hab.2:6) 10:16; Ga.3:11

Blessings are the same, i.e., Justification: Ro.4:9; Ga.3:6; The Spirit, Ga.3:14; Eternal Life, He.6:13-20

Immutable: Heb.6:13-20

Supplants the law: Ga.3:13-18; Ro.4:13-18 (Called "the covenant ...in Christ) Ga.3:17

Called "the Gospel": Ga.3:8

It is one Covenant, indivisible: Ex.2:24; Le.26:42; IK.13:23; IChr.16:16; Ps.105:9 Verse List  
Dispensationalism (Points taken from Berkhof Systematic Theology) If students insist on discussing this subject, you may give the following quotes from Berkhof and then discuss it.

[Berkhof here quotes from Frank E. Gaebelin, a dispensationalist, to represent his views.]

*“Though there are seven dispensations, they are all one in principle, being throughout based upon the single test of obedience. And had man been found able to keep the conditions laid down by the first dispensation, the other six would have been unnecessary. But man failed. Yet, instead of casting off his guilty creature, God was moved with compassion, and gave him a fresh trial under new conditions. Thus each dispensation ends with failure, and each dispensation show’s fourth God’s mercy.”*

[Berkhof goes on to say that there are ‘serious objections to this view.’]

“A. The word dispensation, which is a Scriptural term is used here in an unscriptural sense. It the notes a stewardship, an arrangement, or an administration, but never a testing time or a time of probation.

B. The distinctions are clearly quite arbitrary. This is evident already from the fact that the Dispensationalist themselves sometimes speak of them as overlapping. The second dispensation is called the dispensation of conscience, but according to Paul conscience was still the monitor the Gentiles in his day.

C. This representation is contrary to Scripture, which does not represent fallen man as still on probation, but as an utter failure of, totally unable to render obedience to God, and absolutely dependent on the grace of God for salvation.

D. This theory is also divisive in tendency, dismembering the organism of Scripture with disastrous results. Those parts of scripture that belong to any one of the dispensations are addressed to, and have no to significance for, the people of that dispensation, and for no one else. ... since the dispensations do not intermingle, it follows that in the dispensation of the law there is no revelation of the grace of God, and in the dispensation of Grace there’s no revelation of the laws binding on the New Testament people of God.”

[Addition by Smalling -] likewise it must follow, if the dispensationalists are right, that the covenant with Abraham is not the covenant of Grace that we enjoy today. To be consistent with their views, Dispensationalist must reject this and usually and do. But this puts them in a very awkward position relative to Galatians chapters 3 and 4 in which Paul’s evident intent is to show that the covenant of Grace began with Abraham and continues in Christ. This cuts across any so-called dispensations intervening between Abraham and Christ.

## Lesson

### Covenant Con't/ Blessings of the Covenant

#### Introduction:

In the previous lesson you laid the foundation as to what is “Covenant”, its unconditional nature, origin in God, unchangeable nature and Christ as the guarantor of it.

Though this is a good foundation, it will seem impractical to some students. In this lesson, you will do everything possible to bring it down to earth for them. The best place to start is with the Covenant promises to parents for their children. This will lead directly into the question of whether unregenerate people can be legally a part of the Covenant.

#### Blessings upon the children of believers.

The Covenant is a *family* Covenant. God makes this Covenant with believing families.

Gen.17:7,9,10 Abraham’s descendants.

The apostles showed a family mentality. Acts 2:39; Acts 16:31

Promises to the seed of the righteous. Have the students look up these verses.

Suggestion: Start with Is.59:21 and show the relationship between Covenant and the children of believers. Show that the Covenant is also spiritual in nature, not limited to material blessings. Though the word ‘Covenant’ is not always mentioned in these verses, they nevertheless reflect the Covenant mentality since a Jew would never think of a gentile as righteous. To the Jew, a righteous man was one obedient to the Law. Psa. 37:25; Psa. 69:36; Psa.102:28; Psa.112:2; Prov.11:21; Prov. 20:7;Is. 59:21

NEW TESTAMENT indications of a *family* or *household* mindset in the Apostles, indicating their view of the covenant relationship.

ICor.7:14- In this text, Paul indicates that the children of the believing parent are *sanctified* in a specific legal sense. This does not mean *saved*. It means that God views the children as belonging to a legitimate marriage, legitimate not only in the sociological sense, but legitimate before God. This is a kind of covenant relationship, in which there is an implied legal covenant over the entire family as a result of the faith of the believer.

Acts 16:31- Here, the Apostles invoke the concept of household salvation and practiced household baptism. This again shows the covenant mindset of Apostles, regardless of whether children were present or not.

Acts.2:38-39-Acts 2:38 *Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off — for all whom the Lord our God will call.”*

What would a believing Jew understand from Peter’s statement about repentance and baptism? Is there any possible doubt that they would have interpreted his preaching in any other terms than household covenant relationship?

Explain to parents that the grounds of our prayers should be the Covenant, not our faithfulness as parents, not the willingness of the children, their temperament or degree of obedience.

#### The unregenerate in the Covenant of Grace:

Reformed theology teaches a difference in the Covenant between a legal relationship and an experiential relationship. It is possible for a person to be a partaker of Covenant blessings without being saved. (Dispensationalists deny this vehemently.) The evidence is as follows:

The covenants belonged to the Jews even though they were unsaved. *Rom.9:4-5*

*Theirs is the adoption as sons; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. 5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.*

In the prophets, esp. Jeremiah and Ezekiel, God invokes the Covenant as argument against the Jews, reminding them that they have broken the terms thereof. This could not be done if they were not part of the covenant.

Unregenerate are part of the visible church and are treated as believers until they show prove otherwise. This is the way Paul treated the Corinthian church as a whole, even though he doubted the salvation of some. 1Cor.5

Other blessings in Genesis

Victory over enemies. Gen.12:3

Material blessings: Inherit land of Canaan and its wealth

The Holy Spirit Gal.3:14

The Songs of Mary and Zechariah

All the Covenant blessings are found combined in these two songs. Use these to show that the Covenant and its blessings are New Testament blessings also, not limited to those in the Old Testament. You may use these as a group dynamic.

The Christian's Self Concept: the culmination of the Christian's self-concept.

This is the perfect opportunity for the teacher to change the negative self-concept that Christians often have of themselves. Many Christians, particularly among reformed, erroneously consider themselves sinners with remnants of grace rather than saints with remnants of corruption. Some have been taught nonsense such as 'living a life of repentance', whereas the Bible instructs us to live a life of rejoicing the Christ.

We repent when the Holy Spirit brings to our attention particular sins. Other than that, we live to 'glorify God and enjoy Him forever.' If we repent, it should be for not confessing the positive things we are in Christ and living according to it.

To break such students out of their negative syndrome, a good exercise for them is to take the handout below and paste it in their Bibles and read it to themselves once a day. It is taken from the first three chapters of Ephesians.

You can do this as a group exercise if you wish by having the group study Ephesians 1-3 and pick out for themselves what Paul says we are and have in Christ.

**THE CHRISTIAN'S SELF CONCEPT  
IN CHRIST I AM ...**

A saint and faithful brother  
Blessed with every spiritual blessings  
Chosen in Christ  
Holy and without blame  
Loved by God  
Predestined to be a son  
Adopted by God  
The praise of the glory of his grace  
A trophy of his grace  
Redeemed by His blood  
Forgiven  
Caretaker of the riches of His grace  
Heir of God  
The praise of His glory

Sealed with the Spirit  
Alive in Christ  
Seated in heavenly places  
Saved by grace  
Created for good works  
Heir of the Covenant  
With access to the Father  
Fellow citizen with the saints of God  
Member of God's household  
Gods dwelling place  
With bold access to the throne of God  
Sealed for Redemption  
A child of the light  
A member of Christ's body

**Group Dynamic:  
The Covenant in the Songs of Zechariah and Mary**

**Song of Mary: Lk.1:47-55**

Where do we find the concept of grace expressed here? \_\_\_\_\_

Where is the family aspect? \_\_\_\_\_

Where is found victory over enemies? \_\_\_\_\_

Where is found material provision? \_\_\_\_\_

Where is found the eternal nature of the Covenant? \_\_\_\_\_

What are some of the divine attributes stated or implied in these texts?

**Song of Zechariah: Lk.1:67-80**

Where do we find the promise of salvation? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do we find victory over our enemies? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do we find the concept of grace? \_\_\_\_\_

Where do we find the idea of sanctification? \_\_\_\_\_

What are some of the attributes of God expressed in these two songs?

## Lesson

### Covenant Con't/ The Church and the Covenant

(This lesson can be tacked on the end of the previous one because both lessons are rather short.)

Introduction: In this lesson you will attempt to use the concept of covenant to show the seriousness of commitment to the church as a member and why leaving it for unjustifiable reasons is extremely serious.

To do this, it is necessary to show the unity of the covenant in its relationship with the corporate people of God, throughout the whole Bible. This involves showing that the covenant of grace is *corporate* in nature, which in turn means there is a unity between the people of God in the Old Testament and the church in the new. (Remind the students that dispensationalists deny this vehemently.)

The church is the fulfillment of the concept of the corporate people of God as typified in Israel.

Paul calls the church "Israel" in Ga.6:16.

The elect, whether Jew or Gentile are 'Israel'. Rom. 9:8&24

Stephen the martyr calls the Old Testament assembly in the desert, a 'church'. Ekklesia. This shows the Apostolic mind set...it was NOT dispensationalist. Acts 7:38 (Note how deftly the NIV avoids the translating the word 'ekklesia' as 'church', using 'assembly' instead.)

The writer of Hebrews expresses the unity of the Old Testament saints with the New Testament saints.

#### Church life

Here, you can discuss the relationship of the believer to the church in terms of covenant relationship and commitment to it. Use chapter seven from *Unlocking Grace* and discuss the issues of when it is legitimate to leave the church and whether denominations are legitimate.

## Annotated Bibliography

### Doctrines of Grace Teacher's Manual

Augustine, *Enchiridion*, Ages Christian Library, Albany, Or, 1997

Written in 420 A.D. in response to a request from an acquaintance for a handbook of Christian doctrine. (The greek term *Enchiridion* means 'handbook'.) It's value in the study of soteriology resides in Augustine's persistence in attributing every Christian virtue to a non-meritorious work of God. This lends ample proof that early Christianity was a grace-based movement. 101 pages

Berkhof, Louis, *Manual of Christian Doctrine*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 1979

A concise outline of the essentials of Christian theology from the perspective of one of the Christian Reformed Church's key scholars. As a handy reference work, it facilitates the preparation of doctrinal studies on a laymen's level. 372 pages

Berkhof, Louis *Systematic Theology* Eerdmans, Grand Rapid, 1996 Theology

Considered by many Reformed scholars the outstanding single-volume systematics books ever written. As his Opus Magnum, Berkhof compares in a scholarly yet comprehensible manner the various views of each aspect of Christian theology. The succinct style makes it an ideal reference work. 784 pages

Boettner, Lorraine *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* P&R Publishers Philipsburg, NJ 1992

Written in the last century, this work has been popular as an introduction to the five points of calvinism. The title is misleading because Predestination is merely one of the chapters. The argumentation is compelling, without pedantry and comprehensible to the average reader. 431 pages

Bunyan, John *On Justification* GAM Publishers, Sterling, VA. 1988

The 17th Century puritan describes his struggles regarding acceptance with God until he grasped the meaning of the imputed righteousness of Christ. Though small, the book misses little in elaborating this central doctrine. 88 pages

Calvin, John (Battles, Translation) *Institutes of the Christian Religion* Westminster Press Philadelphia 1990

Considered by many scholars to be the Opus Magnum of the entire Reformation, the Institutes catalog and analyze thoroughly every single Christian doctrine. Calvin's exposé of Catholic errors has never been done better. His defenses and explanations of Reformed distinctives such as election and the Sovereignty of God are widely studied today. It was, in essence, the first protestant systematic theology textbook. Calvin's writing style, though, tended toward verbosity. He also indulged in vociferous and vindictive comments against his opponents, typical of the writing style of the times. A theologian's library is incomplete without this work. 1734 pages

Chantry, Walter *Man's Will: Free Yet Bound Banner Of Truth* Edinburgh, Scotland 1975

This concise treatise refutes the central Arminian premise that the will must be 'free' in the sense of moral neutrality, to be responsible for one's actions. Chantry exposes both the irrationality and the unscriptural nature of this assumption. 8 pages

Gerstner, John, *A Primer On Free Will*, P&R, Philipsburg, NJ 1982

This presbyterian scholar attacks directly the error of free will. He exposes the irrationality of the free will position without using the term Arminian. It is almost sarcastic in its approach and lacks the charm of Boettner. 28 pages

Gill, John, *Cause of God and Truth* Baker House, Grand Rapids, MI 1980

This puritan scholar of the 17th century attacks Arminianism head-on. He refutes Arminian erroneous interpretations of Scripture, then finishes with quotes from the early church fathers, showing that what we call Reformed theology was the teaching of the early church. 328 pages

Long, Gary, *The Salvation Of All Men*, Grace Abounding Ministries, Sterling, Virginia 1975

This short treatise analyzes 1 Jn.2:2, exposing the irrationality of the Arminian assumption that Christ died with the intent of saving all mankind. 13 pages.

Luther, Martin/Packer & Johnson, *Bondage of the Will*, Revell Publishers, Old Tappan, NJ 1980

Luther's thorough refutation of free will theology is probably the best ever written on the subject. He called it his "Opus Magnum." Luther wrote this in response to Erasmus' *Freedom of the Will*, which attacked the reformation. His exposé of humanistic logic fallacies leaves no doubt about what the Scriptures teach on this subject. This classic is a must for every theological library. 322 pages

Orange, Council of *Canons of Orange 529A.D.*, Ages Christian Library, Albany, Or, 1997

In 529 A.D., scholars from all over Christendom met to resolve the Pelagian-Augustinian controversy. Their conclusions showed total support for Augustine's sovereign grace theology. This furnishes forceful proof that early christendom held to what we call today, "Reformed Theology." 6 pages.

Owen, John, *Death of Death*, Banner Of Truth Publishers, Edinburgh, Scotland 1985

*The* definitive work on limited atonement. Owen was an outstanding puritan scholar, died 1683, whose arguments on this key doctrine have never been refuted. The introduction alone, by J.I.Packer, is worth the cost of the book. 312 pages

Pink, A.W. *Attributes of God* Baker House Grand Rapids, MI 1988

A brief introduction to God's attributes by the 20th century American scholar. The work is not deep and serves to introduce laity to this topic. 96pages

Pink, A.W. *Sovereignty of God*, Banner of Truth London, Eng 1968

This classic by an American scholar is one of the best introductions to Reformed thought or even biblical theology in general. Laity are the intended audience. By the time a reader finishes the book he will have understood the reasons why the Reformed movement insist on this doctrine. 160 pages

Rupp, Gordon *Free Will and Salvation* Westminster Press 1969

Rupp compares both Erasmus' *Freedom of the Will* and Luther's *Bondage of the Will*. Erasmus' dissertation is presented first, then Luther's refutation. This allows for a more definitive analysis of the Reformed position relative to the religious influences of the epoch on Reformed thought. 348 pages

Total pages 5125

**END OF MANUAL**

## VERSE LISTS

### Omniscience Of God

Return

Job 37:16 Do you know how the clouds hang poised, those wonders of him who is perfect in knowledge?

Jer. 17:10 “I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.”

Psa. 139:1 ¶ O LORD, you have searched me and you know me.

Psa. 139:2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.

Psa. 139:3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways.

Psa. 139:4 Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD.

1Sam. 16:7 ¶ But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

1John 3:20 whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

1Sam. 23:10 David said, “O LORD, God of Israel, your servant has heard definitely that Saul plans to come to Keilah and destroy the town on account of me.

1Sam. 23:11 Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me to him? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O LORD, God of Israel, tell your servant.” ¶ And the LORD said, “He will.”

1Sam. 23:12 ¶ Again David asked, “Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me and my men to Saul?” ¶ And the LORD said, “They will.”

1Sam. 23:13 ¶ So David and his men, about six hundred in number, left Keilah and kept moving from place to place. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he did not go there.

2Kings 13:19 The man of God was angry with him and said, “You should have struck the ground five or six times; then you would have defeated Aram and completely destroyed it. But now you will defeat it only three times.”

Psa. 81:14 how quickly would I subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes!

Psa. 81:15 Those who hate the LORD would cringe before him, and their punishment would last forever.

Is. 42:7 to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

Is. 48:18 If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea.

Deut. 2:7 ¶ The LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hands. He has watched over your journey through this vast desert. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you, and you have not lacked anything.

Job 23:10 But he knows the way that I take; when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.

Job 24:23 He may let them rest in a feeling of security, but his eyes are on their ways.

Job 31:4 Does he not see my ways and count my every step?

Psa. 1:6 For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Psa. 119:168 I obey your precepts and your statutes, for all my ways are known to you.

Return

### Omnipotence of God

Return

Gen. 18:14 Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son.”

Jer. 32:27 “I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?

Job 9:12 If he snatches away, who can stop him? Who can say to him, ‘What are you doing?’

Psa. 115:3 Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him.

Jer. 32:17 “Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.

Matt. 19:26 ¶ Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Rom. 1:20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Eph. 1:19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength,

**(God Called "Almighty")**

Rev. 1:8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

Rev. 4:8 Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."

Rev. 11:17 saying: "We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign.

Rev. 19:6 ¶ Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.

Return

### **Immutability**

Return

#### **In General**

Heb. 1:11 They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment;

Heb. 1:12 Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail."

Heb. 6:17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath,

Heb. 6:18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.

#### **Immutability of Decrees**

Psa. 33:11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart to all generations.

Is. 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'

Acts 2:23 "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death;

Eph. 3:11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord,

Eph. 1:11 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,

Rev. 4:11 "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."

Return

### **God Owns Everything**

Return

Psa. 24:1 ¶ The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;

Gen. 14:19 And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth;

Gen. 14:22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth,

Ex. 9:29 So Moses said to him, “As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, that you may know that the earth is the LORD’s.

Ex. 19:5 ‘Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.

Josh. 2:11 “And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

1Chr. 29:11 Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, And You are exalted as head over all.

Job 41:11 Who has preceded Me, that I should pay him? Everything under heaven is Mine.

Psa. 24:1 The earth is the LORD’s, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein.

Psa. 89:11 The heavens are Yours, the earth also is Yours; The world and all its fullness, You have founded them.

Acts 17:24 “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.

Return

### **Loss of Spiritual Ability**

Return

Eph. 4:18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;

1Cor. 2:14 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.

Rom. 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

Col. 1:21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled

2Cor. 4:4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

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

Eph. 2:2 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,

Eph. 2:3 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.

Titus 2:15 Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

John 6:44 “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:65 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.”

### **Foreknowledge**

Return

### **Declarative Not Predictive**

Prov. 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.

Is. 46:10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.

Acts 2:23 This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

Acts 4:27 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.

Acts 4:28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

Rom. 11:36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

Rom. 13:1 ¶ Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

Eph. 1:11 ¶ In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will,

Heb. 6:17 Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath.

Heb. 11:3 ¶ By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

### **Examples of:**

#### **Christ**

Acts 2:23 This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

Acts 4:27 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.

Acts 4:28 They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.

1Pet. 1:20 He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.

1Pet. 2:4 ¶ As you come to him, the living Stone — rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him —

1Pet. 2:9 ¶ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

#### **In General**

Matt. 11:21 “Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Matt. 11:22 But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you.

Matt. 11:23 And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day.

Acts 13:48 ¶ When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

Acts 18:27 ¶ When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. On arriving, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed.

Rom. 10:20 And Isaiah boldly says, “I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me.”

Rom. 11:1 ¶ I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin.

Rom. 11:2 God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah — how he appealed to God against Israel:

John 6:65 He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him."

Rom. 3:9 ¶ What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.

Rom. 3:10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;

Rom. 3:11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.

Return

## **Reprobation**

### Return

Deut. 2:30 "But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass through, for the LORD your God hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, that He might deliver him into your hand, as it is this day.

Psa. 5:5 The boastful shall not stand in Your sight; You hate all workers of iniquity.

Is. 63:17 O LORD, why have You made us stray from Your ways, And hardened our heart from Your fear? Return for Your servants' sake, The tribes of Your inheritance.

Prov. 16:4 The LORD has made all for Himself, Yes, even the wicked for the day of doom.

Matt. 11:25 ¶ 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.

Matt. 11:26 "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.

Matt. 13:11 He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

John 10:26 "But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you.

John 12:37 ¶ But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him,

Rom. 9:11 (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),

Rom. 9:12 it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger."

Rom. 9:13 As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."

Rom. 9:14 ¶ What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!

Rom. 9:17 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."

Rom. 9:18 Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

Rom. 9:19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?"

Rom. 9:20 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?"

Rom. 9:21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

Rom. 9:22 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,

Rom. 11:7 What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

1Pet. 2:8 and "A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

2Pet. 2:12 ¶ But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption,

Return

## **Covenant**

### **Return**

#### **Same Mediator**

Acts 4:12 “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Acts 10:43 “To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”

Acts 15:10 “Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?”

Acts 15:11 “But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they.”

Gal. 3:16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ.

1Tim. 2:5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,

1Tim. 2:6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,

1Pet. 1:9 receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls.

1Pet. 1:10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you,

1Pet. 1:11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

1Pet. 1:12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things which angels desire to look into.

#### **Same Conditions**

Gen. 15:6 And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

Rom. 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

Psa. 32:10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; But he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him.

Heb. 2:4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

Acts 10:43 “To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”

John 12:38 that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: “Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?”

John 12:39 Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

John 12:40 “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with their eyes, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.”

John 12:41 These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

Rom. 1:17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”

Hab. 2:6 “¶ Will not all these take up a proverb against him, And a taunting riddle against him, and say, ‘Woe to him who increases What is not his — how long? And to him who loads himself with many pledges’?”

Rom. 10:16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?”

Rom. 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Gal. 3:11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for “the just shall live by faith.”

### **Same Blessings**

Rom. 4:9 ¶ Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.

Gal. 3:6 just as Abraham “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

Gal. 3:14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Heb. 6:13 ¶ For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,

Heb. 6:14 saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.”

Heb. 6:15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

Heb. 6:16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute.

Heb. 6:17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath,

Heb. 6:18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

Heb. 6:19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil,

Heb. 6:20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

### **Various**

Gal. 3:13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”),

Gal. 3:14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Gal. 3:15 ¶ Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man’s covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it.

Gal. 3:16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as of many, but as of one, “And to your Seed,” who is Christ.

Gal. 3:17 And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.

Gal. 3:18 For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

Rom. 4:13 ¶ For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Rom. 4:14 For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect,

Rom. 4:15 because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.

Rom. 4:16 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all

Rom. 4:17 (as it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations”) in the presence of Him whom he believed — God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;

Rom. 4:18 who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So shall your descendants be.”

Gal. 3:17 And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.

Ex. 2:24 So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

Lev. 26:42 then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land.

1Kings 13:23 ¶ So it was, after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, that he saddled the donkey for him, the prophet whom he had brought back.

1Chr. 16:16 The covenant which He made with Abraham, And His oath to Isaac,

Psa. 105:9 The covenant which He made with Abraham, And His oath to Isaac,

Return

## Preservation

Verses Using The Word “Preserve”

[Return]

**Psa. 31:23** Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints! For the LORD **preserves** the faithful, And fully repays the proud person.

**Psa. 37:28** For the LORD loves justice, And does not forsake His saints; They are **preserved** forever, But the descendants of the wicked shall be cut off.

**Psa. 97:10** You who love the LORD, hate evil! He **preserves** the souls of His saints; He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked.

**Psa. 121:7** The LORD shall **preserve** you from all evil; He shall **preserve** your soul.

**Psa. 145:20** The LORD **preserves** all who love Him, But all the wicked He will destroy.

**1Th. 5:23** ¶ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be **preserved** blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**1Th. 5:24** The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

**2Tim. 4:18** And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and **preserve** me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!

**Jude 1:1** ¶ Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, ¶ To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and **preserved** in Jesus Christ:

## **HANDOUTS**

**Piper On Suffering and Tragedy**

**Smalling On “Why Does God Permit Evil?”**

**Historical Chronology of Doctrines of Grace**

**Excerpts From WCF**

**Sproul, ‘Captive Church’**

**Arminian Logic Fallacies**

**Smalling On Foreknowledge And Election**

**Packer on “Death of Death”**

**Verses on ‘Given’**

**Smalling On Preservation**

## Doctrine of Salvation

### Prospectus For MINTS Students

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#### The Purpose Of The Course

The Doctrine of Salvation course is designed to give the student a clear perspective of the Reformed view of salvation, so that he may see it as a defensible system in accord with Scripture and reason. “Grace” will become clearly defined. This in turn should have practical consequences in the student’s life as he sees better how his relationship with God is meant to function.

The course will examine eight doctrines in particular. These are:

The Sovereignty of God, the Depravity of Man, Justification, Election, the Atonement, the Unity of the Church, the Security of the Believer and the believer’s Covenant Relationship with God.

Attendance counts for 10% of the grade. The student may miss twenty percent of the classes. If the student miss more than that, MINTS cannot grant credit for the course. However, the student may recuperate a class by having the lesson taped by another student and writing a one page report about the lesson. s

Grading is as follows:

- A. Attendance, 10% as above
- B. Exams: 70%
- C. Papers: 20%

Papers: a ten page paper, or two five page papers are required, no more. The subject must be one of the themes of the course. The format will follow the MLA handbook for thesis writing.

Do not pad your manuscript with Scripture verses. (Exceptions to this may be brief one-liners within a sentence.) The text should be in Times format or Times Roman, double spaced. Argumentation in the paper may consist of proper exegesis of Scripture, respecting the rules of Hermeneutics, along with concise and logical theological evidences. Your paper need not be in agreement with the viewpoint of the teacher. However, if it is not in agreement, it will be the responsibility of the student to address the points of evidence the teacher has presented to show why you think they are defective.

The student must read a total of 300 pages of material by the end of the course. The class textbook, *Unlocking Grace* may count as 175 pages of this. Any class handouts may count toward this requirement also. The student is responsible for finding additional materials to read relevant to the subjects. (A list of *suggested* readings is provided.)

Notebook: The student is advised to keep a notebook of handouts given throughout the course. Exams may have questions from these handouts.

Exams:

A. Quizzes: There will usually be a brief quiz at the beginning of every class, lasting 5 or 10 minutes. The quiz will begin at the exact minute of the opening of the class and will end exactly 5 or 10 minutes afterward.

B. One Mid-term and one Final exam will be given. The mid-term will take place on the last day of class for the year 2001. The final exam will be on the last day of the course.

### **Some Class Procedures**

This teacher lectures only for about 10-15 minutes at a time before stopping to ask if there are questions. Therefore it is unnecessary to interrupt the teacher during the lecture times to raise your hand to ask questions. He is prepared to engage in discussion for as long it takes to clarify points during the lecture.

Good reasons for this procedure. Parts of the class may be taped for absentee students or for use by Miami International Seminary later. More importantly, some subjects require concentration to follow the teaching. Interruptions break the concentration in the minds of other students and the train of thought is lost. This generates unnecessary questions. Most of time the questions in the mind of the student are answered before the lecture aspect is over anyway.

This teacher believes in helping the students come to the right conclusions on their own rather than just telling them what to think. Therefore he uses 'group dynamics' as a teaching device. Periodically the class will divide up into small groups to study the Scriptures on a topic to come to a conclusion to be discussed later. This is *not* a waste of time as some may suppose. Experience shows it to be a *very* effective teaching technique and makes the material interesting.

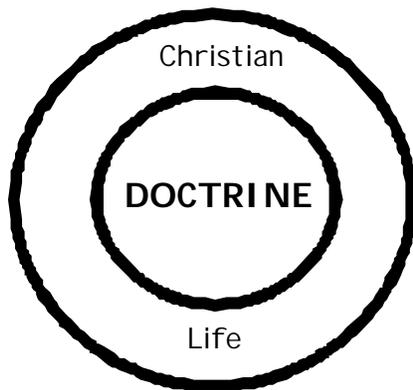
If you come to the class late, please enter quietly, with the least amount of interruption.

**Why Study Doctrine**  
**(From "Understanding Doctrine"**  
**By Ronald W. Nickerson)**  
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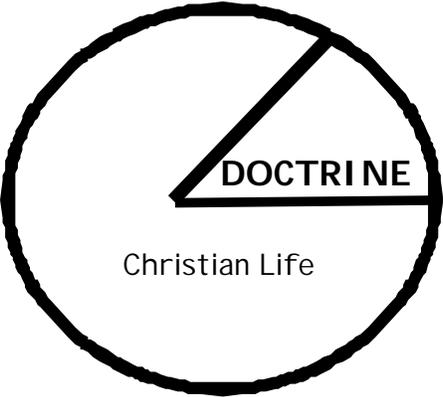
"I can't see any point to learning all those doctrines. What really counts is the way Christians live. We have too much arguing in the church already!" Does this sound familiar to you? Many sincere Christians hold this position which might be diagrammed like this:

They consider doctrine to be "dead orthodoxy." For them the heart of Christianity lies in its practice, not its teaching. As a result, these believers are often weak in their understanding of Scripture, unable to grasp the "strong meat of the Word. And yet Jesus insists that it is our faith which saves, not our works. And Paul says it is necessary to know the whole counsel of God, not simply a few basic beliefs.

Unlike some who downgrade the significance of Biblical doctrine, those who hold to what is commonly called the Reformed faith stress the fact that there can be no true godliness without sound knowledge of the Scripture. Jesus taught that it is the truth which makes us free. We might diagram the idea this way:



The essence of this view is that **DOCTRINE DETERMINES LIFE**. We cannot please God unless we first understand what He reveals to us in His Word as His plan and purpose. Whereas the view above stresses makes works and man himself as the central focus of Christianity, the Reformed faith centers around the sovereignty of God and the grace found in Christ. Such a perspective leads then to the highest regard for the authority of Scripture as the only rule of faith and life given us whereby we may glorify and enjoy God.



**Why I Do Not Say,  
“God Did Not Cause the Calamity, But He Can Use It for Good.”**

**By  
John Piper  
Pastor Bethlehem Baptist Church  
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September 19, 2001

Many Christians are speaking this way about the murderous destruction of the World Trade Towers on September 11, 2001. God did not cause it, but he can use it for good. There are two reasons I do not say this. One is that it goes beyond, and is contrary to, what the Bible teaches. The other is that it undermines the very hope it wants to offer.

First, this statement goes beyond and against the Bible. For some, all they want to say, in denying that God "caused" the calamity, is that God is not a sinner and that God does not remove human accountability and that God is compassionate. That is true - and precious beyond words. But for others, and for most people who hear this slogan, something far more is implied. Namely, God, by his very nature, cannot or would not act to bring about such a calamity. This view of God is what contradicts the Bible and undercuts hope.

How God governs all events in the universe without sinning, and without removing responsibility from man, and with compassionate outcomes is mysterious indeed! But that is what the Bible teaches. God "works all things after the counsel of his will" (Ephesians 1:11).

This "all things" includes the fall of sparrows (Matthew 10:29), the rolling of dice (Proverbs 16:33), the slaughter of his people (Psalm 44:11), the decisions of kings (Proverbs 21:1), the failing of sight (Exodus 4:11), the sickness of children (2 Samuel 12:15), the loss and gain of money (1 Samuel 2:7), the suffering of saints (1 Peter 4:19), the completion of travel plans (James 4:15), the persecution of Christians (Hebrews 12:4-7), the repentance of souls (2 Timothy 2:25), the gift of faith (Philippians 1:29), the pursuit of holiness (Philippians 3:12-13), the growth of believers (Hebrews 6:3), the giving of life and the taking in death (1 Samuel 2:6), and the crucifixion of his Son (Acts 4:27-28).

From the smallest thing to the greatest thing, good and evil, happy and sad, pagan and Christian, pain and pleasure - God governs them all for his wise and just and good purposes (Isaiah 46:10). Lest we miss the point, the Bible speaks most clearly to this in the most painful situations. Amos asks, in time of disaster, "If a calamity occurs in a city has not the LORD done it?" (Amos 3:6). After losing all ten of his children in the collapse of his son's house, Job says, "The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21). After being covered with boils he says, "Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?" (Job 2:10).

Oh, yes, Satan is real and active and involved in this world of woe! In fact Job 2:7 says, "Satan went out from the presence of the LORD and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head." Satan struck him. But Job did not get comfort from looking at secondary causes. He got comfort from looking at the ultimate cause. "Shall we not accept adversity from God?" And the author of the book agrees with Job when he says that Job's

brothers and sisters "consoled him and comforted him for all the adversities that the LORD had brought on him" (Job 42:11). Then James underlines God's purposeful goodness in Job's misery: "You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings, that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful" (James 5:11). Job himself concludes in prayer: "I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted" (Job 42:2). Yes, Satan is real, and he is terrible - and he is on a leash.

The other reason I don't say, "God did not cause the calamity, but he can use it for good," is that it undercuts the very hope it wants to create. I ask those who say this: "If you deny that God could have 'used' a million prior events to save 5,000 people from this great evil, what hope then do you have that God could now 'use' this terrible event to save you in the hour of trial?" We say we believe he can use these events for good, but we deny that he could use the events of the past to hold back the evil of September 11. But the Bible teaches he could have restrained this evil (Genesis 20:6). "The LORD nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the peoples" (Psalm 33:10). But it was not in his plan to do it. Let us beware. We spare God the burden of his sovereignty and lose our only hope.

All of us are sinners. We deserve to perish. Every breath we take is an undeserved gift. We have one great hope: that Jesus Christ died to obtain pardon and righteousness for us (Ephesians 1:7; 2 Corinthians 5:21), and that God will employ his all-conquering, sovereign grace to preserve us for our inheritance (Jeremiah 32:40). We surrender this hope if we sacrifice this sovereignty.

[www.desiring GOD.org](http://www.desiringGOD.org)

## **How Could God Be Good And Permit Evil?**

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**By**

**Roger L. Smalling**

In a previous article, "Sovereignty and Suffering" I dealt with the problem of evil from a pastoral perspective. The intent was to give comfort and counsel to suffering people. I steered away from intellectual analysis and focused on the God's character as worthy of trust, despite circumstances.

This left me with an incomplete feeling, since some need philosophical answers. This article is designed to give Christians the ammunition to answer this objection when it comes from those who challenge the existence or goodness of God on this basis.

Rather than attempt to 'answer' the question, the strategy is to show the objector that the question is devoid of meaning. The objector expects the Christian to attempt an answer which he can then attack as absurd. The Christian puts the burden back on the objector by requiring him to show why the question makes sense. It is not the Christian has no answer. It is rather that the question is not a question.

### **The question assumes that good cannot come out of evil events.**

If this is not the underlying assumption, then the question is meaningless and must be withdrawn. Human experience shows that good often comes from evil. Or, sometimes suffering and pain are necessary to prevent a greater evil, such as a war to defeat a dictator who wants to enslave the world. Such a war, therefore, cannot be defined as an evil, despite the horrors associated with it. Likewise, Christians have always taught and often exemplified the truth that suffering is a means toward increased virtue, such as patience, endurance and sympathy toward others. Scripture seems to give the greater weight to this particular answer. The Cross is the supreme example of it.

Short answer: "Now all you have to do, sir, is show that good cannot come from evil."

### **The question commits the fallacy of circular reasoning.**

The question commits a logic fallacy with regard to the use of the term 'good.' Normally this term in our society is derived from Judeo-Christian ethic. God's character, in other words, is the basis of the definition of the term 'good.' It is illogical therefore to use the concept of good, of which God is the source, to refute the goodness of God. This is the fallacy of circular reasoning.

Short answer: "Sir, why are you using the concept of good to show that the source of the concept of good is not good?"

### **Relativists are exclude from any right to ask the question.**

If a person says that truth and morality are relative to the individual, then how can he use the concept of good to show that God is absolutely wrong in permitting evil? In the case of the World Trade Center atrocity, the only thing a consistent relativist can say dispassionately is that relative to the terrorists, it was a good thing. Relative to us, it is a bad thing.

Short answer: "Sir, do you believe that truth and morality, good and evil, are relative to the individual?" "Then why are you asking the question?"

**The question asks God to commit the greatest atrocity of all against humanity.**

It implies that God should do something to others that we do not want him to do to ourselves. Most of the evil in today's world is caused by things people do to each other...man's inhumanity to man. We need to ask, "In practical terms, exactly what do we want God to do?" One possible answer to ask God to remove from others the ability to choose to do evil to their fellow man. He could, for example, perform a brain operation and remove their ability to choose between good and evil. This, of course, would dehumanize them completely. If we want God to dehumanize others, then why not ask him to do it first to ourselves?

Which is the greater evil: the inhumanity of man to man? Or, the dehumanization of man altogether? Is it possible that the question is really asking God to commit the ultimate atrocity?

Short answer: "Sir, are you asking for God to remove from mankind the ability to choose between right and wrong? If you are, then why not ask Him to start with you?"

**It implies a moral contract between God and disobedient mankind.**

Why is God obliged to protect anybody from anything? When and how did God acquire this moral obligation?

Short Answer: "Sir, why is God obligated to protect the disobedient?"

**The questions ought to be put the other way around.**

The right question is, "Why isn't there more suffering in the world than there is?" If God is as holy as Scripture says He is and man as perverse as described in Romans 3, then it would seem that more there should be more suffering than there is.

Short Answer: "Answer sir, this question first. If God is holy and man is unholy, why isn't there more suffering in the world than there is?"

**It assumes that mankind wants something from God other than His absence.**

Mankind has shown consistently that he wants to be independent from God. Human nature wants nothing more than for God to leave it alone. People usually prefer for God to leave them alone except when they get into trouble. We cannot depose a king and ask for his protection at the same time. We cannot reject the Lord and then blame him for His absence.

Short Answer: "Sir, do you want God's intervention with or without submitting to His authority?"

**It assumes an unrealistic dualism between good and evil.**

Evil does not exist in the same sense as good does. Evil is a sort of parasite of the good. Example: A human body is a good thing in and of itself. But it can become sick. The sickness is a bad thing, but cannot exist apart from the body. The sickness therefore a kind of parasite taking something away that existed before...health. Evil is something which detracts from good and cannot exist on its own. By asserting that sickness exists, we are asserting that such a thing as health exists.

Darkness is merely the absence of light and cold is the absence of heat. Darkness and cold have no existence apart from these.

Therefore, to suggest that God is not good to permit evil is to say that good has no existence if evil is present. This is a contradiction. The presence of evil, ironically, is proof of ultimate good.

Short Answer: "Sir, if you say that evil has a real existence, then you must also say that good has a real existence also, since evil is merely the absence of good. Why then are you asking the question?"

**Conclusion:**

The issue is not whether a Christian has an answer to the question of suffering. The issue is whether the non-question has a legitimate question to ask. The question posed by the skeptic is self-contradictory as well as rife with dubious hidden assumptions. It is not so much that Christian has no answer. It is rather that the question is not a question.

## EXCERPTS FROM CANONS OF ORANGE, 529, A.D.

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CANON 4 If anyone maintains that God awaits our will to be cleansed from sin, but does not confess that even our will to be cleansed comes to us through the infusion and working of the Holy Spirit, he resists the Holy Spirit himself who says through Solomon, "The will is prepared by the Lord" (Proverbs 8:35, LXX), and the salutary word of the Apostle, "For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

CANON 6 If anyone says that God has mercy upon us when, apart from his grace, we believe, will, desire, strive, labor, pray, watch, study, seek, ask, or knock, but does not confess that it is by the infusion and inspiration of the Holy Spirit within us that we have the faith, the will, or the strength to do all these things as we ought; or if anyone makes the assistance of grace depend on the humility or obedience of man and does not agree that it is a gift of grace itself that we are obedient and humble, he contradicts the Apostle who says, "What have you that you did not receive?" (1 Corinthians 4:7), and, "But by the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Corinthians 15:10).

CANON 7 If anyone affirms that we can form any right opinion or make any right choice which relates to the salvation of eternal life, as is expedient for us, or that we can be saved, that is, assent to the preaching of the gospel through our natural powers without the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who makes all men gladly assent to and believe in the truth, he is led astray by a heretical spirit, and does not understand the voice of God who says in the Gospel, "For apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5), and the word of the Apostle, "Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God" (2 Corinthians

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CANON 23 Concerning the will of God and of man. Men do their own will and not the will of God when they do what displeases him; but when they follow their own will and comply with the will of God, however willingly they do so, yet it is his will by which what they will is both prepared and instructed.

CANON 25 Concerning the love with which we love God. It is wholly a gift of God to love God. He who loves, even though he is not loved, allowed himself to be loved. We are loved, even when we displease him, so that we might have means to please him. For the Spirit, whom we love with the Father and the Son, has poured into our hearts the love of the Father and the Son (Romans 5:5).

CONCLUSION And thus according to the passages of holy scripture quoted above or the interpretations of the ancient Fathers we must, under the blessing of God, preach and believe as follows. The sin of the first man has so impaired and weakened free will that no one thereafter can

either love God as he ought or believe in God or do good for God's sake, unless the grace of divine mercy has preceded him. We therefore believe that the glorious faith which was given to Abel the righteous, and Noah, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and to all the saints of old, and which the Apostle Paul commends in extolling them (Hebrews 11), was not given through natural goodness as it was before to Adam, but was bestowed by the grace of God. And we know and also believe that even after the coming of our Lord this grace is not to be found in the free will of all who desire to be baptized, but is bestowed by the kindness of Christ, as has already been frequently stated and as the Apostle Paul declares, "For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake" (Philippians 1:29). And again, "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). And again, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and it is not your own doing, it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). And as the Apostle says of himself, "I have obtained mercy to be faithful" (1 Corinthians 7:25, cf. 1 Timothy 1:13).

## Historical Chronology Of Doctrines Of Grace

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**This general outline deals with expressions throughout history, after the apostolic period, of what is called today the ‘Reformed’ Doctrines of Grace.**

100-400 A.D. Comments by early church fathers in their ‘epistles’ expressing these doctrines. Irenaeus, Polycarp, Crisostom, etc. Puritan writer John Gill writes “Cause of God and Truth”, 1735 documenting this.

C.400 A.D.- Pelagian-Augustinian controversy. Augustine writes dissertations on grace Against Pelagius and Echiridion manual of doctrine.

529 A.D.- Council of Orange. Augustinian theology vindicated. Strong statements favoring Sovereign Grace.

Dark Ages- 500-1500 A.D. Scholars holding to Doctrines of Grace sometimes called Augustinians, or Johannians.

Thomas Aquinas, C.1300, Summa Teologica contains elements of these.

1517- Luther begins Reformation. Erasmus-Luther dispute over free will. His Opus Magnum “The Bondage of the Will” refutes Erasmus.

1559-Calvin publishes “Institutes of the Christian Religion”

1560-1609 James Arminius & the Arminian Controversy

1618- Synod of Dort/ Arminianism refuted/ Five Points of Calvinism established. Canons of Dort.

1643-1648- Westminster Assembly writes Westminster Standards. End of Reformation period.

1689- Baptists adopt Westminster Confession, with changes= London Baptist Confession

1703-1791- John Wesley and the resurgence of Arminianism. Leads to Methodism-Nazarene-Pentecostalism.

1823- Southern Baptist Convention adopts Westminster Confession at Philadelphia, with changes= Philadelphia Confession.

From this lesson we have learned that:

1. What are popularly called today 'the Doctrines of Grace' or, 'Reformed Theology' were taken by granted as standard orthodoxy in the early church throughout the first four centuries.
2. While Rome apostatized from the Christian faith, remnants of these doctrines re-surfaced periodically throughout the dark ages.
3. A full revival of these doctrines occurred during the reformation period.
4. Arminianism was invented toward the end of the reformation period by a dutch heretic. It was refuted by Reformed theologians at the Synod of Dort in 1618 and proved to be unscriptural.
5. Arminianism was revived by the English evangelist John Wesley and thus spread again through Christendom. Arminianism is strong today because it is a religious form of humanism and the western world is experiencing a strong wave of secular humanism.
6. Arminians do not fare well in debates with Calvinists.
7. The Doctrines of Grace today are unpopular because we are in the midst of a strong wave of humanism.

## **EXCERPTS FROM WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF FAITH**

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From WCF Chapter 5- Providence

1. God the great Creator of all things doth uphold, direct, dispose, and govern all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy.
4. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in his providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men; and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering, and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from

WCF- Chapter 9 Of Free Will

1. God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor, by any absolute necessity of nature, determined to good, or evil.
2. Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom, and power to will and to do that which was good and well pleasing to God; but yet, mutably, so that he might fall from it.
3. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation: so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.
4. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, he freeth him from his natural bondage under sin; and, by his grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so, as that by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly, nor only, will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.
5. The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone, in the state of glory only.

WCF- Chapter 10 Of Effectual Calling

1. All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation, by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and, by his almighty power, determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.
2. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.
3. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated, and saved by Christ, through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how he pleaseth: so also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.
4. Others, not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the Word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come unto Christ, and therefore cannot be saved: much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the laws of that religion they do profess. And, to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested.

WCF- Chapter 16 On Good Works

1. Good works are only such as God hath commanded in his holy Word, and not such as, without the warrant thereof, are devised by men, out of blind zeal, or upon any pretense of good intention.

7. Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands; and of good use both to themselves and others: yet, because they proceed not from an heart purified by faith; nor are done in a right manner, according to the Word; nor to a right end, the glory of God, they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God: and yet, their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing unto God.

## **Captive Hearts, Captive Church**

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**By**

**R.C. Sproul**

During the Protestant Reformation Martin Luther wrote a little book that was highly controversial. It was a massive critique of the Roman Catholic sacramental system, entitled *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*. Luther likened the oppressive regime of Rome in the sixteenth century with that of Israel's blight while held captive by the rivers of Babylon.

I have often wondered how Luther would assess our own age and the state of the church today. I suspect if he wrote for our time his book would be entitled *The Pelagian Captivity of the Church*. I suspect this would be the case because Luther considered the most important book he ever wrote to be his classic magnum opus, *The Bondage of the Will* (*De Servo Arbitrio*).

This work focused on the issue of the enslaved will of man as a result of original sin. It was a response to the *Diatribes* of Desiderius Erasmus, of Rotterdam. In the translator's introduction to this work it is said that Luther "saw Erasmus as an enemy of God and the Christian religion, an Epicurean and a serpent, and he was not afraid to say so." I think Luther would see the great threat to the church today in terms of Pelagianism because of what transpired after the Reformation.

Historians have said that though Luther won the battle with Erasmus in the sixteenth century he lost it in the seventeenth century and was demolished in the eighteenth century by the conquest achieved by the Pelagianism of the Enlightenment. He would see the church today as being in the grasp of Pelagianism with this adversary of the faith having a stranglehold on us.

Pelagianism in its pure form was first articulated by the man for whom it is named, a fourth century British monk. Pelagius engaged in a fierce debate with St. Augustine, a debate provoked by Pelagius' reaction to Augustine's prayer: "Command what thou wilt, and grant what thou dost command." Pelagius insisted that moral obligation necessarily implies moral ability. If God requires men to live perfect lives then men must have the ability to live perfect lives. This led Pelagius to his wholesale denial of original sin. He insisted that Adam's fall affected Adam alone; there is no such thing as an inherited fallen nature that afflicts humanity. He further claimed grace is not necessary for salvation; that man is able to be saved by his works apart from the assistance of grace. Grace may facilitate obedience, but it is not a necessary condition for it.

Augustine triumphed in his struggle with Pelagius whose views were consequently condemned by the church. In condemning Pelagianism as heresy the church strongly affirmed the doctrine of original sin. In Augustine's view this entailed the notion that though fallen man still has a free will in the sense that he retains the faculty of choosing, the will is fallen and enslaved by sin to such an extent that man does not have moral liberty. He cannot not sin.

After this struggle passed, modified views of Pelagianism returned to haunt the church. These views were called semi-Pelagianism.

Semi-Pelagianism admitted to a real Fall and a real transfer of Original Sin to the progeny of Adam. Man is fallen and requires grace in order to be saved. However, this view says we are not so fallen that we are left totally enslaved to sin or totally depraved in our nature. An island of

righteousness remains in fallen man by which the fallen person still has the moral power to incline himself, without operative grace, to the things of God.

Though the ancient church condemned semi-Pelagianism as vigorously as it had condemned Pelagianism, it never died out. In the sixteenth century the magisterial reformers were convinced that Rome had degenerated from pure Augustinianism and fallen into semi-Pelagianism.

It was not an insignificant detail of history that Luther himself was a monk in the Augustinian Order. Luther saw his debate with Erasmus and Rome as a renewal of the titanic struggle Augustine had with Pelagius.

In the eighteenth century, Reformation thought was challenged by the rise of Arminianism, a new form of semi-Pelagianism. This captured the thinking of such prominent men as John Wesley. The split over doctrine between Wesley and George Whitefield focused on this point. Whitefield sided with Jonathan Edward's defense of classic Augustinianism during the American "Great Awakening." The nineteenth century witnessed a revival of pure Pelagianism in the teaching and preaching of Finney. Finney made no bones about his unvarnished Pelagianism. He rejected the doctrine of original sin (along with the orthodox view of the atonement and the doctrine of justification by faith alone). But Finney's evangelistic methodology was so successful that he became a revered model for later evangelists and is usually regarded as a titan of Evangelicalism, this despite his wholesale rejection of Evangelical doctrine.

Though American Evangelicalism did not embrace Finney's pristine Pelagianism (that was left for the Liberals to do), it was deeply infected by forms of semi-Pelagianism to the extent that today semi-Pelagianism is far and away the majority report within Evangelicalism. Though most Evangelicals will not hesitate to affirm that man is fallen, few embrace the Reformation doctrine of total depravity.

Thirty years ago I was teaching theology in an Evangelical college that was heavily influenced by semi-Pelagianism. I was working through the five points of Calvinism using the acrostic tulip with a class of about thirty students. After giving a lengthy exposition of the doctrine of total depravity, I asked the class how many of them were convinced of the doctrine. All thirty students raised their hands in the affirmative. I laughed and said, "We'll see." I wrote the number 30 in the upper left hand corner of the blackboard. As we proceeded to the doctrine of unconditional election several of the students balked.

I counted their number then went to the board and subtracted that number from the original thirty. By the time we got to Limited Atonement the number was reduced from thirty to about three.

I then tried to get the students to see that if they really embraced the doctrine of total depravity that the other doctrines in the Five Points were but footnotes. The students soon discovered that they didn't really believe in total depravity after all. They believed in depravity, but not in the sense of total. They still wished to retain an island of righteousness unaffected by the Fall whereby fallen sinners still retained the moral ability to incline themselves to God.

They believed that in order to be regenerated they must first exercise faith by the exertion of their wills. They did not believe that the divine and supernatural work of regeneration by the Holy Spirit was a necessary precondition for faith.

Erasmus had won. Again the authors of the introductory essay of *The Bondage of the Will* assert: Whoever puts this book down without having realized that evangelical theology stands or falls with the doctrine of the bondage of the will has read it in vain. The doctrine of free justification by faith only, which became the storm- centre of so much controversy during the Reformation period, is often regarded as the heart of the Reformers' theology, but this is hardly accurate. The truth is that their thinking was really centered upon the contention ... that the sinner's entire salvation is by free and sovereign grace only. ...

Is our salvation wholly of God, or does it ultimately depend on something that we do for ourselves? Those who say the latter (as the Arminians later did) thereby deny man's utter helplessness in sin, and affirm that a form of semi-Pelagianism is true after all. It is no wonder, then, that later Reformed theology condemned Arminianism as being in principle a return to Rome ... and a betrayal of the Reformation. ... Arminianism was, indeed, in Reformed eyes a renunciation of New Testament Christianity in favour of New Testament Judaism; for to rely on oneself for faith is no different in principle from relying on oneself for works, and the one is as un-Christian and anti-Christian as the other.

These are strong words. Indeed for some they are fighting words. But of one thing I am sure: They mirror and reflect accurately the sentiments of Augustine and the Reformers. The issue of the extent of Original Sin is tied inseparably to our understanding of the doctrine of sola fide. The Reformers understood clearly that there is a necessary link between sola fide and sola gratia. Justification by faith alone means justification by grace alone. Semi-Pelagianism in its Erasmian form breaks this link and erases the sola from sola gratia.

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## What Is Sanctification?

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The following is an article based on a response to a question by my nephew Paul, a fledgling minister, on the nature of sanctification.

Dear Paul:

Thanks for your letter and news. We are delighted that you are going ahead full steam for the Lord.

Your question about sanctification was a bit ambiguous. I'm not clear on exactly what you are asking. I think, from the clues in the brief paragraph, that you are affirming that sanctification is a process which is incomplete in this life, although the provision and guarantee for it is completed in the cross. If that is the point, then you are on the right track.

I don't know how much you want to go into this. I will do so in greater detail in another letter if you request it. But for the moment, a bird's eye may suffice.

Most Christians are confused as to the difference between Justification and Sanctification. The failure to distinguish between the two is one of the difficulties behind both Catholicism and Arminianism. It is also the cause of a good deal of insecurity in the lives of some believers. They wind up basing their security of salvation on their degree of sanctification, which is a variable, rather than on their justification, which is an absolute.

Definitions: **Justification** means "Declare to be righteous". It does NOT mean "Made righteous". This is the meaning of the Greek "DIKAIOS". It is involved with three principles:

- A. God requires that the absolute righteousness of the Law be fulfilled in all believers. Ro.8:4
- B. Nobody can fulfill that requirement. Ro.3:11-19
- C. Christ is our substitute under the law, fulfilling in our place the righteous requirements of the law. Ro.8:4; Galatians 3&4
- D. Through faith, the free gift of the righteousness of Christ is imputed to our account. Romans Chapter 4 & Ro.5:17
- E. All of those who are justified will be glorified. Ro.8:30 God accepts no accusations against His justified people, insofar as the question of their eternal destiny is concerned. Ro.8:33
- F. There is no such thing in the Bible as a doctrine of de-justification. That is, no such thing as a person who is once justified who is declared by God to be then non-justified. The reason is above in E., i.e., the sin question was settled for God's justified elect, and it is an absurdity to Paul that any of those should be condemned.

Key point: Justification is NOT a process. It happens once. The basis of it is the imputed righteousness of Christ, not the variable works of the believer. The means of receiving it is faith in Christ. <sup>3</sup> It is imputable, i.e., unchangeable.

I think you meant by your reference to Romans 6 that Paul had just finished explaining the mechanism of justification in the previous three chapters, and that in Romans 6, he is describing the fruit of justification, i.e., a righteous life. Conditional clauses are rare in the Greek grammar there. He is simply describing how truly justified people live. He is not laying down a series of conditions by which people can be more justified. If he were, he would be contradicting himself.

**Sanctification** means the process of growing in holiness.

Note that I said “process”. That’s what the greek word “HAGIASMOS” means. A good example of this is in Heb. 10:14. I have chosen the New King James here, because the translators rightly saw that the verb for sanctification is continuous present tense, and thus added the word “being”.

*Heb. 10:14 For by one offering he has perfected for ever those that are being sanctified.*

This verse requires a bit of thought, because it deals with apparently weird time-sequences. Here we have to get into a bit of deeper theology, but if you are going to have an adequate answer to your question, it is necessary.

First, he says that by the “one offering” of Jesus on the Cross, he has already “perfected” some people. Notice it does not say, “will perfect”, but “has perfected”. This part is a past-tense accomplished fact. The second part, is a present-tense continuing experience, “being sanctified”.

The difference here is between our legal standing with God, versus our daily experience. God knew that you were going to accept Christ. So when Christ died on the Cross, His sacrifice was the absolute guarantee of your ultimate perfection. God therefore attributed to your account in heaven, the absolute, perfect righteousness of Christ which is necessary to make you acceptable to Him. Thus, in a certain spiritual, legal sense, God accepts you as perfect, because you are in Him who is perfect, and Who made a perfect sacrifice for you one the Cross for all your sins, past, present and future. When Jesus died on the Cross, His last words were, “It is finished.” Jn.19:30 (In the original Greek He used a word which also means, “The debt is paid in full”. This refers to the debt of sin that was owed to God.) Thus, there is nothing you can ever do to add to your “account” in heaven to increase your possibilities of going there. It is already full.

Notice again, that the text says, “He has perfected forever...” not, “They have perfected themselves.”

But God, of course, is a realist. He knows we are weak and that we do not live according to the righteousness that Christ purchased for us. Life for the believer, then, is the process of learning to live according to the standard of righteousness that God has reserved for us in heaven. This is where the second part of the verse comes in. “...those who are being sanctified.” This show the progressive nature of sanctification.

Though sanctification is progressive, and must not be confused with justification, nevertheless it has an important aspect in common with justification, i.e., inevitability. God promises to complete our sanctification. He doesn’t say how. Just that He will do it.

*1Ths. 5:23 -24 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.*

As mentioned before, there is a difference in viewpoint on sanctification between Roman Catholics/Arminians on one hand, and Reformed theologians on the other. The former base any security of salvation they might have on their degree of sanctification. The latter base it on justification. I shall leave it to you to study out which is the Biblical view.

Another couple of points though, before I close. Beware of the Wesleyan/Methodist doctrine that there exists a special second, once-and-for-all experience after conversion by which one becomes perfectly “sanctified” in this life. This is heresy.

I think the error here is due to at least two things: Sanctification is sometimes spoken of in the same absolute terms as justification, as mentioned above. This is, of course, a logic error. Merely because the outcome is certain, purchased in the Cross, does not mean it is necessarily complete now.

The second error is based on Antinomianism. Definition: The belief that the Law has no reference to the Christian. The teaching that we are not under the law for justification is assumed to mean that the moral law of God is not relevant to Christians at all. Thus the antinomian christian throws away the eternal moral law of God and sets up his own in its place. This is another heresy. The 10 commandments, found in the law of Moses, are still binding on Christians as moral guidelines. We can't get righteousness from them, but we can get plenty of sin if we ignore them.

Since the antinomian invents his own standards to define righteousness, usually based on his own personal strong points, he then has the opportunity to declare himself “sanctified”. Whatever standard he invents, it will always be less than what God requires in His eternal moral laws. The Nazarenes, Methodists and some Pentecostals fall into this. Some even claim that they don't sin anymore. They just make “mistakes”. The Bible does not teach any sort of definite “second” blessing or experience after salvation that can be identified as a complete “sanctification” in this life. Any such teaching is heresy, because it confuses justification with sanctification, ignores the continuance of God's eternal moral law, leads to spiritual pride, and holds an insufficient view of the corruptibility of human nature including after salvation. But those are other topics, and I shall not belabor you with them.

I'm beginning to see that no theological subject can be divorced from the totality of the Bible. Every doctrine is connected with every other. I suppose that is why I ramble. It is impossible to give a complete explanation of any one doctrine, without reference to numerous others. Of course, I think you know this by now. So study on.

Yours In Christ,

Roger & Dianne

## Arminian Logic Fallacies

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By

Roger Smalling

Introduce here the primary Arminian logic fallacies and refute them.

**‘A command to do a thing proves the ability to do it.’**

Or ‘God would not command us to do what we cannot do.’ God gave the Law to Moses, The Ten Commandments, to reveal what man *cannot* do, not what he *can* do.

This premise is unscriptural. God gave the Law for two reasons: To expose sin and to increase it so man would have no excuse for declaring his own righteousness. Why? Because in the context, he does NO righteousness. As Martin Luther said to Erasmus, when you are finished with all your commands and exhortations from the OLD TESTAMENT, I’ll write Ro.3:20 over the top of it all. Why use commands and exhortations from the O.T. to show free will when they were given to prove man’s sinfulness? They exist to show what we *cannot* do rather than what we *can* do. Yes, God gave commands to man which man cannot do. Therefore commandments and exhortations do not prove free will. Nowhere in scripture is there any hint that God gives commands to men to prove they are able to perform them.

This premise is irrational. There may be many reasons for commanding someone to do something, other than the assumption that they can do it. The purpose, as above, may be to show the person his inability to perform the command. Thus, NOTHING can be deduced about abilities from a mere command.

**Introduce the second Arminian objection: Predetermination of Will is a denial of responsibility.** Or, “If not free, then not responsible.” This means if we are unable to make a contrary choice, then our wills are not free. Thus, if we are completely bound in sin so that we can do nothing else but sin, then we are free from responsibility for those sins. This is irrational because the assumption behind this is the idea of neutrality.

The Bible does not present the concept of freedom in this way. According to Scripture, freedom is described as holiness. The *ultimate* freedom is absolute *holiness*. If that is true, then God is the most *free* being in the universe. Otherwise, we must say that God is the most *enslaved* being in the universe because He is the one least neutral on moral issues.

Likewise, if we affirm that bondage of will eliminates responsibility, then the best way to avoid responsibility for our sins to be as bound by them as possible. The drunk who is bound by alcoholism is therefore not responsible for his actions. Should we encourage people to sin all the more therefore, so that they are not responsible any more?

The entire idea of neutrality of will is absurd. If the decisions of the will are not determined by the internal nature of the person, then in what sense can it be said that those decisions are the results of a decision of the person himself? How in fact could be a decision be truly a moral one if it is morally neutral? How can morally be morality at all and be neutral?

**Third Arminian Presupposition: For love to be real, it must have the possibility of being rejected.**

God wants us to love him freely, not by compulsion. Therefore, fallen man must have the ability to love God. It is simply that he chooses to love other things.

Scripture teaches that love for God is a product of His grace. 1Ti.1:14. If grace is necessary to make us love God, then it follows that we had no ability to love him

before the arrival of grace. It also means that grace is not given because we chose to love God. We chose to love God because grace is given. Grace, not a virtue in man, takes the initiative.

This premise is similar the one that says, “Contrary choice is necessary for freedom to exist.” Does God periodically give the saints in heaven an opportunity to hate him so as to be ‘fair’? Did Jesus have some ability to hate the Father? Or was His love for the Father a reflection of what He himself really is?

If faith is a gift of grace, as we saw above, then why is it strange to think that love may not be also a gift of grace?

**Fourth Arminian Objection: “A person cannot be punished for what he cannot help doing”**

If that is the case, then a Christian may not be rewarded for what his new nature compels him to do. Let us not forget that the nature of a person is not a thing he *possesses*. It is something he *is*.

From WCF Chapter 3

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.

2. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

## DOES FOREKNOWLEDGE EXPLAIN ELECTION?

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By

**Roger Smalling, M.A.**

The term 'Election' occurs frequently in the New Testament, referring to God's choice of some for salvation. All Christians hold to a doctrine of election since it is a biblical word. The notion of God choosing some for salvation and not others is so clear throughout the entire Bible that no serious student of Scripture denies it. Contention occurs, however, when we ask what is basis of God's choice? Two answers exist within the Christian community. The first view holds that Election has no basis whatever in man. It is a mystery, hidden forever in God's sovereign will. Though God is not arbitrary in his decrees, nevertheless the decree of Election is a righteous one since no one deserves salvation anyway.

This view is frequently called 'Reformed', because it was prominent during the Reformation period and is held today by those churches who identify their theology as 'Reformed.' The second view claims divine 'foreknowledge' as the basis for Election. God supposedly looks into the future and notices who will accept Christ and 'elects' those.

This view is normally called 'Arminian', after the Dutch pastor in the 16th century, Arminius, who invented the doctrine toward the end of the Reformation period. Because the meaning of foreknowledge, when used of divine decisions, it carries the connotation of 'appointed.' It therefore means something like 'foreordained' in connection with Election. It is the person who is 'foreknown', or 'appointed' to salvation, not some quality in the person. The evidence is:

### **Foreknowledge was determinative and not merely predictive in the coming of Christ.**

1. Acts 2:23, "Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, ...." Here, "determined purpose" and "foreknowledge" are linked by a greek grammatical form called the Granville-Sharp Rule. This makes the two nouns synonymous for emphasis, like saying "right and good" or "evil and wrong." The word "determined" here is formed of the same verb from which "predestination" is derived. Peter declares the coming of Christ was both arranged and appointed by God.

2. I Peter 1:20, "He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world..." The word "foreordained" here is PROGINOSKO - "foreknow". Note that in the case of Christ that God's foreknowledge was more than merely predictive.

It would be absurd to say that the Father merely "foreknew" the coming of Christ. Jesus was appointed to the office of Christ. All circumstances relating to His coming were arranged in advance. History was made for Him, not He for history. Acts 4:27-28 "For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. The same principles apply to the election of the believer.

A favorite text of opponents to Election is I Peter 1:2. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father....." (verse 2). "Foreknowledge" in verse 3 and "foreordained" in verse 20 are the same word, and mean the same thing. In verse 20, it refers to Jesus himself in his appointment as redeemer. In verse 2 it also refers to an appointment, in this case of believers appointed to

obedience. (Notice he says for obedience, not because of obedience.) Peter wishes all to understand that God has appointed the elect for obedience just as he appointed Jesus as redeemer. Any other interpretation fails to explain the usage of the same word in the same context, and would create an absurdity with regard to Christ.

**Foreknowledge means "foreordained" with regard to Israel, because God ignored Israel's persistent rebellion.**

Romans 11:2 "God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew".

What was it that God "foreknew" about the Jews? That they would respond favorably to Him by their free will? Hardly! Notice the context.

"But to Israel he says: 'All day long I have stretched out My Hands to a disobedient and contrary people.'" Romans 10:21 If the foreknowledge view were correct, then God should have rejected the Jews as candidates for Election. Foreseen obedience had nothing to do with God's election of Israel.

1. Lexicon Evidence: 1.Foreknowledge: The Greek terms are PROGINOSKO (verb: to know or ordain before hand) and PROGINOSIS (noun: foreknowledge or foreordination).

It is common for words in any language to have two or more meanings, usually a primary meaning and then a secondary. Such is the case with PROGINOSIS. The primary is "foreknowledge", the secondary is "foreordination". How do we distinguish the difference? It is "foreordained" when Divine appointments and activity are in view, as in the above scriptures. This holds true also to our appointments as believers to the office and function of God's elect.

1.Gingrich's Shorter Lexicon: PROGINOSKO: Know beforehand or choose beforehand.

2.Newman's Greek-English Dictionary: PROGINOSKO: know already; choose from the beginning, choose beforehand.

4. Louw & Nida: PROGINOSKO: Know beforehand or Chose beforehand. There exists no good quality in man to foresee.

**The foreknowledge view normally asserts that God foresees one of several qualities in man which attract His grace.**

Was it faith He foresaw? Hardly! Faith itself is a work of grace based on election according to Acts 13:47. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. Acts 18:27 those who had believed through grace; Jesus Christ himself is the source of our faith. 1Tim. 1:14 And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Was it perhaps our sanctification that God foresaw? It depends on who does the sanctifying. According to Jude 1, God the Father does it. To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: Circular reasoning would come into play here if foreknowledge of our sanctification were the cause of election.

What about a willing heart? Paul explicitly denies this in Romans 9:16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. Could some goodness or

righteousness in man be the quality God foresaw? Paul goes to great lengths in Romans 3 to kill this notion. There is none who does good, no, not one." "There is none righteous, no, not one;" V.10 "There is none who does good, no, not one." V.12 Was it because God foresaw some would seek him and some would not? "There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God." Ro.3:11 It is persons God foresees (appoints), not some good quality in them. Because foreknowledge does not tempt people to blame God for unfairness. Any doctrine which fails to do this must be rejected according to Romans 9:19-20.

The very reason why many accept foreknowledge as an explanation of Election is actually strong reason for rejecting it. We call this a 'paradox proof.' Its intent is to refute the other view, but it refutes itself instead. Foreknowledge does not lead a person to ask "Then why does God still blame us? For who resists his will?" verse 19 NIV. If Paul felt that foreknowledge were a factor, then why didn't he say so instead of concluding that it is none of man's business to ask such questions? "But who are you, Oh man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, Why did you make me like this? Verse 20 NIV. To discover which of these two viewpoints, foreknowledge or Election, is the correct one, we need only to ask ourselves which of these two seems to be the least "fair", and we have the correct one.

### **The Arminian foreknowledge perverts the literal meaning of Election.**

1. "Election" means chosen of God, not chosen of self. Many verses confirm this such as: Mark 13:20 "And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days." I Thessalonians 1:4 "knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God." Colossians 3:12 "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved," Titus 1:1 "...according to the faith of God's elect..." The foreknowledge view renders meaningless the scriptural examples of Election which the Apostles gave to prove the sovereignty of God's choice.

Examples: 1. The 7000 who did not bow the knee to Baal. Romans 11: 4-5 "But what does the divine response say to him? 'I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.' Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Notice that God did not merely "find" 7000. He "reserved" them. It was He who was in charge of their choosing, not they themselves. Paul uses this incident as an example of election by grace. If this is not the intent of the passage, then what purpose does the illustration serve? 1. Jacob and Esau. Romans 9:11- "(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)," The notion of self-election is absurd.

**Foreknowledge assumes that man's will is free with regard to his ability to accept Christ and submit to God's law.** The Bible denies this. 1. Man's will is bound in sin and cannot submit to God without His grace.

Romans 3:11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. Romans 8:7 "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Romans 9:16 "So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy." 1. Coming to Christ is a gift of the Father.

John 6:37 "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me,..." John 6:44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; John 17:9 "I pray for them. I do not pray for the

world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours." 1.Faith is a gift from God, not something generated by the believer's own will.

Romans 12:3 "...as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. " Philippians 1:29 "For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake," Hebrews 12:2,"looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,..." 1.Repentance is a gift, not something man is able to generate in himself without grace.

Acts 11:18 "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life." II Timothy 2:25 "...if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth,..." Foreknowledge renders the term "predestination" meaningless. It makes it passive rather than the active verb that it is.

"Predestination" is the greek word PROORIZO. PRO means "before" and "ORIZO" means to establish boundaries. Thus it means "to establish the boundaries beforehand". God set up the limitations of the circumstances surrounding our lives to ensure the fulfillment of our foreordination as the Elect.

If God merely "foreknew" who would accept Him, why would He to set up any limits beforehand? This proves the choices were His and not ours.

"Foreordain" refers to our appointment as His elect, whereas "Predestinate" refers to the outworking of God's elective decree.

Do the following verses sound passive? Ephesians 1:5 "having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will," Romans 8:29 "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." Romans 8:29 merits special comment. The term "foreknew" here carries the meaning of "foreordain" because of the context. In verse 28 Paul has just explained that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose. But what is the grounds for believing this? God has already done His appointing and preparing before the world began, to ensure the accomplishment of our salvation. That's why we can believe that everything works together for our good. The Lexicon of Louw & Nida translate this verse as: 'those whom he had chosen beforehand, he had already decided should become like his Son' Ro 8:29.

**Foreknowledge assumes that God is either unwilling or unable to transgress the limits of man's will.**

Bible examples to the contrary are: 1.Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel 4:28-35 As a result of this Babylonian king's pride, God removed his sanity for seven years, his reason, "free will" and all. Did God ask permission to do this? Nebuchadnezzar learned that "...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?" 1.The Antichrist and the Ten Nations. Rev.17:17 "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." 2.The Egyptians, "And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen." Exodus 14:17 1.The Kings of the Earth. "The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes."

Proverbs 21:1 Foreknowledge puts the ultimate choice on man rather than God, which the Scriptures categorically deny.

Romans 9:16 "So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy." John 15:16 "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you..." Foreknowledge implies that God's control over all things is merely passive rather than active.

Isaiah 46:10 "My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure," Philippians 3:21 "...according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.." Hebrews 1:3 ".....upholding all things by the word of His power." Foreknowledge assumes that faith precedes election. This is an error.

1. We believe because we are His sheep. It is not our faith that makes us sheep. John 10:26 "But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep,..." 2. Ordaining to eternal life comes before faith, not vice versa. Acts 13:48 "And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed." 3. The promise of salvation is available only to as many as the Lord calls. Acts 2:39 "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call." 4. Jesus reveals the Father to those whom He wills to do so.

Matthew 12:27 "...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." 1. See John 5:21, 6:37, 44, 45, 65; 17:6, 9, 11, 20.

**Conclusion:** The term foreknowledge supports the doctrine of sovereign election, rather than explains it away. When used regarding divine activity, especially in connection with election, it refers to the appointment of a person rather than the result of a divine attraction to a positive quality in the person. The Bible teaches election by the sovereign grace of God, without regard to any foreseen condition in man.

**Excerpts From Introduction To  
Owen's "Death of Death"**

[Return]

**By**

**J.I. Packer**

(Note: A Calvinist who does not possess Owen's book may consider his library incomplete. It is *the* definitive work on the subject.)

Christ did not win a hypothetical salvation for hypothetical believers, a mere possibility of salvation for any who might possibly believe, but a real salvation for his own chosen people.

Its saving power does not depend on faith being added to it; its saving power is such that faith flows from it.

The extent of the atonement-involves the further question of its nature, since if it was offered to save some who will finally perish, then it cannot have been a transaction securing the actual salvation of all for whom it was designed. But, says Owen, this is precisely the kind of transaction that the Bible says it was.

Without realizing it, we have during the past century bartered the gospel for a substitute product which, though it looks similar in points of detail, is as a whole a decidedly different thing...

Whereas the chief aim of the old was to teach men to worship God, the concern of the new seems limited to making them feel better.

The new gospel, by asserting Universal Redemption... Compels itself to cheapen grace and the Cross by denying that the Father and son are Sovereign in salvation; for it assures us that after God and Christ have done all that they can, or will, it depends finally on each man's choice whether God's purpose to save him is realized or not. This position has two unhappy results. The first is that it compels us to misunderstand the significance of the gracious invitations of Christ in the Gospel; not as expressions of the tender patience of a mighty Sovereign, but as the pathetic pleadings of impotent desire; and so the enthroned Lord is suddenly metamorphosized into a weak, futile figure tapping forlornly at the door of the human heart, which he is powerless to open. This is a shameful dishonor to the Christ of the New Testament . . . If it tells us that we are, after all, what sin taught us to think we were-masters of our fate, captain of our souls, . . . it can hardly be wondered at that the converts of the new gospel are so often both irreverent and religious . . .

And when we come to preach the gospel, our false preconceptions make us say just the opposite of what we intend. We want, rightly, to proclaim Christ as savior; yet we end up saying that Christ, having made salvation possible, has left us to become our own saviors. And it comes about in this way. We want to magnify the saving grace of God in the saving power of Christ. So we declare that God's redeeming love extends to every man, and that Christ has died to save every man, and we proclaim that the glory of the divine mercy is to be measured by these facts. And then in order to avoid universalism, we have to depreciate all that we were previously extolling, and to explain that, after all, nothing that God and Christ have done can save us unless we add something to it; the decisive factor which actually saves us is our own believing. What we

say comes to this-that Christ saves us with our help: and what that means, when one thinks it out is this-that we save ourselves with Christ's help. This is a hollow anticlimax.

## **THE FATHER GAVE CERTAIN ONES TO JESUS TO SAVE**

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John 6:37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.

John 6:39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.

John 10:29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.

John 17:2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.

John 17:6 "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word.

John 17:9 I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.

John 17:24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

John 18:9 that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none."

## What Is Preservation?

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The following is an essay based on a response to a question by my nephew Paul, a fledgling minister. He asked me if I believe in the doctrine of 'once saved always saved', and what would be the rationale for my answer.

Dear Paul:

Your letter came as a pleasant surprise. Pleasant for various reasons. Not only are we interested in your progress and activities, but it is a pleasure for me to deal with theological subjects.

I'll now attempt to answer in part your theological question. The difficulty with addressing questions to theology-buffs is the danger of over-kill. I shall try to restrain myself from giving you more than you asked for, but that effort will probably be unsuccessful. This is due not only to my temperament, but also to the nature of the subject. It is my tendency to over-teach. Please forgive this on the grounds that it is the least of my sins.

Before I can answer your question on the specific texts, it will be essential to define some terms and establish some parameters. The doctrine you described as "once saved always saved" is more precisely termed Eternal Security. The opposing view is known as Arminianism. Neither of these terms is adequate for various reasons. For one, Arminianism really refers to an entire system of theology of which the loss of salvation is only one aspect. Eternal Security was a term used a lot by the reformers, but they did not mean it in the sense in which baptists use it today. If you don't mind, I shall sometimes refer to the Eternal Security view as the "baptist" view.

These two views are hotly disputed, as you know. What most do not realize, however, is that these two are not the only options. In fact, there is a third view, called The Doctrine of the Preservation and Perseverance of the Saints. This "third" view is the one that I hold, and is the one the reformers held, as well as reformed churches today such as Presbyterian, Christian Reformed, etc.

It is perhaps incorrect to call this a "third" view, because in fact, the other two views are historical perversions of this one, and developed out of it.

Now to define some terms:

**Eternal Security:** The doctrine that a born-again christian cannot, under any conditions, lose his salvation. Once he has made the free-will choice to be born-again, God deposits the gift of eternal life in him and will not remove it under any conditions, regardless of conduct or apostasy from the faith. Backslidden christians will go to heaven.

**Arminianism:** The doctrine that a born-again christian may, through reversion to a life of sin and/or apostatizing from the faith, lose his salvation and be eternally lost.

**Preservation and Perseverance:** The doctrine that God has an elect and justified people, chosen from before the foundation of the world, whom He preserves from ultimately and finally falling into the conditions that would jeopardize their eternal salvation. Though Preservation is a gift of the grace of God, He uses practical, concrete means to ensure it. The primary means He

uses is the believers' own efforts at perseverance, which God stimulates through exhortations, warnings, chastisements, the Word, fellowship, and others. I shall sometimes refer to this as the Reformed view.

Note that Preservation and Perseverance agrees with both of the other views in some respects, but disagrees in others. {1} It agrees with the Baptist view in that born-again believers do not lose their salvation. It states that conditions do exist by which that could happen. A life of sin and/or apostasy are fully legitimate conditions by which a believer can indeed lose his salvation, and must beware that he does not. But it affirms that God preserves His people from fulfilling that condition. {2}

It also disagrees with the Baptist view as to what is the basis of the believer's hope. The Baptist view bases it on the believer's choice to be born-again, and God then gives him eternal life. Preservation and Perseverance bases it on the elective decree of God and on Justification. (Justification means that God imputes the perfect righteousness of Christ to a believer, and thus refuses to accept accusations against him from anyone. ){3} The Reformed view feels that the Baptist view places its hope on the will and activity of man, rather than on God.

In fact, this latter criticism can be leveled against the Arminian view also. Thus, the Reformed view affirms that, paradoxically, both the other views commit the same basic error, but from different directions.

Preservation and Perseverance agrees with the Arminian view that conditions do indeed exist by which a christian can lose his salvation, and that the responsibility lies squarely on the shoulders of the believers to persevere via the means that God has provided. It disagrees with the Arminians in their assumption that this proves that such a thing as loss of salvation has actually happened to any believer. The Reformed view states that this is a logic error. Just because a thing is hypothetically possible does not prove that it has ever happened or ever will happen. A fundamental principle of logic is that hypotheses are not facts. Preservation and Perseverance also disagrees with Arminianism because it leads to a false gospel, i.e., a doctrine that salvation ultimately depends, in part, on good works. Any such gospel is apostasy. {4}

It's easy to see why the Arminian accusation that security of salvation provides a license to sin, falls heavier on the Baptist view than the Reformed. After all, the former deny that sin and apostasy represent any real danger.

It's also easy to see why, if Preservation and Perseverance is correct, that warnings to believers about the consequences of apostasy and sin exist in the same Bible with promises of eternal security. God is not kidding when He gives such warnings. There is no need to explain them away. The dangers are real. But neither is He fudging on His covenant promises of preservation. {5} Doesn't the Bible teach that God is Sovereign, and that man is also responsible for his actions? The reformers felt so, and did not feel uncomfortable with either line of verses.

If that's so, then we may ask if the verses you listed are really "hard to understand". {6}

Remember, I said before that I needed to establish some parameters along with definitions. We've had some definitions, but now we need a parameter.

You already know that the Bible does not say literally, "Christians can/cannot lose their salvation". The resolution has to do therefore with conclusions drawn from the available evidence.

Is it legitimate to say “the Bible says such and such”, based on a conclusion not directly stated in scripture?

Yes. Otherwise, we would have to abandon the doctrines of the Trinity, most of evidence for the deity of Christ, whatever view of end-time prophecy we hold, and a lot of other things. Views not directly stated can be valid doctrine, assuming of course, that they incorporate all of the available evidence. {7}

The question then, is, Of the three options, which best incorporates the sum of the Biblical evidence on this subject?

Now for some specific text analysis, as requested.

I Pet. 2:20-22

1. Part of the answer has to do with what I said above. These verses may be taken as an exhortation to avoid apostatizing and the consequences thereof. They do not prove that such has actually happened to anyone. This answer assumes that the verses refer to born-again christians.

2. However, I have a problem with the above answer. The problem is grammatical. Note the pronouns “they” & “them”. We know from grammar that a pronoun replaces a previously stated noun. If we carefully trace these pronouns back to their origin, we land on verse 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.”

Observe that he is referring to false prophets who have infiltrated themselves into the church, professing to be believers, but in actual fact are reprobates in disguise.

But what about “escaping the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ”? No problem. Monks have done that for centuries without being saved. The knowledge of Christ plus a strong will and hard work has produced external righteousness in many who are now in hell.

Heb. 10:26-31

1. Hebrews occupies a special place. To comment on these verses, and those in Ch.6, we have to look at the purpose of the book as a whole.

The writer was dealing with a special first-century problem among converts from judaism. Some had one foot in the synagogue and the other in the church. They wanted judaism and christianity too. They came to church only occasionally.{8} It was really hard to tell if they were saved or not. The whole intent of the writer is to warn that they couldn’t walk that kind of fence. Unless they left the foundation principles of judaism, and committed themselves fully to Christ, there was no salvation for them. They can’t be saved by a mixture of law and grace, because such a mixture is a contradiction in terms. The above text addresses the danger of these people without the writer passing judgment on whether they are saved or not.

2. If this text means that genuine believers lose their salvation, then we have a problem with v.26. The text proves more than the Arminian intends, because assuming he is talking to born-again people, then we must conclude that if a christian sins after he is saved, then he can never be

forgiven! This makes backslidding the unforgivable sin, without scriptural warrant. But no Arminian believes this. Thus, he can't use this text to prove his view.

The author is making a point in the most forceful way he knows how. He shows that just as a Jew in the Old Testament was lost without mercy if he rejected the Law of Moses, so under the New, if he rejected Christ, he could expect no more mercy than under the Law.

How does one "trample" the Son of God underfoot and insult the Spirit of Grace? These half-baked Jews were doing this by returning to the synagogue, and the Law. This insulted Grace and counted as "common" the blood of Christ by implying that the Cross was not enough for their salvation.

The text is not intended to deal with the issue of backslidden Christians, but rather with Jews who professed to be believers but would not abandon dependence on Judaism.

Heb. 6:4-6

1. The passage must be taken in the context of the chapter as a whole. Note that it can, and must, be divided into two distinct sections, separated by V.9:

But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.

The people from V. 9 to the end of the chapter have the following characteristics: They are beloved of God (a term never used except in reference to God's people); they are saved; they minister to the saints, work for God and show love; they have a sure and steadfast hope, and are partakers of the immutable covenant of Grace.

It is evident that the people in the last part of the chapter are not the same as those in the first part. In the last part, he is obviously talking about the saved. It follows therefore, that the people in the first part are NOT saved.

The Arminian assumes that V.1-8 refers to genuine Christians. This cannot be the case since genuine Christians are the topic in V.9-20. I believe that the "elementary principles of Christ" do not refer to doctrines distinctive to Christianity for the following reasons:

A) All of these doctrines are also Jewish, taught clearly in the O.T. The elementary principles refer therefore to these basic teachings of Judaism which Jews knew already. The problem with some Jewish converts to Christianity was that they did not want to leave these principles to go on into a full commitment to Christ, and thus be saved. Going on into "perfection" (maturity) would mean entering into the things in 6:9-20. These Jews had been "enlightened" (but not converted), had "tasted" (but not swallowed), had been "partakers" of the Holy Spirit, (but not regenerate).{9}

B) Context. See 5:12-14. Notice in 5:12, the phrase "first principles of the oracles of God". This seems to refer to the basic points of the priesthood, the subject of the chapter, which these Jews should have understood. This seems to confirm that the "first principles" of 6:1 do not refer to distinctively Christian teachings.

It seems peculiar to me that Arminians refer to Hebrews for support, when this book is in fact written to demonstrate the certainty and efficacy of Christ's High Priestly ministry for all those effectually called. Heb. 9:14-15. Hebrews was written to give security to the sincere, while at the same time terrifying phony professors. It appears a case of not seeing the forest because of the trees.

That's enough for now. I relished the opportunity to indulge in some theology, and hope it hasn't bored you.

Love,  
Roger

FOOTNOTES\*\*\*\*\*

{1} This is one of the reasons why Reformed theologians tend to view both Arminian and Baptist theology in general as shallow-minded and simplistic; failing to view the totality of Scripture as a whole, not incorporating Biblical teaching as a unified system. That attitude lacks humility but I think there is truth in it.

{2} Note Jer. 34:40 as an example of how God uses fear as a means of preservation. 'And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me.

{3} See Romans Church. 4 on the idea of imputation. Also, see Rom.8:33 on the idea that God accepts no accusations against His elect and justified people. Note also in 8:30 how many of those justified, get glorified.

{4} Arminians always emphatically deny that they believe in a faith + works salvation, but none have shown convincing reasons why not.

{5} Permit me to suggest that you take a complete concordance, and look up the word Preserve and its derivatives (preservation, preserving, preserveth, etc.)

{6} Don't worry, I'll get to them in detail in a minute.

{7} In theology, we call this process "Inferential Theology". (An inference is an unavoidable conclusion based on evidence. The difficulty with Inferential Theology is that frequently people draw conclusions from verses by reading into it assumptions that cannot be logically deduced them. A case in point is the Arminian assumption that a command to do a thing proves the ability to do it; or, an exhortation to not fall away proves that some have fallen away.)

{8} Thus the exhortation to not neglect the assembling of ourselves together.

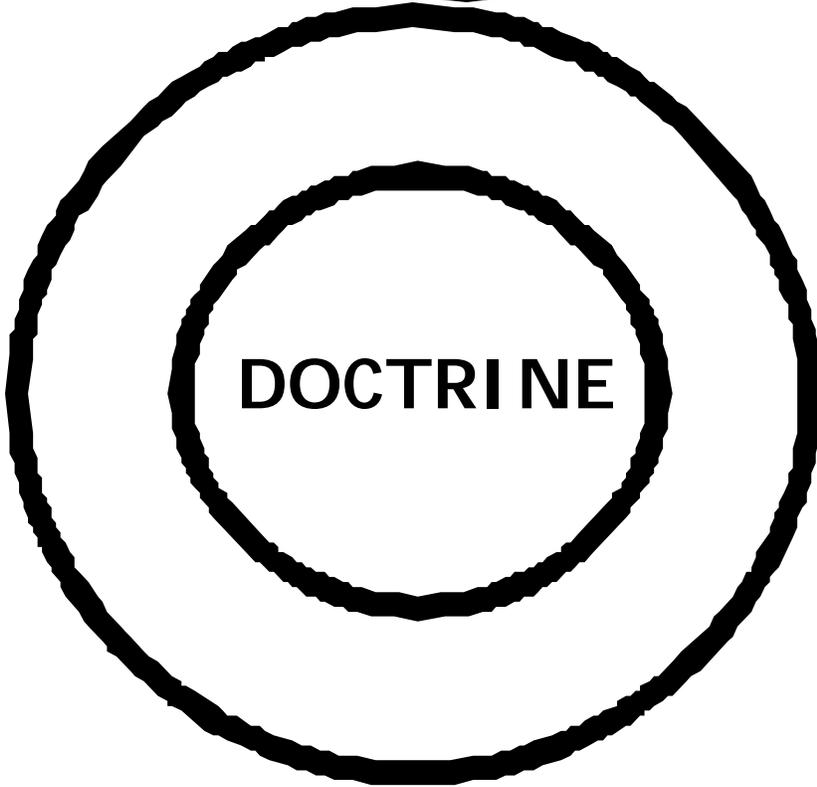
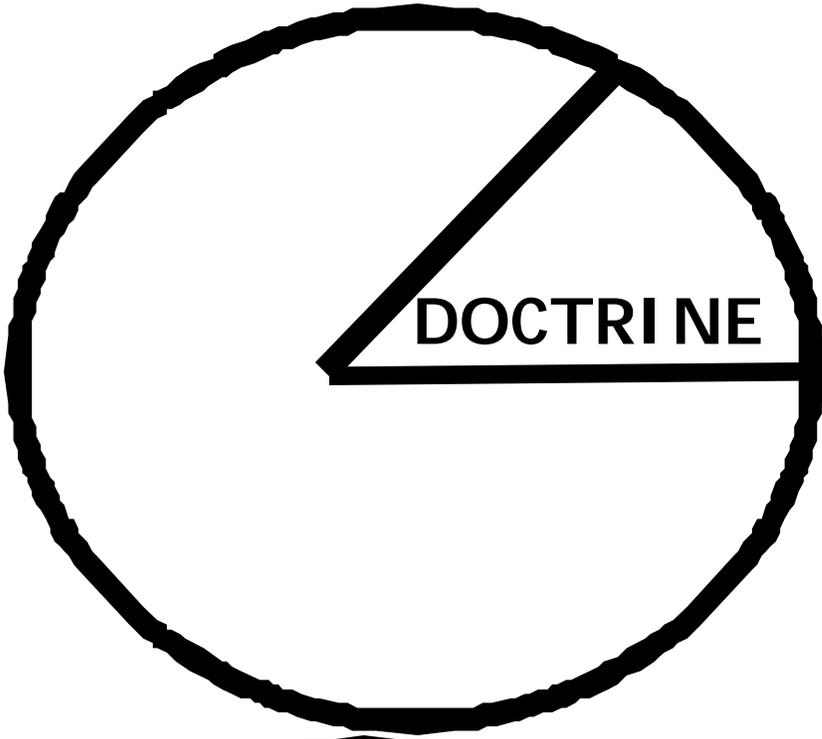
{9} The notion that it is impossible to experience anything of the Holy Spirit without being regenerate is refuted by Mt.7:21-23.

## **WHY I AM EXCITED ABOUT THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE**

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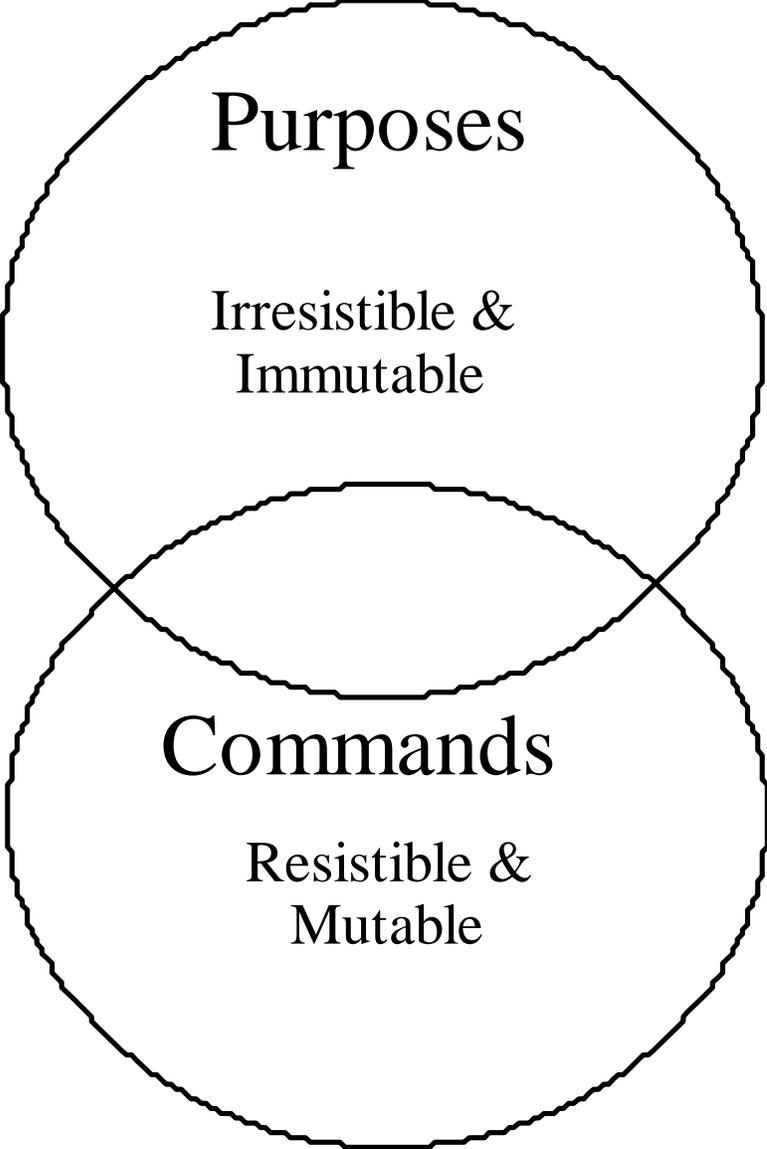
- 1. The strongest confirmation of the Christian faith.**
- 2. They give unity to the Bible**
- 3. They accommodate more Biblical data.**
- 4. They are provable and defensible.**
- 5. They contain no logic fallacies.**
- 6. They make sense of many obscure passages.**
- 7. The only possible basis for security of salvation.**
- 8. They silence the voice of self-condemnation.**

[Return]



**IS DOCTRINE CENTRAL?  
OR ONLY A *PART* OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?**

[Return]



# Purposes

Irresistible &  
Immutable

# Commands

Resistible &  
Mutable

## PURPOSES AND COMMANDS

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# SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD THE THEOLOGICAL BASES

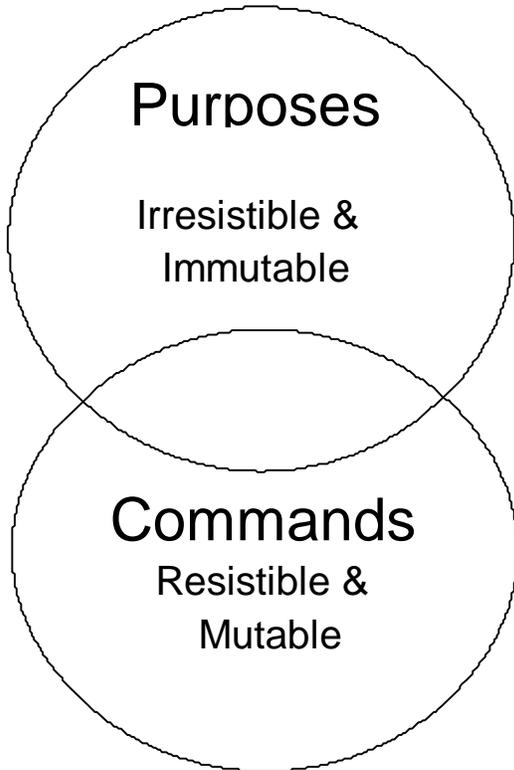
## 1. Divine Attributes:

**Omniscience: GOD KNOWS EVERYTHING**

**Omnipotence: GOD CAN DO EVERYTHING**

## 2. Immutability

## 3. Divine Decrees



## 4. God Owns Everything

**Arminianism**

**Calvinism**



Freedom of the Will

Total Depravity

Conditional Election

Unconditional Election

Universal Atonement

Limited Atonement

Resistible Grace

Irresistible Grace

Loss of the Salvation

Preservation of the Elect

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## **TOTAL DEPRAVITY MEANS**

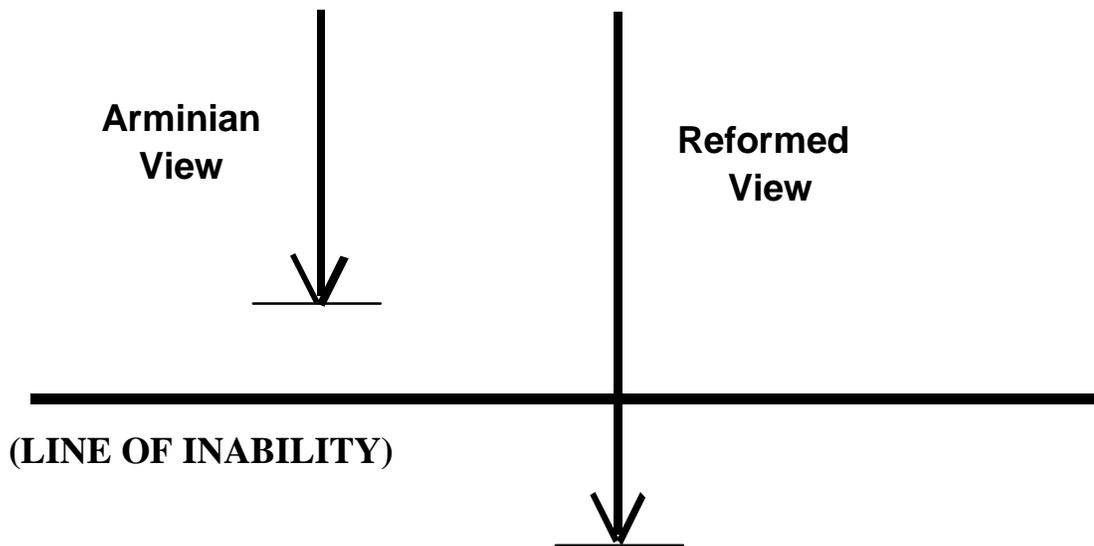
- 1. All faculties of the unregenerate are under the control and dominion of sin.**
- 2. The will of the unregenerate is not morally neutral and is also controlled by sin.**
- 3. The unregenerate are incapable of willing or doing anything that could attract the grace of God or contribute to their salvation.**
- 4. None of the works of the unregenerated are acceptable to God.**

## **"TOTAL DEPRAVITY" DOES NOT MEAN**

- 1. The unregenerate are as bad as they can be.**
- 2. Man has no free will in any sense of the word.**
- 3. The unregenerate possess no virtues or sincere religious devotion in any sense.**
- 4. Have lost certain faculties such as conscience, will or reason.**

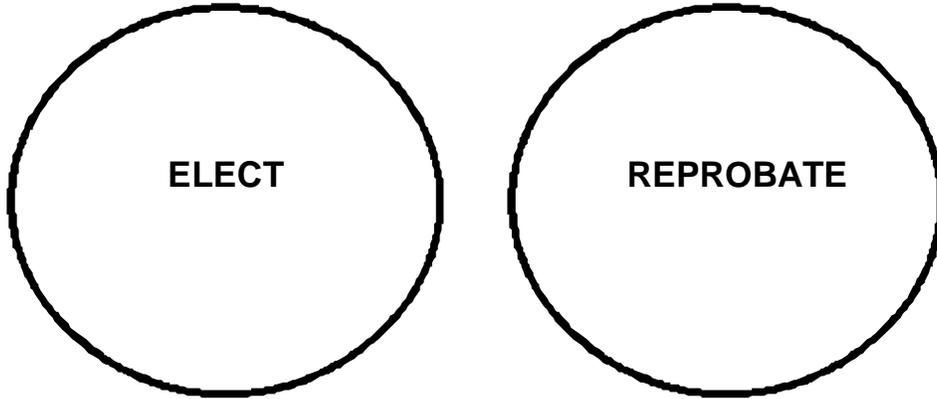
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# HOW FAR DID ADAM FALL?

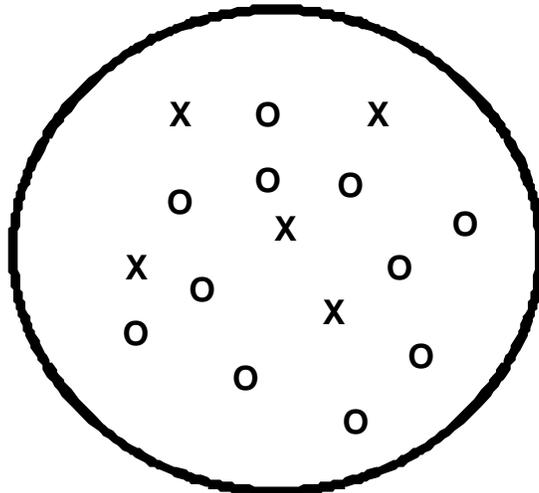


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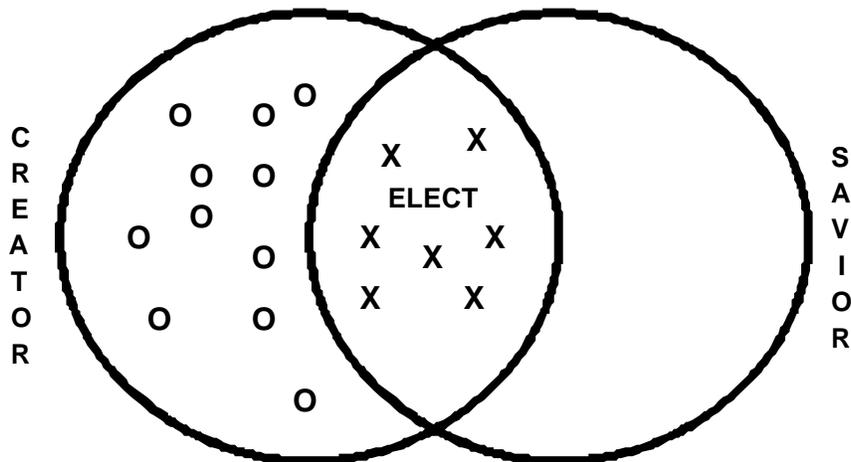
**GOD LOVES HIS ELECT  
AND HATES THE REPROBATE**



**LOVES HATES  
GOD LOVES EVERYONE EQUALLY**



**GOD LOVES EVERYBODY  
BUT NOT EQUALLY**

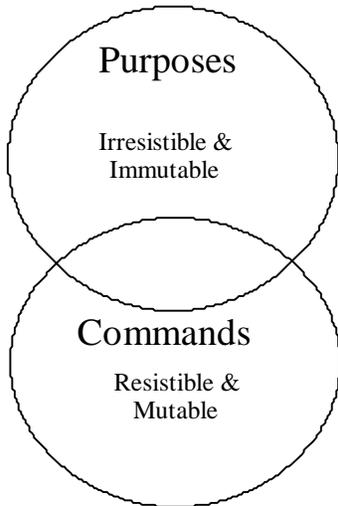




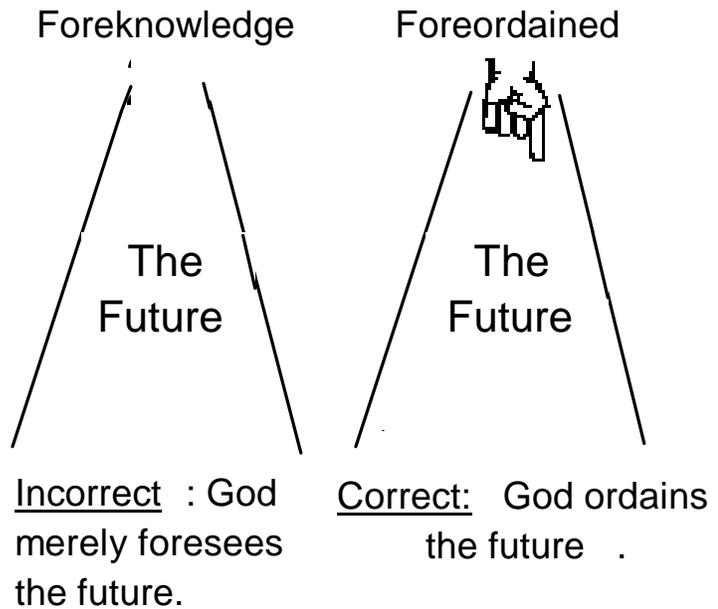
# SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD THE THEOLOGICAL BASES

## 1. Divine Attributes: Omniscience-Omnipotence

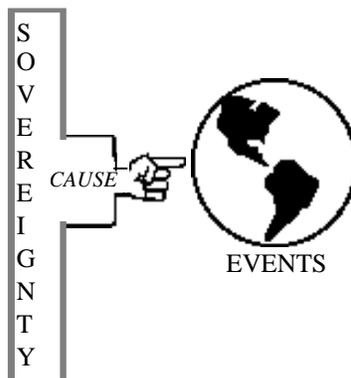
## 2. Immutability



## 3. Divine Decrees



## 4. God Owns Everything



EFFECT

CAUSE

Acts 13:48

Believing

Appointment to eternal life.

Acts 18:27

Believing

Grace

Heb. 12:2

Faith

Jesus

Phil. 1:29:

Believe in Christ

Granted by God

Jn.6:65

Come To Christ

Given by the Father

## **LOGIC FALLACIES REGARDING FREE WILL**

**A command to do a thing proves the ability to do it.**

**Predetermination of Will is a denial of responsibility.**

**For love to real, it must have the possibility of being rejected.**

**A person cannot be punished for what he cannot help doing**

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## **PRINCIPLES OF JUSTIFICATION**

**Principle One: Justification is based on the idea of Covenant. Gal.3**

**Principle Two: God requires the righteousness of the Law to be fulfilled in the believer.  
Rom.8:4**

**Principle Three: Christ is our substitute under the Law. Gal.4:4**

**Principle Four: Imputation of the righteousness of Christ through faith.  
Rom.4**

**Principle Five: Justification is permanent.  
Rom.8:30**

## Christ Died For...

**His People:** *“... and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” Mt. 1:21.*

**His Sheep:** *“...and I lay down my life for the sheep.” Jn. 10:15*

**His Church:** *“...the church of God which He has purchased with His own blood.” Acts20:28*

**His Elect:** *“Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.” Ro.8:32-33.*

**Those Who Participate In His Covenant:** *“...He is the mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, ....that those who are called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.” Heb.9:15*

**Those For Whom Christ Intercedes:** *“I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given me out of the world for they are yours.” Jn.17:9.*

**Those The Father Gave To Christ:** *“Of those whom you gave Me I have lost none.” Jn18:9*

**CAUSE**

**EFFECT**

Jn.3:3: Born again

**See the Kingdom of God**

Jer.24:7 God gives a new heart

**That they may know Him**

Ez. 16:62,63 God confirms His  
Covenant

**And He will forgive their sins**

Ez. 36:26,27 Gives a new heart

**Obedience**

James1:18: He, of His own will,

**Born again**

Ps.65:4: Chosen by God

**Drawn to Him**

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**SECURITY OF SALVATION  
COMPARISON CHART**

	<b>Arminian</b>	<b>Baptist</b>	<b>Catholic</b>	<b>Reformed</b>
<b>Basis of Security</b>	Level of Sanctification & obedience	Having made a 'decision' for Christ.	Personal Righteousness & Obedience To Church Rites	Election and Justification
<b>Possible Causes of Loss of Salvation</b>	Apostacy: Certain Serious Sins	None	Apostacy From Church; Mortal Sins	Final Apostasy (Though God preserves Elect from this)
<b>Absolute Security of Salvation?</b>	None	Yes	None	Yes

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1. This refers to the concept that the descendants of a person inherit the blessings or curses of an ancestor. This is a frequent Old Testament concept. The entire Abraham Covenant is based on it.

2. Illustration from Tim Keller, Pastor of Redeemer PC, New York City.

3. It is interesting to note, therefore, that it is incorrect to say that faith is the basis of justification. The basis is the imputed righteousness of Christ. Faith is simply the means by which the basis is received. But we let that pass when Christians say it, because we know that they really mean to deny works as a basis.