

Is Calvinism or Arminianism Biblical?

A Biblical Explanation of the Doctrine of Election.

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Is Calvinism or Arminianism Biblical?

One of the most perplexing problems for the teacher of God's Word is to explain the relationship between the doctrine of election and the doctrine of salvation by grace. These two doctrines are widely debated by conservative Christians who divide themselves into two opposing camps, the "Calvinists" and the "Arminians." To understand the problem let us look at the various positions held, the terms used, a brief history of the matter, and then present a biblical solution that correctly addresses the issue and avoids the unbiblical extremes of both the Calvinists and the Arminians.

Introduction to Calvinism

John Calvin, the Swiss reformer (1509-1564) a theologian, drafted the system of Soteriology (study of salvation) that bears his name. The term "Calvinism" refers to doctrines and practices that stemmed from the works of John Calvin. The tenants of modern Calvinism are based on the works of Calvin that have been expanded by his followers. These beliefs became the distinguishing characteristics of the Reformed churches and some Baptists. Simply stated, this view claims that God predestined or elected some to be saved and others to be lost. Those elected to salvation are decreed by God to receive salvation and cannot "resist God's grace." However, those that God elected to be lost are born condemned eternally to the Lake of Fire and He will not allow them be saved.

Calvinists are divided into several groups, the extremist called, "Hyper," the "Five Point" Calvinists and the "Moderate Calvinists." The Hyper and Five Point Calvinists holds to the five points of Calvinism, which is stated in the acrostic below. The Moderate Calvinist may accept one or more of these five points, but not all. The Hyper or Five Point Calvinistic teaching of "Limited Atonement" is generally rejected by the Moderate Calvinist.

This controversy began during the Reformation, in the 16th Century, and grew out of the teachings of John Calvin who taught that some men were predestined by God to receive salvation and others were predestined to condemned hell. Those that God, in His sovereignty, has chosen to be saved will be saved by God's "irresistible grace." The man "elected" by God to salvation cannot reject salvation. The rest of humanity, not chosen by God to receive everlasting life, has no opportunity to be saved. According to the Hyper-Calvinist, God in the past has decreed their damnation. Today this theology is found in what is called "Covenant" or "Reformed" theology. This is taught by Presbyterians, Reformed churches and a number of Baptists

TULIP

This teaching is referred to as "Five Point Calvinism." The five points are represented by using the acrostic "TULIP."

T - Total depravity of man.

U - Unconditional election.

L - Limited atonement.

I - Irresistible grace.

P - Perseverance of the saints.

Basically, Calvinism teaches that a man is totally depraved, and unable, or has no capacity to receive salvation. The Calvinist assumes that man's free will has no part in his coming to Christ and receiving salvation. He teaches that God, exercising His sovereignty, first elected and decreed certain individuals to salvation in time past. Christ's death was not for all people, but only for the elect who would be saved. God then extended "irresistible" grace to those He elected, meaning those that God decreed or predestined to be saved. Therefore, man had nothing to do with his receiving salvation because God choose to save him and caused him to believe. [\(1\)](#)

There are many strong objections to Calvinism. The main one is it teaches that God chose to save some and chose not to save others. Those who reject Calvinism contend that this contradicts the biblical teaching that Jesus Christ died and paid the sin debt of all men (1 John 2:2); and that God ". . . *will have all men to be saved*" (1 Tim. 2:4); and that God's nature is to love, which means to seek the best for all men (1 John 4:7-8, 16).

Calvinism correctly teaches that once saved, a person cannot lose

their salvation. It uses the term "perseverance of the saints" instead of using the better term the "security of the believer." The word "perseverance" means to "continue on a course of action" or refers to steadfastness. This is a minor point, but it should be stated that a believer can and does sin and can sin to the point that God will take the person's life. The believer is assured that he is "secure" in Christ and will go to heaven. More will be said about this later. Once saved, a person cannot be lost because he did nothing to earn his salvation and cannot do anything to keep it or lose it. Salvation biblically is totally the work of God and once saved a person is kept secure by the power of God unto salvation.

God said: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:3-5).

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."(Ephesians 4:30)

Arminianism

In the 17th Century, James Arminius, was the first to formerly address this issue. He attempted to ". . . modify Calvinism so that, according to him, God might not be considered the author of sin, nor man an automaton in the hand of God." [\(2\)](#)

He presented the view that God was indeed sovereign and elected men to be saved. He taught election was based on God's foreknowledge of who would by faith accept Christ and who would reject Him. All men, he taught, could be saved on the condition they exercised their wills and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. He rejected the idea that atonement was limited to only a few and that God was the author of sin. Arminius insisted that Christ died for all men and saves all who receive Him by faith.

Arminius was doctrinally weak in the area of the biblical doctrine of the "Eternal Security of the Believer." Eternal security means that once a person is saved, he cannot lose his salvation. Arminius said he thought the Scriptures were unclear and the Bible seemed to teach believers could lose their salvation. [\(3\)](#) Most, who identify themselves as Arminians, believe that a person can be saved and afterwards lose their salvation.

Just as those that followed John Calvin, carrying his teachings to

extremes, many who succeeded James Arminius did not stop with his views, but carried the matter a step further, teaching that man had a part in salvation. (4) The Arminians, as they became known, taught that man took part with God in salvation. The natural conclusion of this train of thought was that salvation could be lost. If through a man's efforts he could acquire salvation, through his actions he could also lose it. The belief can be expressed this way; Christ made the down payment on our salvation on the cross, however once a person is saved he has to keep up the payments through being faithful and with good works. This serious error therefore bases salvation on the ability of a person to merit their salvation by their good works. Clearly the Bible condemns this false teaching: *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast"* (Eph. 2:8-9). Is Arminianism Biblical?

Arminianism teaches that man has a spark of divinity in him and thus he can respond to the Gospel, within his own ability and be saved. Yet, the Bible says all men are sinners, without merit and saved by God's grace apart from any works of man. Man cannot will himself to be saved nor has the ability, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, to respond to God.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23)

"But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." (Galatians 3:22)

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6)

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." (2 Corinthians 5:14)

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12)

God is clear in stating that man is a sinner unable to save himself. Therefore to say that within man is a spark of divinity or goodness is to contradict what God has plainly stated. The Arminian who teaches that man

has a part in his salvation is making the same mistake as the Calvinist in using the faulty human reasoning in interpreting God's word. God says, ". . . *the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*" (Romans 8:7). The carnal man has nothing to offer God for his salvation. God said that the natural man is "dead in trespasses and sin." (Eph. 2:1, Col. 2:13) That which is dead has no life and cannot do anything for itself.

Romans 10:13 says "*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*" It must be concluded that if "whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" then, in receiving salvation, that person must be given the capacity to answer the call from the Lord. That is the work of the Holy Spirit who brings conviction to the heart of man and thus supernaturally makes a man able to respond. Verse 17 says, "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*" Therefore it is clear that when a man hears the word of God, God enables him to believe and accept it. Nowhere does the Bible teach that man has a "spark of divinity" and man is meriting salvation by consenting to the truth the Holy Spirit enables him to understand and receive. Salvation is a free gift offered to man. (See Eph. 2:8-9, Rom. 5:15-16, 18)

The Greek word "grace" is "*charis*" and it means "a gift one receives without any merit of his own." Thus receiving God's grace, through salvation by faith, is not a "work" of man by which one merits salvation. It is simply a matter of responding to the urging of the Holy Spirit and of believing in the truth that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world and that by simple faith in Him, and His work alone, one can be saved.

The Bible teaches that when a man is saved he receives everlasting life. The Arminian limits the meaning of the word eternal. He interjects that salvation is eternal only if a man maintains his faithfulness by his good works. Therefore the Arminian concludes that the word "eternal" does not mean "everlasting." This plainly violates the normal and correct meaning of the word. Something that is eternal continues forever uninterrupted. If some action can be stopped or discontinued it cannot be said to be eternal.

The Arminian also falsely concludes that in receiving the gift of salvation he has done so because he innately has the ability to respond. He fails to recognize that man, being spiritually dead, cannot respond in his own ability, but can only believe and receive the truth when supernaturally enabled by the Holy Spirit. The Arminian, bound and faithful to his unbiblical system, assumes that if man has within himself the capacity to affect his salvation, then also through good works, he has to maintain it. He has degraded God's plan of salvation by grace, to a plan of salvation by grace

plus works. Therefore, he falsely assumes that if a believer has the ability to accept salvation on his own, he then can stop believing and fall from grace. The Arminian then preaches another Gospel that is not "another" (Gal. 1:6-7).

Charles Spurgeon, one of the greatest preachers in recent times, dealt with the matter by alternately preaching both salvation by grace and man's responsibility to respond to God's offer of redemption. He would preach election to salvation one Sunday and the next Sunday preach that man must exercise his will and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Like most Calvinists, he made the error of seeing election as referring to a person being chosen for salvation, when biblically it was God's plan for salvation that He elected, not the individual; more will be said about this later. The Calvinist takes great stock in that Charles Spurgeon was a Calvinist.

Others, such as the writer Arthur Pink, with most of the Five Point Calvinist persuasion, boldly taught that God has predestined some to be saved and equally predestined others to be damned to hell. The one predestined to salvation will absolutely be saved and there is nothing he can do to prevent it. This is their teaching of "Irresistible Grace." If God offers grace then it cannot be refused. On the other hand, the poor unfortunate soul who has been chosen by God to be lost is not offered grace, but is born for hell and cannot receive Christ.

Popular Radio Preachers Who Are Calvinists.

John MacArthur, of the radio program "Grace to You", is a Five Point Calvinist. He states that the dispute over this matter is because man does not want to accept God's sovereignty. He says the truth of God's sovereignty offends man's pride and offends his sense of fairness. MacArthur resorts to name calling and quotes Arthur Pink, as calling those who reject Calvinism as being "merit-mongers." He further states that some men reject the sovereignty of God in salvation: "because fallen man wants to assume some responsibility--even if it is a very little--for having believed. He desperately wants some credit for having made the right choice." (5) MacArthur builds a straw man of his own imagination and attacks it. No sound biblical student or preacher of the Bible would deny God's complete sovereignty over all things. Nor would a believer who knows anything about the Bible and salvation teach that salvation is earned and thereby be a "merit monger." That is a foolish and uncalled for statement.

The Bible is emphatically clear that man cannot merit or work for his salvation as it is the work of God. But the Calvinist mistakenly infers that if a man uses his will and believes in Jesus Christ, it means man is earning or

meriting his salvation. That is an unacceptable conclusion to those who believe God's word and who reject the tenants of Calvinism, because it is not biblical.

MacArthur further says that man is repulsed by the doctrine of election because it seems unfair that God would choose to save some, but not others. MacArthur says, ". . . the reason man so strongly wants to have a part in his own salvation is because he wants to exercise his pride." (6) MacArthur should not make emphatic statements about what biblical Christians believe. It is a serious error of MacArthur, to judge the hearts of men he does not know. Further it is tragic that a man of his popularity would equate accepting Calvinism to the status of believing God's word, but that is what he does. According to John MacArthur, if you reject Calvinism you are not a Bible believer!

Frankly, there are many believers who do not fit into either of MacArthur's supposed categories and reject the Calvinistic view based solely on what the Bible says about the matter. These people, as does the author of this article, reject both the Calvinistic and Arminian views and appeal to the Scriptures alone. There is compelling biblical evidence to reject both ideas as being unbiblical. There are many godly people who totally accept the sovereignty of God and reject human pride or any participation of man in meriting salvation.

David Jeremiah, of the program "Turning Point" is another prominent Calvinist. In a reply to a letter this author sent to David Jeremiah, one of his assistants replied saying, "In the study of predestination and election our poor minds may not reconcile them both, but our faith knows them both and holds them both to be truth. Scripture is addressed to faith not reason." (7) He further quoted some source and stated "Now do not seek to mix these two things (predestination and election) and still more emphatically . . . do not try to 'reconcile' them. Profitless controversy and partisan feeling will be the only result. Who told us to 'reconcile' in our little minds, these seemingly contradictory things? . . . if you undertake to 'reconcile' God's sovereign election with His free offer of salvation to all, you must sacrifice one truth for another." (8)

In this reply, David Jeremiah's representative also built a straw man in his poor attempt to defend this unbiblical teaching. His statement that "Scripture is addressed to faith not reason" is grossly unsound. Yes, we do live by faith...but faith in God's revealed word! Our faith is not blind...but based on God's stated word. Biblically, God is certainly not the author of confusion and further cannot lie, or contradict Himself. It is a contradiction for God on one hand to state, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of

God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:4), and on the other hand decree, as David Jeremiah teaches, that some men are elected and born to be condemned to hell. The reason the Calvinist wishes to condemn those who disagree with them for trying to "reconcile" the matter is that their view is in direct opposition to what God has plainly stated and cannot be biblically defended. They correctly state that they cannot 'reconcile' God decreeing to save some and refusing His grace to others, because you cannot "reconcile" truth with error. You cannot reconcile God being a loving and just God, and on the other hand teach that He withholds His mercy and grace and condemns most of the world to hell and will not allow them to believe and be saved. It is an unreasonable idea that God's word does not substantiate. There is not one verse in the Bible that states that God has limited His grace or decreed that some men will go to hell without any chance of being saved. Not one verse in the Bible teaches "irresistible grace." Calvinism is a false teaching formed in the minds of men who dogmatically support an indefensible system with a flawed theology. The Calvinist dogmatically holds to his view regardless of whether it contradicts God's word or not.

Calvinism Destroys God's Grace

Calvinism is contrary to God's grace itself, which stems from God's love and unmerited favor toward man. To accept Calvinism is to proclaim that God does not love all His creation and that nullifies His grace. It makes God unloving and unjust to most men on earth. Calvinism restricts God's love to only a part of His creation and makes a lie out of God's statements that He loves the world (John 3:16). God is love and that is His very nature, therefore He cannot go against who He is and deny His love to some because He chooses not to love them. God says He is love and He cannot go against His nature. God's sovereignty does not allow Him to deny who He is.

How then can the Calvinist accept that God is love, when they believe He withholds his grace from most of the world. Not one word in the Bible limits God's love. God's love is offered freely, and is only limited by sinful men who will not accept His love. But that is not God's fault, but man's. John 3:15-16 states plainly "God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son." If you truly believe that statement from God's word, you cannot be a Calvinist. Man goes to hell because he is a sinner who rejects God, not because God decreed him to burn in hell and refuses to allow him to repent (Romans 1:18-23). It is a perversion of God's sovereignty and His grace to conclude He would violate His own nature and withhold His love toward the world. God is just and therefore His justice demands that if a

man rejects His grace, and Christ's payment for his sins, then the man must pay the debt himself. Yet, 1 John 2:2 states clearly that *"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."* (1 John 2:2)

The question is simply this: "Does God love the world and did Jesus Christ, God incarnate in the flesh, come to the earth, suffer, and die for the sins of mankind?" The biblical answer is overwhelmingly YES! Then how can the Calvinist teach He didn't. On what basis does he teach that God did not extend His love to all men?

Calvinism and man's will

Is willfully believing and accepting Jesus Christ as one's Savior at "work." One of the first arguments the Calvinist will use to "prove" his belief is that a man is totally depraved and cannot by willfully believing can be saved because that would be a "work." Their reasoning is that if a man chooses to be save his act of his will saves him.

In Genesis 2:16-17 God said to Adam, *"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."* (Genesis 2:16-17) Did not God give Adam and choice? He was warned that if he ate fruit from the forbidden tree he would surely die. God gave Adam a clear choice. Eat of all the other tree, but not this one. The Lord allowed Adam to use his will.

Abe and Cain were given a choice also. Obey God and present to Him a blood sacrifice and be accepted, or reject God's word, disobey God and be rejected by Him. Abe made the right choice and Cain did not.

Throughout the whole of the Bible God gave men choices. He always told them what was righteous, meaning what was His will, and He warned them of making the wrong choice. Hebrews 11, abounds with men and women that when God told them what was His will they obeyed, believed God and it was "counted unto them for righteous." These hosts of the "heroes of faith" used their God give wills to honor God.

Joshua beckoned Israel to serve the Lord saying, *"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."* (Joshua 24:15) Israel had a choice

to serve God or idols. This was a choice of salvation or damnation. Joshua warned them *"If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good."* (Joshua 24:20) If they were totally depraved and could not respond they why did God speak to them through Joshua and offer them the choice. If they all were "predestined to heaven or hell with no ability to respond but how God had programmed them, why offer the choice? If any of the children of Israel, who heard Joshua's promise of salvation, and God would not have allowed them to respond, then the choice and the offer would have been a lie to those poor souls. Plainly, God gave them a choice and they used their God give wills to accept or reject God's offer.

Inconsistencies in Calvinism

There are many inconsistencies in reformed theology. God says in Hebrews 11:6 *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* Several truths stand out sharply. Plainly, the heart of God's plan is man's faith in God that without it is impossible for him to please or come to God. The man who comes to God must believe that God is. A "depraved" robot, which is the Calvinist's view of man, cannot express faith, nor believe or seek God. (irresistible grace!?) Further, faith is inseparably tied to "diligently seeking Him." A robot cannot seek anything, but only can respond to the programming he is given. How can a "totally depraved" man desire to seek something he is incapable of knowing exists? The context of God's statement is of the saving faith of men who heard God's promises and by faith received them. God's very definition of faith Calvinism is refuted. Calvinism is a maze of inconsistencies and unbiblical conclusions that defy any logic. There are no inconsistencies with God as He is a God of order, organization and logic.

The Bible Commands All Men to Believe

The Scriptures tell us that man must believe on Jesus Christ in order to be saved. There are literally hundreds of Scriptures that teach that man must believe, trust or have faith in God.

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

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

"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1)

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephesians 2:9)

"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." (1 Corinthians 1:21)

A man must believe and by faith receive God's offer of salvation. Belief is an act of man's will. However, man has nothing to boast of in the process of exercising his will and believing what God has said. The act of atonement for sin was accomplished by the Lord Jesus, not man. Suppose you received a gift from someone that offered it to you out of the goodness of their heart. They did not offer you the gift because you deserved or had earned it, but because they "willed" or wanted you to have it. In their care or love for you, they wanted you to have something nice. Your act of reaching out and taking the gift does not change it into something you deserved, does it? Would your act of receiving the gift mean you had earned it or paid something for it? Obviously the answer is no; the one who offers the gift decides, within themselves, why they give the gift, not the one who accepts it. The Arminian is right when he states that salvation is totally the act of a Sovereign God. He is wrong, however, when he concludes that a man in receiving Christ is in some way working for, or meriting salvation. The Calvinist's extreme views are wrong when they take away man's responsibility to receive Christ, by stating God has decreed some to be saved and others to be lost and that grace is irresistible. God rightly commands all men to believe and receive His Son the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. A man cannot exercise his will outside the limits which God has set in place. Thus God has, in an act of His will, enabled all men to receive salvation.

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receive salvation.

God Will Not Violate a Man's Will

One important truth that further refutes Five Point Calvinism is that God will not violate a man's will. God has not created man as a programmed robot with his life predestined at his creation. In God's plan He allows man the freedom to choose for himself the course of his life. It was God's sovereign choice to create man with the ability to reason and to love, which both are acts of one's will. Man can respond to God when the Holy Spirit enlightens the man's heart. That happens when a man hears the Gospel or as Romans 1:19-20 states, when man responds to natural revelation which God shows him from nature. God elected the plan of salvation and what He designed it to accomplish. He gave man a will and in doing so allows a man to respond to God willingly and in love.

The Calvinistic Teaching of the "Perseverance of the Saints."

The Calvinists use human reasoning and unbiblically confusing the doctrine of the "security of the believer" with the doctrine of "the perseverance of the saints." The Bible clearly teaches a man can "backslide" and can allow sin to rule his life. Hebrews 12:6-11, 1 Corinthians 11:32 and 1 John 5:16 teach that God will chasten a sinning believer even unto death to end his rebellion. The Biblical doctrine is the "security" not the "perseverance" of the saints. A saint of God can fail God, but God will not fail the saint. God gives eternal life to those who He saves and they cannot be lost, thus they are secure in God's grace. The Arminian is wrong when he is carried along by the extremes of his system and states a man can lose his salvation. Salvation is totally the act of God and not of man. When a man receives Christ he becomes a new creature, a saved child of God and is indwelt by the spirit of God. He cannot be lost once saved.

Does Calvinism give a biblical explanation of election?

The beliefs of the Calvinistic system of theology misinterpret the Bible's teaching on election. However, biblically election is not to salvation, but to what salvation accomplishes in the life of the one who believes. Election is God's plan for what He desired would be the benefit of those who believed and put their faith in Him. Election then is God's plan or blueprint of salvation. Election is not what individual God will save, but what salvation would mean to those who accept His grace.

This is explained in Ephesians One. Verse 3 introduces the subject and content of the discourse. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord

Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3) Paul is addressing the how wonderful (blessed) is God who has blessed us with spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. This is address to believers to remind them of the blessing of salvation to those "in Christ." Verses 4-6 explain what the blessing that God gives to believers and what salvation it to achieve in their lives.

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."
(Ephesians 1:4-6)

God has chosen "us" meaning those who are saved, before He created the world, that the believer should be holy (separated), and without blame (forgiven all sins) before Him in love. God's plan was, before the world existed, to make salvation a blessing to those who believed and received His grace. The verse does not say or even imply that God chose which individual He would save, but to what salvation would impart to them. God is stating His blueprint for salvation. He is not saying that He is choosing some and rejecting others.

Verse 5 says God predestinated that believers would be "unto" (*eis*) the adopted children by Jesus Christ by the "good pleasure of His purpose will." (*eudokia*) In other words God purposed that believers would be the adopted children of God. The statement does not address who God would save, but the relationship of the believer who is saved. Verse 6 states *"To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved."* (Ephesians 1:6) God's plan that He chose, was that those who are saved would be holy, without blame and be the adopted children of God. Therefore it is plan that is in view, not who would He would save. His plan, which is the blessing that is being proclaimed is that those who by faith received God's gift of grace are "to the praise of the glory of his grace." It is God's grace, meaning His mercy and love, that are to His praise and glory. God is glorified in His benevolence (grace) and love to sinful men. Verse 7 continues proclaiming the basis of redemption that God's plan it is that the believer is made acceptable unto God through Jesus Christ's blood, being forgiven of his sins though the distribution (*kata*) of the "riches of His grace."

This passage nor the New Testament says God are elected or chose

who would be saved or who He would not offer His grace. The glory of His grace is that it is freely offered to all. This can be seen in the many passages of God's word that Christ died for all men. Calvinism teaches that election or God's gift of grace is limited to a select few whom God chooses to save. However, the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the whole world and offers salvation to all who will believe. Note that this is plainly taught in the following verses:

"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2).

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

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).

"Who (speaking of Christ) gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Timothy 2:6).

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead" (2 Corinthians 5:14).

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

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

"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).

"Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Romans 5:18).

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9).

Clearly, each of these Scriptures teaches that Christ died for the sins of all men everywhere and wishes all men to be saved. Any

teaching of man that contradicts this truth is false and that should settle the matter.

It is understood that those that hold to limited atonement often counter by saying "the world" and "all men" does not mean the entire world or all men, but refers only to the "elect." Surely, such a line of thinking is based on man's faulty reasoning and not on sound hermeneutical principles. The clear meaning of the word "world" (cosmos), as used in the Bible, means the whole earth and everyone on it or the lost world. It is never used in the Bible as referring to God's elect or those who are saved. The word "all" is all-inclusive. "All men" encompasses everyone. If God had wanted to limit the scope of salvation, He could have easily chosen a better word than "all", "world" and "every" man! He chose these words because they convey the meaning God intended. He paid the price for all men's sin everywhere in the entire world! He bought with His own blood the right to offer all men salvation. Limited atonement would mean he only suffered for those that will be saved, and is clearly an unbiblical teaching.

The Calvinist must disagree with many portions of God's Word to continue to teach that Christ's death was limited to only a few men who would be saved. Matthew 7:13-14 and Romans 3:10-26 explains why men are lost and are condemned to hell. Romans 1:18-22 says:

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom. 1:18-22)

The verse says that God's wrath is revealed from heaven against men's sin and that man holds the truth in unrighteousness. It states God has revealed Himself to all men and therefore all men are without excuse. This begs the question . . . "Why would God reveal Himself to all men and base His wrath on the fact that men know the truth, but reject it, IF some men could not respond to God's revelation of Himself?"

Further, the Calvinist must conclude that when he preaches the Gospel and presents salvation to his listeners he is doing so "tongue in cheek." He must admit he is offering something that some hearing him cannot receive because God will not permit them to. I listened to a popularly

radio preacher eloquently speaking on the love of God for sinners about fifteen minutes and then tell his audience that if they would believe in Jesus Christ they would be saved. Yet, as a Calvinist his teaching contradicts his proclaiming of salvation based on if a person would believe. He does not believe that most who hear his messages can be saved because he believes God has chosen to withhold grace to most of the world and thus condemned them without any hope of salvation. The Gospel then becomes "Good News", only to the select few. The others, whom the Calvinist says are born for hell, are wasting their time even hearing of Christ's death, burial and resurrection, because they cannot receive Christ. They are, according to Calvinism, elected by God to an unalterable course to hell. I heard John MacArthur on the radio, clearly and passionately present the Gospel. He calls his programs Grace to You, but plainly believes that God's grace is only for the "few." What is baffling me is he and the Calvinists cannot see the contradiction in their beliefs and message.

The truth is the Calvinist who preaches, teaches and witnesses to the Gospel is in reality lying to most of the people who hear him and he's doing so in Jesus' name. It is a lie to tell a man that if he will believe in Jesus Christ that he shall be saved (Romans 10:9-10) while, at the same time, believing and teaching that most cannot accept Christ because God will not allow them to be saved. According to Calvinism, the unelected are not offered God's grace and most of the human race is doomed to hell with no chance of redemption. Technically and practically it is a lie to tell an unelected person he can be saved when he cannot. The Calvinist never gives any criteria for determining who is elected and who is not. The reason is clear . . . not even the Calvinist would go that far in their false teaching. Doctrinal error perverts God's truth and corrupts the very Gospel the Calvinist claims he believes. The questions the Calvinist must answer are these: "How do you know someone is elected? On what basis do you make such a determination?" Jesus speaking to Israel warned them that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah would receive less punishment in the day of judgment, because Israel had the privilege of seeing and hearing the Messiah, but rejected Him.(See Matthew 10:15) He said the same thing of Chorazin and Bethsaida warning them of the results of their rejection of their Christ. "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes" (Luke 10:13).

Jesus stated that their condemnation was because they had seen His miracles and heard His message, but had rejected Him as their Messiah. This clear truth is but another death blow to the heresy of Calvinism. Clearly, the people in these two cities, where Jesus presented the Gospel,

willingly rejected the truth that they heard from Jesus Himself. Because of their rejection, Jesus said they would be judged more harshly than those who had not been privileged to hear the truth. If the people in these cities in Israel could not have responded to the truth after hearing it, because they were predestined by God to Hell, on what basis could God judge them more harshly than those who had not heard? Doubtlessly, God held them accountable for their sin of rejecting the truth and in doing so verifies that they could have responded, but chose not to. It was not God who chose to send them to hell simply because He could do so and because He decreed their condemnation. The people of these two cities condemned themselves because of their willing unbelief.

Passages that the Calvinists use to Support their Theology Matthew 28:19-20 The Great Commission

The Great Commission "to go into all the world and teach the Gospel" loses its purpose in Calvinistic teaching. Why teach salvation to all the world if God is going to save the elect anyway? The Calvinist again will counter by saying that God commands us to preach the Gospel and that is God's method to reach the elect. Again this is an example of the poor reasoning behind Calvinism and, indeed, a failure in human reasoning. If the Bible teaches we are to tell all men everywhere they can be saved by trusting in Christ Jesus and God, but in fact has limited the offer to only a select few, then we become liars and God is sending us out with a tainted message! Please excuse the redundancy in the following statement, but it is a lie to stand before an audience and preach that God will save them if they will believe and put their trust in Jesus Christ, if God has elected that some of them cannot respond! God is not the author of lies; Satan is the author of the sin of lying (John 8:44). What a gross insult to the truth and to Almighty God to make God a liar, by this false teaching.

Does John 11:49-52 Teach the Limited Atonement

John 11:49-52 It seems a good number of Jews upon seeing Jesus' miracle believe on Him. One of the miracles the Jews had just witnessed was raising Lazarus from the grave. Some who saw the miracle went to their religious leaders, seeking advice and to understand what was happening. They were confused because the Jewish rulers were seeking to kill Jesus and denounced Him even saying He did His miracles by demons. Thus the people saw the miracles He did and knew only One from God could do these supernatural acts and they were confused.

The chief priests and the Pharisee of the Sanhedrin under pressure from the people and also worried about the consequences of Jesus'

miracles and message, met to decide was to do. They were afraid of the problem Jesus was causing. It is important to again understand the context. The rulers of the Jews served at the discretion of their Roman conquerors. Israel was looking for a civil Messiah and not a spiritual One as Jesus was. In John 6:15 states this saying *"When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone."* (John 6:15) The Jews, even His disciples did not see Him as God come to suffer and die for the sins of the world, but as a national hero with great power to throw off the Roman oppression and free Israel from its enemies. (Read John 7:1-5)

Therefore seeing Jesus as a civil Messiah and not really believing He could overcome Roman rule of Israel, they concluded Jesus should be destroyed before He could bring down the wrath of Rome on them. Further, they were afraid also that they would lose their positions of power in Israel if Jesus did overthrow the Romans. They were merely using their supposed concern for Israel to hide their true intent which was to destroy the Lord who was exposing their gross sin and hypocrisy. (see Matt. 23:13-29) Thus John in verse 51 states Caiaphas foretold that they(the Jewish rulers) would sacrifice Jesus to appease the Romans and thus spare the Jews from Roman reprisals.

Verse 52 is John's addition to Caiaphas' statement. Caiaphas did not make the statement of verse 52. John stated this would be the result of the high priest's prediction. In other word, Caiaphas' and the Sanhedrin's decision was to put Jesus to death and that His death would be for the Jews in Jerusalem, and around the world. In verse 53, the Jewish rulers from that day made the decision to put Jesus to death and in their minds were doing so to save Israel from the Romans.

There is absolutely nothing in this verse that teaches or even hints at Limited Atonement. Yet, this is the tactic of false teachers. I have often wondered, why does the Calvinist go to such extraordinary lengths to "prove" his false theology. Wouldn't it make more sense just to believe God's word and accept His truth?

Acts 17:30-31

Acts 17:30-31, explains *"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."*

God in this verse commands "all" men "everywhere" to repent. The use of the words "all" and "everywhere" makes it doubly clear that this command is not limited to a select few, but to everyone, everywhere and none are excluded. This passage teaches that man is responsible and will be judged for his sins. The basis of this judgment is the fact that Christ came into the world and brought salvation. You take away man's responsibility to receive Christ as Savior if you take away a man's chance to be saved. If you take away God's offer of grace you leave God without a basis for judgment. God cannot unjustly condemn a man for not receiving something he was unable to receive. Revelation 20:12 states, that at the final judgment of the lost, the unsaved will be judged according to their works, not because God decreed their damnation. How could a just God judge men according to their works when, because of His sovereign choice, He decreed them only able to do sinful works, because He had denied salvation to them?

God says, *"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"* (John 3:18). The false conclusion of Calvinism is that some cannot be saved, because God decreed their damnation. This verse says the unsaved are condemned because they would not believe. Calvinism destroys this biblical truth. The teaching of the Bible of the nature of God shows us that He cannot be just if He decrees some to hell without the possibility of their accepting or rejecting God.

Going back to the many verses stating that Christ died for the sins of the "world" one must assume that Christ's death was for the of salvation of those who believe and at the same time the grounds of condemnation for those who do not believe. [\(9\)](#) The basis of man's condemnation is that man is a sinner and justly deserves hell. That is mirrored by the marvelous love of God that offers man redemption, but does not force him to receive it. If a man, under the convicting and enabling ministry of the Holy Spirit responds, his sins are forgiven completely; he becomes a child of God and receives eternal life. *"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where [emphasis added] to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men , in that he hath raised him from the dead"* (Acts 17:31).

Does John 12:40 support Calvinism?

"That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias

said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." (John 12:38-41) The statement *"Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them"* must be interpreted in the analogy of the faith. John quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 which is quoted six times in the New Testament. (Matt. 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; Acts 28:26-27; Rom. 11:8) At first reading it seems that the passage is saying God is the cause of their unbelief because He blinded their eyes so they could not see and be saved and healed. However this interpretation is inconsistent with other statements of God's desire to see all men believe and be saved. God cannot contradict Himself so this is not the correct interpretation. God states His desire is that none perish and all come to repentance. *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."* (2 Peter 3:9) It would be a contradiction of God's word for Him to desire that no one perish, and then to blind their eyes to the truth thus preventing them from believing and being saved. Therefore we must look closer for God's meaning.

Jesus explained why men are condemned saying *"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd."* (John 3:19-20) Why did Jesus say men reject the light? He says it is because their deeds are evil and they reject the truth because it exposes and reproves them of their sin. Note Jesus states plainly this is the reason that men are condemned. He does not say, nor does the Bible anywhere say, that God condemns men inadvertently by decreeing their condemnation to the Lake of Fire by withholding His grace. Nowhere does God say He predetermined and elected anyone to spend eternity in hell by withholding His grace and mercy. God is love and that false teaching contradicts the very nature of God who desires all men to be saved.

Luke in Acts 28:27 explains why men's eyes are blinded. *"For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."* Note the underlined words "their eyes have they closed." It was willing unbelief that prevented them from seeing the truth and accepting it. These who refused to believe were not converted because they did not want God in their lives or be saved.

God did blind their eyes and hardened their hearts, but it was because of they refused to believe. What He blinded their eyes to was to spiritual truth. The unsaved do not understand God's word or spiritual things. Paul explains this saying *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."* (1 Corinthians 2:14) God will not let the lost man see more than the truth of the Gospel. Only the saved born again believer who has the new nature and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit can see the deep things of God. *"But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."* (1 Corinthians 2:10)

Does John 15:16 teach that God only chose some to salvation?

Always in interpreting God's word, one must consider the context of the statement, as to who is being addressed and the situation. Jesus was speaking to His disciples whom He had chosen. (John 6:70, 13:18, 15:19). He was not making a general statement as to their salvation. They were saved, except for Judas as John 6:70 states. Jesus was expressing His choosing them for service that they would "go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." Further He promised to fulfill their requests in prayer for help in fulfilling His commission to them. The choosing was to service...not to salvation as the words state.

One of the most serious mistakes made by those that misinterpret God's word is to ignore biblical hermeneutical principles of interpretation. The context, grammar, analogy of the faith, historical and cultural details are vital to making a proper interpretation. Ignoring these principles, is the foundation of false doctrine such as Calvinism. (see my article at <http://bible-truth.org/Principles.htm> to learn how to biblically interpret God's word.)

Does Romans 8:29-30 support Calvinism?

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Rom. 8:29-30).

There is much debate over what God's foreknowledge means. The

word "foreknow" is the Greek word "proginsko" ("pro" = before and "gingko" means "to know"). The definition of the word is simple, meaning "to know before hand." God is omniscient and knows all things past, present and future. God is not subject to time and sees all things as present. The problem is that the Calvinist defines foreknowledge as being determinative. In other words, they conclude that if God fore knows something it means He causes it to happen.

In Romans 8:29, the Lord used two words to convey His truth. He said, *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate."* The wording of the verse communicates two separate actions. One, God knew through His omniscience who would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Second, those He foreknew would believe He predestinated "to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ." If foreknowledge was causative He would not have stated that He predestinated what they would become. Because God knows ahead of time the future, it does not mean He makes it happen. In His foreknowledge he also knows what would happen under different circumstances. For example in 1 Samuel 23:12, David asked the Lord if the men of Keilah would hand him over to Saul. God replied that they would hand him over to Saul. However, it never happened. David and his men left and went into the mountains of Ziph. God's foreknowledge is simply that...He is omniscience and knows all things without the limitation of time. But God's foreknowledge does not make an event happen. Proper hermeneutical principles would dictate that a passage be interpreted literally, observing the definition of the words and their grammatical construction within the sentences. In other words, we must take the statement literally at its face value. Barnes commenting on the word "foreknowledge" says:

"The literal meaning of the word cannot be a matter of dispute. It denotes, properly, to know beforehand; to be acquainted with future events." [\(10\)](#)

The question is, "What does the word "election" refer to and what did God predestinate?" God is omniscient and the verse says God foreknew those who would be saved and He predestinated them *"to be conformed to the image of his Son."* The verse does not say God predestined those He foreknew to be saved. Rather He states that those who are saved are to be conformed to the image of His Son.

The word "conformed" means "to be made unto like fashion." God's plan is that believers are to be made in like fashion to Christ, meaning to be like Christ and to live godly lives.

1 John 3:2 states that believers will be like Christ, "we shall be like

him; for we shall see him as he is." Election then explains God's plan for those who believe and whom He saves. God's election was not which individuals would be saved, but what salvation would bring to those who are saved.

Paul in Romans 8, states several blessing that God's predestined plan gives the believer. Please note that these truths are in context Romans 8:28-29. The believer becomes a spiritual being as Christ, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Romans 8:9) Also Paul explains the ones who believe are made a joint heir with Jesus Christ. "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (Romans 8:17) Romans 8:29 explains that this is God's plan as to what believers become in Christ. Ephesians 2:10, states *"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."* Election or "fore ordination" established the result of salvation for those who will believe in Jesus Christ. It ordained that those who believe would be made alive (given eternal life) and declared in God's favor forever. The Calvinist, in his blind sided view of Scripture, concludes that this verse means election is to salvation by God. Election rightly refers to the plan of what salvation accomplishes for the believer, not to whom God offers He grace, or whom He withholds it.

The context of verse Romans 8:28 addresses God's plan in salvation, that, "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purposes." God is revealing the result of His plan of salvation, in that He is working in every believer's life. This is expounded further in verses 31-39 that teaches assurance of salvation based on the work and plan of God.

The context of verse 29-30 is clear. God is talking about a Christian living within the purposes of God. He is referring to His plan for believers. He is certainly not telling us that He chooses only to save certain individuals and chooses to condemn the rest to Hell. The passage does not say or even infer that idea. In other words God is saying He is in control of all that salvation is deemed to accomplish in the life of a believer. This is God's plan that whatever happens to the believer will work out for good. Further the verse says this is applicable to those who are "called according to his purposes". What purposes? The answer is the part of His purpose that all things work for good in a believer's life. The verse is not addressing who will be allowed receive salvation, but the circumstances of life the believer faces and their result. God is saying believers are called by Him to live according to His plan. It is the plan of what God purposed salvation to

accomplish that is in view; not who would be saved.

Verses 29-30 continues the discussion and states that God predestined, or to say it another way, God planned that believers were to be conformed to the image of Christ. That means to grow or strive to live like Christ. Christ is the standard that believers are to live by and judge their lives. Again, the verse is not talking about initial salvation but rather God's plan for the believer after salvation.

In verse 30, God says those whom He foreknew, He called, justified and glorified. Here is the work of God in salvation. Those God foreknew would believe through in His omniscience, He called, justified, and glorified. God plainly states the calling, justification and glorification was to those He foreknew would believe and be saved. Then in the next verse God gives absolute assurance to the believer that God is working in his life, not only in salvation, but in eternal security. The believer is assured that God will carry out His plan.

In 1 John 5:13, the Lord bases assurance of salvation on one's belief in the name of the Son of God. The verse says, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." The basis of assurance of salvation given in the New Testament is one's belief in Jesus Christ. It is never presented as being based on election to salvation by God. A person knows he is saved because he truly believes in Jesus Christ, not that he was elected to salvation by God. There is not one word, stated or implied in Romans 8:29-30 that says God predestined some to salvation and the rest He condemned to Hell.

Does Roman 9 Support Calvinism?

Often the Calvinists refer to Romans 9 as proof of their false view of election. However, to properly understand the statements of this chapter we must first consider the context and subject being addressed. The failure to consider the context of this passage has resulted in its gross misinterpretation the same way as with Ephesians 1. The context of Romans 9 is Paul's answer to the question of Romans 3:1, "What advantage then has the Jew? or "what profit is there of circumcision?" This discourse begins with this question and ends with Romans 11. Paul is addressing the misunderstanding of the Jews in which they concluded that they were in God's favor because they were born Hebrews, God's chosen people, and were assured of heaven and of God's grace. John 3:1-7 is an example of this error in Jewish thinking and was the reason for Jesus' response to Nicodemus. Jesus explained to this Pharisee that he must be "born again".

Nicodemus believed that he was going to heaven and be a part of God's kingdom because he was born a Jew. Jesus said, "Not so." A man must be born of water (human birth) and of the Spirit (spiritual birth) to be saved. He was saying to Nicodemus, in order to be saved you must be spiritually reborn and that happens when a person believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. In John 3:15-16, Jesus continues and explains how to be saved by faith. Paul explains in Romans 3-11, that the Jew, like the Gentile, are both responsible to God and the Jew's only advantage is that he has been born among a people God chose to reveal Himself through thus they had the knowledge of God. But being a Jew does not preclude salvation, because as Paul plainly states in Chapter 10:9-10 that salvation is a matter of faith.

Many teach that Romans 9:13-14 states that God rejected and condemned Esau to hell, but chose to save Jacob. *"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."* However, this is not what the verse is saying. Paul is not talking about God predestining or in His sovereignty decreeing Jacob to heaven and Esau to hell. God chooses to "use" some in His plan such as Jacob and others, such as Esau, to "reject".

The term "hated" used in Romans 9:13 means to "love less or to choose instead of." It does not mean to condemn. Jesus in Luke 14:26 uses the same word stating, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Clearly, God does not require we "hate" our family, but in using the term He means we are to choose Him first or to place Him before our relatives. God is also not saying He simply hated Esau and sent him to hell. God is saying he chose to reject Esau and He had good reasons. What God is revealing is related to His plan of bringing salvation through the Jews, mainly through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God is to have the preeminence in our lives as Colossians 1:18 instructs and those are the people He uses in His plans.

The word "hate" means to "love less" and in Romans 9, God uses the illustration of His choosing Jacob rather than Esau to illustrate the point that being born a Jew does not save a person. God says He rejected to use Esau, the first born son, because he was not a man who loved or served God. His interests in life were worldly and did not include the Lord in them. Further, the promise made to Abraham would normally be through his first born son. This promise was God's plan for the coming nation of Israel and the Messiah. However, Esau showed no interest in his birth right and the sacredness of God's promise. He thought so little of it; he sold it for a bowl of pottage. Therefore, God rejected him as the natural heir of Abraham and Isaac and as the one through whom God would bring the Messiah who would be the Savior. The verse does not teach that God just choose to hate

Esau, or that God in His sovereignty decreed to send him to hell as Calvinism teaches! God did not decree to "hate" Esau, but rather rejected him because he rejected God. A false interpretation of God's word always leads to confusion and false doctrine.

Consider this. Suppose there are two brothers in a family. One is a rebel and always in trouble. The other is a Christian and lives for the Lord. Who would God chose then to serve Him? God being omniscient, would He choose the rebellious son who rejected God and His purpose for his life, or the faithful one who believed in God?

It should also be understood that the names Jacob and Esau also refer to the progeny of both men. The Book of Obadiah makes this perfectly clear that God rejected the "house of Esau," who were the enemies of the house of Jacob. God said He would destroy completely the house of Esau (also called Edom, Mt. Seir) and none of them would remain (Obadiah 17-18). The decedents of Esau hated God and for generations opposed Israel (Jacob) until God finally destroyed them. Hermeneutically, the passage is correctly interpreted in its context as referring to the Nation of Edom (Esau), not strictly to Esau who fathered the nation.

Interpreting Romans 9:20-21

Romans 9:20-21 is also a passage that is misunderstood and incorrectly used to support Calvinism's false idea that God predestined some to hell. *"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?"*

God is the author and finisher of "author and finisher of our faith." (Hebrews 12:2) It is His plan and in His sovereignty He has chose what salvation is to be. Romans 9:20-23 is Paul's second answer to the question asked in verse 19, *"Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?"* Vessels fitted for destruction are those that

reject God. You cannot blame God for that, or make Him the cause of men's rejecting Him. Paul is addressing the Jews that rejected Jesus as the Messiah. These people by their rejection of Christ made themselves "vessels fitted for destruction." Jesus fulfilled all the Old Testament prophecies as to His coming and work. He performed supernatural miracles that only God could do. (See John 3:1-2) Yet, in spite of all the signs and wonders God showed them, they rejected Him as their Messiah. Therefore, by their actions they condemned themselves. Nothing in the passages says God decreed to make them "vessels fitted for destruction." Romans 6:23 says, *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* Does not God plainly state in 1 Timothy 2:4 that He would that all men be saved? How then can the Calvinist totally miss the point of the subject of Romans 9-11 and suppose that it supports the idea that God, in His sovereignty, chose to send some to hell, excluding them from his plan of salvation?

Paul uses the example of Pharaoh to illustrate his point. Pharaoh rejected God over and over, and that was the ruler's choice (Romans 9:17) Pharaoh refused to believe God and submit to Him. Is God to be blamed for Pharaoh ultimately rejecting God, especially after God showed him who He was by demonstrating His power repeatedly in bringing the plagues? God's bringing the plagues was God demonstrating His power to Pharaoh to persuade Him to obey God and let Israel go. Pharaoh could have believed and obeyed God, but he chose rather to reject Him in the face of overwhelming evidence. Paul asked the question, *"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid."* (Rom. 9:14) In other words is God at fault for Pharaoh's condemnation? The answer is "of course not" . . . Pharaoh condemned himself by rejecting God. There is plainly no support in this passage for God electing some to hell denying them the opportunity to believe and be saved.

The statement that God "hardened Pharaoh's heart" means that God permitted Pharaoh to resist Him. God did not make Pharaoh reject Him; that is the point Paul is making. Genesis 6:3, states that the Holy Spirit will not always "strive" with man. God does seek to guide and direct man, but in time, if the man resists God, the Holy Spirit will stop seeking to win Him and leave that man to his own devices. Man's rejection of God does not allow God to work; God will not violate a man's will. He will allow men to remain, as men choose, to be blind and hardened in their heart rejecting God. God further states, *"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid."* (Romans 9:14) God is not unrighteous which means He does that which is right. By God's own principles He is a God of mercy. "For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that

willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." (Romans 9:15-16) The Lord is saying that no one has any special hold on God because of who he is or his position. God's nature is to offer grace and to show mercy without restriction. That is exactly what He did with Pharaoh. He repeatedly revealed Himself to Pharaoh through the plagues. God was doing what was right and offering Him salvation. Pharaoh rejected God and refused to believe. Thus Pharaoh condemned Himself. The blame rests on Pharaoh, not God. God was righteous in offering His mercy to Pharaoh. It is a gross misinterpretation to suggest God revealed Himself to Pharaoh all the while knowing He would not allow Pharaoh to respond in faith. *"For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declare throughout all the earth."* (Romans 9:17) If Pharaoh could not have responded then God would be unrighteous.

God is not to blame for the damnation of a man who chooses to be blind and hardens his heart against the urging of the Holy Spirit. God has gone to great lengths to bring men to Himself (Romans 1:20-21). God does not force man to believe or accept Him. He allows them to resist and exercise their own wills. Pharaoh's heart was hardened because he was a sinful, proud man and would not give up his sin. He valued the slave labor of the Hebrews more than his own soul. He chose to reject God's truth as John 3:19-20 says *"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd."* James 1:13-14 says that God does not tempt men. God presented to Pharaoh the truth of who He was and what was His will. He did not tempt Pharaoh with the intent to prevent Pharaoh from accepting Him. To the contrary He revealed Himself to the Egyptian ruler that he might believe. Pharaoh refused to believe God for his own reasons and the blame rests solely on him. Pharaoh was condemned by his unbelief and by his own sinful nature (John 3:19-20, James 1:14-15). Nothing in this passage supports the idea that God in His sovereignty has decreed who would or would not allow to be saved. God did decree that all who believed would be saved.

Does Ephesians 1 support the Calvinist's view?

Ephesians 1 is another passage the Calvinist misuses to teach God chooses to save some and condemn others. Let us examine the passage biblically:

Ephesians 1:3-12:

3. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:
4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:
5 Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,
6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;
8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;
9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:
10 That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:
11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:
12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.
13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,
14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

This passage in Ephesians is dealing with God's plan for the believer who is saved by faith. Verse 3, introduces the discourse and states God has blessed believers with "spiritual blessings in heavenly places." Note that the word "blessings" is plural, therefore it is referring not to a single blessing, but to multiple blessings. Verse 4, continues stating the believer is chosen in Christ before the foundations of the world to be holy and without blame before Him in love. The verse does not say a person is chose "to" Christ but gin" Christ. The significance of using gin" instead of "to" means that the person who is saved and gin" Christ is chosen to accomplish a purpose of God. God is revealing what redemption would accomplish in the believer's life. His plan is that, through His love, God chose that believers would stand before Him. Specifically, the passage says, "that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." (Ephesians 1:4b-6) What is

accomplished by God's elected plan is that a believer would be, holy, without blame (forgiven of all sin).

Further, God predestinated through His plan that the believer would become an adopted child in the Lord Jesus Christ which was God's good pleasure to grant. God is explaining that those who are saved become His children and part of His heavenly family. (See Col. 1:12, 3:24; Heb. 9:15; 1 Pet. 3-4) The believer then is elected to be to the praise and glory of His grace. All this God elected so that the believer is made accepted in the "beloved" meaning Jesus Christ. This passage does not say that God chose these to be saved, but rather He chose what they would become when they were saved.

As in Romans 8:29-30, this passage explains that God's plan for believers in salvation is what is being addressed. These passages are not saying that God made a sovereign choice to call some to salvation and withhold that call from others. This passage does not state that God elected some to be born destined for hell, but rather presents God's plan for the believer's life in Christ.

Verse 9, reveals that this was a mystery, which is a truth not previously revealed, that in the fullness of time His plan was that He would gather together in one, all things in Christ (v10). In the Old Testament God instituted the nation of Israel to be His witness to the world and to be the people to whom the Messiah would be born. In Ephesians 1, God is revealing His previously undisclosed plan for the institution of the local church, which is the Bride and Body of Jesus Christ on earth. The special relationship with God and being in His family was not offered to Israel. The word "family" is found seventy three times in the Old Testament, but never used to refer to Israel as God's family. Israel was never called the "the children of God." Six times believers in this dispensation are called the children of God. Believers today are in a special dispensation of being in the Body and Bride of Jesus Christ. (See Eph. 5:30, Rev. 21:9, 22:17) This is the truth God reveals in this passage. He is not certainly stating that He only offers salvation to a select few who He elects to receive grace.

Verse 11, further explains that God's plan is that He willed or predestined is *"That we should be of his glory, who first trusted in Christ"* (v12). Believers are to bring glory to God and this was a purpose of His plan or what God elected for those that would believe.

Verse 12-13, addressed to believers, says, *"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your*

salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13)."

It is noteworthy that those who are saved are not sealed with the "Holy Spirit of promise" until they believed. This is an important point. Surely, if God had chosen them to be saved before the world existed, then in His sovereignty He would have sealed them to salvation before they believed. Ephesians 1 is not saying God predestined some individuals to be saved and others lost. The passage states that God predestinated that all who believe would be saved and subsequently "sealed" with the "spirit of promise" meaning that they would not be lost. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

Does 1 Peter 2:8-10 Support Calvinism?

"And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." (1 Peter 2:8-10)

One major error of Calvinism is that it interprets the scriptures with the presupposition that Calvinism is a correct view. This eisegetical hermeneutic imposes an interpretation of the passage that fits this preconceived premise. The interpretation of a passage must be based on the definition of its words, grammatical construction, analogy of the faith, and its context. If these principles of interpretation are ignored it will produce an incorrect meaning.

Applying proper principles of interpretation, note that the verse states that Christ to the unbeliever is ". . . a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient." (2 Peter 2:8) In other words these people to whom this verse is referring heard the word and stumbled at it. The word "stumble" is the Greek word "*proskopto*" and means to "strike or surge against." They heard God's truth, yet were deliberately disobedient to it. They knew it was God's word, but they refused to accept Him or His word. God then says ". . . whereunto they were appointed." The word "whereunto" refers to God's plan, which because of their rejection of

God's word, would result in their ruin. Therefore they are appointed to God's plan, that those who reject His mercy and grace, refusing to believe upon hearing the Gospel and being convicted by the Holy Spirit, would be condemned to eternal damnation.

The passage cannot be said to support the idea that God is revealing who He decreed to be appointed to condemnation. The condemnation from God was because the person was disobedient to God. (See verses 7 and 8) That is what the verses state. Note the disobedience was followed by condemnation. The passage is not stating that God refused to offer His grace which resulted in the person being elected to be eternally lost. It plainly states the reason for their condemnation was that they were disobedient to God, not because He decreed they would be lost. If God decreed their condemnation He would not have referred to their disobedience as having any significance. God is not the cause of man's disobedience, but it is man's love of sin and refusal to bow in faith to God that brings condemnation.

The 1 Peter 2:9 says ". . . *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people . . .*" The misuse of 1 Peter 2 is a good example of the error of Calvinism. The Calvinists sees the word "chosen" and concludes that this is referring to their view that God in the past decreed in His sovereignty whom He would save and who He would not. They believe that God has chosen who He will allow to receive Him and from whom He will withhold His grace. The ones chosen are the "elect" and the one's not elected, God condemns to the Lake of Fire with no chance of salvation. However, this is a false premise that is not found in God's word.

The Calvinist does not use a correct exegetical approach to interpretation which finds the meaning within the words of the statement. 1 Peter 2:9-10 contextually states what the believer is chosen to, not to who would be chosen. The verse states that the believer is appointed to be a part of a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a peculiar people." Note that each of the words used describes what the believer is chosen to, are not addressing individuals, but groups or classes of saved people. An individual cannot be described as a "chosen generation." A "chosen generation" is not talking about an individual, but people within a time frame. A "royal priesthood" is referring to a class of people. Clearly, a "holy nation" cannot be applied to an individual, but to all believers and a "peculiar people" is referring to humans considered as a group of indefinite numbers.

1 Peter 2:8-10 exegetically gives no support to Calvinism. Like all the other passages, the Calvinist imposes his false view on these verses to support his faulty human idea. This passage is revealing God's plan; not who would be saved or from whom He would withhold His grace.

Does 2 Peter 1:10-11 support Calvinism?

***"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."* (2 Peter 1:10-11)**

The Calvinists have distorted the meaning of this verse and passage to support they false idea the "elect" are those specially chosen by God to receive His grace and that only those He has predestined can be saved. To find the true meaning of this verse carefully and exegetically look at the subject and words of the verses.

The context of the passage is shown in verses 1-9, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Peter 1:2) Grace and peace abounds to those who recognize (*epignoss*) acknowledge and know God and Jesus our Lord. Verse 3-4, reveal that through God's power he gives the believer everything that pertains to life and godliness. (See Col. 2:10) This completeness in Christ is through our knowledge of Him, in which He calls us to glory and "virtue" (*arete*) excellence.

Verse 5-7 Peter instructs the believer to live a godly life and notes the attributes of godliness. Verse 8-9 says if the believer has these attributes in his life he will not be barren or fruitless. The one who is blind to these godly attributes has gotten that God purged his old or past sins.

Verse 10: *"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall"* (2 Peter 1:10) In other words make sure you give diligence, or labor to make sure that you are living what God has called you to, which are the attributes earlier mentioned in verse 8-9. The word "calling" is the word "*klesis*" and means an invitation. "*ekloge*" is translated "election" and means chosen. Therefore the believer is invited (called) and chosen (elected) to live a godly live in Christ Jesus.

This passage as well as others show that election is to what God ordained salvation to accomplish and be in the life of the believer. Election is not directed to who God saves by His grace, but what those who believe will experience by receiving God's grace.

Verse 11, Continues saying if a believer heeds these instructions he shall be richly supplied (*epichoregethesetai*) into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.(1) (AT Robertson. See 1 Thess. 1:9 for use of the word)Peter sums up the principle saying "*Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.*" (2 Peter 1:12)

The Calvinist uses the passage falsely teaching it addresses a "professing" Christian and admonishes him to make sure he is saved and one of God's "elect" or chosen. A simple and honest reading shows their error. This verse is written to believers who by their faith in Jesus Christ were saved, and who Peter is admonishing to live a godly life. Verse 9 shows the problem in some believer's lives in that they appear blind to their calling to living a godly life. This disobedient and blind believer has forgotten his sins were purged, thus plainly this is addressing a saved Christian. The call to godly living is the subject of this passage, not who God chose to be saved, but how the saved should live. This does not support Calvinism false idea that God elected some to receive His grace and others He with holds grace thus creating them to burn in the fires of hell (*Gehenna*).

Do passages such as Jeremiah 1:5 support Calvinism?

This verse plainly states that God "knew" Jeremiah. This clearly refers to God's foreknowledge of the birth of Jeremiah and of who and what Jeremiah would be. God then being omniscience knew that Jeremiah would be a man of faith and serve Him, chose him to be a prophet to Judah and the nations in that area. God says clearly that He chose Jeremiah to be a prophet by His foreknowledge. Foreknowledge is not the same as "fore decreeing." If God was telling us He decreed to make Jeremiah a prophet without giving him a choice, why did He not say that? Why did he say He "knew" Jeremiah? Knowing is not the same as decreeing. God is omniscient; He knows all things including who would be born on earth and how they would live their lives. God knows all men and here emphasizes that He had knowledge of Jeremiah, meaning of his character and faith. God then chose to use a man who would be faithful to him. Again the Calvinist interprets this passage eisegetically, applying his presupposition that God decreed

certain ones for salvation and withholds His grace from others. They conclude that God did not give Jeremiah a choice, but forced him to obey His will. Yet the passage does not state that idea. The Calvinist's problem is that he sees everything within the tenants of his false system of theology. His interpretation of God's word will always supports his Calvinistic ideas. God is telling us that He "knew" Jeremiah would be a man of faith and that God could use him as a prophet to Israel. There is no support in this passage for opinions or presuppositions that go beyond what God has stated. Clearly, Calvinists are grabbing at straws when they use Jeremiah or others like John the Baptist, who God choose as His prophets through His foreknowledge, to support their false teaching. This explanation does not fit their erroneous theology so they reject this truth. The Bible does not teach that God predestined some to Heaven and others to hell. Nowhere in these verses, or anywhere else in God's word, is it stated or implied that God predestined some to salvation and others to go to hell, having no chance to be saved. Those that make such statements have gravely misapplied God's word to their false ideas. What is predestined is God's plan of salvation, that a believer becomes a child of God, the result of salvation, and what the believer's position is with God once they are saved, and the life he then lives in Christ. God's plan is what He predestined. God's plan is that man who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ is saved and the one that rejects God's grace is lost and condemns himself.

When a man believes in Calvinism it is always the result of accepting the teaching of some man. Calvinism is only accepted by those to whom it is taught. If a man studies the Bible alone he will never become a Calvinist. Understanding that God is love and offers grace freely, it would never enter in a Bible student's mind that God would choose to send some individuals to hell and deny them the ability to respond to the Gospel. The Bible's theme which is presented repeatedly is that God is a God of love and grace. Understanding God unchanging character of love and justice would not allow me to be swayed in that false direction.

Calvinism seems to pride itself in praising and defending the sovereignty of God, which is the premier doctrine of Calvinism. The believer who rejects Calvinism also accepts that God is absolutely sovereign. But God's sovereignty cannot contradict His other attributes. God's attribute of love and justice would not allow Him to deny His grace to untold millions. It would be against God's very nature for Him to do this. Calvinism in reality misrepresents God's nature. He demeans and degrades God's sovereignty making God unloving and unjust, by

saying that God uses His sovereignty unjustly, not allowing some to be saved.

The Misuse of Words by the Calvinists

Whosoever - "pas" - The word "pas" (whosoever) in John 3:16, Acts 2:21, present a problem for the Calvinist because the word means "whoever" and means "whatever person: no matter who" and in the verse means "who ever believes." (11) They infer that the word literally means "all the believing ones of those who were predestinated to believe by God, in contrast to the ones God will not allow to be saved because He withholds His grace from them." However this is not substantiated by Greek definitions of the word used nor by teachings of the New Testament. *"And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."* (Acts 2:21) In Acts 2:21, Robertson identifies the phrase "shall call on" as "First aorist middle subjunctive of *epikaleo*, common verb, to call to, middle voice for oneself in need. Indefinite relative clause with *ean* and so subjunctive, punctiular idea, in any single case, and so aorist." (12) It can accurately be translated "whatever person would call on the Lord will be saved." In other words, whatever person would call on the name of the Lord "sozo" (shall be saved) meaning shall be delivered.

In John 3:15-16, the word "pas" as a pronoun modifies the word believes. The verse literally says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever (whatever person or whoever) believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16) The Greek dictionary Arndt-Gingrich says this in the context John 3:15-16 it means "everyone who, whoever." (13)

The Greek word(s) "pas, pasa, pan,ras, rasa, ran," are used in the New Testament and translated hundreds of times "all, whosoever, everyone, whole, all manner, etc." The word $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ is used 99 times in the New Testament. The word is all inclusive and how it is modified determines who it is referring to. In John 3:15-16 and Acts 2:21 the word "whosoever" simply means every person who believes will be saved. The word "whosoever" is not restricted as applying only to the supposed few who are decreed to receive irresistible grace from God but to all the world.

World - kosmos. - The Calvinist insist that the word "world" used in verses such as John 3:16, 1 John 2:2 does not mean the whole world, but only applies to the elect few who are decreed by God to receive irresistible grace. Note how explicit is 1 John 2:2, "And he is the

propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole (*holos* "all") world (*kosmos*). The word when used with the article refers to the whole of something. For example: "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. . . ." (Acts 11:26) Barnabas and Saul taught at Antioch one year. If the Calvinist was consistent he would have to translate the verse to mean they assembled for some indefinite or unspecified period of time. However the use of the modifier "whole" restricts the phrase to mean one complete year.

Further, the word "world" is *kosmos* and denotes as Arndt-Gingrich states, "the world as the sum total of everything here, as the sum total of all beings above the level of the animals, the planet on which we live, the habitation of mankind, the world in contrast to heaven, all mankind, especially believers."¹ Note the use of "whole world" in 1 John 5:19 "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." The Calvinist interpretation contradicts the statement of the passage 1 John 2:2. John makes the unmistakable distinction between the whole world and the those who are distinctive as believers. It is a gross misrepresentation of this phrase to limit it to any individuals elected by God through His supposed irresistible grace. These passages state that Jesus Christ was the full payment the "propitiation" for the believer's sins, and also for all mankind. Jesus' suffering and payment for sins was for all of mankind. Sadly, only those who by faith believe will be saved and receive God free gift of grace. (Eph. 2:8-9)

The Biblical Explanation

Many believers who accept a literal and holistic interpretation of Scripture have the correct and biblical understanding of the matter, and reject both the extremes of the Calvinist and Arminian systems. Both the Calvinists and the Arminians have fallen into a trap set by human wisdom, which tries to explain and systematize every act of God. They have used the poorest of hermeneutical principles and reached wrong conclusions about God Himself. God clearly has not told man everything about Himself or given us the "why" of all He has done. But what He has plainly revealed is that we are to believe Him, trust Him, accept Him and live. It is unthinkable that God would leave us in a state of confusion over the matter of salvation! Yet, that is what the Calvinist concludes. All this confusion is not in God's word, but in the unsound

reasoning of some men.

God made salvation so simple and clear that even a little child can believe and be saved and become a witness and testimony to others. What is the value of spending countless hours concocting theological systems which seek to second guess all God has done? The Bible principle that "you can know the vine by its fruit" is well applied here. What has been the fruit of Calvinism or Arminianism? They have both led to confusion, division and false teaching. Therefore both systems should be rejected because both produce unbiblical results.

One response of those who hold to extreme views on the doctrine of election is often to condescend to judgmental and cult like attacks on those who would differ with them. Almost every Calvinist writer I've studied, to some degree, harshly judges the motives of non-Calvinists. Calvinist Gordon Clark descends to criticizing those who differ from the Calvinist view by concluding they are not students of the Bible and not interested in doctrine. [\(14\)](#) That is a meretricious and unscholarly attack on those who disagree with him. A swipe at non-Calvinists establishes nothing and certainly does nothing to support his position or credibility as a Bible scholar. It is a childish response and out of place with biblical scholarship. Many renowned and scholarly men with earned degrees in Bible disagree and reject Calvinism. To say they are not scholarly or interested in doctrine shows an extreme unsound bias on Clark's part.

Calvinist C. D. Cole, makes this harsh judgment toward those who do not accept Calvinism saying, "Ah, the real trouble with the objector is not election; it is something else. His real objection is to total depravity or human inability to do good." [\(15\)](#) This is simply a false statement. Most Bible scholars and students reject Calvinism, and totally accept that man is a depraved sinner lost in his sins as Romans 3:10 plainly states. Once again the Calvinist does not offer any real defense of his beliefs, but makes unfounded critical statements about those who do not agree with him.

John MacArthur also fits this mold and accuses objectors to the Calvinistic system as doing so because of pride. [\(16\)](#) Kenneth Good, who falsely places all traditional Baptists as being in the Calvinist camp correctly says, "It is to be regretted that both confusion and emotion seem to reign in the current discussions on Calvinism versus Arminianism. Considerably more heat than light is being generated by the energy presently expended in most quarters." [\(17\)](#)

The Calvinist often resorts to defending his position by stating those that reject this false view are rejecting God's sovereignty. That too is an absurd statement. Such a weak defense shows the unsound foundation on which their ideas are founded. Certainly, Almighty God is absolutely sovereign, but that does not preclude that He can go against His own nature. The true biblicalist correctly understands and accepts God's sovereignty, but this does not mean he must accept the theology of Calvinists which contradicts God's other attributes. The true Bible scholar knows that God in His sovereignty does not violate His own nature or His stated word. Both the Calvinists and the Arminians have taken extreme positions and neither has proved its system to be biblical or a correct explanation of the doctrines of election. Huntsmen, of David Jeremiah's "Turning Point," in a weak attempt to defend Calvinism's contradictions, tell us not to attempt to "reconcile" the teachings of God on election and the sovereignty of God. [\(18\)](#) Both the Calvinist and the Arminian teachings contain some truth, but they go further than God does and that makes them erroneous. I have been a student of the Bible since I was saved in 1972 at 32 years of age. With gratitude, I thank those that taught me that the first distinctive of a New Testament believer was to accept the Bible as my sole authority for faith and practice. The Bible is the authority, not the theological systems of man. I am a Christian, a believer in Jesus Christ and I identify myself totally with Him and Him alone.

Paul condemned the error of identifying oneself with man or religious teachers, in 1 Corinthians 1:12. In 1 Corinthians 3:4, Paul says identifying oneself with anyone but Jesus Christ is a carnal act. True believers identify themselves with Jesus Christ, He is the Word, and only His word is Truth. The true believer is to accept God's word, as His only source for his faith and practice. The Calvinist by accepting John Calvin's "Institutes" as their source and explanation of their faith, make a serious mistake.

The conclusion on a personal note.

I am not a Calvinist nor am I an Arminian. I reject both titles and theological systems. They both are the heretical and cult like systems of fallible men. I chose to call myself a Biblicist, or simply a "Bible believer." I identify myself with my Savior and His word. I take no pride in the fact that I am saved, yet I am eternally grateful. I am awed by the truth that the Lord Jesus Christ died on Calvary's cross for my sin. I am deeply and eternally grateful to God who loved this blind sinner that much! I totally reject the idea that I received salvation on any merit of

my own! I was, as God said, a sinner, dead in trespasses and sin, sold unto sin, a child of sin, and with no righteousness of my own. I was saved by the sovereign act and plan of our loving God, who came to the earth, incarnate in man and totally paid my sin debt. I did not merit salvation and was totally in bondage to my sinful nature. I absolutely had no spark of divinity in me. Yet, God loved me, His created being, and suffered for me while I was yet in my sin. He provided the way and the means of my salvation by His grace through faith. I am not going to try and put Almighty God in a box and try to systematize God's act of saving the sinner. I am just going to believe His very Word and to thank Him for loving me, the sinner that I am, and forgiving my sin and giving me eternal life.

Man cannot take pride or boast of any merit on his part in his salvation. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Man cannot merit salvation by good works. "*But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness*" (Romans 4:5).

Man has no goodness or righteousness in him upon which to base his salvation. "*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*" (Romans 5:8) "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23).

Many in history have fallen into the trap of going further than Scripture goes and trying, with human rationalization, to explain and systematize God's actions. The result of such rationalization is that most of the time it ends in extremism. Finite men with finite minds cannot systematize Almighty God! It is an extreme and false view that says God predestined some men to be damned to hell and does not offer them salvation. It is equally an extreme view that states man can in any way merit his salvation or lose the eternal life that God gives the believer.

Each view, whether Calvinism or Arminianism, when adhered to violates clear biblical teaching and therefore cannot be truth. My position is that I reject the extremes of both the Calvinists and the Arminians and do not use neither name in identifying my stand on accepting what the Bible clearly teaches.

There was a time in which I did not think that these issues were

of a great importance. I have since changed my mind because I have seen the fruit of Calvinism. Over the past years many people have written and expressed of the confusion and anguish the teachings of Calvinism causes in their lives. One dear lady wrote and said she had not had any children because she was afraid that God would not elect them to salvation. [\(16\)](#)

Calvinism for some has cast a shadow over their assurance of salvation, because they wondered if they were elected or rejected by God. One man wrote that when his church began teaching Calvinism. He said "I was sick for 2 weeks, couldn't sleep or eat. I was bothered by it taking away the loving Savior I had known all my life." [\(17\)](#) Another young man wrote saying what seeking the Lord and studying the claims of Christ. He then stumbled across the teachings of Calvinism and said is shattered him. He said, "My question to you is, am I able to make a choice to follow Christ? If I want to follow Christ, can I do so? Or is it not my choice? I feel odd trying to put this question into words, but I've tried. The bottom line is, if I wished to become a Christian today, tomorrow or whenever I feel I am ready, can I do so? Calvinists have tried to tell me that I have the inability to call upon Christ, and that if not one of the elect, I won't be saved. Please help!" [\(18\)](#)

For years I have corresponded with Calvinists, and found they will rarely concede to any plain biblical truth that does not agree with their theology. From their statements about the matter they seem to be a proud people who see themselves as having a superior intellect and spirituality. However, their fruit is corrupt because it ignores a great deal of God's word, and worse distorts even the very nature of God.

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End Notes:

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