

THE APOLOGETICS GROUP PRESENTS



Amazing Grace

The History
& Theology
of Calvinism

STUDY GUIDE
AND
WORKBOOK

BY ERIC HOLMBERG

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	SECTION	PAGE NUMBER
a.	About this Study Guide -----	3
b.	Preface -----	4
1.	Chapter 1: Opening/Overture -----	8
2.	Chapter 2: The History of the Debate -----	9
3.	Chapter 3: Church History -----	12
4.	Chapter 4: Free-Will Controversy -----	15
5.	Chapter 5: The Reformation -----	24
6.	Chapter 6: Arminianism vs. Calvinism -----	32
7.	Chapter 7: Introduction: Testimony of Scripture --	38
8.	Chapter 8: Total Depravity -----	38
9.	Chapter 9: Unconditional Election -----	47
10.	Chapter 10: Limited Atonement -----	59
11.	Chapter 11: Irresistible Grace -----	64
12.	Chapter 12: Perseverance -----	69
13.	Chapter 13: Evangelism -----	80
14.	Chapter 14: The Law of God -----	94
15.	Chapter 15: Nine Keys to Evangelism -----	104
16.	Video Transcript -----	110
17.	Recommended Reading -----	208
18.	Question & Answer Key -----	209

Amazing Grace: The History and Theology of Calvinism

Study Guide and Workbook

By Eric Holmberg

About this Study Guide

We realize that most of the people who will use this study guide and workbook will do so while watching the DVD. Often this will take place in a group setting where pausing or rewinding the video will not always be practical. So to maximize clarity, continuity, and retention, we have included in this workbook many of the program's more important quotes and bible verses along with key segments of script.

This expanded study guide features new articles, essays, definitions, and historical anecdotes that we trust will help better illustrate and impart the truths surrounding the Reformed view of God, man, and salvation. It also includes the entire word-for-word transcription of the script for the video. This adds considerably to the length of this guide and work book and hence the costs of printing it in its entirety. With the proliferation of computers – particularly laptops – many people will prefer using this as a digital file so printing costs are moot. Because it is available free of charge on-line (www.theapoloeticsgroup.com, under "Writings" tab), if printing costs are a problem we recommend that the course facilitator just print out those pages he or she deems necessary for the class and then refer the participants to the online guide for further study. For those who really want to conserve paper we have also included a "Question & Answer" key (pps. 209 – 229) that contains just the numbered questions and answers.

Teachers in a classroom situation may want to begin each lesson with a brief review of the previous session as well as one or more of the essay-style discussion questions. And, of course, prayer is vital. The truths in the video and this study guide are often offensive to the natural mind. Being "spiritually discerned," the assistance of the Holy Spirit – the One who was sent to come

alongside us and illuminate our minds and hearts – is critical to fully apprehending the mysteries surrounding God’s amazing grace.

Preface

I personally experienced the most amazing aspect of God’s good grace in 1980 at the age of 26. In a moment of time I went from being a confident practitioner and apologist for rationalism (unbelief) and immorality – to a man undone. I was very conscious of a supernatural Presence as I knelt in sorrow, weeping as my life of rebellion and profligacy unfolded before me. In my heart I knew that a fork in my life’s road had been reached. I could stay on the path that I had been on...or take the one that had opened up before me in the bright shadow of Calvary’s cross.

I hesitated. I knew that this new way would require that I deny the self I had grown so fond of serving and satisfying; that my lifestyle would have to undergo profound change. I didn’t see how I could possibly live up to these challenges. I suddenly became frightened, even sad. I knew deep down that the way of the cross would lead to life. But I also knew that I didn’t have the strength for the journey. The cords of sin I had entangled myself in were too strong.

And then the grace became even more amazing as a still small voice spoke to my heart. I couldn’t make the journey in my own strength, I realized in a flash of understanding. But I wouldn’t have to. A greater One would walk with me and in His strength I would be made strong. Words of adoration and commitment to the One who sacrificed His life for mine sprang up from my heart...and the rest as they say is history. What was dead became alive and a whole new person was born.

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me...”

I jumped with both feet into this new world that had opened up before me. I got involved in a campus outreach and began training for vocational ministry. The church I was a part of was full of revival fires and zeal for the LORD’s house. And passion for “saving the lost” and making them into true disciples was the outflow of this zeal. I was introduced to the writings of Charles Finney and

other leaders of what was referred to as the second Great Awakening. (I heard about the first awakening, too, though not as much.) In time I began ministering on university campuses and later in other churches, developing the multi-media tools that would eventually lead to the establishment of Reel to Real Ministries and The Apologetics Group. God graciously used these live seminars as tools to lead many to faith in Christ.

But how exactly did these salvations come about? What was the *ordo salutis*: the causal order that turns a fallen man into a child of God? (See page 45 of this guide.) At the time, the answer seemed simple, even commonsensical to me. Jesus died a sacrificial death to atone for the sins of all mankind. God (who is love) loves everyone and desires that all people will be saved. But at the same time He doesn't want to compromise our free will. (He doesn't want robots worshipping Him after all.) Through the preaching of the gospel the way of salvation is presented to man. Through this same preaching people become aware of their sins and receive the grace necessary, if they so desire, to turn from their sins and receive the gift of Christ's righteousness. Some choose life and the blessing of heaven; others reject God's mercy and by default opt for death and the curse of hell. What could be simpler and ultimately fairer? God makes the way of salvation open before all men and then presents us with a real choice...and we choose.

And it all seemed to work. I was honored to present this way of salvation to people individually as well as in groups and to then lead many in the sinner's prayer: having them repent (turn from) their sins, commit their lives to Christ so that they would then be "saved" or born-again. And many apparently were as they brought forth and are still producing the fruit of a transformed life. They really did get saved.

Over time, however, my understanding of the *ordo salutis* began to undergo some subtle modifications. Many were brought about by verses I read in the Bible. Did God really love everyone? (Proverbs 6:17; Romans 9:13) Could God's will really be frustrated by any man? (Luke 1:17; Romans 9: 20,21) And how well did the most famous conversion in the Bible fit into the steps of salvation I had been trained to accept? (Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9) But then there was also the impact of the writings of earlier champions of the faith. I had taken C.S. Lewis' admonition to prefer older writings that have withstood the test of time over the

unproven ruminations of the latest popular writer. As I read the insights of Augustine, Athanasius, Luther, Calvin, Spurgeon and others, I found that the God of these saints of old seemed much bigger, more awesome, more mysterious and more sovereign than the One I had heard preached. My views concerning the nature of God, man and salvation continued to develop and mature.

And one day, it all just made sense and I found myself in the camp that I used to warn others against. I had become “Reformed.”

What follows is an exploration and explanation of the Reformed faith, what many call “Calvinism” after the name of the great Protestant reformer who so powerfully systematized its teachings. It is offered, in the words of the Mayflower Compact, “for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith.” As I will explain in the introduction of the video, it is in no way intended as a screed against advocates of Arminian (“free will”) salvation or to impugn their salvation, spiritual maturity or zeal for the LORD and His kingdom. Some of the godliest people and most effective soul-winners I know stand on the other side of this theological divide. Conversely, I have met more than a few people who know the “Five-Points” and the “Five-Solas” like the back of their hand and yet have little spiritual fruit; men who know a lot *about* God, but don’t seem to really *know* Him very well. Being “reformed” is in no way a guarantee of becoming a better – a more mature and spiritual – Christian.

Nevertheless, all ideas have consequences, whether intended or not. And I think we can all agree that ideas concerning the nature of God, man and redemption from sin likely have among the greatest consequences of all. The participants in this video believe that the unintended after-effects of Arminianism have been great and have compromised both the Gospel message and, as a result, the experiment in Christian liberty that is (was?) the West (Christendom it was once called) and most specifically America. Whichever side you fall on now – or after you have watched the video and done this workbook – we owe it to our God and the generation we have been called to serve to carefully consider these great themes. “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter and the glory of kings is to search out a matter.” (Proverbs 25:2)

I close with a challenging thought. As I write this we have embarked on what may be among the most daunting production we have ever undertaken. Called

The Real Jihad: The War Behind the War, one of its key contentions is that Islam is a “polished knife” (Ezekiel 21: 8-10) that has been raised up against the West **by the LORD** to challenge and chastise our growing idolatries. (Along with scripture verses and the many lessons of history, we will set out the chilling parallels between the “gaps in our wall” — those specific collective idolatries that have breached the hedge of God’s covenantal protection — and the tactical strengths of the jihadists. The parallels are extremely sobering and we believe a secondary proof of our thesis.) Like all chastisements from a loving, holy God, their purpose is restorative: to force us to confront our sins that we might turn in repentance and see our country healed by God. (2 Chronicles 7:14). But if we refuse to repent, God’s longer term purpose for chastisement will enter the picture: that is that He will allow the seeds of destruction that we have sown to reach full maturity.¹ The America that we know and love, with its freedoms and prosperity, will disappear. Our (and Europe’s) primary redemptive purpose at this point will be to serve as a warning to future generations: this is what happens to nations that are blessed by God and then forget and turn from the One who was the ultimate source of those blessings.

The connection here to the themes of *Amazing Grace* and this workbook is that in the confrontation with Islam we are ultimately engaged in a struggle between competing gods and worldviews. There is no question that the West’s primary deity — the idol of humanism and multiculturalism — is no match for the transcendent, unapologetically all-subjecting god of Islam. But as the Church wakes-up and strengthens the things that remain (Revelation 3:2; *Father, we pray that it happens!*), as we (figuratively speaking) ascend Mount Carmel to confront the prophets of Baal, we had better make sure that the God we both call upon and present to the watching world (particularly the Muslim world) is the true God, **the One who answers with fire**. A God who is not completely sovereign, who offers the hope of salvation but is not all-powerful to secure it, who knocks on the doors of sinners’ hearts asking to come in and then walks away sad when

¹ I speak humanly here. God knows everything past, present and future and only has one will and plan. But we don’t know the specifics of it and never know how our response to the details of covenantal history as it unfolds will precisely impact the future. But we do know many things about God and His promises concerning what will happen if, for example, we humble ourselves and pray and seek God’s face and turn from our wickedness. (2 Chr. 7:14) All we can do is what we can do: obey God, repent when we need to, focus on the Great Commission by winning souls and disciplining nations (beginning, of course, with our own) and rest in the knowledge that all things work together for the good of those that love God and are called according to His purposes. (Romans 8:28)

He is turned down, who is impotent (to some degree at least) to subdue nations through His covenant people before a Devil who somehow has the power to overcome the world through his, will never be able to topple the fierce desert deity that Mohammed presented to the world.

May the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, lead us all into a true knowledge and deeper intimacy with the One who is mighty to save...and will do so to the uttermost. (Isaiah 63:1; Hebrews 7:25)

Eric Holmberg , New Year's Eve, 2007

Chapter 1: Opening/Overture

(Video running time: 7:22 minutes)

“The Christian does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us.” - C.S. Lewis

Eric: What follows is a three-part presentation that asks one of the most important questions the human mind can contemplate: “How exactly is a fallen, fallible and finite human – a sinner – redeemed before an infinitely just and holy God?”

1. How do Christians answer that question? What are the key truths that underlie redemption that would be common to all evangelicals? On what points do they sometimes disagree? (You can use examples from the video, your own thoughts or what you have heard from others.)

2. Dr. RC Sproul: Jesus taught that each one of us will be brought before God in a final judgment. As every person has to stand before an infinitely Holy God, the supreme question of life will be: _____

3. The next related question is: Who gets the glory in this process of redeeming man from his sins and pardoning him from the judgment those sins deserve?

4. All true Christians will say that God alone gets the glory for redemption. But how is that inconsistent with certain aspects of the answer that many people give to the question about how a person is saved? _____

Answers for Chapter 1: Opening/Overture

1. (various) 2. How do I escape the righteous judgment of God? 3. God 4. If man has to do something – further if man has the ability to do something – that contributes to his salvation, then at least some of the glory (no matter how infinitesimal) would be credited to the person who cooperated with God in their redemption.

SECTION 1: THE HISTORY OF THE DEBATE

Chapter 2: The History of the Debate

(Video running time: 3:38 minutes)

The debate concerning this vital issue is as old as Christianity itself.

1.) How do many people resolve the debate surrounding the question of how people are saved? _____

2. Why is it that ultimately these responses are not profitable? _____

3. According to the philosopher George Santayana, those who don't remember the past are _____
4. By examining the past, we may, by God's grace, avoid its _____ and draw wisdom and encouragement from its victories.

Controversies arise whenever mystery is present.

Answers for Chapter 2: The History of the Debate

1. People just accept the contradictions or try to ignore them. 2. The issues are too important to just gloss over; touching as they do on some of the most important issues of life. 3. ...condemned to repeat it 4. mistakes

Grist for the Mill: Many people are troubled by the amount of controversy and debate that seems to arise from the Bible. Why can't Christianity's truths be clearer and less complicated? (That is one of the things that makes Islam such a potent ideology; your basic, run-of-the-mill disciple can learn everything he needs to know – and many of its leaders would say should know – in a few hours or less.) Mystery seems to bleed from all around its edges.

Well, first we need to keep in mind that many of the most fundamental truths of our faith are, in fact, simple enough that even a child or the mentally handicapped can embrace them. They are things known more by the heart than by the mind. And they are powerful to save. Thankfully we are redeemed by grace through faith, not because every "i" is dotted and "t" crossed properly in our systematic theology.

Second, when an eternal, infallible, infinitely wise God who can create and sustain an unimaginably vast universe by the word of His power while simultaneously knowing each of us down to the thoughts of our hearts, *when that God* decides to intersect with our finite, fallen and fallible world and worldviews by revealing Himself through His Word or through the Incarnation, we should expect that sparks should fly! (Personally, I find the mystery of the Trinity very satisfying and consoling for this very reason. Any God that I can get my puny mind around can't be God!)

And when faced with these sparks, what should be our response?

For those who have a real relationship with God and have grown to the point where they can endure “strong meat” (Hebrews 5:12-14), God, in effect, says “Chase the mystery!” (Proverbs 25:2) Exercise those powers of understanding and discernment. Grow up. Work those jaw muscles. Don’t you know that one day you will judge angels? There is work to be done in preparation for the challenges of the Great Commission (imagine discipling entire nations!), not to mention ruling with Christ in the age to come. Are you going to stop and stare at this obstacle, this mystery, and then shrug and turn around? Or are you going to be a man or woman after My own heart and press on?

Too many choose the easy way. And it is not unusual to see them try to justify their reluctance by quoting scripture; for example the first part of the Lord’s well-known admonition in Isaiah 55: 8 & 9:

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

“Well, the secret things belong to God (Deuteronomy 29:29),” they often say. “Calvinism vs. Arminianism, predestination, those freaky verses in the Old Testament, the problem of evil, the book of Revelation and end-times matters, Paul’s ‘hard sayings,’ all those things are beyond our grasp even as the heavens are above the earth. Let’s just love the Lord and avoid disputing about these things.”

But in this they ignore the words of God that follow in verses 10 and 11:

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

In other words, when we see that we are bumping up against the ceiling of our human reasoning and we know that God's ways are waiting for us somewhere above, we should not look back to the ground in surrender. It is the glory of a king to search out the matter; to seek to know God's ways. We should turn instead to the Word, humbly and in great faith, knowing that it will not return void. For in the same way that water (O cleansing, life-giving water!) comes down from the natural heavens and causes the land to bring forth fruit, so will the living Word that proceeds from the realms of glory transform us and bring us into greater levels of maturity and understanding.

And don't be surprised if the understanding you end up gaining tends to offend the natural mind. His ways *are* higher than ours, after all. In truth, I have found that the closer you get to what Francis Schaeffer called "true truth," the more the earth-born mind will squirm in discomfort.

Augustine and Anselm were right: *Credo ut intelligam*. We believe – we have faith in God and His Word – in order to understand.

Chapter 3: Church History

A Brief Apologetic for Understanding Church History

(Video running time: 5:26 minutes)

Why begin with a historical survey of the debate instead of going right to the testimony of Scripture? Well, by neglecting the creeds, councils and other vital facets of the Church's rich two-thousand-year-old history, many Christians have fallen into the trap of having to rediscover what the Bible says.

1. The beliefs of the Jehovah's Witnesses concerning Christ are simply a re-hash of what ancient heresy? _____ The heresy was named after its chief proponent, _____.
2. Where did the church council meet that ultimately condemned this view as heresy? _____ In what year did this council meet? _____

3. Who was the champion of the orthodox view? _____

It is important to note that we should in no way equate a church council as being equal in authority and infallibility as the Bible.

Dr. R.C. Sproul: Although tradition does not rule our interpretation, it does guide it. If upon reading a particular passage you have come up with an interpretation that has escaped the notice of every other Christian for two thousand years, or has been championed by universally recognized heretics, chances are pretty good that you had better abandon your interpretation.

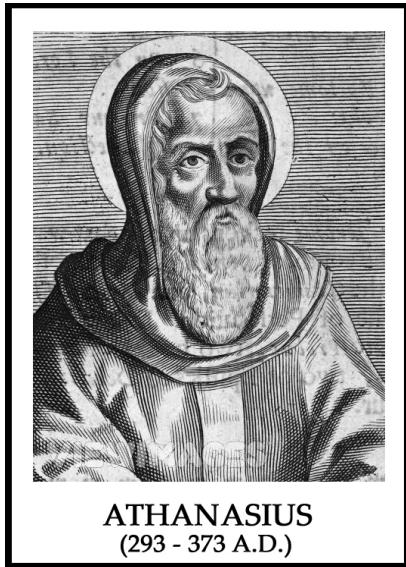
4. Eric: Why have so many in the modern church forsaken the treasures of wisdom and experience won by Christians in centuries past? Some blame an _____ to the errors of Roman Catholicism – where the traditions and councils of the Church were elevated to be virtually equivalent to the Word of God... They have thrown the baby out with the bath water. Because we don't remember the past we are caught by surprise and fooled by old heresies.

5. Can you think of other reasons why modern Christians are so often ignorant of Church history and specifically the councils that met to deal with early heresies and the creeds that were formulated as a response? _____

Dr. Tom Ascol: Christians of all ages should be willing to learn from those who have gone before us. The Bible says that Christ gives gifts to his church, including teachers. It is the height of arrogance for us to close our ears to or to ignore what God taught our fathers... So what councils have declared, what teachers have made known, the lessons that have stood the test of time, we ought to be willing to consider those and weigh those...Not as equal authority with the word of God at all, but to measure them in the light of what the Word says.

Answers for Chapter 3: Church History

1. Arianism; Arius. 2. Nicea; 325 A.D. 3. Athanasius 4. overreaction 5. (various) e.g. general antipathy toward history in our culture; the idea that with Constantine and the acceptance of Christianity by the Roman Empire the church became fully corrupt and so its councils are to be viewed with suspicion or as being irrelevant; spread of fundamentalism and its "Bible only," "No Creed but Christ" mentality; postmodernism with its "truth is whatever I think it is" which tends to denigrate tradition and the opinions of others.



Athanasius: theologian, ecclesiastical statesman, and Egyptian national leader; he was the chief defender of Christian orthodoxy in the 4th-century battle against Arianism, the heresy that the Son of God was a creature of like, but not of the same, substance as God the Father. In Athanasius' system, the Son of God, the eternal Word through whom God made the world, entered the world in human form to lead men back to the harmony from which they had fallen away. Athanasius reacted vigorously against Arianism and its view of the Son was a created and lesser being than God, and welcomed the definition of the Son

formulated at the Council of Nicea in 325: "consubstantial with the Father." His important works include *The Life of St. Antony*, *Four Orations Against the Arians*, and most notably *On the Incarnation*.

Athanasius received his philosophical and theological training at Alexandria. In 325 he attended Bishop Alexander of Alexandria as deacon at the Council of Nicea. While not a bishop or an official delegate, the young Athanasius was nevertheless allowed to participate in the discussions. Theodoret observed that "he contended earnestly for the apostolic doctrines and was applauded by their champions, while he earned the hostility of their opponents." At Nicea, Athanasius' position on the divinity of Christ won the day and Arianism was declared a heresy. But the battle was far from won. Arianism continued to spread, at times gaining the upper hand as various bishops and even emperors embraced its errors. Athanasius was periodically persecuted and banished throughout his life and there were times when it seemed that Arianism would

prevail – hence the famous expression *Athanasius contra mundum* or "Athanasius against the world." But he continued fearlessly to write, preach and courageously defend the truth. In the end, he prevailed.

Adapted from "Athanasius, Saint." Encyclopedia Britannica. 2008. Encyclopedia Britannica Online.

Chapter 4: Free-Will Controversy

The Augustinian/Pelagian Controversy Over Free-Will

(Video running time: 18:20 minutes)

"If I ought, I can." - Pelagius

As Jesus prophesied, the early church suffered many trials and tribulations; most of them at the hands of the Pharisees and the Romans. However, as time went by the greatest trials were to come from within the church itself.

"...savage wolves will come among you, not sparing the flock
...men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the
disciples after themselves. - Acts 20:29-30

The Introduction of and Response to False Doctrine:

- 1) Challenges established teachings.
- 2) Challenges are then circulated through the means of letters and tracts.
- 3) Church council is called to deal with the new teaching.
- 4) The Church issues a formal written response.

1. This is how creeds and confessions were developed. They were essentially a formal _____ to false or controversial teachings.

During the fifth century A.D., a new controversy arose. It started when the premier theologian of the time, Aurelius Augustine, also known as St. Augustine of Hippo, wrote a simple prayer that began to circulate throughout Christendom:

"LORD, give what Thou commandest, and command

The man who came to be known as Saint Augustine of Hippo was born in A.D. 354 in Thagaste, a provincial Roman city in North Africa (present day Algeria) to a pagan father and a devout Christian mother. A gifted but rebellious thinker, Augustine left his mother’s Catholicism to pursue a number of Gnostic/dualistic systems of thought while also indulging in the sins of the flesh in no small measure. But gradually his mother’s prayers prevailed, culminating in one of the most famous conversion experiences in history.



While sitting in his garden (he had moved north to Italy and the center of the Latin world to teach rhetoric and had come under the influence of the great Ambrose, bishop of Milan) the thirty-two-year-old Augustine heard the voice of an unseen child telling him in a sing-song voice, *tolle, lege* ("take up and read"). He grabbed the nearest text to him, which happened to be Paul's Epistle to the Romans, and opened it at random to 13:13-14: "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires." God granted Augustine the grace he later memorialized in his famous saying:

“Our hearts were made for You, O Lord, and they are restless until they rest in Thee.” He was baptized into the faith by Ambrose a year later.

Augustine detailed his spiritual journey in his famous *Confessions*, which became a classic of both Christian theology and world literature. His *City of God* remains another classic, as were his writings on original sin, just war, ecclesiology, eschatology and many other key Christian doctrines. *Aurelius Augustinus Hipponensis* is deservedly hailed today by Roman Catholics and Protestants alike as one of the greatest theologians in Church history.

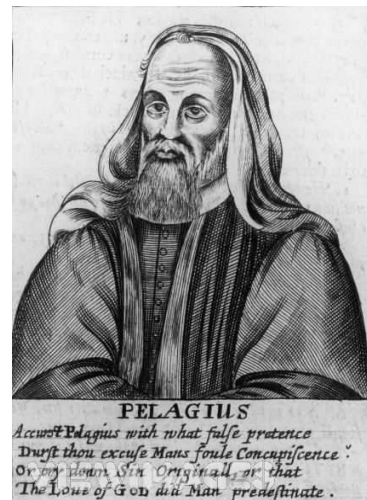
A British monk by the name of Pelagius vehemently disagreed with the prayer. He declared:

1. God would never give a command unless man was capable – of his own free will and ability – to accomplish it.

2. Man was not overcome by sin to the point where he could do nothing to satisfy God.

3. No one was contaminated by the Fall, nor were they “born in sin.” A baby instead was *tabular rosa*, Latin for a “blank sheet of paper”, and was therefore perfectly capable of obeying and pleasing God.

Pelagius (ca. AD 354 – ca. AD 420/440) was an ascetic who denied the doctrine of original sin, later developed by Augustine of Hippo, and was declared a heretic by the Council of Carthage. His interpretation of a doctrine of free will became known as Pelagianism. He was well educated, fluent in both Greek and Latin, and learned in theology. He was not, however, a cleric. He was certainly well known in Rome, both for the harsh asceticism of his public life as well as the power and persuasiveness of his speech. His reputation in Rome earned him praise early in his career even from such pillars of the Church as Augustine, who referred to him as a “saintly man.” However, he was later accused of lying about his own teachings in order to avoid public condemnation. Most of his later life was spent defending himself against other theologians and the Catholic Church.



2. As this controversy between Augustine and Pelagius developed, it became increasingly clear that at issue were several principles at the core of the Christian belief system; doctrines concerning the fundamental nature of _____.

An all-important question began to emerge: Does man need God’s grace in order

to stand before Him in righteousness?

3. Pelagius responded with an emphatic, “No!” While God’s help is always appreciated, it is not absolutely necessary. Man can simply exercise his _____ and choose not to sin.

4. Augustine was just as insistent when he declared, “Yes!” Man is utterly dependant upon God’s grace because he has been ruined by _____ and can do absolutely nothing to redeem himself from the wrath of the infinite holy God.

The stakes here were can hardly be exaggerated.

“There has never, perhaps, been another crisis of equal importance in Church history in which the opponents have expressed the principles at issue so clearly and abstractly...The Arian dispute before the Council of Nicea can alone compare with [the Pelagian Controversy].” – Adolph Harnack

Dr Tom Ascol: Augustine was recognizing that all of life is grace; that we live and breathe and do what we do because God enables us to be that way and live that way. So by acknowledging our utter dependence on God, he asks for the grace and then acknowledges: “Command whatever you will and then give the grace to do what you command.”...You have commanded us to worship, LORD grant us the ability to worship. You have commanded us to pray, grant us the ability to pray. You have commanded us to evangelize, grant us the ability to evangelize. And every real Christian, at his best moment, would acknowledge the rightness of both of those requests. Because when we pray we’re asking God to do for us what we can’t do for ourselves.

Dr. Thomas Nettles: In other words we are dependent upon the grace God gives us to accomplish His commands.

Dr. Thomas Nettles: Pelagius thought this made God seem unjust and put Him in a bad light. He also thought it was an affront to human nature.

5. Dr Tom Ascol: Pelagius was basically a_____. He believed

that man had not been so corrupted that he could not be perfected in this life. The prayer that God would have to grant something to us for us to perform what He required to him was blasphemous. What we need is simply the act of our wills and the getting our lives together to pursue the things that God had really commanded us to do. So Pelagius did not see life as being a matter of grace and only grace. For him Christianity was basically moralism. Man could do it! So you don't need to pray for God to grant you that which you already have the ability to perform.

6. Eric: With the teachings of Pelagius, humanism and its doctrine of the natural ability of man came to the forefront of Christian thought. Though it had been a dominant belief system within the _____ that had greatly influenced the world for many centuries, now it sprang full-formed into the culture of the Church.

Pelagius, as a humanist, believed that each person was created like a new Adam: perfect, untethered by the influence of a sinful nature and perfectly capable of obeying the commands of God. Of course, many do choose to sin from time to time and so Jesus' atonement provided real benefit to them. Understanding this, man could then use his own intelligence and free will to choose forgiveness in Christ without any necessary assistance from outside himself.

7. Pelagius denied what the apostolic Church labeled " _____ " – that as a result of the fall, in which Adam died spiritually and ultimately physically, all of those born after Adam carry within themselves a corrupt nature and the guilt of his first sin.

Dr. D. James Kennedy: If you ignore or deny the doctrine of original sin, the doctrine of the Fall and the fallen nature of man – as being dead in trespasses and sins – if you deny that and see him as being in the same state as Adam at his creation, then you are going to produce an entire superstructure of theology which is all wrong. And that is why the Pelagian heresy was so important.

What impact would Pelagius' teaching have had on the Church if leaders at that time had not spoken out against him?

8. Dr. D. James Kennedy: If Pelagius was right and man today is born in the same way Adam was created (sinless and immortal), then we don't need Christ. We

don't need a _____.

Only sinners need a savior. And according to Pelagius sin was not inevitable. In fact, he believed and taught that there were many who had never committed a single sin.

He asserted that death was a natural occurrence even to Adam and that Adam would have eventually died even if he had never sinned... Pelagius made salvation by grace through faith unnecessary.

A council was called in the North African city of Carthage in 412 A.D. Both sides were present to argue their case. In the end, the council overwhelmingly agreed with Augustine. According to the Word of God, man was conceived and brought forth in sin.

"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin
my mother conceived me." Psalm 51:5

Man's will was not in any way "free" according to the doctrine of Pelagius, but was instead in bondage to his sinful nature. As a result of the Fall, given the opportunity to choose between good and evil, God or the Devil, the unregenerate man would always and freely choose evil and the Devil unless God Himself intervened.

9. Pelagius, as well as anyone who followed his teaching, were condemned as _____. The decision of this council reads in part, "Whosoever says, that Adam was created mortal, and would, even without sin, have died by natural necessity, let him be anathema."



Anathema (from Greek *anatithenai*; to set up, dedicate – a thing devoted to evil, curse; an accursed thing or person) A solemn condemnation by the Church to declare that some position or teaching contradicts apostolic faith and doctrine. "If anyone," Paul wrote to the Galatians, "preach to you a gospel besides what you have received, let him be anathema. (Galatians 1:8). Reflecting the Church's concern to preserve the integrity of faith, early Church fathers anathematized heretics using a variety of

terms. Polycarp called Marcion the firstborn of the devil. Ignatius saw in heretics poisonous plants, or animals in human form. Justin (c. 100-65) and Tertullian (160-220) called their teachings an inspiration of the Evil One. Theophilus compared them to barren and rocky islands on which ships were wrecked, and Origen said they were pirates placing lights on cliffs to lure and destroy vessels in search of refuge. These primitive views were later tempered in language, but the implicit attitudes remained and were crystallized in solemn conciliar decrees. The actual term “anathema” appears to have been first applied to heretics at the Council of Elvira (Spain) in 300-6, and became the standard formula in all the general councils of the Church, as against Arius (256-336) at Nicea in 325.

Dr. Thomas Nettles: The Scriptures say that the wages of sin is death. Death was promised as a result of disobedience. And one of the chief evidences that we are all sinners is that we die. When Pelagius and Coelestius taught that men were mortal from the beginning and would have died whether they sinned or not, they challenged the veracity of God in placing the curse of death on disobedient humanity. If unfallen man had died anyway then that means that the threat of God for disobedience would have been basically nonsense.

To our modern, pluralistic ears, declaring that someone should be “anathema” or “accursed” sounds unchristian.

Dr. Thomas Nettles: When these councils end some of these decisions with “let him be anathema,” they were picking the phrase up from the Biblical example in Galatians 1:8. In other words, let that person be cut off from the church. But the real meaning is “let that person be cut off from even the possibility of salvation.” Paul understood this to be something that was a destruction of the gospel. What they were saying was that this was an issue that was so important that it was better for that person to be cut off from the church than to allow them to continue to teach and possibly destroy souls.

10. In total, _____ councils condemned Pelagianism in all its forms. Unfortunately, the Bishop of Rome, Zosimus, later sided with Pelagius. In 412 A.D. he wrote a letter condemning the Council at Carthage for their anathema against Pelagius. Understanding that they had the support of Scripture, the leaders of the Carthaginian council disregarded the bishop and his letter.

“This temporary favor of the bishop of Rome towards the Pelagian heresy is a significant presage of the indulgence of later popes for Pelagianizing tendencies.” - Philip Schaff

11. It was these “pelagianizing tendencies” advocated by the Bishop of Rome that allowed for the later development of the works righteousness in the _____ belief system.



Cornelius Otto Jansen (October 28, 1585–May 6, 1640) was the Roman Catholic bishop of Ypres and the father of the religious movement known as Jansenism.

He actually set out to disprove the Protestant position and demonstrate that Roman Catholics were just as Biblically-focused as Luther and his followers. His major work, *Augustinus*, was finished just before he died. In it he presented the Bible's and Saint Augustine's soteriology, which to the Jesuit (Roman Catholic) watchdogs veered far too close to the Protestant position. Their initial eight charges of heresy were reduced to five and in 1643 Pope Innocent X formally condemned them. As Jansenism continued to spread, the Jesuit resistance became increasingly violent and papal condemnation more broad. In 1713, Pope Clement XI condemned 101 statements from their writings.



The great French religious philosopher, mathematician and physicist, Blaise Pascal (1623 – 1662), was among the most famous and influential of Jansen's followers.

12. Jansen believed in salvation by the grace of God. On behalf of the Pope, the

Jesuits launched a violent attack on the movement (Jansenist) he spawned. In 1713, Pope Clement XI issued a papal bull, or formal condemnation, against them, denouncing 101 statements from their writings. Many of these statements were direct quotations from the writings of _____.

As the church continued into the Middle Ages and the bishop of Rome became the so-called “visible head of the church,” these “Pelagianizing tendencies” metastasized and began to spread like a cancer. By the time of the Reformation, Rome was teaching that man saved himself by cooperating with the grace of God, a position known as *semi-Pelagianism*.

13. Dr. D. James Kennedy: Then came the mediating view of the semi-Pelagian position which said man was neither well nor dead. In this life man is born sick. If man is born well, as Pelagius said, all he needs is a little moral guidance in his life to stay along the path. If man is born sick, he needs help from a physician and if he will cooperate with his physician then he and the physician can affect a cure. Augustine said that man today was born dead in trespasses and sin. He needs to be resurrected, something we are totally incapable of doing. So the practical result is that if you are a Pelagian, all you need is a _____. If you are a semi-Pelagian all you need is a little help from a _____. And if you are an Augustinian, then you realize that man needs to be _____ and that salvation furthermore is entirely of grace.

14. Dr. Kenneth Talbot: Semi-Pelagianism was a doctrine that was a restructuring of Pelagius’ teachings. It was a synergistic rather than a _____ approach. It said that God and man must work together to bring redemption.

Answers for Chapter 4: Free-Will Controversy

1. Response 2. God, man, and the Gospel 3. free will 4. the sin of Adam 5. moralist 6. Greco-Roman culture 7. Original Sin 8. Savior 9. Heretics 10. Three 11. Roman Catholic 12. Augustine against Pelagius 13. teacher, physician, resurrected from the dead 14. monergistic

Chapter 5: The Reformation

Erasmus vs. Luther

(Video running time: 16:49 minutes)

“By free choice in this place we mean a power of the human will by which a man can apply himself to the things which lead to eternal salvation, or turn away from them.” - **Desiderius Erasmus**

1. Eric: On September 1, 1524, Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, a Roman Catholic apologist, published a work entitled *Diatribes Concerning Free Will*. Martin Luther, the German Reformer, responded with *On the Enslaved Will* or *The Bondage of the Will*, a masterful apologetic that referenced over three-hundred Bible verses. Luther maintained the full Augustinian position against the semi-Pelagian position of Erasmus...Luther considered it to be his *most important work* because it spoke to the issues that went to the very heart of what it meant to be a Christian. Dr. B.B. Warfield, the great Princeton Theologian, called *The Bondage of the Will* the “_____ of the Protestant Reformation.”



Desiderius Erasmus (ca. 1466/1469 – ca. 1536) was a Dutch Renaissance humanist and Catholic Christian theologian. Using humanist techniques for working on texts, he prepared important new Latin and Greek editions of the New Testament. These, along with books like *The Praise of Folly* – which cast a critical eye on many of the abuses of the clergy – raised issues that would be influential in both the Protestant Reformation as well as the Catholic Counter-Reformation.

Even though his writings and scholarship cast the Roman church in less than an “infallible” light, Erasmus remained committed to reforming it from within. He also held to Catholic doctrines such as “free will,” which Protestant Reformers rejected in favor of the doctrine of predestination. His middle road disappointed

and even angered many Protestants, including Martin Luther, while not faring very well with conservative Catholics either.

Years later Richard Trench, Archbishop of Dublin, would famously declare: "Erasmus laid the egg of the Reformation and Luther hatched it."

By the beginning of the 16th century, the level of unrest against the Roman's church's control over theological truth and men's consciences had reached a tipping point. Men like John Wycliffe and John Hus had courageously, often at the cost of their lives, stood for Christ, His truth and the centrality of His Word, a Word they argued that should be given freely to all men. The last straw was laid down on October 31 of 1517 when a thirty-four-year-old Augustinian monk by the name of Martin Luther (1483 – 1546) nailed his ninety-five theses – primarily protesting the sale and efficacy of indulgences offered by the church – to the door of the Wittenberg Church. The Protestant Reformation was born, a movement that radically changed the course of Western civilization.



Luther taught that salvation is a free gift of God and received only through true faith in Jesus as redeemer from sin and not from good works. His theology challenged the authority of the *magisterium* (the teaching authority of the church as resident with the pope and the bishops) not only as regards its *soteriology* (doctrine of salvation) but also by teaching that the Bible and not the magisterium is the ultimate source of divinely revealed knowledge.

Luther's refusal to retract his writings at the demand of the pope in 1520 and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V at the Diet of Worms meeting in 1521 ("Here I stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen.") resulted in his excommunication by Pope Leo X and condemnation as an outlaw by the emperor.

Along with a translation of the Bible and numerous commentaries on its books, a small and large Catechism, and other writings, Luther wrote *On the Bondage of the*

Will. He considered it in many respects to be his most important work (besides the Bible and the Catechisms) because it clearly defended, against the challenge of the Roman church and Erasmus, one of the key foundations of the Reformation: that man is so in the thrall of sin that salvation is impossible apart from the monergistic work of God's grace.

2. Luther's book drew a line in the sand between the Roman Catholic view of justification and the Reformed view. And the debate that followed became known as the _____ controversy.

Dr. Thomas Nettles: In this book Erasmus opted for a view of salvation that says that God offers us grace but we still have some elements of freedom in us by which we can choose this grace or reject it. And it is our choice that God then rewards with salvation.

Dr Tom Ascol: Erasmus' main thesis in his treatment of the will, his *Diatribes on the Will*, is that man has the ability to initiate the relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. He has the ability within himself to believe and through that faith then access all that goes with faith in justification and reconciliation with God.

3. Etymology of *synergism*: *syn*- _____ *ergos*- _____

"Synergism" comes from a compound word in Greek meaning "together, working together" and basically teaches that man and God cooperate in the initiation of faith; that man does his part and God does his part. And so it is a cooperative work.

4. What does *monergism* mean? _____

5. Did the reformers believe the Bible taught that being born-again and being justified were the same thing? _____

6. Eric: The prefix *syn* means, "with," "together with," or "at the same time." It

refers to two or more. It is used in words like “synchronize.” *Ergos* is a Greek word for “work.” In theological terms, “synergism” refers to divine and human cooperation; God and man work together to bring about the latter’s conversion. Martin Luther saw this as little more than a _____ dressed up in evening clothes.

7. Eric: Luther believed that Erasmus’ semi-Pelagianism denied _____; the full impact the Fall had on man.

8. Instead of being dead in his trespasses and sins, man was, according to Erasmus, only _____ and therefore could help himself by helping God.

9. Luther understood that Erasmus’ view made the grace of God a _____ for our faith. In other words, man believes the gospel and as a result of this good work, God gives him grace. In the end, man deserves some of the credit – some of the glory – for his salvation.

Dr. Thomas Nettles: It was the glory of God that was at stake in this view of salvation according to Luther.

10. Eric: Against Erasmus’ synergistic view, Luther believed that being *born-again* or *born from above* was a *monergistic* act. *Mono* is the Greek word meaning _____. It is the prefix for words like “monotheism” – the belief in one God. Monergism, then, is the belief that regeneration or the new birth is to be understood as the work of God alone.”

KEY: Monergism = Regeneration is the work of God alone

Because man is dead in his trespasses and sin, it is God, and God alone, who brings him back to life, sending His Spirit to revive, regenerate, and resurrect man from the hopeless condition of spiritual death.

11. Eric: The terms _____ and what we deem as “salvation” or “justification” are **not** synonymous terms. Many modern day Christians equate the two. Luther emphatically taught that fallen man does not have faith in order to be born-again; but that man is born-again of the Spirit and the Word and as a result has faith.

12. Dr Tom Ascol: Luther rightly understood that when the Bible describes the condition of man in sin it is a desperate condition. Man in sin is not just sick; he's _____! A sick man can help himself a little bit, but a dead man needs a supernatural miraculous work of grace to bring him back to life...Luther understood that it's not enough to advocate *sola fide*, faith alone, but *sola fide* is dependent on *sola gracias*, grace alone. And the faith, which we exercise in Jesus Christ, is itself a gift from God. And it is produced in us by the work of the Spirit.

The *Book of Concord*, the statement of faith that outlined many of the distinctives of the Lutheran church, clearly affirmed the monergistic position on salvation:

“...man of himself, or from his natural powers, cannot contribute ANYTHING or HELP to his conversion, and that conversion is not only in part, but altogether an operation, gift and present and work of the Holy Ghost alone, who accomplishes and effects it, by his virtue and power, through the Word, in the understanding, [of the] heart and will of man.” *The Book of Concord, Article II, on Free-Will*

13. Eric: In response to the challenge and growth of the Reformation, Pope Paul III convened a council on the December 13, 1545 in the city of _____ in what is now northern Italy. This council supposedly produced infallible dogmas concerning faith and morality that were to bind the consciences of all true Christians. Among them, the Roman Catholic Church decreed: “If anyone says that after the sin of Adam man’s free will was lost and destroyed...let him be _____.”

This acknowledgment of the semi-Pelagian doctrine of free will went straight to the heart of the dispute between the Roman church’s teaching on salvation and that of the Reformers.

“If any man doth ascribe aught of salvation, even the very least, to the free will of man, he knoweth nothing of grace, and he hath not learnt Jesus Christ a-right.” – Martin Luther

“...he who in his soul believes that man does of his own free will

turn to God, cannot have been taught of God.” - Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Eric: Luther and the Reformers knew that the issue of “free will” versus the “bondage of the will” went to the “first principle” of justification and if compromised, would not only put man in at least the co-driver’s seat concerning the vital issue of salvation, it would give him some of the glory for having sense enough to get saved.

14. Dr Tom Ascol: “Now this is important, because if we argue against this we are actually _____ God of His glory. Which gives God more glory? Which recognizes the greatness of His work? A helper who gives a little medicine to a sick man – or a miracle worker who looks at a dead man and then says, ‘Live!’ ...God did it. It is His work; so all praise goes to God. It’s not a question of “praise me” for trusting Jesus and Jesus for accepting my faith and saving me. It’s praise God for saving me, because He quickened me. He changed me. He granted me faith and enabled me to trust His Son. All praise goes to Him. All glory goes to Him. No praise and no glory belong to anyone else.”

15. Dr. R.C. Sproul: At the heart of the Reformed faith is the phrase “*solī Deo gloria*” meaning _____. And I know of no other system of thought that consistently honors God and gives the whole glory to God and no glory to us than what we call reformed theology or historic Calvinism. That to me is the one that is most consistent with the Biblical approach to honoring God.

16. Eric: George Whitfield contended that the semi-pelagian doctrine of free will ultimately compromised both preaching and the invitation for people to believe in the LORD Jesus. What did Whitefield mean? _____

17. Eric: Living as we do in an age that has been so influenced by humanism, many Christians today view the monergistic position concerning salvation as strange. However, history is filled with champions of the Faith who considered the synergistic view of free will as directly opposed to both God’s sovereignty and the true Gospel. Ironically, many of them are revered today by

. Among the many defenders of the Reformed view of free-will and salvation are:

- Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, pastor of Westminster Chapel in London
- Jonathan Edwards, a key leader of the Great Awakening (1730-40s)
- John Bunyan, pastor and author of the classic work *Pilgrims Progress*
- August Toplady, writer of the classic hymn *Rock of Ages*
- Dr. John Owen, arguably England's greatest non-conformist pastor and theologian
- William Wilberforce, English Parliamentarian who worked to end slavery in England
- Luther Rice, Baptist Missionary
- John A. Broadus, namesake of Broadman Press
- J.P. Boyce, founder of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, who, like Spurgeon, often lamented over the inroads that Arminianism was making on Baptist life. He saw the fate that awaits the Church when it trades the sovereignty of God for the sovereignty of man.
- B.H. Carroll, founder of Southwestern Theological Seminary
- P.H. Mell, for 17 years served as President of the Southern Baptist Convention
- Roger Williams, pastor and founder of the very first Baptist Church in America
- William Carey, the Baptist missionary known as "The Father of Modern Missions"
- John Foxe, author of *Foxe's Book of the Martyrs*
- J.C. Ryle, Anglican Bishop who throughout his ministry became known and beloved as a defender of the evangelical Reformed faith as expressed in the *Thirty-nine Articles of Religion* of the Church of England.
- A.W. Pink, influential writer and Baptist Minister
- Dr. Francis Schaeffer, author of the classic "*How Should We Then Live?*"
- John Newton, former slave trader and writer of the hymn "*Amazing Grace*"
- Matthew Henry of the *Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible*
- Dr. Charles Hodge, author of *Hodge's Systematic Theology*
- Charles Haddon Spurgeon, pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London and known as the "Prince of Preachers."

Others: John Knox, J. Gresham Machen, John Murray, Benjamin Warfield, John Harvard, Robert L. Dabney, Timothy Dwight, A.A. Hodge, Archibald Alexander, Abraham Kuyper, D. James Kennedy)

Other champions could be mentioned who currently serve the Church today; among them:

- J.I. Packer, author of the best selling book *Knowing God*
- R.C. Sproul, pastor and author of over 45 books
- Albert Mohler, President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
- John MacArthur, author and pastor of Grace Community Church
- John Piper, author and pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church.
- Dr. Thomas Nettles, Dr. Tom Ascol, Wayne Grudem, Marvin Olasky, Gordon Clark, C.J. Mahaney, etcetera

And then there are the great Confessions of faith that have guided and illuminated the Church for centuries; each decisively monergistic:

- The Waldensian Creed, 1120
- The Belgic Confession, 1561
- The Heidelberg Catechism, 1563
- The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, 1563
- The Book of Concord, 1577
- The Westminster Confessions of Faith, 1647
- The Baptist Confession of 1689 (also know as Philadelphia Baptist Confession)
- the list could go on.

Eric: "Unfortunately, many in the Church refused to heed these councils and the cycles of false teaching continued to revolve."

Answers for Chapter 5: The Reformation

1. Manifesto 2. Monergistic vs. Synergistic 3. *syn*: with, together with, at the same time; *ergos*: work. *Synergism* then means *working together with*; man and God work together to save man. 4. "alone," or "single," or "one" work; the idea that God alone saves without the cooperation of the individual. 5. No 6. works-based salvation 7. Original sin 8. Wounded 9. Reward 10. One or alone 11. Born-again 12. Dead 13. Trent; anathema 14. Robbing 15. To God Alone Be the Glory 16. For the Gospel (the "good news") to be truly good it has to be effectual, it has to have the power to save and not just offer the possibility of salvation; a salvation, by the way, that according to the Arminian formulation can be lost. It also puts the burden of salvation on man

(asking him to do something that he cannot do on his own steam) and presents an inaccurate view of God's power, sovereignty and glory. 17. semi-Pelagians

Chapter 6: Arminianism vs. Calvinism

(Video running time: 16:06 minutes)

“The Synod (of Dordt) rejects the errors of those who teach that, properly speaking, it cannot be said that original sin in itself is enough to condemn the whole human race or to warrant temporal and eternal punishments.” *The Third and Fourth Main Points of Doctrine, Rejection of Errors, Article I*

Eric: As the gap between Rome and the Reformers grew, attempts were made, consciously and unconsciously, to find a compromise between the two positions. The next cycle of false teaching, this time growing up from within the ranks of the Protestant movement — involved a very sincere man by the name of James Arminius.

1. Arminius was born at Oudewater, in the Netherlands. He became a pastor of an Amsterdam congregation and a professor at the University of Leiden from 1603 until his death in 1609. During the course of his life, Arminius rejected the teachings of the Reformation and returned to the _____ - _____ view of the Church of Rome.

2. In 1610, one year after Arminius' death, his follower's drafted five articles of faith based upon his teachings. These five points of what came to be called Arminianism stood in contradistinction to what the Church of Holland had been teaching since the Reformation. These five articles, also called the "remonstrance" or "_____", were then presented to the Reformed Church. The Arminian party insisted that the Church's statements of faith, the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism, be adapted to conform to the five points of Arminianism.

3. In November of 1618, a national Synod, or council, was convened in the city of Dordt for the purpose of examining the views of the Arminian party. Some 154 sessions were held. The result was an overwhelming _____ of the five points of Arminianism.

4. The Synod responded to each of the five points in return, formulating what has come to be called the _____.

Dr. Thomas Nettles: "The reason that they (the Five Points of Calvinism) came out as five distinct points was because it was in response to the five key objections of the Arminians or the Remonstrance...."

Dr. J.I. Packer, author of the classic work *Knowing God* summarized the Arminian position as put forth in the remonstrance:

- 1) Man is never so completely corrupted by sin that he cannot savingly believe the gospel when it is put before him;
- 2) Man is never so completely controlled by God that he cannot reject God's grace;
- 3) Election is a result of God, looking down through the corridors of time, foreseeing that a sinner will accept Christ. Therefore, God elects those who first elect Him.
- 4) Christ's death did not ensure the salvation of anyone, for it did not secure the gift of faith (for the Remonstrance there was no such gift); what it did was rather to create a possibility of salvation for everyone if they would only choose to believe.
- 5) It ultimately rests with the believers to keep themselves in a state of grace by keeping up their faith. Those who fail here fall away and are lost.

Dr. Packer concludes: "*Arminianism made man's salvation depend ultimately on man himself, saving faith being viewed throughout as man's own work.*"

5. Eric: In essence, Arminianism re-captured the _____ position of semi-pelagianism and _____; teaching that salvation is accomplished through the combined efforts of God (who takes the initiative) and man (who must respond) with man's response being the ultimate _____ factor. God has provided salvation for everyone, but His provision becomes effective only for those who, of their own free will, "choose" to cooperate with Him and accept His offer of grace. At the crucial point, man's will plays the decisive role, the catalyst or active ingredient. Thus man's "good work", and not God, determines who will be recipients of the gift of

grace.

The Synod of Dordt, responded to the five points of the Arminian party with what is known today as the Five Points of Calvinism, in essence they are as follows:

6. **T**otal _____, in response to the Arminian view of free will.
7. **U**nconditional _____, in contradistinction to conditional election.
8. **L**imited (or Particular) _____, in opposition to general or universal atonement.
9. **I**rresistible _____, in reply to resistible grace.
10. **P**erseverance of the _____, in place of the idea that a saved man can become "unsaved."

11. Eric: The leaders at the Synod of Dordt, like Luther, Calvin and Augustine, taught that salvation is accomplished by the almighty power of the Triune God. The _____ chooses – or elects – people to be saved; the _____ redeems them through His cross; and the _____ makes Christ's death effective by bringing the elect to faith and repentance, thereby causing them willingly to believe the gospel. The entire process is the work of God and is by and through _____ alone. Thus God's grace and not man's _____ determines who will be saved.

12. Dr. Kenneth G. Talbot: The Arminians were ejected out of the church. Over three hundred ministers were expelled as a result of their disagreements with the doctrinal teaching of the Dutch Church. That teaching was Reformational theology or _____, as it has become more popularly known.

13. Eric: The Synod of Dordt taught that _____, from beginning to end, was a work of God's grace alone. They believed that Adam's fall had ruined the whole race and plunged man into a spiritual death that entangled his will in

bondage to _____. To teach that man could save himself, by an exercise of his will apart from the grace of God (_____), or contribute to his own salvation, by having man cooperate with the grace of God (_____), was heresy — a giant step away from the Reformation and back towards Roman Catholicism.

Dr. R.C. Sproul: The Reformers felt that if they acquiesced to the protest or the remonstrance of the Arminianists at that time, that in a real way they would be putting their feet back on a path to Rome. Now let me clarify that: I do not think any of them believed that Arminianism was or is today Roman Catholicism. We are talking about putting your feet on a path that goes in a certain direction. The big difference between historic Roman Catholicism and Arminianism is that Arminianism does believe and affirm categorically the doctrine of justification by faith alone. That is, an orthodox Arminian believes the ground of his justification, his salvation, is not his own righteousness but the righteousness won for him by the work of Jesus Christ. However, when you get down to the nitty gritty and push Arminianism to its logical conclusion, there is where you see the extreme dangers of slipping into a works righteousness.

Dr D. James Kennedy: Once you acknowledge free will, which Luther and all the Reformers denied, then you open the door to all the Roman Catholic heresies that come along as well.

Eric: So did the Reformers believe that man had a will, one that's free to choose one thing over another without the necessary intrusion of some outside force?

14. Dr D. James Kennedy: Are total depravity and free will compatible? Yes and no. As we said noted earlier, free will can be defined in a number of ways. If we are talking about the sense in which every human being, regenerate or unregenerate, is free – for example to choose what tie he will wear or what to have for dinner – the answer is _____. But in the significant sense in which it is used in the Bible, that is that man is free to do what he ought to do – repent of his sins, surrender his life to Christ and follow Him in godliness – the _____ man is not free to do that. The more he hears of it, the more he dislikes it. His _____ must be changed for him to do that.

15. Eric: The Reformers believed that man had a will; and they believed that

man's will is free to choose one thing over another without the necessary intrusion of some outside force. What they objected to was the Pelagian, semi-pelagian, and Arminian *view* of free will. They unequivocally held that as a result of the Fall, man's will was now in bondage to sin and death and has lost the _____, apart from the outside influence of God's grace, to choose the perfect good in relation to the spiritual realm. Rather than a God-centered will, a will that desires to please and honor the LORD, as the *prima facie* motivation for everything man says, does and thinks, the fallen will is ultimately grounded in _____. And while this self may and often does choose things that are relatively good and that can occasionally even outwardly _____ the moral perfection modeled by Jesus — in the consuming fire of God's perfect sight, fallen man's most righteous deeds are as "filthy rags" — corrupted by the leaven of a self-directed will.

"But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are like filthy rags." Isaiah 64.6

In the end, man is free to choose... but can of necessity only choose from among the things that his fallen nature will of its own accord consider. Dying to self and living whole-heartedly for the true God is not something that would ever show up on fallen man's radar screen of options.

In spite of all the councils, synods, creeds and confessions created to deal with this issue; most of the Bible-believing church today is Arminian. Of course, most are not consistent with respect to this aspect of their theology. People pray, for example, as if God were truly sovereign and omnipotent.

Charles Spurgeon: "...You have heard a great many Arminian sermons, I dare say; but you never heard an Arminian prayer—for the saints in prayer appear as one in word, and deed and mind. An Arminian on his knees would pray desperately like a Calvinist."

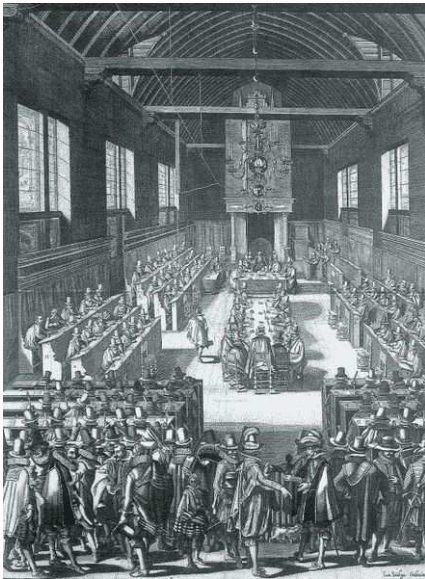
Spurgeon's tongue-in-cheek "Arminian-styled" prayer was:

"LORD, I thank thee I am not like those poor presumptuous Calvinists. LORD, I was born with a glorious free will; I was born with power by which I can turn to thee of myself; I have improved my grace. If everybody had done the same with their grace that I have, they might

all have been saved ... Thou givest grace to everybody; some do not improve it, but I do. There are many that will go to hell as much bought with the blood of Christ as I was; they had as much of the Holy Ghost given to them; they had as good a chance, and were as much blessed as I am. It was not thy grace that made us to differ; I know it did a great deal, still I turned the point; I made use of what was given me, and others did not—that is the difference between me and them.”

16. If you are an Arminian, you need to think through your _____. Though you would never say it with your mouth, is not this where your theology ultimately leads?

17. The Apostle Paul declared that there is no room in the gospel for _____. (Ephesians 2:7) Arminianism, at its root, allows for it. Thankfully, more and more Bible-believing Christians today are coming to understand the doctrines of sovereign free grace... and are now making their boast in the LORD.



The purpose of the Synod (1618/19) held in Dordrecht (commonly shortened to Dordt) was to settle a controversy that had arisen in the Dutch churches following the spread of Arminianism. After the death of Jacob Arminius his followers presented objections to the Belgic Confession and the teaching of John Calvin, Theodore Beza, and their followers. These objections were published in a document called The Remonstrance of 1610, and its proponents were therefore also known as Remonstrants. The opposing Calvinists, led by professor Franciscus Gomarus of the University of Leiden, became known as the Contra-Remonstrants.

Although this was a national synod of the Reformed churches of the Netherlands, it had an international character since it was composed not only of Dutch delegates but also of twenty-six delegates from eight foreign countries.

The Remonstrance argued for five key points: election based on foreseen faith, universal atonement, partial depravity, resistible grace, and the possibility of a lapse from grace. The Synod concluded with a rejection of these views, and set forth the Reformed doctrine on each point, namely: total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible (or irrevocable) grace, and the perseverance of the saints. These are sometimes referred to as the Five points of Calvinism and remembered by many using the mnemonic "TULIP".

Answers for Chapter 6: Arminianism vs. Calvinism

1. Semi-pelagian 2. "Protest" 3. rejection 4. Five Points of Calvinism 5. synergistic, Roman Catholicism, determining 6. Depravity 7. Election 8. Atonement 9. Grace 10. Saints 11. Father, Son, Holy Spirit, grace, good works 12. Calvinism 13. Salvation, sin and Satan, Pelagianism, semi-Pelagianism 14. Yes, unregenerate, will and heart 15. ability; self, approximate 16. presuppositions 17. boasting

Section 2: The Testimony of Scripture

Chapter 7: Introduction: Testimony of Scripture

(Video running time: 1:15 minutes)

Chapter 8: Total Depravity

Wounded or Dead?

(Video running time: 23:00 minutes)

"It is sad, harmful, and evil characteristic of sin not to recognize how serious it is and to excuse it by treating it lightly." **Dr. James Montgomery**

1. Eric: Whenever a church council was convened, it was, for all intents and purposes, a _____. Even today, some denominations still call the gathering of elders, pastors and bishops the "court of the LORD Jesus" or "synod" — another word for court.

2. The court or Synod of Dordt was convened in November of 1618 to deal with the Arminian challenge. The primary question was: "How does fallen man come to a _____ knowledge of the LORD Jesus Christ?"

3. The Arminian party's first point has become known as "partial depravity" or "the _____ man theory." Although man is fallen, they insisted, his mind, will and emotions were only wounded by the fall. Therefore, "the human will is free and [still] self-controlled, having power to yield to the influence of the truth and the Spirit, or to resist them and perish." **Articles of Faith of the National Association of Free Will Baptists**

4. The Synod of Dordt responded to the contrary, articulating what has come to be known as "total depravity" or "the _____ man theory". Simply stated: in the Fall, man just didn't become spiritually sick — he died. As a result, he is completely unable to do any ultimate good in the eyes of God, including believing the gospel. Since the fall of Adam every person is conceived and born a _____, spiritually dead in their sin. Though we still have a will and are free to choose what we want to choose, we are not _____ to choose what is _____ to our nature. In the end, the will of fallen man can only embrace sin and face its ultimate wages: _____.

Dr. Thomas Nettles: What total depravity means is that every faculty that we have is affected by the Fall. Every faculty we have is predisposed to unholiness. Our mind, will, emotions, memory, conscience – all of these things are impacted by sin and are predisposed toward corruption and evil.

Dr. D. James Kennedy: This does not mean that man is as bad as he could be. Nor does it mean that every unregenerate man is equally bad. There are obviously some people who are worse than others. What it does mean is that the Fall of Adam and original sin does impact every part of man's being. Namely his mind, his heart, and his will.

Eric: So does the Word of God, teach that man is *partially* or *totally* depraved — spiritually wounded or spiritually dead? Any answer must take into full account the following sobering assessments of man's inherent nature. In our fallenness the Bible describes us as:

- "Darkened in our understanding" (Ephesians 4:18, 1 Corinthians 2:14) and

- “carnally minded” (Romans 8:5-7) — at enmity with God and incapable of being subject to Him.
- “Haters of God” and “lovers of darkness.” (Romans 1:30; John 3:19)
 - “Dead in our transgressions and sins” and “by nature children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:1- 5) — without the life of God in our souls;
 - “Slaves” to our sinful nature (Titus 3:3; John 8:34), captive to a “My will be done” ethic and epistemology.
 - With hearts that are so twisted with self-centeredness that out of them come “evil thoughts, vulgar deeds, stealing, murder, unfaithfulness in marriage, greed, meanness, deceit, indecency, envy, insults, pride and foolishness.” (Mark 7:21, 22)
 - ‘We have turned everyone to his own way’ (Isaiah 53:6), that even “the thoughts and imaginations of our hearts are evil continually from our youth” (Genesis 6:5; 8:21.)

5. A wise man once observed that the Bible doesn’t contain just *theology*— God’s revelation of Himself. It’s also the LORD’s _____ — God’s analysis of man. (Abraham Herschel)

"As it is written: 'There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one...Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes....'" Romans 3:10-18 (see also Psalm 14: 1-4)

6. Dr. Steven Mansfield: We talk about free will a great deal but the fact is that man’s will is _____ by his own sinfulness. So there is only a certain range that he is going to be able to choose within. He is not able to choose all the best things, the highest things, the most godly things because sin has bound his will.

7. Eric: The bottom line: the Calvinists saw that the remonstrance was giving fallen man more _____ than he deserved, and attributing an ability that was simply not there. And they understood that how one

viewed the _____ would be reflected in how one understood, believed and preached the gospel.

So can fallen man, who is spiritually dead, take any steps? Can he cry out for help?

8. Dr. Steven Mansfield: One of the things we must bring back into our approach to evangelism is to help the lost understand that they are walking corpses; that they are dead in their sins. What brings that to light is the _____. I know that we have moved away from it a great deal in our modern church. But the fact is that it is the law – as it is applied to a person’s life – that reveals them to be dead in their transgressions and sins.

9. Dr. George Grant: There are two analogies that Scripture uses for someone who is dead in their trespasses. One is the analogy of the corpse. The other is the analogy of progressive corruption. We see in Romans 1, that someone that is dead in their trespasses can actually _____ to deeper and deeper depths by giving themselves over to bestial impulses. As a result, we have to be careful to realize that just because a person is lost doesn’t mean that they have descended to the depths of corruption that they could if just turned completely loose.

Pastor Walter Bowie: An unrepentant, unregenerate child of the devil can never choose the good as far as God is concerned. Total depravity doesn’t mean that a person can’t do anything good as far as man counts good. It doesn’t mean that he is as bad as he can be. It simply means that he has been affected totally in his being as a result of the Fall and therefore can never do anything ultimately good as far as Almighty God is concerned. As a matter of fact the prophet Isaiah declared that all our righteousness is as filthy rags in God’s eyes. So if even our righteousness is as filthy rags, you know everything else about us is even worse.

10. It is important at this point to discuss the difference between the words “_____” and “_____.”

11. Dr. Tom Ascol: What grabbed me about total depravity as I was reading the Scripture is that little word “can.” “Can” is a word of _____ and “may” is a word of _____. And I am a stickler for making that

distinction even with my children because I want them to get the right theology. It was because I was confused about those two words that I didn't get my theology right for a long time.

Pastor Walter Bowie: One of the passages that stands out very clearly in my mind, that drove home to me the point that I could not choose good, is what Jesus said in John 6:44: "No man **CAN** come except he is drawn by the Father." Prior to that time it always seemed to me that anybody "can" choose to come whenever he gets ready. But then I found that no man "CAN" and can is a word of ability.

12. Eric: The Bible makes it clear that every man, women and child SHOULD come to Christ. They have His _____ . In fact, they are even _____ by God to repent and have faith in Him! The problem – the dilemma really – is that they're dead, buried away in the coffin of sin. There's no spiritual life in them. They don't have the ability to see the Kingdom, to repent and have faith. They simply CAN'T do it.

13. So let's apply this truth to the spiritual realm by asking the question, "Given the opportunity to choose between good or evil, obedience or rebellion, God or Satan, eternal life with LORD Jesus or death in the pool of sin, what will fallen man always choose?" If you said _____, to stay in the coffin of sin, you are correct!

14. DR. R.C. SPROUL: Until God the Holy Spirit changes the _____ of my soul; I will never have faith in Christ. I will never embrace Him. I will never decide for him in any redemptive way. I will never truly choose him because my heart is still bound up in sin.

Eric: As a result of the clear teaching of scripture, the men at the Synod of Dordt reaffirmed the biblical and historical teaching of total depravity. In Section three and four of the Canons of Dordt they declared,

"... all people are conceived in sin and are born children of wrath, unfit for any saving good, inclined to evil, dead in their sins, and slaves to sin; [and] without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit they are neither willing nor able to return to God, to reform their distorted

nature, or even to dispose themselves to such reform.”

You may be saying, “Well, if that’s true, how did I then come to know the LORD? How is it that anyone is saved?” We will answer that question the same way Jesus did.

“With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Matthew 19:26

MANY ARE CALLED BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN

“God elected us before the foundation of the world. Before the creation, the fall, the covenants, or the law, we were sovereignly predestined by God to be His. He designed the church, the Body of His Son, before the world began.” John MacArthur

Eric: The Arminian party agreed that man fell in the Garden of Eden. They believed that this Fall was not Adam’s alone, but that it was carried to all of his posterity by natural generation. So what was the point of contention?

15. Dr. R.C. Sproul, Jr.: The Arminian doesn’t deny the sinfulness of man. But what he does deny is the _____ and the _____ of sin in the life of the individual.

16. Eric: The Arminians and the Calvinists disagreed over the _____ of the Fall as it related to the will of man. The Arminians, simply put, believed that man’s will was _____ by the Fall and that he still had the ability to choose the good over evil in the spiritual realm. The Calvinist, on the other hand, held that since the fall the only thing unregenerate man could and would choose was inevitably corrupted by his will, motivated by self and evil.

The next logical question then becomes: If fallen man can only choose evil, how can he ever choose the ultimate good — the gospel of the LORD Jesus? How can he be saved?

17. Dr. R.C. Sproul: People are not, in their natural state searching for God. God is the one who seeks us out. _____ is the one who comes to seek and save

the lost.

One of the most misunderstood teachings of the modern era is what it means to be “born-again.” Most modern evangelical Christians have been taught that as a sinner repents of his sin and put his faith in God, he becomes born-again. This is what the Arminian party was advocating and what the Calvinists rejected. How, they asked, can a dead man have faith?

18. Pastor Walter Bowie: The modern church teaches that you have to have faith in order to be born-again. This is the exact _____ of what Jesus said in John 3. As a matter of fact, in response to the question ‘How can a man be born-again?’ Jesus did not say repent and believe. He said it is like the wind and you don’t know where it is going or where it is coming. In other words, he’s saying that the new birth is something that you can’t _____, you can’t _____, it happens and you experience it.

19. Dr. Roger Shultz: I think one of the problems that evangelists have is seeing people not as being dead, but as being sick. You’re sick in your sins and you need a little therapy or you need a little medicine and then you can get better. But Scripture teaches that we are dead and what we need is a spiritual _____.

20. Eric: Jesus likened being born-again to a “new birth”, a spiritual resurrection. God works this miracle on spiritually dead people who have neither the ability nor desire to live for Him. This is what the Bible, numerous church councils, and countless “champions of the faith” have taught — that being born-again is a _____ work: the effort of God alone.

21. Pastor Walter Bowie: In the New Testament, there are three figures used to designate the new life in Christ, they are _____, _____ and _____. The one thing they all have in common is the fact that the person or thing involved is _____. You can do nothing to be born, if you’re dead you can do nothing to be resurrected, and you can do nothing to be created if you do not already exist. And so it all means that the initiative must all come from God’s side, not man’s side.

22. Dr. R.C. Sproul explains that Arminians have “unconverted sinners who are

dead in trespasses and sin bringing themselves to life by choosing to be born-again. Christ made it clear that dead people cannot choose anything, that the _____ and that a person must be born of the Spirit BEFORE he can even see the kingdom of God, let alone enter it."

Dr. Kenneth G. Talbot: Man believes the gospel because he has been transformed by the Spirit of God. He is thus given the gift of faith by which he exercises that faith in believing what God has said about Christ in the Scripture. He also responds in repentance and seeks forgiveness from God.

Dr. R. C. Sproul, Jr: If the Holy Spirit doesn't come down and give life and take those dry bones and knit them together what's going to happen? Nothing! They are dead -- which is what all of us are spiritually. We are dead in our trespasses and sins.

Answers for Chapter 8: Total Depravity

1. trial 2. saving 3. wounded 4. dead, slave, able, contrary, death 5. anthropology 6. bound 7. credit, Fall 8. law 9. descend 10. may, can 11. ability, permission 12. permission, commanded 13. death 14. disposition 15. depth, power 16. scope, wounded 17. Christ 18. opposite, program, determine 19. resurrection 20. monergistic 21. birth, creation, resurrection, passive 22. flesh profits nothing



The *Ordo Salutis*

Latin for "the order of salvation," the *ordo salutis* is the theological doctrine that deals with the logical sequencing of the benefits of salvation worked by Christ which are applied to us by the Spirit. This first thing to remember is that we must never separate the benefits (regeneration, justification, sanctification) from the Benefactor (Jesus Christ). The entire process (election, redemption, regeneration, etc.) is the work of God in Christ and is by grace alone. Election is the superstructure of our *ordo salutis*, but not itself the application of redemption. Regeneration, the work of the Holy Spirit which brings us into a living union with Christ, has a causal priority over the other aspects of the process of salvation. God opens our eyes,

we see. God unplugs our ears, we hear. Jesus calls a dead and buried Lazarus out of the grave, he comes. In the same way, the Holy Spirit applies regeneration, (opening our spiritual eyes and renewing our affections), infallibly resulting in faith. All the benefits of redemption such as conversion (faith and repentance), justification, sanctification and perseverance presuppose the existence of spiritual life. The work of applying God's grace is a unitary process given to the elect simultaneously. This is instantaneous, but there is definitely a causal order (regeneration giving rise to all the rest). Though these benefits cannot be separated, it is helpful to distinguish them. Therefore, instead of imposing a chronological order we should view these as a unitary work of God to bring us into union with Christ. We must always keep in mind that the orders expressed in the following articles occur together or happen simultaneously like the turning on of a light switch or a faucet. But God turns on the light/faucet, so to speak. All aspects of the work of God continue together throughout the life of a Christian.

Historically in the Church there has been disagreement about the order of salvation, especially between those in the Reformed and Arminian camps. The following two perspectives of God's order in carrying out His redemptive work reveals the stark contrast between these two main historic views. Keep in mind that both viewpoints are based on the redemptive work which Christ accomplished for His people in history:

- **In the Reformed camp**, the *ordo salutis* is 1) election, 2) predestination, 3) gospel call 4) inward call 5) regeneration, 6) conversion (faith and repentance), 7) justification, 8) sanctification, and 9) glorification. (Rom 8:29-30)
- **In the Arminian camp**, the *ordo salutis* is 1) outward call 2) faith/election, 3) repentance, 4) regeneration, 5) justification, 6) perseverance, 7) glorification.

Notice the crucial difference in the orders of regeneration and faith. While the Reformed position believes spiritual life is a prerequisite for the existence of the other aspects of salvation, the Arminians believe that fallen, natural man retains the moral capacity to receive or reject the gospel of his own power. Even with the help of grace he still must find it within himself to believe or reject Christ. This has broad implications and raises questions like why does one man believe and

not another? You might also notice that, according to Arminians, election is dependent on faith, not the other way around. This is no small matter ...understanding the biblical order, while keeping in mind its unitary process, is crucial and has a profound impact on how one views God, the gospel, and the Bible as a whole.

This article is republished with the permission of the author Mr. Dave Brown of Christ Covenant Reformed Church (PCA) Reynoldsburg, Ohio.

Chapter 9: Unconditional Election

(Video running time: 30:08 minutes)

Born-again vs. Saved

1. Eric: There is another misunderstanding many evangelicals have about being “born-again.” They view it and being justified or “saved” as synonyms – as being the same thing. But in reality they are two different terms that depict two related but nonetheless distinct events. Being born-again enables us to have faith in Christ – something we can never do while still dead in our trespasses and sins. Being born-again is the first act, if you will, of God’s grace. It makes us new creatures in Christ. And as new creatures we are no longer haters of God. We are no longer at enmity with God. As the prophet Ezekiel explained (36:26), God removes our hearts of stone and replaces them with hearts of flesh, and with the scales now removed from our eyes, we see the holiness of God and the sinfulness of ourselves. And as a result, we repent and have faith in God and what He has done for us through the cross. Being born-again must, of necessity, _____ faith. So the question remains, how is a sinner born-again so that he may have faith in Christ?

2. Dr. Tom Ascol: Because of what God has done before the foundation of the world. He has _____ an innumerable amount of people that will respond to the gospel. They will be His followers. They will become disciples of the LORD Jesus. He guarantees it.

3. Eric: Many, if not most modern Christians, tend to either ignore or lightly

skim over words like “chosen,” “predestination” and “election” when they see them in their Bibles. The reason for this is simple: the Biblical doctrine of election is, humanly speaking, _____ — an offense to the natural human tendency to believe that we play a part in our own salvation. But the Bible declares this awesome truth often and without apology. We need to come to terms with it.

“For many are called, but few are chosen.” **Matthew 22:14**

“And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.” **Mark 13:27**

“And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?” **Luke 18:7**

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit...” **John 15:16**

“And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the LORD: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” **Acts 13:48**

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

“...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.” **Ephesians 1:4-5**

4. The New Testament letters were specifically addressed to the *elect*. Also consider that the word most often translated “**church**” in the New Testament is the Greek word *ekklesia* meaning, “**the called out ones.**” The term comes from the same Greek root as *eklektos* —the word we translate as “**the elect.**” So the terms “_____” and “_____” are roughly synonymous.

The word “**beloved**” is another word that refers to the elect. Though the passages in which it appears are too numerous to mention, let’s look at just one passage:

“But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, **brethren beloved of the LORD**, because God hath from the beginning **chosen you to salvation.**” II Thessalonians. 2:13

Another term God uses to refer to His elect children is “**sheep.**” In John 10:26 Jesus declared to the unbelieving Jews, “But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep.”

5. Note that Jesus did not say, “_____you did not believe, you are not my sheep.” Instead, he declared the opposite: they did not believe BECAUSE they were not members of His flock. The word “because” assigns the reason for their unbelief — they simply were not His sheep or elect. His sheep will believe.

Matthew Henry, explains the meaning of this passage:

“Ye (speaking to a group of Jews) are not designed to be my followers; ye are not of those that were given me by my Father, to be brought to grace and glory. Ye are not of the number of the elect; and your unbelief, if you persist in it, will be certain evidence that you are not.”

As stated earlier, many today either ignore or deny the concept of election. Many see it as unfair or unjust. How could a loving God, they ask, choose to give some mercy and grace and withhold it from others?

Well, before we to dare subject God and His word to the bar of human conceptions of fairness, consider this:

6. Dr. R.C. Sproul Jr.: Nobody seems to have a problem that God called out Israel and set them apart and set his love upon them and distinguished them...God didn’t come in a bush to Pharaoh and say, “Hey Pharaoh, I’m going to be your God. I’m going to take care of you and all your people and I’m going to give you my law and I’m going to place you in a land and I’m going to give you grace galore and through you the nations will be blessed.” But now in the

New Testament, supposedly God cannot set his _____ upon this person as distinct for that person. But God explicitly says in the Scripture several times, "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy." (Exodus 33:19)

Dr. Steven Mansfield: As much as we need to be doing theology and need to be doing apologetics for the things we believe, we never need to lose the perspective that God is God and He can do what He wants to do. And who are we to question His ways and His sovereign choices?

Pastor Walter Bowie: I always ask a person, "Where do you stand to get a standard by which you measure God?" He Himself is the standard. And He does what and only what He pleases.

Dr. Steven Mansfield: The truth is that God is God and He can do whatever He wants. His job description is to do whatever pleases Him. That is how He makes decisions. That is the way He conducts himself: according to His own good pleasure, as Scripture says. That is good news to the believer but it is bad news to those who are rebelling against God.

7. Eric: Given the theological climate of the time, the Arminian party had no choice but to deal with the doctrine of election. As we've seen, their remonstrance insisted that the individual's response to God's offer of salvation was what sparked their spiritual resurrection; their "born-again" experience. But at the same time they acknowledged the Bible's clear teaching that God chooses who will be saved. And so they devised a way of supposedly reconciling the obvious tension between these two concepts. According to the Arminian party's formulation, God looked down through the corridors of time and foresaw those who would choose Him and then ratified their choice by electing them. Therefore, election, to the Arminians was " _____," based upon man's proper reaction. Quoting again from the Articles of Faith of the National Association of Free Will Baptist: "God determined from the beginning to save all who should comply with the conditions of salvation. Hence by faith in Christ men become His elect." (Articles IX)

8. Eric: This was, according to the Synod of Dordt, pure _____. In their official denunciation of the Remonstrance they wrote:

“For this does away with all effective functioning of God's grace in our conversion and subjects the activity of Almighty God to the will of man; it is contrary to the apostles, who teach that we believe by virtue of the effective working of God's mighty strength (Eph. 1:19), and that God fulfills the undeserved good will of his kindness and the work of faith in us with power (2 Thess. 1:11), and likewise that his divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). *Canons of Dordt, Third and Fourth Head of Doctrine, Rejection of Errors, Article IX*

Dr. Roger Schultz: We believe that our salvation is by grace. That even the faith we have comes as a gift from God. There is nothing that we can lay claim too. There is nothing, which we can boast. Our salvation comes entirely from the LORD.

Dr. J.I. Packer explains:

“The Arminians say: *‘I owe my election to my faith,’* The Calvinist says: *‘I owe my faith to my election.’”*

Dr. Tomas Nettles: People are either elect or non-elect before they are born. There is nothing a person can do to get himself elected. It is not like God has voted for you and the Devil has voted against you and now you make your election sure by voting one way or the other.

9. The Arminian position is not really election; it's_____. In the end, it's man's vote that decides the outcome. And while the Arminian may and likely will insist that the weight of God's elective power is infinitely greater than Satan's — that the ballot box has been radically stuffed in our favor — there remains no way to get around the final bottom line: that one man, with the devil's help, can frustrate the vote and the desires of Almighty God.

Most learned Arminians would draw on numerous passages to buttress their doctrine. But their greatest proof text is found in Romans:

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” *Romans 8: 29*

The word “foreknew” was understood by the Arminians to mean that God knew or saw beforehand which sinners would believe and that He then predestined them to salvation based upon this knowledge.

10. Notice, however, that the text does not say that God knew “something about” particular individuals (that they would do this or that), or that He saw their actions – even though both statements are true. Rather it states that God **knew** the individuals themselves. The word “whom” is the _____ of the verb and the _____ denotes persons, not events or happenings.

11. Dr Joe Morecraft: The Bible says whom he foreknew he predestined to be conformed into the image of his Son. The word foreknow does not mean foresee. It means to _____. In Genesis 4:1 we are told Adam knew his wife and she conceived. If all he did was intellectually foresee Eve, she never would have conceived. The point is, he made her the object of his loving affections and she conceived. And so in Romans 8 it says whom he fore loved, those whom he foreknew, those he predestined, whom he set his love upon. Those whom he chose according to the good pleasure of his will. He determined that in time they would believe in the LORD Jesus Christ.

Addressing the elect nation of Israel, God declares

“You only have I known of all the families of the earth.” Amos 3:2

Surely the LORD had knowledge of and can see all the actions of every family on the earth, but He “knew” or “loved” Israel in a special way and set His heart upon them alone.

12. The Arminian attempt to redefine the doctrine of election failed. In contradistinction from the doctrine of conditional election, the confessions of the Dutch Church taught what is called “_____election.” They believed that God elected certain individuals in Christ before the foundation of the world based upon Christ’s sacrifice. His reason for selecting the ones He did was solely based upon His own good will and pleasure. He loved them even though they were just as deserving of His wrath as those He did not love. And those whom He elected to love, through the power and regenerating work of the

Holy Spirit, He causes them to be born-again, whereby they WILLINGLY accept Christ.

So what is the basis for God electing one and not another?

13. Dr. D. James Kennedy: That is a fascinating question and I want to tell you that the Bible never answers it. It answers it in the _____. It tells you what things are not the basis for election. For example, the Apostle Paul says that in considering our calling, remember that not many mighty are called, not many noble, not many of the great people of this world are called to salvation. (1 Corinthians 1:26-31)

“For this is the word of promise: At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), it was said to her, ‘The older shall serve the younger.’ As it is written, ‘Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.’” *Romans 9:9-13*

The reason for choosing one over the other is so that “the purpose of God according to election might stand.” Election, in other words, is of God, by God, and through God. Nowhere is man given even a scintilla of responsibility for his election. Nowhere does man have any room to boast. Paul concludes this passage by echoing a verse from Malachi 1:2,3 — and in his mouth it becomes one of the most controversial statements in the entire Bible: “Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon:

“Why did God love Jacob and hate Esau? I can tell you why God loves Jacob; it is sovereign grace! There was nothing in Jacob that could make God love him; there was everything about him that might have made God hate him as much as He did Esau, and a great deal more. But it was because God is infinitely gracious that He loved Jacob and because He is sovereign in His dispensation of His grace that He chose Jacob as an object of that love.”

14. Dr. D. James Kennedy: God has chosen the foolish things of the world, the base things of the world, the things that are nothing. These are the things that God has chosen that _____ may glory in His sight. So, the only reason we are told why anybody is chosen is because we are weak, foolish and base and don't amount to anything.

Modern day commentators, as well as the Arminian remonstrance, attempted to soften the blow of this passage by saying that God loved Jacob more than Esau and therefore it was really not hate. They argue that the word translated hate means "unloved" or "less loved" (as if in the end this really makes any difference.).

Again, Charles H. Spurgeon:

"It is a terrible text, and I will be honest with it if I can. One man says the word 'hate' does not mean hate; it means, 'love less' — 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I loved less.' It may be so; but I don't believe it is...I like to take it and let it stand just as it is. The fact is, God loved Jacob, and he did not love Esau; he did choose Jacob, but he did not choose Esau."

However one wants to understand the word "hate", whether literally or figuratively, it is clear that whatever God had for Jacob He did not have for Esau! And it is clear from the text that the love God had for Jacob was not "conditional", but "unconditional", for neither Jacob nor Esau had yet been born and therefore had not done anything good or evil.

15. Pastor Walter Chantry: No one would say that a human being has to love everyone alike. God does have a general love for all men. He does love all men in the sense that he sends sunshine and rain upon the wicked as well as upon the righteous. But there are some people for whom he has had a _____. Just as a man has a _____ for his wife and his children, God has the right to have a _____ for those who are the objects of his affection.

16. Spurgeon continues, "Why did God hate Esau? Why does God hate any man? I defy anyone to give any answer but this: because that man

_____ to be hated. No reply but that can be true. If God deals severely with any person, it is because that person deserves all that he gets.”

Dr. Roger Shultz: God owes salvation to no one. God would be entirely just if He would have condemned Adam and the entire human race immediately after the Fall. God would be just to send every single person to hell because that is what our sin deserves: the eternal wrath and curse of God.

The Synod of Dordt explained it this way; “God does not owe this grace to anyone. For what could God owe to one who has nothing to give that can be paid back? Indeed, what could God owe to one who has nothing of his own to give but sin and falsehood?”

Dr. Tom Ascol: Beggars don’t have any claims upon a man’s money. In the same way, we do not have any claims upon God’s goodness and God’s favor. And the fact that God saves anyone declares Him to be a very gracious and loving God.

17. Dr. D. James Kennedy: Election puts nobody in _____ and a vast multitude in _____ that wouldn’t be there otherwise. In heaven we have nothing to boast about in _____. In hell we have no one to blame but _____.

Both the Holy Spirit and Paul knew that this teaching was going to be controversial and purposively set out to address the very natural human objection from the outset:

“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?
Certainly not!” **Romans 9:14**

18. Dr. Tom Ascol: A question I have for those that disagree with the doctrine of unconditional election: does your view of election provoke the same kind of antagonism that Paul’s does? If election is based upon foreseen faith or based upon something in man, who would ever charge God with being _____?

19. This last observation is a vital point! The Arminian view attempts to make the doctrine of election seem _____ to the mind of man. But the

Apostle Paul takes the opposite tack: rather than making it more _____, he continues to emphasize the absolute sovereignty of God by giving us another Old Testament example.

“For He says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.’ So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, ‘For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.’ Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.” **Romans 9: 15-18**

20. Is Paul saying that God actually hardens people’s hearts — that He makes them stonier than they already are? Well, there’s no getting around it. Six times in the Exodus account we are told “the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart. “ (Exodus 4:21, 9:12, 10:1; 11:10; 14:4, 8.) But it is important to understand how God accomplished this. He didn’t just arbitrarily harden Pharaoh’s heart against his will; three times (Exodus 8:15, 32; 9:34) the Bible declares that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. What happened is that God sovereignly created situations where Pharaoh was confronted with a decision as whether to obey God or instead lean to his own will and understanding. Given his sinful nature and the fact that God did not _____ to overcome that nature, Pharaoh chose sin of his own accord. As a sin always does, it brought forth spiritual decay and death. (Romans 6:23) And so Pharaoh’s heart became harder with each successive act of rebellion. God brought forth the test, but it was Pharaoh that failed them.

21. This same principle, of _____ the gift of grace, was reflected in Jesus’ earthly ministry many centuries later. When asked by his disciples why He spoke to the people in parables, the LORD replied:

“Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, **but to them it has not been given.**”
Matthew 13:11

In other words, as with Pharaoh, there are people that God has chosen not to help believe. And when confronted with the truth, it is these people who of their

own accord will choose to harden their hearts and instead persecute the truth. In fact, in their case, they sought to destroy the Truth by nailing "it" to a cross.

22. Pastor Walter Chantry: Jesus, in Matthew 11, when He contemplated the fact that many of the people in _____, where He did His main public ministry, did not believe or receive the gospel, He thanked God that He had hidden the gospel from the wise and the prudent and had revealed it unto _____. And then He went on to express his reason for that thanksgiving, because it was good in His Father's sight. So, it was the Father's _____, who would receive and believe the Gospel and who would remain hard-hearted.

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

Paul's answer is a stiff rebuke to any man who would dare to sit in judgment on God:

"But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" **Romans 9:20**

23. Paul insists that as sinners we have no _____ before God. We have no claims on His mercy. God could have elected everyone. He could have elected none. The choice, therefore, was His and His alone.

24. Dr. R.C. Sproul: Students come to me all the time and they ask me a myriad of theological questions. And I have never had a student come to me and say "R.C. why does God save _____?" That is the _____ question. Why would bother to save a creation that is in manifest, consistent, impenitent rebellion against His glory and against His majesty. I don't know why God doesn't save everybody. I don't know why He saves anybody. Those are both questions I would have to ask Him because I can't answer them for Him."

Paul continues:

"Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? What if God,

wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" **Romans 9:21-24**

John Gill explains:

"God is represented as the potter, and men as clay in His hands; now if the potter has such power over the clay which he did not make, only has made a purchase of, or has it in his possession, much more has God a power, who has created the clay, to appoint out of it persons to different uses and purposes, for His own glory, as He sees fit..."

25. Dr. D. James Kennedy: Many people think they have trouble with election or predestination, but as I said earlier, their problem really is with doctrine of _____. They don't understand or believe the doctrine of the fall of man. They basically deny _____. Because once you acknowledge that man is fallen and man is born in a sinful condition; that his heart, mind, and will are against God, then you will see that election is essential if anybody is going to go to heaven.

The ninth chapter of Romans, as well as numerous other passages, led the Synod of Dordt to reject the Arminian doctrine of "conditional election." They labeled it heresy, likened it to Pelagianism and called it an error "by which the Dutch Churches have for some time been disturbed."

Election, according to the Synod of Dordt, does not save anyone. It simply marked those in Christ whom God, of His own free will, chose to be the objects of His affection and mercy. Election is in Christ, who, by His blood, purchased everything the chosen need for salvation, including regeneration and faith. And this teaching became the next issue of contention for the Arminian party.

"Many divines say that Christ did something when he died that enabled God to be just, and yet the Justifier of the ungodly. What that something is they do not tell us. They believe in an atonement made for everybody; but then, their atonement is just this. They believe that Judas was atoned for just as much as Peter; they believe that the damned in hell were as much an object of Jesus Christ's satisfaction as the saved in heaven; and though they do not say it in proper words, yet they must mean it, for it is a fair inference, that in the case of multitudes, Christ died in vain, for he died for them all, they say; and yet so ineffectual was his dying for them, that though he died for them they are damned afterwards. Now, such an atonement I despise — I reject it." CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON



Answers for Chapter 9: Unconditional Election

1. precede
2. elected
3. counter-intuitive
4. church, the elect
5. Because
6. covenantal love
7. conditional
8. pelagianism
9. ratification
10. object, object
11. fore-love
12. unconditional
13. negative
14. no flesh
15. special love
16. deserves
17. hell, heaven, ourselves
18. unjust or unfair
19. fair, palatable
20. grant him the grace
21. withholding
22. Caesarea, babes, choice
23. rights
24. anybody, real
25. man, original sin

Chapter 10: Limited Atonement

Payment or Possibility?

(Video running time: 37: 00 minutes)

"I had rather believe a limited atonement that is efficacious for all men for whom it was intended, than a universal atonement that is not efficacious for anybody..." Charles Spurgeon

1. _____ is one of the most controversial and misunderstood of all five of the points of Calvinism.
2. Arminianism and Calvinism both limit atonement. The Arminian limits its _____ and the Calvinist limits its _____.
3. The Calvinist believes that regeneration “raptures” the believer out of one _____ and into another.

There is a difference between historic Arminian doctrine and modern Arminian doctrine.

4. Arminians believe that Christ “_____” but did not die to _____ for sin.
5. Does “all” mean “all” all the time? _____
6. “All” is an example of _____ speech.

When we read Scripture we must not ignore:

- When it was written,
- Who it was written to,
- Historical context, and the
- Jewish mind-set.

7. For proper interpretation, we must look at Scripture based on its _____ and compared to other Scripture.
8. The Jewish mind-set tended to believe that the _____ was coming only to save them. The term “_____” in the Bible was used to correct this exclusive notion and to convey that people from out of _____ would be chosen.
9. Jesus did not say he came to lay his life down for the wolves, goats and the sheep, but that he came for the _____.

10. When Peter said that God would have none perish, to whom was Peter writing? _____

“Jesus said I lay down my life for my sheep. And in the same chapter John 10 he turns to the Pharisees and says you don’t believe because you are not my sheep. Jesus specifically substitutes himself for God’s elect and those are the ones that will be saved by his death....” Dr. Tom Ascol

11. What reason did Jesus give as to why the Pharisees did not believe?

“I pray for them (those whom the Father had given Him). **I do not pray for the world** but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.” John 17:9

12. Jesus explicitly states that He does not pray for _____, rather only those whom the Father has _____ Him.

In fact, we would do well to carefully consider a few of the preceding verses, noting particularly the words we have set in bold:

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life **to as many as You have given Him** ... I have manifested Your name **to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me...I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.**

John 17:1,2,6,9

13. When the payment for sin (and remember that unbelief is a sin) is made for all, then all would _____. This is called universal salvation.

Historic Arminians believe:

1. Christ did not pay for sin

2. The sufferings of Christ are the focal point of the atonement and not his death.
14. Modern Arminians believe that Christ died for “ _____ ” sins. Christ did not pay for our sins _____.
15. Because Arminians believe that man must contribute something (belief, or repentance) to gain his salvation there is no way to escape the fact that theirs is a _____-based righteousness.
16. _____ grace is the modern Arminian’s notion that there is a special grace that works before saving grace; a sort of awakening or _____ of the sinner. He is not at this point born-again but has been made supernaturally aware of his state by the Holy Spirit and has been given sufficient light and power to repent and choose life if he so wills it. On the other hand he can reject God’s offer, roll over and go back to his state of spiritual death.

*Not the labors of my hands
Can fulfill thy law’s demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and thou alone.
“Rock of Ages,” Augustus M. Toplady, 1776*

John Calvin (10 July 1509 – 27 May 1564) was an influential French theologian and pastor during the Protestant Reformation. He was a principal figure in the development of the system of Christian theology that later came to be known as Calvinism. Originally trained as a humanist lawyer, he broke from the Roman Catholic Church in the 1520s. After religious tensions provoked a violent uprising against Protestants in France, Calvin fled to Basel, Switzerland, where he published the first edition of his seminal work *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. The *Institutes*, easily among the most important works of Christian theology ever written, was published in March of 1536. Calvin had not yet reached his 27th birthday.

Calvin was invited by William Farel, a French evangelist and fellow reformer, to incarnate the great truths outlined in the *Institutes* and help reform the church in Geneva. The city council resisted the implementation of Calvin and Farel's ideas, and both men were excommunicated. At the invitation of Martin Bucer, Calvin proceeded to Strasbourg, where he became the minister of a church of French refugees. He continued to support the reform movement in Geneva, and was eventually invited back to lead its church. Following his return, he introduced new forms of church government and liturgy, despite the opposition of several powerful families in the city who tried to curb his authority. Calvin spent his final years promoting the Reformation both in Geneva and throughout Europe.



Though Calvin's system of theology has come to be referred to most commonly as *Calvinism*, its distinctives are in no way unique to him. Virtually every truth he defended can be found in either the writings of Augustine or other Church Fathers, most notably the father of them all, the Apostle Paul. In this Calvinism is probably best referred to as Reformed Theology; an inspired effort to "reform" the great doctrines of the faith so that they better conform to the Apostolic faith that was "was once for all delivered to the saints." (Jude 3b)

No doubt if he were alive today, this humble and gracious reformer would insist that his name never be used to describe the theological system he so brilliantly articulated and defended.

One other important point: in that his ideas were so instrumental in fashioning the worldviews of so many of America's founders, it is not unusual to see John Calvin referred to as another "Father of America."

Answers for Chapter 10: Limited Atonement

1. Limited Atonement
2. power, intent
3. kingdom
4. suffered, pay the penalty
5. No
6. figurative
7. context
8. Messiah, all tribes, all nations
9. sheep
10. The elect
11. They were not his sheep
12. The whole world, given
13. be saved, or go to heaven
14. most, in full
15. works
16. Prevenient, resuscitation

Chapter 11: Irresistible Grace

God or Chance: Which is Sovereign?

(Video running time: 13:25 minutes)

Eric: Does God have the right and the ability to do what He wills? Consider these words from the prophet Isaiah:

Remember this, and show yourselves men; Recall to mind, O you transgressors. Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, "My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure." ... Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it. **Isaiah 46:8-11**

1. Can the LORD do whatever He wills? Check one: No _____ Maybe _____ Sometimes _____ YES! _____
2. The next question addressed by the Synod of Dordt was: How can sinners, who are dead in their trespasses and sins, come to a _____ knowledge of the LORD Jesus?
3. The answer to this question went to the heart of the debate concerning the nature and _____ power of God.
4. The Calvinist answered " _____ ", God's sovereignty was inevitable for "who has resisted His will?" (Roman 9:19)
5. The Remonstrance, on the other hand, said " _____ " that man's will is free from the ultimate effects of the Fall and therefore he can accept or reject God's offer of grace.

6. To the Calvinists, this view reduced God to little more than a concerned _____ and placed _____ in the ultimate position of sovereignty.

7. Dr. Steven Mansfield: God goes _____ people.

John Newton chided the Remonstrance when he wrote:

“We zealously contend for this point in our debates with the Arminians; and are ready to wonder that any should be hardy enough to dispute the Creator's right to do what He wills.”

8. The heart of the Arminian’s misunderstanding is the extent and depth of the _____. If man is merely wounded and not _____, then he’s still conscious and has a choice of whether to take the medicine.

9. The Calvinist, on the other hand, taught that when man fell he _____ and therefore isn’t capable by himself of even choosing — much less taking — the medicine of God’s eternal life. Like a corpse in a morgue, all he can do is await the autopsy. He isn’t going to be able to respond to the Holy Spirit’s call to repentance and redemption unless the same Spirit first makes him alive.

10. Dr. D. James Kennedy speaks about: the a.) _____ call, which comes through our lips and our mouths as we proclaim the gospel, and the b.) _____ call of the Holy Spirit. The outward call, by itself, is always invariably ineffective and ineffectual. It is only when the outward call of the gospel is _____ by the inward call of the Holy Spirit that the heart is changed, the mind is open, the _____ is transformed. Only then can the recipient of this grace say “it is the voice of my beloved.”

11. Dr. Joe Morecraft: As a result of the Holy Spirit’s regenerating power, the newly alive person begins believing in the LORD Jesus Christ; loving Him, seeking to serve Him and _____ of his sins.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, that unless a man is born-again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3: 3

12. Eric: Here the LORD identifies this quickening and the resultant capacity to see and understand God's kingdom as a spiritual rebirth. This is called being _____ . Nicodemus asked, "How this can be?" and Jesus responded by first acknowledging the problem:

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh." John 3:6a

...and then stated three chapters later:

"...the flesh profits nothing." John 6:63a

Nicodemus wondered aloud: If it was left to man and his own fleshly strength and ability, how *could* this happen; how could he become "born-again"? Jesus pointed the way — in both John 3 and 6 — to the solution for this dilemma:

"...and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." John 3:6b

"...it is the Spirit that quickens." John 6:63a

13. The Holy Spirit has to first come and _____ the person who is dead in their trespasses and sins before he or she can, in the words of Jesus "see the Kingdom of God" — let alone enter it.

14. Dr. Thomas Nettles: We will be saved only when God reaches in to our hearts and changes them. He is the _____. He is the one who is aggressive. He is the one who reaches to us.

15. Dr. D. James Kennedy: (In our natural condition) we _____ God. The more we know about Him the more we _____ Him.

16. The senate of Dordt said the grace of God is _____.
And the work of God is _____.

Jesus likens the new birth to human birth. Prior to conception you did not exist and you had no conscious thoughts. Your biological life was sparked from the union of your father and mother. And so it is with being born-again by the Holy Spirit.

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” John 1:12-13

Dr. Tom Ascol: John 6:44 speaks of irresistible grace. When Jesus talks about all that the Father gives Me will come to Me and no man may come to me unless the Father **draws** him.

17. The word “draw” is a powerful word. It was used of a _____. When fishermen would go out to the sea and cast their nets in they would draw the fish. This is a powerful description of the work of Gods’ grace.

John 6:44

“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him...”

18. The word means _____. The same word used in James 2:6-

“But you dishonored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts?

It does not mean they oppress you and “woo you” into the courts.

19. Eric: By rejecting irresistible grace, the Arminians made man and his _____ ultimately sovereign. In an effort to satisfy man’s humanistic standards of fairness, God’s glory and power were inevitably compromised.

God was reduced to roaming the earth, knocking on the door of human hearts and hoping that people will see the wonder of His plan and accept Jesus as their personal savior.

20. Dr. Kenneth Talbot: When Jesus said, “I stand at the door and knock’ the passage was not referring to an individual but to the_____.

21. Eric: It is important to note that by “Irresistible Grace” the Calvinists were in no way saying that people cannot resist the grace of God. Quite the contrary, unless God makes us alive not a single one of us would ever _____ resisting it.

22. This issue of saving grace — was it resistible or irresistible? — was at its core a theological battle over who was _____: God or man?

The Synod of Dordt accused the Remonstrance of rejecting the God who IS and substituting instead one they had fashioned in their own image and to their own liking – one that was ultimately subservient to the will of man and some elements of chance. As one noted Reformed scholar observed,

“[The debate was] not between some law intermingled with a doctrine of chance, miscalled freedom, on the one hand, and the doctrines of “rigid Calvinism” on the other, but simply between God and chance. If an iota of chance is allowed into the universe, then God’s sovereignty is denied, and God is not God.” R.J. Rushdoony



The doctrine of God's sovereignty likewise, though not so generally owned as the former, is no less fully assented to by those who are called Calvinists. We zealously contend for this point in our debates with the Armimians; and are ready to wonder that any should be hardy enough to dispute the Creator's right to do what he will with his own. While we are only engaged in defense of the election of grace, and have a comfortable hope that we are ourselves of that number, we seem so convinced, by the arguments the Scripture affords us in support of the truth, that we can hardly forbear charging our adversaries with perverse obstinacy and pride, for opposing it.

Undoubtedly the ground of this opposition lies in the pride of the human heart, but this evil principle is not confined to any party: and occasions frequently arise, when they who contend for the divine sovereignty are little more practically influenced by it than their opponents. This humiliating doctrine concludes as strongly for submission to the will of God, under every circumstance of life, as it does for our acquiescing in his purpose to have mercy.... What an inconsistency,

that while we think God is just and righteous in withholding from others the things which pertain to their everlasting peace, we should find it so hard to submit to his dispensations to ourselves in matters of unspeakably less importance!

Excerpted from the article "More Than a Calvinist" by Rev. John Newton (1762), ex-slave trader and author of the hymn "Amazing Grace."

Answers for Chapter 11: Irresistible Grace

1. YES!!!!!! 2. saving 3. sovereign 4. Yes 5. No 6. by-stander, man 7. after 8. Fall, dead 9. died spiritually 10. outward, inward, accompanied, will 11. repenting 12. born-again 13. regenerate 14. seeker 15. hate 16. irresistible, monergistic 17. drag net 18. Drag 19. will 20. Church 21. stop 22. sovereign

Chapter 12: Perseverance

And I Will Lose None of Them!

(Video running time: 34:48 minutes)

"Perseverance of the saints is the almighty work of God to keep us, through all affliction and suffering, for an inheritance of pleasures at God's right hand forever." John Piper

Eric: The grace that theologians from Augustine to Calvin were defending was *truly* amazing. Jesus went to a bloody cross, they said, in order to ransom the elect; those whom the Father had given Him.

Jesus said:

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand." John 10: 27-29

Later, at the Last Supper, He affirmed this bold guarantee-

"While I was with them, I kept them in Thy name...I have guarded them and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the

scripture might be fulfilled. John 17:12

1. ...thereby affirming God's absolute sovereignty over everything, including even the evil decisions of His _____.

The book of Hebrews says that God and God alone is the

"...author and finisher (or guarantor) of our (the elect's) faith."

Hebrews 12:2

This truth was summed up in the 17th Chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith:

"They, whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally Fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved." Westminster Confession of Faith, 17:1.

2. To put it in the vernacular of today: "Once you have been *truly* saved by God, that's it. Your eternal salvation is _____."
3. Arminians shake their heads in disbelief. This promise that "once you're saved, you're always saved" seems a recipe for disaster, an inducement to _____ living and _____.
4. More than a few theologians and Christian authors argue that "_____ " is an option for mature believers only, a brass ring for those who want a "better resurrection." At the end of the day, these same authors insist, the gracious gift that is salvation could very well result in a person who remains a _____ to sin their whole lives while professing to be blood-bought, redeemed sons and daughters of the living God. _____ then is incidental to the Christian life and the grace of God does not *necessarily* produce any outward effect.
5. The Arminian party again sided with the _____ against the Reformation, insisting that no man could be truly sure of his salvation.

If any one saith, that man is truly absolved from his sins and justified....and that, by this faith alone, absolution and justification are effected; let him be anathema." **The Council of Trent: Canons on Justification, Canon 14**

6. What are some common things that people point to as "proof" that someone is saved which by themselves, in fact, prove nothing? _____

7. The idea that one is saved by "praying the sinner's prayer" or "walking the aisle" without the subsequent fruit of a changed life is **not** the Reformed teaching of the "perseverance of the saints" and we stand with them in condemning this teaching as a doctrine of demons. Jesus made it clear that **while the law is not the gospel — the gospel is not** _____.

In the 7th chapter of Matthew, Jesus warned,

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'LORD, LORD,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'LORD, LORD, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" **Matthew 17:21-23**

8. Any teaching that suggests that the Christian is free from the law and may sin as he pleases and still have _____ is a damnable lie and as much a _____ of God's word as the distortion breathed by the serpent in Eden's garden.

Reformed Theology recognizes that:

- People can hear the word and respond with joy — but because there is no root of true regeneration in their heart, they soon fall away.

"Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. But when

the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away." Mark 4:5,6

9. It's not that they were saved and then became _____: it's that they were never truly saved at all. And this is why Jesus will say to them "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" Jesus is not saying I knew you but then, because of your lawlessness, I have become forgetful. He said I _____ knew you!

"For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death." 2 Corinthians 7:10

- 10. Individuals can react to the gospel with " _____ " which is in fact the only type of repentance the unregenerate heart can muster. And this sorrow, while it may look authentic and life-giving, only produces death.

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance." Hebrews 6: 4-6

- 11. People can experience a dimension of _____ as they hear "the good word of God", taste of the "heavenly gift and the powers of the world to come" and partake of the blessings wrought by the Holy Spirit as they attend a church or live within a Christian family, community or culture **and still go to hell when they die.**

Hebrews 6: 4-8 is a popular proof passage for Arminians who insist that the perseverance of the saints is not true and that a Christian really can lose his or her salvation. But the true focus of this controversial passage is on a person who appears to be a Christian in their profession and in their participation in a community of true believers. But inwardly they have never been converted.

If you would like to study this in more detail, a good place to start is with the

commentaries of Matthew Henry, John Gill or Matthew Poole.

12. The Arminian interpretation leads to one unpleasant and unbiblical conclusion: that there is no hope for the _____.

If this passage was meant to explain that a true Christian could lose his or her salvation, then it must also mean that anyone who backslides for any period of time has no hope of being restored. The words of the writer make this clear, for he says "...it is impossible... to renew them again to repentance." Of course no Arminian would take this position. When they see a former member who has backslidden, who years earlier professed Christ with zeal but now lives for himself and his own pleasure, do they not beg and plead with him to return to Christ? Of course they do!

So what is perseverance of the saints?

13. Dr. Tom Ascol: Perseverance of the Saints is no license to_____. It is a _____ and _____, as well as a call to a holy life.

14. Eric: The Christian life is a call to _____; growing in the fear and admonition of the LORD. This growth in sanctification is a necessary by-product, the _____ of a converted heart. It is birthed and nurtured by the grace of God, for:

"We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."
Ephesians 2:10

The Christian should be able to show or demonstrate his faith through his works

"I will show you my faith by my works" James 2:18

and that any faith *without* these good works is dead.

"But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? James 2:20

15. We do not live holy lives to make ourselves _____ to God or to gain His love.

The regenerating presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts will inevitably result in an increase of holiness in our lives. Without that holiness, no man should presume that he has genuinely been converted.

Does the Bible teach that one who has truly believed can never lose their salvation?

“For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about...to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.” **Romans 4:2,4**

- Both Calvinist and most modern-day Arminians agree that justification is by grace and not works.
- Both agree that by definition, grace means “unconditional, unmerited or unearned.”

16. If this is true; if there are no _____ to grace, how can you lose it unless you believe deep down that you have done something — even the smallest thing — to earn it?

If there were conditions, then salvation would be earned and kept by obedience to those conditions. Salvation then would not be by grace, but works!

17. In short, God would _____ you salvation because you did something to deserve or earn it. And if you earned it, it would stand to reason that you could unearn it. (Romans 4:1-8)

There are numerous passages in the Scriptures that support the “perseverance of the saints”

“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” **John 17:12**

“Being confident of this very thing, that **He** who has begun a good work in you **will complete it** until the day of Jesus Christ.” *Philippians 1:6*

“The work of salvation in the heart or soul was initiated by Christ, not by the human person. The text does NOT say that because Christ began to work after the sinner had started the good work, He, Christ, would continue His efforts too. The text says that Christ began the good work. He also will perfect or complete it, continuing His work throughout the now regenerated sinner’s life.” *Dr. Gordon Clark*

“And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.” *John 10:28-29*

Jesus declares that He’s the One who gives His followers eternal life and that they shall never perish! How long is never?

18. Eric: The issue of perseverance of the saints emphasizes, not what man does to keep his salvation, but what Christ has already _____!

Paul addresses the questions of how many sins are forgiven through the atonement.

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

“...Forgiveness of sin is not done by piecemeals, or at different times, or by divers acts, but is done at once, and includes sin past, present, and to come; and is universal, reaches to all sin, original and actual, before and after conversion; sins of thought, word, and action.” *Dr. John Gill*

19. Eric: Many people see their conversion as the moment when all their past sins were forgiven and washed away. But their _____

are somehow different. Consciously, or more often subconsciously, there's a sense that they somehow must atone to God for these particular sins.

20. But while atonement "____-_____" may be necessary to restore relationships and preserve the integrity of human culture, "____-_____" our post-conversion sins are washed away in the same way as those that preceded our relationship with Christ — through His sacrifice on the cross.

21. Dr. Rodger Schultz: Our assurance of salvation never rests on what we do, what we accomplish and our own faithfulness, but entirely depends upon God, upon the perfect _____ of Jesus Christ, the _____ that he made and the meditation of our faithful high priest who intercedes for us and the work of His Spirit in our lives. The reason for it is not because of anything we do, but because God interposed with an _____. He made that _____ for Abraham and he makes that _____ for us as well.

22. There are those who will object to this based upon _____, that someone they once knew as a Christian has fallen away from the faith.

No man can truly know another's heart, either at the presumed point of his conversion or at the moment of his death.

Not everyone who says to Me, 'LORD, LORD,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'LORD, LORD, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" **Matthew 17:21-23**

Pastor Walter Bowie: It is possible for a person to go a long way and even convince us they are Christians. But, the bottom line is what John says, "they went out from us because they were not of us. If they had been of us they would have remained till now. But they went out that it might be revealed that they were not of us." **1 John 2:19**

We need to be careful that if we see a professing Christian committing a grievous sin, that we don't begin by questioning their salvation. We should love and pray for them and do what Jesus commanded in Matthew 18:

“...go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'” Matthew 18: 15-16

23. This is what the prophet Nathan did after King David committed both adultery and murder. If we had been among King David's advisors and had seen all that went on surrounding his relationship with Uriah and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11) we would have been tempted to conclude that David was not a true believer. But we would have been wrong -- as David later demonstrated through his _____.

Eric: Arminius himself was not fully convinced that a true believer could lose his salvation and advised that more study on the subject was needed.

24. However, the vast majority of his followers came to reject “the perseverance of the saints” and instead teach that a person could be saved and then lost, born-again and unborn-again, _____ and then _____.

25. The Calvinists believed that the Arminians' teaching in this area was once again a direct result of the Remonstrance's low view of the _____. Because they held that Christ's sacrifice by itself didn't satisfy the penalty for anyone's sin, it was left to the believer to do something to catalyze the process of forgiveness. It then made perfect sense that the believer could make the process _____ as well. And so not only our _____ but also the _____ of our salvation was ultimately dependent on man.

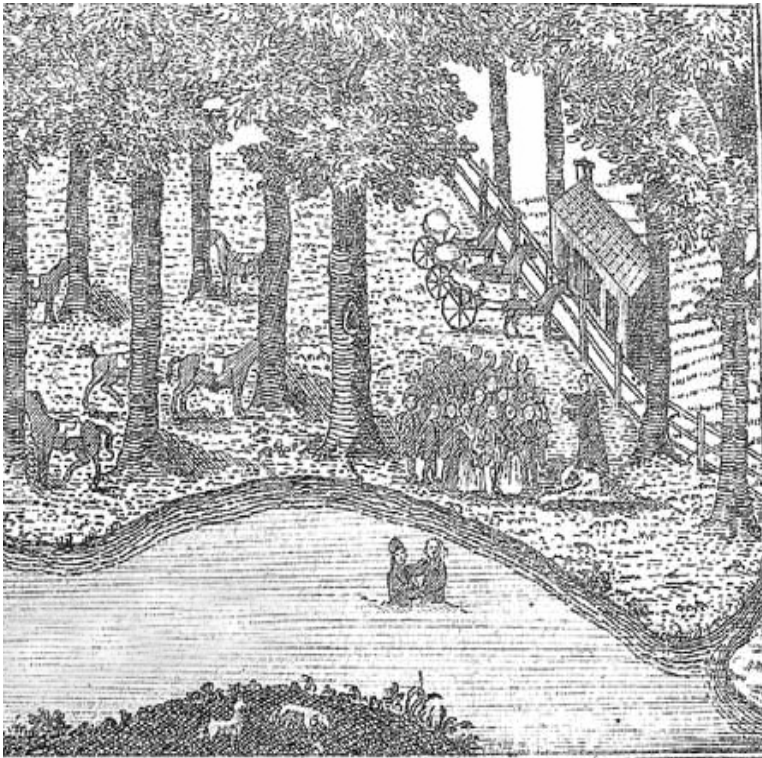
The Synod of Dordt emphatically disagreed:

“For God, who is rich in mercy, according to his unchangeable purpose of election does not take his Holy Spirit from his own completely, even when they Fall grievously. Neither does he let

them Fall down so far that they forfeit the grace of adoption and the state of justification, or commit the sin which leads to death (the sin against the Holy Spirit), and plunge themselves, entirely forsaken by him, into eternal ruin." *The Canons of Dordt, The Fifth Main Point of Doctrine, The Perseverance of the Saints, Article Six*

The Canons of Dordt concluded by urging the Arminians to repent of the false doctrines contained within their protest and embrace the Biblical and historic teaching of the Reformation. It closes with an admonition to the Calvinists:

"May God's Son Jesus Christ, who sits at the right hand of God and gives gifts to men, sanctify us in the truth, lead to the truth those who err, silence the mouths of those who lay false accusations against sound teaching, and equip faithful ministers of his Word with a spirit of wisdom and discretion, that all they say may be to the glory of God and the building up of their hearers. Amen." *Canons of Dordt, Conclusion, Rejection of False Accusations*



Most Baptists today that are aware of the Calvinistic/Arminian divide will come down staunchly in the latter's camp. But it wasn't always this way. The average Baptist would be shocked to learn that their ancestors in the faith were once avowedly reformed.

For example, consider *The Baptist Confession of 1689*. This Confession was Calvinistic in its character and rejected all

suggestions that they were Anabaptist/Arminian. Although this Confession was not comprehensive, it was a strong document which helped pull together the early Baptists. Later, a second confession was drawn up reflecting the Westminster Confession (1647) and the Savoy Declaration (1658). Called the Second London Confession, it was the statement of faith that was used by the Metropolitan Tabernacle, the church pastored by C.H. Spurgeon. In America, the confession became known as The Philadelphia Confession.

Consider the Confession's position on this chapter's subject matter:

THE BAPTIST CONFESSION OF 1689 (SECOND LONDON CONFESSION)

Chapter 17 - The Perseverance of the Saints

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

(John 10:28, 29; Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 2:19; 1 John 2:19; Psalms 89:31, 32; 1 Corinthians 11:32; Malachi 3:6)

2. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ and union with him, the oath of God, the abiding of his Spirit, and the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace; from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

(Romans 8:30 Romans 9:11, 16; Romans 5:9, 10; John 14:19; Hebrews 6:17, 18; 1 John 3:9; Jeremiah 32:40)

3. And though they may, through the temptation of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins, and for a time continue therein, whereby they incur God's displeasure and grieve his Holy Spirit, come to have their graces and comforts impaired, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves, yet shall they renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end.

(Matthew 26:70, 72, 74; Isaiah 64:5, 9; Ephesians 4:30; Psalms 51:10, 12; Psalms 32:3, 4; 2 Samuel 12:14; Luke 22:32, 61, 62)

Answers for Chapter 12: Perseverance

1. enemies 2. secure 3. carnal, compromise 4. LORDship, slave, Good fruit
5. Roman Catholic Church (Church of Rome) 6. being baptized, praying the sinner's prayer, walking the aisle or in some other way responding to an altar call, shaking the pastor's hand, speaking in tongues, being on the church rolls, attending church, etc. 7. lawless
8. remission, perversion 9. unsaved, never 10. worldly sorrow 11. enlightenment
12. backslider 13. Sin, confidence, assurance 14. holiness, evidence 15. acceptable
16. conditions 17. owe 18. accomplished 19. post-conversion sins 20. man-ward, God-ward
21. propitiation, perfect sacrifice, oath 22. personal experience 23. repentance
24. adopted, divorced 25. atonement, ineffectual, salvation, preservation

Section 3: Evangelism

Chapter 13: Evangelism

Onward Christian Soldier

(Video running time: 9:17 minutes)

1. Eric: There are two questions that often arise when discussing the reformed view of man and salvation. The first and most common is: 1) "If all this is true, then why bother _____?" and 2) If man is spiritually dead and completely unable to choose life, *how* are we to present God's good news?

Why evangelize?

If God has an elect and they are already predestined to come to Christ, why do we need to do anything to help make it happen?

2. Dr Tom Ascol: Well, we evangelize because God has _____ us to. If God is God and we are his creatures, the fact that He says to do it, that is enough.

3. Pastor Walter Bowie: First of all, we should be evangelizing, if for no other reason, simply because Christ said to do it. If there was no logic, no rhyme, no reason, if we had nothing but the simple command, "go therefore and preach" that's why we should evangelize, number one. Then secondly, a more comprehensive answer is that evangelism is the _____ by which God has purposed to bring His will to pass. And so the God of the ends is also the God of the means.

4. Dr. D. James Kennedy: God is pleased to use human means to accomplish His gloriously divine and eternal ends. And we have the incredible privilege of being _____ with Christ in bringing to pass the greatest most glorious end imaginable, the redemption of God's elect.

Pastor Walter Chantry: God has intended to save men through the means of mortal human beings. It is absolutely astounding that God would use a weak, fragile, sinful human being to testify to the LORD Jesus Christ."

5. Dr. R.C Sproul: Does God specifically need you or me to evangelize? _____ but it is a _____.

6. Eric: As a result of free-will theology, much of modern evangelism falsely assumes that God **needs** us to proclaim the gospel. Though they would never say it this way, the impression one gets is that *without us God can do nothing*. Scripture, however, teaches the exact _____. Jesus put the axe to the root of such humanistic thinking when He responded to the Pharisees' plea that He tell the crowd to stop praising Him.

But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

Luke 19:40

In the same way, His cousin, John the Baptist, rebuked a crowd for only trusting in their religious heritage. *For I say to you that God is*

able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.

Luke 3:8

7. Eric: Evangelism is a responsibility and a _____. Arminians sometimes think that if the Church embraces Calvinism, evangelism will die. However, when you consider that many of the greatest preachers and evangelists in history were Calvinists, this fear can be seen to be unwarranted.

8. One of the most common objections Arminians have against Calvinism is thinking that if God is sovereign in election and salvation and man is unable to choose salvation on his own the need for evangelism goes right out the window. Is this true? Give some examples of why or why not.

Dr. Roger Schultz: When we look at the history of the United States, we see that our greatest revivals, the most impressive ones in our country's history, were produced through the sovereignty of God, by people who were committed to the five points of Calvinism.

9. Eric: The fact is, not only does Calvinism – with its high view of God – demand that we obey the LORD and take the gospel to the four corners of the world; it also guarantees our _____ in the enterprise.

[His] word will not return void, but it shall accomplish what [He] pleases, and it shall prosper in the thing for which [He] sent it.

Isaiah 55:11

The second question:

“In light of these truths, how and to whom should we present the gospel?”

We are to be ready, instant in season and out of season, to present the gospel to everyone we meet. Or, as Jesus put it:

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

Mark 16:15

10. The Arminian will often ask, “Why every creature? If God is only going to save His elect, why waste your time sharing with people who have not been appointed unto salvation?” Quite simply, God doesn’t _____ us who the elect are.

11. Dr. Steven Mansfield: When people say, “Why preach the gospel to every creature when only the elect are going to respond?” there are two answers. First of all it is part of the indictment against the lost that the gospel is preached to them and they don’t respond, number one. And number two, part of the gospel is its _____ effect on the culture as a whole. So even unsaved men are affected by the gospel that seeps into their lives.

“God has called me to preach his word and if I knew that all the elect had a yellow stripe painted down their backs, then I would give up preaching the gospel and go lift up shirt tails!” Charles Spurgeon

We don’t know who the elect are so we instead strive to be all things to all men, so that by all means some – meaning the elect – might be saved.

I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

I Corinthians 9:22

Expendable Crewmen

Why Doesn’t A Loving God Save Everybody?



And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. Acts 13:48

If we’re honest with both ourselves and with God, there are a lot of things about Him, the world He has designed and the drama of life He has scripted that seem confusing, unfair and, at times, even wrong. Godly parents give birth to a little girl only to watch as she dies in their arms. The father of two on his way to a prayer meeting is killed by a drunk driver running from the police. A man spends years studying theology and languages and then leaves

everything behind to go and minister to unreached peoples on the other side of the world, only to be killed by pirates on the way there.²

But besides the notorious “problem of evil,” there are theological conundrums as well: an eternal hell; the lot of the “good” (relative to other men) pagan who through no fault of his own is born and dies in a village where false religion rules the roost and the Gospel has never been proclaimed; the “ugly” passages in the Old Testament calling for the extermination of pagan peoples or the amputation of offending hands.³ I could go on.

But there may be no greater difficulty – likely because it weaves together many of the troubling themes just mentioned – than the notion that a loving God chooses not to save certain people. To put it another, more stark way, the Lord withholds His saving grace from great numbers of souls, thereby allowing their eventual freefall into hell. (Theologians call this “reprobation,” from the Middle English word for “condemned,” deriving from the Latin *reprobare*, meaning “to reprove.”)

This notion is so noxious that most people, including many (most?) Christians, refuse to accept it. And so they come up with all manner of theological theories in order to get God “off the hook.” Universalism – the idea that in the end God will save everyone – is one such supposition.⁴ But by far, the most popular is some form of Arminianism: where God makes the saving grace of the Atonement available to everyone and then leaves the choice of whether to embrace it – either through the rank *pelagianism* of a Pelagius or a Charles Finney or the prevenient grace of a John Wesley – to the “free-will” of the individual. It is ultimately our choice, not the Lord’s, whether we are saved. Case closed...and the jury finds for the Defendant. God’s “fairness” remains intact.

The problem with this response, besides any inference that men can dare to put “God in the dock;” that mere creatures are permitted to sit in judgment on their

² The first two I experienced in my own church in the last few months; the last I heard about on a recent trip to Princeton.

³ Deuteronomy 7:1-2; Deuteronomy 25: 11-12

⁴ Universalism, also called universal or ultimate reconciliation, is a heresy that was most famously developed in the 3rd century by Origen – who on many other subjects was a very capable and orthodox theologian. It has always had its proponents – most typically among liberal, heterodox theologians – precisely because it does away with the “problem” of hell and the eternal torment of the damned. Most recently it has been propounded by Carlton Pearson, a graduate of Oral Roberts University, at one time a popular and respected speaker in the charismatic movement.

Creator, is that there is an abundance of scriptures – the passage I opened this with being only one of many – that clearly and emphatically reveal that it is God who chooses and God who saves. Furthermore, our wills are so in the thrall of sin, that we are utterly incapable of ever choosing God on our own steam.⁵

I am not going to defend these twin truths here. Books like *Chosen by God* by R.C. Sproul or our documentary, *Amazing Grace: The History and Theology of Calvinism*, among other publications, do a good job of presenting the Bible's position on this counter-intuitive truth. Instead, I want to "search out God's glory in this mystery" (Proverbs 25:2) by wrestling a bit with the "Why?" and see if we can come up with some clues – if not outright answers.⁶

Why does God save John Doe...but not John Roe? Why does He allow Jane Roe her free-fall into hell? What purpose could He have – and what glory could He receive – in creating a human being that ends up stoking the fires of Gehenna?

The first question: Why did God save John Doe or, for that matter, you or me? – is a simple one. Because He wanted to...and for His own glory. He has mercy on those whom He will have mercy (Rom. 9:15, 18; Exo. 33:19) and our ability to wrap our minds around His reason for picking us and not John Roe is about on par with a blob of clay discerning the mind of the potter. (Rom. 9:20) Bumping up against the working end of God's sovereignty in unconditional election and irresistible grace sits relatively easy with those who have been redeemed because it is such glorious good news.⁷

But the fact that the answer for Jane Roe is just as simple because it is also the same – that God chooses *not* to have mercy on Roe because He decided not to...and for His own glory – isn't at all easy to reconcile with our sense of fairness or our view of God as the personification of infinite love. *It is horrible*

⁵ Salvation then is a monergistic act – a unilateral (*mono*, meaning "one") act of God rather than a synergistic act of both God and man.

⁶ *The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever.* (Deut. 29:29) The inscrutability of God is a well-established fact, really a necessity, within the Christian tradition. Where the secrets end and revelation begins is itself a bit inscrutable. No doubt much if not most of the "Why's" connected with predestination, election and reprobation are firmly in the "secrets" camp. But the God revealed in scripture delights in having us "chase the mystery" as long as we do it properly: with love, humility and a sense of wonder.

⁷ "Unconditional election" and "irresistible grace" are the second and fourth elements in the mnemonic that is commonly used to teach the "five points of Calvinism": T.U.L.I.P. Both speak specifically to the theological truth that God has mercy (in election) on those He will have mercy – and that His choice is in no way conditioned by any inherent goodness on the part of those He elects (hence "unconditional") – and Jesus will then "save to the uttermost" all those that the Father has given to Him (irresistible grace).

*news.*⁸ Why would an all-powerful, loving God – One who declares that He takes no delight in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11) – stand by and not only allow death to consume Roe but also the horrible judgment that waits for him on its other side? And all this, *when it is within the Sovereign’s power to prevent this tragedy from taking place!* All He need do is choose Roe; to extend the same mercy He granted to the equally undeserving Doe.

This is a good point to bow before the Lord of glory and worship Him; to repeat the words of the equally mind-blown Peter: “Lord, to whom else shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” (John 6:68)

Two insights into the mind of God on this difficult subject are granted to us in the Bible’s most famous chapter dealing with the themes of election and reprobation: Romans 9.

Sandwiched in between two verses saying nearly the same thing – that God will have mercy on those He chooses to – the Holy Spirit through Paul declares:

For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” Rom. 9:17

And just a few verses later:

What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory. Rom. 9: 22,23

Pharaoh is perhaps the single clearest example of reprobation in the Bible. After squaring off against Moses and God’s power, manifested through a series of ten plagues, the Bible repeatedly – fifteen times in fact! – speaks of Pharaoh’s heart being “hardened.”

⁸ To help counter the humanistic, “sloppy-agape” spirit of our age, I have the occasional hankering to put up a billboard or design a T-shirt showing a person falling into Hell with the caption, “God may hate you and have a horrible plan for your life.” (Just kidding.)

Six times it is simply recorded as a fact; for example: *Still Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the Lord had said. Exodus 7:13*

Three times we are told that it was Pharaoh who did the hardening: *But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet again and hardened his heart, he and his servants. Exodus 9:34*

But another six times the Bible declares that it was the Lord who hardened the king's heart: *Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them." Exodus 10:1*

And it was this same emphasis on God doing the hardening that Paul mentions in Romans 9; right after talking about Pharaoh:

So then He has mercy on whomever He wills, and He hardens whomever he wills. Romans 9:18

So how do we understand what happened inside of Pharaoh's soul as he faced each of the plagues? Did he ever want to relent and let the Israelites go but was then somehow forced by God to stiffen his neck and refuse?

To put it another way, are we merely robots without any free will?⁹

Not at all! We freely choose things all the time. But at the same time we cannot choose what we would not choose. This is not a tautology¹⁰ but a profound insight into human nature. The Bible's anthropology declares man to be a slave to his fallen nature; that as a result of the stain of original sin we are predisposed at the very core of our beings to seek our own way and to be our own gods. We are in our very essence slaves to "the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and (are) by nature children of wrath." (Eph.

⁹ "God's sovereignty operates in such a way that our freedom and responsibility to act are not compromised, yet the end result is still exactly what God has purposed. What is more, God achieves his perfect goals not just through our best intentions and most self-sacrificing acts, but even through our greatest sins and compromises." Ian Duguid, *Esther and Ruth*, (P & R Publishing, 2005), pg. 69.

¹⁰ *tautology*: a repetition of words that impart no new information

2:3) We are, to borrow a lyric from my friend John Thompson, “basically bad” – or as the classic blues tune avers, “bad to the bone.”

This is, of course, the first principle of the so-called “Five Points of Calvinism,” the “t” in the acrostic “T.U.L.I.P.”: *total depravity*.

Now many people, including more than a few professing Christians, object to this bleak assessment of human nature. After all, very few people – outside of MTV Spring Break Weekend – behave in a way that could be characterized as totally depraved. Most in fact are capable of all manner of what seem to us to be good and loving acts. *But understand that total depravity doesn't mean that people are as depraved as possible.* They aren't. Even the real monsters in human history had islands of decency that mitigate against the description of their being *totally* depraved. (Hitler was kind to dogs, certain children, Eva Braun, etcetera.) But all the “righteous deeds” performed by the descendants of Adam who have not been re-born after the second/last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45) – in other words, those who are not yet redeemed – are as “filthy rags” when brought into the light of God's holiness. (Isaiah 64:6b) Why? Because even at their best they fall short of the glory of God; because they are not conceived and performed in and through true faith or the pure love of God; because they are not done *in the grace and to the glory of God*.

For our deeds to be anything but stained in some way by the leaven of original sin, our stony hearts have to be replaced by ones of flesh. (Eze. 36:26) And only God and His grace can accomplish this.

And so when the Lord does not supply that grace and in some way intervene in our lives, the unredeemed naturally revert to their default setting: their hearts become hard; they rebel and do what they want to do; that is, they shake their fist at the Almighty and declare “not Thy will but mine be done!”

And so all that the LORD had to do to “harden Pharaoh's heart” was simply to not extend His hand of grace and leave the Egyptian king to himself. In other words, to *not prevent* Pharaoh's innate rebellion from manifesting itself in all its Psalm 2:2-3 fury.

This interface between the fallen nature of man and God's sovereign grace, by the way, also explains the difference between "worldly and godly sorrow" in 2 Corinthians 7:10:

For godly sorrow produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly sorrow produces death.

All that the naked, unaided human heart is capable of producing is a worldly form of grief: "I got caught;" "I am so miserable;" "I can't live without (fill in the blank);" etc. Coupled with the right words, tears and pleadings with both God and man, it can appear as true repentance to the human observer. (Think of Esau in Hebrews 12:16,17.) But all this will ever produce is death.

The type of sorrow that produces genuine repentance that leads to life is and can only be a gift of God.

So we are back to our original question, hopefully with a bit more understanding concerning its focus and scope: Why would God hold back that grace from Pharaoh or, for that matter, any other sinner stumbling about in the curse of blindness and intractability that result from Adam's fall?

Well, according to Romans 9:17, 22 and 23 it is all for the benefit of the Lord's redeemed children (the vessels of mercy) and so that His Name (and all that includes) might be known throughout all the earth.

Still confused?

Here it is critically important to place this mystery in the context of God's ultimate purpose in creation. Have you ever stopped and asked yourself why the Triune God kicked off this whole divine tragedy (or is it a comedy?) in the first place? After all, the epic tale committed the eternal Son to a cross before the first "Let there be..." was declared. (Ephesians.1:4; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8) What is the *raison d'être* for which God was willing to subject both Himself and His creation to such indescribable suffering?

Well, at least part of the answer is clear: to save a people for His Name and elevate them to a level where they have been trained to rule and reign with Christ over a radically transformed and glorified earth and heaven.

Or to put it in another, more relatable way from a grand story-telling perspective: to create a warrior Bride-Queen for the King of Glory-Son.

(Jesus) for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. Heb. 12:2

The great passage in the opening portion of Paul's letter to the saints in Colossae – one that scholars suggest was drawn from a hymn in the early church – gives us some wonderful insight into this mystery:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

Colossians 1:15-18

Note the awesome celebration of God's sovereignty: that the second Person of the Godhead has created (*by, in and for Him*) and sustains *all things* (see also John 1:2); here with a special emphasis on every form of ruling authority, whether in the invisible realm of the spirit (from angels to demons) or in the temporal/visible world of man (the Byzantine empire or the Third Reich). That means – prepare not to flinch – that virtually everything that has transpired in creation has done so *in, through and for Christ and His eternal purposes* – including everything that we (and God) would view as horrible and satanic: the Fall, reprobation, the Holocaust, etcetera.

As with God hardening Pharaoh's heart, we need to be careful that we don't allow either carnal or demonic reasoning to trip us up into thinking that this means that God "causes" evil things to happen in some kind of blind, deterministic way; that He dealt, for example, a hand of genetic and situational cards to Adolf Hitler that gave him no choice but to become the man that would spark so much evil and suffering. Men are free to operate and make choices

within the parameters of their nature and so are completely responsible for what they do. (Rom. 3:5-8) But God – and this is deep, deep magic – superintends everything that both men and spirits do and uses them to accomplish His eternal purposes. And also ever remember: the greatest abomination in history – the crucifixion of the Son of God – was also done under the decree and purview of the Sovereign God. (Acts 2:23)

And to what end does *everything* exist and occur “through Him and for Him?” Well at least in part so that He might become the head (the husband) of the Church (His body/Bride).¹¹ And to do this He had to become incarnate, go the cross, die and be raised so that He could become “the firstborn from the dead” and thus redeem, resurrect and glorify His bride, the Church.

And how is this Bride made ready (Revelation 19:7); how is she prepared to take her place alongside her Husband; to rule and reign with Him in this world and into an eternity where she will even judge the angels? (2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 3:21; 5:10; 20:6; 1 Corinthians 6:2,3)

The answer, at least in part, is through spiritual warfare (2 Corinthians 10:3-6), learning through hands-on experience how to pull down vain imaginings and take every thought captive in obedience to Christ, scrimmaging against powers and principalities in both spiritual (Ephesians 6:10-20) and physical realms. The latter includes individuals, like our co-worker or next-door neighbor, and systems, as with politics, economics, religions, and demonic ideologies like abortion-on-demand and same-sex marriage.¹²

To put it another way: how are great leaders made? Through discipline, hard work and invariably, by passing through some furnace – or more often *furnaces* – of affliction. When Philip II of Macedon, for example, set out to make his son a

¹¹ Colossians 1:17. And so the last Adam echoes the words of the first: “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” (Gen. 2:23)

¹² There is a tendency among some charismatics to emphasize the former, engaging in “spiritual warfare” (binding demons, praying against strongholds over cities) while not bothering to vote; while more traditional Christian conservatives can err in the other direction: trying to effect change primarily through the ballot box and championing “traditional” values and causes. (This is a gross generalization but you get the point.) But it is not an “either/or” proposition; we should be doing both. Satan *is* the “prince of the power of the air” but he *is also* the spirit that is “now at work in the children of disobedience.” (Ephesians 2:1). In cursing both the serpent and man, the Lord declared that there would be enmity – in fact it was stronger than that; He said He would *set* this hostility in place – between not only the serpent and the woman, but also between their respective “seeds,” their offspring. (Genesis 3:15) There is no “demilitarized zone” in this fallen world. Like it or not, we have been created for warfare and we should fight with all the weapons that the Lord of Hosts has given us.

great king and military leader (in that day the two went hand-in-hand) he didn't place him in a cushioned room with the 4th century BC equivalent of a Nintendo Game Boy. Rather he gave him Aristotle for a tutor and placed him in increasingly risky situations: wild boar hunts as a child, giving him a magnificent but dangerous horse (Bucephalus) when he was ten; introducing him to deadly combat at eighteen. This is how Alexander became "great."

In precisely the same way, whether we are talking about King David facing the bear, the lion, Goliath and then Saul or the many exploits of a Theodore Roosevelt or Winston Churchill, in a fallen world we are called to face tribulation while taking heart in the knowledge that Jesus has overcome the world. (John 16:33; see also 1 John 2:13, 1 Peter 1:6-7, Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-3)

(Paul strengthened) the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. Acts 14:22b

With this background and these truths firmly in mind, let's now go back now to our aforementioned "expendable crewman." Why doesn't God save him or her? Why does He allow Jane or John Roe's freefall into hell as a "vessel of wrath prepared for destruction?" (Romans 9:22) How does this "make known the riches of his glory" for those vessels of mercy which he has prepared beforehand for glory?"¹³ (verse 23) Or to put it in the starkest of terms, how does the presence of the unredeemed in the world make the "riches of God's glory" more manifest for the Christian and help us attain the purpose for which we were created – to become like the One who redeemed us (glorification)?

Well, without the lost, without adversaries, there would be little for us to wrestle against. And without these opponents – these sparring partners – we would

¹³ The word that is translated "prepared beforehand" is used one other time in the N.T.: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God *prepared beforehand*, that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10) So both we (Christians) and our good works are foreordained. But so is everything else really. But allow me to point out that the evil that also happens in the predetermined purposes of God is never referred to as being "prepared beforehand." In other words, it exists to fulfill His ultimate purpose: to serve and help perfect the children of God. But when it comes to those things that are the "apple of His eye" – those things that everything else is called to serve as He has "prepared them beforehand" – well the scriptures only record two: His elect children and their good works.

never learn the lessons and receive the training and the subsequent maturity we will need for the world to come.

But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

Hebrews 5:14

Think about it. Without the presence of evil, there would be little opportunity to practice discernment and at least one primary path to maturity would be closed to us.

...that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death. Philippians 3:10

It isn't a message that is very popular in today's "self-actualized" culture, but learning how to resist evil, striving (agonizing) against it, even if necessary to the point of the shedding of our blood or the losing of our lives (Hebrews 12:4), or – as Paul puts it to the church in Philippi: sharing in Christ's sufferings and being conformed into His death – is a fundamental and really indispensable path to knowing and becoming like Him. This protocol would not exist were it not for evil and evil people.

So now that we understand something of how God uses the existence of evil and evil people to show forth His power, mercy, the riches of His glory, and His name, what should our attitude be towards the evil people around us? Condescension, knowing that their *raison d'être* is to be a chisel – to use another helpful analogy – that God uses to help carve the Bride of Christ out of the "marble slab" of this world and its human inhabitants and that He will later discard when she has been made perfect? (Revelation 19:7) Pride that we are the apple of God's eye while they are the focus of His wrath? A shudder of indifference because they will not be with us in eternity?

Well, if we knew who the expendable crewmen were,¹⁴ such attitudes may have some justification. (Not really!) But the key point here is that we don't. We really don't have a clue. The elect of God throughout history are peppered with

¹⁴ Like if they all wore red shirts ala *Star Trek*; brilliantly parodied in the fun movie, *Galaxy Quest* where one character was actually referred to as "the expendable crewman."

“I can’t believe he or she got saved” people. Consider Saul of Tarsus. Or John Newton. And moving from the sublime to the more ridiculous, if you went to the College of William and Mary in 1977 and took a campus-wide survey as to who was the most likely candidate for reprobation, yours truly would likely have been on the short list.

No, we need to love, pray and minister to those around us as if each is a lost member of the house of Israel. And those who are the most antagonistic to the truth of God should be treated as if they may yet experience the one-hundred-and-eighty degree turnaround that gave us the Apostle Paul.¹⁵

In fact, figuring out how to love, pray for, challenge (and thus humble) and then minister the Gospel to the God-hating, curse-breathing, bondage-brokering infidel in your life may well be among the greatest assignments – and victories – that God will give you on your own journey to the Celestial city and to a better resurrection.

Answers for Chapter 13: Evangelism

1. evangelizing 2. commanded 3. means 4. co-laborers 5. No, privilege 6. opposite 7. privilege 8. No, it is absolutely not true. Some of the greatest in-gatherings in history occurred under the ministry of Calvinists: think Whitefield, Spurgeon and more recently Dr. Kennedy’s Evangelism Explosion. The fact is that true Calvinists love to evangelize because they know that God commands them to and also because they understand that it is the very means that God has appointed to save those whom He wants to save. 9. success 10. tell 11. leavening

Chapter 14: The Law of God

(Video running time: 21:39 minutes)

What should we avoid in evangelism?

1. Eric: Much of what passes for ministry today has been compromised with the leaven of humanism. It often treats its audience as autonomous creatures that have every right to sit in judgment on both God and His word – picking out what they like and throwing out the rest. Along with this has come a

¹⁵ And that doesn’t mean that we get all sentimental and “nicer than Jesus” with them. Challenging, rebuking, even praying imprecatory prayers against them (“Save him...or slay him”) can easily fall within the rubric of “Christian charity” when done in the right spirit. In fact, to not do these things can be very the very antithesis of love.

“_____ -orientated” approach to soul winning where people seem more concerned with how many walk down the aisle than with the content of the message. If the number is not high enough, then the message is changed to make it more palatable so as to get the maximum number of people to make a decision.

More people profess to believe in God and be “born-again” than at any other time in US history. And yet, the Church has less influence in our culture today than she has had in years past. We need to ask ourselves, “What’s wrong with this picture?”

2. In part, the answer may be, that instead of seeking the elect by putting forth food for the sheep, the preached word of God, which the Holy Spirit uses to convict and convince the elect of their sins, many are seeking the bottom line, _____. And since numbers have often become the standard by which to judge a ministry’s success, and not wanting to _____ and drive people away much of the modern church is not preaching the **sinfulness of man** or the **bloody offense of the cross**. As a result, the church is offering the wrong kind of food. Instead of food for sheep, much of today’s preaching and evangelism is food for goats. And goats are now everywhere.

Dr. George Grant: Jesus told us that the gospel was an offence; the cross was an offence. It offends our sensibilities. How do you package that? How do you market that? How do you make an offense seeker-sensitive? Well, what you have to do is to take away the offense. When you take away the offense, you take away the gospel.

Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, offers the solution:

“Evangelism must start with the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the demands of the law, and the eternal consequences of evil.”

The fear today is that if you are not positive and entertaining, people will not come!

“Step into the average church these days and you will likely see that the services are designed more to remove the fear of God than to promote it.” **Rev. Steven J. Lawson**

3. Dr. R.C. Sproul: In the sixteenth century, during the heart of the Reformation, Luther warned his contemporaries; he said that anytime the gospel is preached clearly and boldly it will produce _____. And people don't like conflict. And so, as a result, they will change the gospel, water it down or try to take away its offense.

“The nature of Christ's salvation is woefully misrepresented by the present-day evangelist. He announces a Savior from hell rather than a Savior from sin. And that is why so many are fatally deceived, for there are multitudes who wish to escape the Lake of fire who have no desire to be delivered from their carnality and worldliness.” **A.W. Pink**

“The modern gospel says: ‘put on the LORD Jesus Christ. He gives you love, joy, peace, fulfillment, and lasting happiness.’ The sinner responds, and in an experimental fashion puts on the Savior to see if the claims are true. And what does he get? The promised temptation, tribulation, and persecution...” **Ray Comfort**

4. Eric: Peace and joy are fruits of the gospel. They are not the tree and definitely not the _____. If we really love people, then we need to tell them truth! And what is the truth? That if they are _____, if they have not submitted to Him as LORD and Savior then they are “sinners in the hands of an angry God!”

“**The sentence of the law of God**, that eternal and immutable rule of righteousness that God has fixed between Him and mankind, is gone out against them, and stands against them; so that they are bound over to hell.” **Jonathan Edwards, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.”**

Dr. R.C. Sproul: We tell people they don't need to repent because God loves them just the way they are and the only reason they come to Jesus is to have greater peace or greater happiness or a better trip than they will get from drugs. That is not the gospel.

5. Dr. George Grant: God is not _____ in His love. Promiscuous love throws love around sentimentally without discretion or

discernment. God is not that way at all. God's love has a purpose, the purpose of _____. God does not love us just the way we are, God loves us so that we can be just the way He wants us to be.

Dr. Steven Mansfield: The standard evangelistic approach is to tell non-believers that "God loves you just the way you are." A wise non-believer is going to say, "Well, if God loves me the way I am, why should I change?" We have got to get rid of that kind of humanistic nonsense.

6. The goodness of the gospel — "the good news" — becomes truly good only in direct relation to the "bad news" that it comes to address: that all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3: 23), that we have violated God's righteous standards more times than we can number (James 2:10); that the wages of our sin is death (Romans 6:23) and that the holy anger of God abides upon us (John 3:36) in anticipation of the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God (Romans 2:5) when all those whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:15.) Without understanding the depth of our _____ and our _____ against a thrice-holy God, the "good news" becomes the "_____ news;" just another twelve-step program in our modern therapeutic culture.

7. Eric: Martin Luther understood this. He explained that presenting a cure without explaining the _____ was a trick and device of the arch-enemy of man.

"Satan, the god of all dissension stirs up daily new sects...he has raised up a sect such as teach that men should not be terrified by the law, but gently exhorted by the preaching of the grace of Christ." **Martin Luther**

8. Eric: One of the most important – and sadly often ignored – keys to effective evangelizing is showing people that they are dead in trespasses and sin; a walking corpse in desperate need of a resurrection. And the primary means that God has appointed to bring men to the awareness of the sin and death that rages in their very being is through His law, the _____. Like a CAT scan that can find the silent killer, the cancer or the clogged artery, the commandments reveal the true state of our souls.

Dr. R.C. Sproul: We study the law of God because the law reveals to us not only the righteousness of God and His holiness, but by contrast, it stands as a mirror that I look in. And with the mirror of God's law I realize my utter helplessness in and of myself.

9. Eric: The Church of today has a problem with the law of God as found in the Ten Commandments. Many believe it to be antiquated, _____ or part of the _____ and therefore of no use to "New Testament" Christians. But as Paul wrote to Timothy,

"...we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully"
1 Timothy 1:8

10. Eric: And so it is with the Ten Commandments. If one uses it as a tool for _____ or to earn _____ he will eventually find that at the end of the law there is nothing but death. The law of God was never intended to _____.

The Apostle Paul explains,

"... for by the law is the knowledge of sin."
Romans 3:20

That as fallen creatures, we:

"...would not have known sin except through the law."
Romans 7:17

He further observed that the law has the unique ability to magnify the horror of our transgressions:

"...so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful."
Romans 7:13

The law is also universal in its scope:

"...that every mouth may be stopped, and the entire world may

become guilty before God." Romans 3:19

...and pedagogical in its purpose and impact:

"Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Galatians 3:24

"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul."
Psalms 19:7a

Matthew Henry notes that the law:

"...shows us our sinfulness and misery in our departures from God and the indispensable necessity of our return to him."

11. Tragically today the law has fallen into disuse. Less than ____ in 100 professing Christians can quote the Ten Commandments from memory.



In 1997, I took a camera crew to an event in Washington, D.C. where upwards of one million Christian men were gathered. At the time, Alabama Supreme Court justice Roy Moore was much in the news as a result of his courageous insistence that His courtroom feature a replica of the Ten Commandments. With the camera rolling I asked exactly five-hundred men – many of whom were in ministry and/or had been walking with the LORD for many years (average among the five-hundred: seven years) – whether they supported Judge Moore. There were five-hundred emphatic cries of "Yes!" Then I asked them if they believed our nation's laws

should be based upon the Ten Commandments. Again, a unanimous "Yes." Then I asked them to – you guessed it – list "God's Top Ten" in order. Only *one*

was able to reel them off without hesitating. About seven more were able to get all ten, but out-of-order and after more than a little mental effort.

H-m-m-m-m-m. We want to champion something we know little about. OUCH!

St. Augustine:

“Sin cannot be overcome without the grace of God, so the law was given to convert the soul by anxiety about its guilt, so that it might be ready to receive grace.”

“The law was therefore given not to take away sin but to include all under sin...so that by this humiliation they might know that their salvation was not in their own hands.”

John Wycliffe:

“The highest service to which a man may obtain on earth is to preach the law of God.”

Martin Luther:

“The first duty of a preacher of the Gospel is, through his revealing of the law and of sin...”

“Thou art killed by the law that through Christ thou mayest be quickened and restored to life.”

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones:

“The essence of evangelism is to start by preaching the law; and it is because the law has not been preached that we have so much superficial evangelism.”

Charles Spurgeon:

“By lowering the law you weaken its power in the hands of God as a convincer of sin. It is the looking glass, which shows us our spots, and that is a most powerful thing, though nothing, but the gospel can wash them away...Lower the law and you dim the light by which man perceives his guilt. This is a very serious loss to the sinner rather than a gain” ...

"[A sinner] will never receive grace until he first trembles before a just and holy law"

John Bunyan:

"The man who does not know the nature of the Law cannot know the nature of sin, and he who does not know the nature of sin cannot know the nature of the Savior."

George Whitefield:

"That is the reason we have so many 'mushroom' converts... because their stony ground is not plowed; they have not got a conviction of the Law; they are stony-ground hearers."

The Baptist Confession of 1689 explains that the Ten Commandments show the:

"...need they [sinners] have of Christ and the perfection of his obedience."

The Westminster Confession of Faith states that:

"The moral law is of use to unregenerate men, to awaken their consciences to flee from the wrath to come, and to drive them to Christ."

John Wesley, the great Arminian evangelist, understood that true Biblical evangelism did not start by offering grace, but by expounding the Law of God:

"The first use of the Law, without question, is to convince the world of sin. By this is the sinner discovered to himself. All his fig leaves are torn away, and he sees that he is 'wretched and poor and miserable, blind and naked.' The Law flashes conviction on every side. He feels himself a mere sinner. He has nothing to pay. His 'mouth is stopped' and he stands 'guilty before God.'"

Wesley encouraged a friend to:

"Preach 90 percent law and 10 percent grace."

Saint Augustine:

"...so the law was given to convert the soul"

12. Eric: If the Church does not repent of her lawless, man-centered Gospel, she will continue to reap _____ conversions. She will find herself powerless, her pews filled with unrepentant sinners who will one day hear perhaps the most horrifying words that will ever be uttered by the LORD of Hosts:

"I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"

Matthew 7:23

Being uncompromising and faithful to law of God and the power of the cross is not a license for being insensitive or obnoxious.

How not to use the law of God in evangelism:

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'" **Isaiah 52:7**

It was said of Jesus, the greatest evangelist who will ever live, that:

"...the common people heard Him gladly." **Mark 12:37**

13. How can we – how can you – prepare yourself so that you can effectively share the Gospel with the people that God brings into your life?

More Great Quotes on the Law of God

"...we would not see nor realize it (what a distressing and horrible fall in which we lie), if it were not for the Law, and we would have to remain forever lost, if we were not again helped out of it through Christ. Therefore the Law and the Gospel are given to the end that we may learn to know both how guilty we are and to what we should again return." **Martin Luther**

"Ignorance of the nature and design of the Law is at the bottom of most religious mistakes." **John Newton**

"They must be slain by the law before they can be made alive by the gospel."
Charles Spurgeon

"The only way we can know whether we are sinning is by knowing His Moral Law." **Jonathan Edwards**

"First, then, before you can speak peace to your hearts, you must be made to see, made to feel, made to weep over, made to bewail, your actual transgressions against the Law of God." **George Whitefield**

"Unless we see our shortcomings in the light of the Law and holiness of God, we do not see them as sin at all." **J. I. Packer**

"Just as the world was not ready for the New Testament before it received the Old, just as the Jews were not prepared for the ministry of Christ until John the Baptist had gone before Him with his claimant call to repentance, so the unsaved are in no condition today for the Gospel till the Law be applied to their hearts, for 'by the Law is the knowledge of sin.' It is a waste of time to sow seed on ground which has never been ploughed or spaded! To present the vicarious sacrifice of Christ to those whose dominant passion is to take fill of sin, is to give that which is holy to the dogs." **A. W. Pink**

"People will never set their faces decidedly towards heaven, and live like pilgrims, until they really feel that they are in danger of hell ... Let us expound and beat out the Ten Commandments, and show the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of their requirements." **J. C. Ryle**

"No one can know the true grace of God who has not first known the fear of God." **A. W. Tozer**

"The trouble with people who are not seeking for a Savior, and for salvation, is that they do not understand the nature of sin. It is the peculiar function of the Law to bring such an understanding to a man's mind and conscience. That is why great evangelical preachers 300 years ago in the time of the puritans, and 200 years ago in the time of Whitefield and others, always engaged in what they called a preliminary law work." **Dr. Martin Loyd-Jones**

"We cannot come to Christ to be justified until we have first been to Moses, to be condemned. But once we have gone to Moses, and acknowledged our sin, guilt and condemnation, we must not stay there. We must let Moses send us to Christ." **John R. Stott**

"God's grace cannot be faithfully preached to unbelievers until the Law is preached and man's corrupt nature is exposed. It is impossible for a person to fully realize his need for God's grace until he sees how terribly he has failed the standards of God's Law." **John MacArthur**

Answers for Chapter 14: The Law of God

1. results 2. numbers, offend 3. conflict 4. root, outside of Christ 5. promiscuous, redeeming us and changing us 6. sin, offense, OK 7. Disease 8. Ten Commandments
9. harsh, Old Testament 10. self-righteousness, heaven, save 11. one 12. false 13. Pray and prepare for divine appointments and open hearts, for love for the lost and for wisdom in knowing how to minister to people; memorize and meditate on the law and look for relevant and winsome ways to apply the law to people's lives so that the Holy Spirit can use it to bring the conviction of sin; practice sharing your testimony; learn about the various apologetical methods and gather material that will support each of them; etc.

Chapter 15: Nine Keys to Evangelism

(Video running time: 16:08 minutes)

Nine Important Keys to Biblical Evangelism:

1. _____ **for and love the people to whom you bring the Gospel.** Get beyond a perfunctory "thy will be done" _____ prayer. Beseech Him, wrestling in prayer that He might save so-and-so. This is true love and prevailing prayer.
2. **Strive to _____ the nature and truth of God in your life and character;** to be a living epistle, known and read of all men. (2 Corinthians 3:2)
3. **Ask God for _____.** (James 1:5) Proverbs 11:30 says that the one who wins souls is wise. Working with God to see people saved is a wise career choice. For example, there is the _____ mentioned in Hebrews 11:35.

4. Eric: Hebrew is a notoriously ambiguous language and this verse can just as easily mean that it takes wisdom _____. We are called to be as gentle as doves but “as wise as serpents” (Matthew 10:16) and nowhere is this more necessary than in the art of _____, particularly when you find yourself amongst wolves. Knowing when to “answer a fool according to his folly” and when not to (Proverbs 26:4 & 5) is just one example of our need for wisdom.

5. _____ **the law of God.**

6. _____ **the word of God**, most specifically the Good News of the atonement: the Cross of Calvary. Jesus said that if He be lifted up He will draw all men towards Himself. (John 12:32) As faithful sowers we should ever be mindful of the _____ – *spora* or “spore” (1 Peter 1:23) – that carries within it the power, with the Holy Spirit’s help, to produce faith. (Romans 10:17)

7. **Be a _____ of the Holy Spirit through both your life and your testimony** (2 Corinthians 4:7) Whenever I am presenting the gospel, whether one-on-one or before an audience, I always keep before me the great assurance that while in fact I am a nothing but a earthen vessel, that vessel by God’s grace is a container of the *shekinah glory*—the excellent power of God—and that that glory is somehow, somehow touching those I’m ministering to.

8. How do we overcome Satan and the forces of darkness – keeping in mind that in evangelization our battle is in large part with spiritual forces as they strive to _____ so that they cannot see the light of Christ who is the image of God? (2 Corinthians 4:4) One way is through the word of our _____. (Revelation 12:11) I’ve seen God save well-educated, hardened skeptics through the simple testimony of a changed life.

9. _____ **your audience into a place of doubt!** ...concerning the way they are living their lives. Help them see the futility, vanity and inconsistencies of their worldview by “casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5). To put it another way, to get them to doubt the efficacy of their idolatrous _____, the

“babbling tower” their flesh, the world and the devil have created for them. The “spiritual weapons” (2 Corinthians 10:4) we use to accomplish this are both prayer and apologetics. And when it comes to the latter, we must be ever ready, as the Apostle Peter put it:

“...to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” **1 Peter 3:15**

Be a well-read and thoughtful believer, someone who according to Hebrews 5:14 is mature, used to the solid food of the Word and through use and practice has trained their senses — their judgment — to discern both good and evil.

“But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” **Hebrews 5:14**

As we follow in His footsteps and practice “incarnational Christianity” – entering into the world of the unbeliever – we relate to people on whatever level we can.

Yes, in our hearts we understand that their questions and doubts are ultimately expressions of their own sinfulness and rebellion. Yes, we understand that they are not truly seeking after God, that they in fact already know the truth and are simply suppressing it in unrighteousness. But as we love people and connect with them, as we pray for them and bring them the living water of the gospel through the vessels of our lives and the words of our testimony, and as we challenge them with the truth of God’s word while looking for ways to engage them in a conversation about eternal things, we become a conduit for the grace and the mercy of God. We don’t trust in our evangelistic or our apologetical skills to see people get saved. We ultimately place our trust in the God above, beyond and behind all these things.

10. Help your audience acknowledge the _____ that God has already placed in their hearts but that they are desperately working to suppress in their unrighteousness. (Romans 1:18-20) Again, take great confidence in knowing that deep down _____ what you are saying to them about God is true. They are suppressing the knowledge of God through their inborn desire to be their own god. But as we love and pray for them and faithfully do the work of an ambassador as outlined above, God will have His way.

11. Clearly challenge your audience to _____ and _____ the Gospel; to be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:20) The lost are not seeking God. God Himself is seeking the lost. Our part in evangelism is to tell people what God requires of them, to repent, to believe – to change their mind about the good news and the gospel.

Eric: Our job as Christ's ambassadors is to strive to be as faithful and to grow in all nine of these areas as we can. What happens as a result of our ambassadorship, however, is up to God. Some of those you minister to may experience the mercy of God in regeneration, repentance and salvation. Others may leave with seed planted for another day of watering and eventual harvest. And there may be some who only experience His anger, who leave with hearts all the more hardened; with the Truth pushed and locked back down into their heart boxes, waiting for the day when God will bring it forth and judge the secrets of men's hearts through Jesus Christ. (Romans 2:15 & 16) All three of these possible scenarios bring glory to God and are the righteous fruits of a successful ambassadorship.

12. It has been well-said that the chief end of man is to _____. Glorifying and enjoying God is not just some greeting card piety, however. It carries with it a whole host of things we must both believe and do. Chief among them is to understand who He is and who we are in relation to Him. It is here where the truly amazing grace we looked at in the previous two sections is so vitally important.

A close second however is to share the same passions and desires of our Heavenly Father. And chief among them as regards the world of men is the salvation of His elect and the restoration of this world to its intended purpose.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...”

John 3:16

The great shepherd, Jesus, humbled Himself to redeem the lost sheep of His pasture. Can we be satisfied with any less?

One characteristic of today's Church, at least the one in America, is the great interest in Biblical prophesy and the events that will accompany the end of the age and the return of Christ.

13. Scholars disagree as to which events are yet in the future and which ones have been fulfilled. There is one thing, however, that everyone agrees has yet to be fulfilled; perhaps the clearest and most universally accepted scriptural "_____ " for the consummation of our present age. The Apostle Peter spoke very clearly about the *eschaton* – the end of the world – when the present cosmos will be transformed:

“But the day of the LORD will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.” 2 Peter 3:10

He specifically addresses the mystery of this event's timing, calling us to patient labor and reminding us that God's timetable is not the same as ours.

“But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the LORD one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”
2 Peter 3: 8

But then the Holy Spirit through Peter gives us the rationale for all the waiting and patient toil.

The LORD is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” 2 Peter 3:9

14. Jesus is patiently waiting before He returns and “breaks down the tent”, so to speak, of the present cosmos. **And why is He waiting?** _____
_____ **And who is this all?** Well, it certainly can't mean all people. Scripture makes it abundantly clear that there are many who travel the wide path to destruction and end up in hell. In addition, if He is “not willing” that anyone perish and yet many do, we are left with a God who cannot accomplish His perfect will. This is certainly not the God of the Bible.

15. No, the “all” that Jesus is waiting for – the “none” that He is not willing to let perish – are the sheep of His flock, the elect that He died for and is committed to saving. And so the ultimate “tipping point” of the eschaton is the day when the _____ is ushered into His pasture!

Understanding all this, how should we then live? Peter tells us:

“Therefore...what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God...” 2 Peter 3:11, 12a

And so we end; the banquet of God’s amazing grace laid before us. Not only has our great LORD paid the ultimate sacrifice to redeem us and raise us from the dead. And not only is He patiently waiting for our other brothers and sisters to be saved, He has blessed us with the inexpressible privilege and honor of working with Him in bringing those elect brethren into His kingdom. Let us long for our King’s return. Let us hasten the day! Let us seek so that He might save the lost!

Answers for Chapter 15: Nine Keys to Evangelism

1. Pray, hyper-Calvinistic 2. reflect 3. wisdom, better resurrection 4. to win souls, ambassadorship 5. Present 6. Sow, seed 7. vessel 8. blind the minds of the unbelieving, testimony 9. Move, belief-system 10. truth, they know 11. repent, believe 12. glorify God and enjoy Him forever 13. tipping point 14. That none of us would perish but that all come to repentance. 15. last lost sheep

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Amazing Grace: *The History & Theology of Calvinism*

The Christian does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us. ~ C.S. Lewis

Dr. Thomas Ascol – All of life is grace: that we live, we breathe; we do what we do because God enables us to be that way and to live that way.

Rev. Walter Bowie – The major problem with a grace that operates prior to salvation, it makes man the final determiner in his own salvation. And so salvation is a matter of man and God working together, so man has some grounds whereby he can boast.

Rev. Walter J. Chantry – It would be right of God to destroy all of us for our sins and if He would have mercy on some He has the right to do that.

Dr. George Grant – In God's good providence the plan of salvation was a tangible and effective plan of salvation. God set out to accomplish the mission of redeeming His own.

Dr. D. James Kennedy – Augustine said that man today is born dead in trespasses and sin. He needs to be resurrected; that we are totally incapable of doing.

Dr. Stephen Mansfield – The reality is, in Scripture, God goes after people. He has sovereignly chosen. He has chosen Paul, knocks him off of the horse and says, "I've chosen you for this purpose, get busy." It's a sovereign God in operation, not a lonely old man hoping people will follow Him.

Dr. Joe Morecraft III – The greatest world mission enterprises have all been initiated in the past by men who believe these great doctrines that we've been talking about with the Reformed faith.

Dr. Roger Schultz – We believe that our salvation is by grace; that even the faith that we have comes as a gift from God. There is nothing that we can lay claim to, nothing that which we can boast. Our salvation entirely comes from the Lord.

Dr. Thomas Nettles – God, command what You will, and give what You command. In

other words, we are dependent upon the grace You give us to accomplish in us Your own commands.

Dr. R.C. Sproul – The most significant issue that any human being will ever face is the question, “How can I escape the judgment of God?”

Dr. R.C. Sproul, Jr. – In order for the “good news” to be good it has to not just be abstract. It has to have the capacity to affect a change in us.

Dr. Kenneth Talbot – The doctrine of Calvinism has never been defeated because it is the true exposition of Scripture.

Hello, my name is Eric Holmberg and I’ll be your host for *Amazing Grace: The History and Theology of Calvinism*. What follows is a three-part presentation that asks, and hopefully answers, one of the most important questions the human mind can contemplate: How exactly is a fallen, fallible and finite human – a sinner – redeemed before an infinitely just and holy God?

Interviewer - How can a sinner be saved from the judgment of God?

Various Interview Responses

- By the grace of God. Through the sacrifice for sins that was offered upon the cross.
- Well, I think the answer to that is really what makes Christianity unique among world religions. Because with any other system of belief, systems that understand that there is a fundamental problem with man, what we would call sin, there is also a system of works by which the practitioner needs to either prove himself or redeem himself through his works, his actions. And Christianity alone is the one that basically says that there’s nothing we can do about it. We’re too far gone and only God can save us at that point.
- The apostle Paul probably laid it out best in Ephesians when he stated that it’s by grace through faith that we’re saved and that it’s not by ourselves, that it’s Christ who did it. He paid the price so that no man should boast in the works that are done.

Interviewer - OK, but how does that work? How exactly does a person get saved?

Various Interview Responses

- You have to believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. In other words, that He was crucified on the cross and rose again

and paid the price for our sins and by acknowledging Him as Lord.

- Well, Jesus died for everyone's sins. He paid the full price to redeem us from the judgment that awaits our disobedience, which is hell. He extends the hand of salvation to everyone and all we need to do is take it. Many don't, but many do. And those that do are saved.
- You know, to answer that, I like what our pastor teaches on that. He says that salvation is like a legal declaration, that God is the judge and He's the one that declares us righteous before Him. Satan is like the accusing attorney, Jesus is the defense attorney. Not only does Jesus defend us, but he also posts the bail and pays the fine. So we're like the jury in that respect and we, depending on who we choose, will determine our eternal destiny.

Dr. R.C. Sproul - The most significant issue that any human being will ever face is the question, "How can I escape the judgment of God?"

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ~ Acts 16:30

Dr. R.C. Sproul - If Jesus taught anything, he taught that each one of us will be brought before God in a final judgment and we will be exposed to His wrath and exposed to His judgment. And that would be the supreme calamity from which to be delivered or to be rescued, which is what the Bible means by "being saved." And so, if it is true, that we will have to face God; and if it is true that there is a judgment, then the question, "How can I escape that judgment?" becomes the most important question that we will ever have to deal with.

All of this raises another related question: "Who gets the glory in this process of redeeming man from his sins and pardoning him from the judgment those sins deserve?"

Various Interview Responses

- 100% God.
- It's God and God alone.
- Who else but God? Jesus is the only way. He's the only sacrifice for sins.

If we were to survey the over one billion people in the world who call themselves Christians, when we got down to the nitty-gritty of their beliefs concerning these two vital questions, we'd likely find more than a little confusion. And while most would probably answer the second question correctly, that God alone gets the glory, more often than not this response wouldn't be theologically consistent with the details of their first

answer.

Section I: History of the Debate

Clip from "Luther", 1953, Gateway Films.

Catholic Priest: God is revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, "The just shall live by faith."

Luther: By faith, man lives and is made righteous, not by what he does for himself – be it adoration of relics, singing of masses, pilgrimages to Rome, purchase of pardon for his sins - but by faith in what God has done for him already; through His Son.

Catholic Priest: Dr. Martin, if you leave the Christian to live only by faith, if you sweep away all good works, all these glorious things you dismiss as mere crutches, what will you put in their place?

Luther: Christ. Man only needs Jesus Christ.

The debate concerning this vital issue is as old as Christianity itself. And in today's relativistic, "to each his own" world, many simply resolve the issue by either accepting the contradiction, or just sweeping it under the proverbial rug. But in the end, neither option is acceptable. The issues are far too critical to our understanding of the true nature of man, grace, and the God we're called to worship and serve. With this in mind, this presentation will attempt to illuminate, if not resolve, the issue while demonstrating just how amazing saving grace truly is.

We'll begin in part one of this presentation with the history of this controversy – the struggle to understand God's sovereignty and grace in relation to man's responsibility and free will.

"For many are called but few are chosen." ~ Matthew 20:16; 22:14

In part two, we'll focus on the Bible's testimony concerning these issues. And in part three, we'll explain how the Gospel should be understood and presented in light of these Biblical truths. The hope here is that you, the viewer, will be inspired and better-prepared to do your part in fulfilling the "Great Commission".

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations." ~ Matthew 28:19

At the end we'll also direct you books and ministries which can further your understanding of the system of doctrine known as Calvinism, Augustinianism, or what the Rev. John Newton, author of the classic Christian hymn, called "The Gospel of

Amazing Grace". May God use this video in some small way to enflame his church with the fire of worship and evangelism that was "The Great Awakening". As we now turn to the fascinating history that surrounds the mystery of grace, focusing particularly on the controversies that arise whenever mystery is present, we would do well to remember the philosopher George Santayana's famous observation,

"Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." ~ George Santayana

By examining the past we may, by God's grace, avoid its mistakes and draw wisdom and encouragement from its victories. Also, pay close attention to the way the controversies help both to define as well as provide a type of incarnational context to the theological issues that under-girded them. That will go a long way in helping make the Biblical analysis of part two more interesting, comprehensible, and memorable.

A Brief Apologetic for Understanding Church History

Now some may ask, "Why begin with the historical survey of the debate instead of going right to the testimony of Scripture?" Well, by neglecting the creeds, counsels, and other vital facets of the church's rich, 2000-year-old history, many Christians have fallen into the trap of having to rediscover what the Bible says.

Consider, for example, the "Watchtower Bible and Tract Society", better known as the Jehovah's Witnesses. At one time or another, most of us have answered our front door only to find two smiling, conservatively dressed members of this group ready to either bear witness to Jehovah or to engage in theological debate. Should the latter take place, one quickly learns that the "Jesus" they teach is a very different person from the One worshipped by true Christians. Theirs is a man with no pretense of being God. According to their organization's teachings, Jesus was the first being created by Jehovah and that, prior to His incarnation through Mary, He existed as the created being known as Michael, the archangel.

What many do not know is that 1700 years ago this doctrine, with a few variations, was called Arianism after its chief proponent Arius. As his rationalized version of "Jesus is not God" theology began to spread like a cancer, a group of more than 300 pastors, elders and deacons came together in the city of Nicaea to discuss his views. The conclusion of that meeting or council was the condemnation of Arius and his teaching. Thanks to the tireless labors of great defenders of Biblical faith, most notably Athanasius, within a generation the heresy was largely defeated and contained. And so it remained for many centuries. Think about it: If the leaders of the church of the late 1800s had brought down the whole weight of the Word of God as taught by the men of Nicaea and that were continually affirmed in subsequent councils, the Jehovah's

Witnesses may have faded from the scene as quickly as they came.

Please note that we are not equating church councils as being equal in authority with the Bible. Dr. R.C. Sproul explains,

“Although tradition does not rule our interpretation, it does guide it. If, upon reading a particular passage, you have come up with an interpretation that has escaped the notice of every other Christian for two thousand years, or has been championed by universally recognized heretics, chances are pretty good that you had better abandon your interpretation.” ~ Dr. R.C. Sproul The Agony of Deceit, pp. 34, 35

Why have so many in the modern church forsaken the treasures of wisdom and experience won by Christians in centuries past? Some blame an overreaction to the errors of Roman Catholicism where the traditions and councils of the church were elevated to be virtually equivalent to the Word of God. Unfortunately, in reacting against the Roman view, many Christians have allowed the pendulum to swing to the other extreme. Ignoring church history altogether, they’ve thrown the baby out with the bathwater.

Dr. George Grant - Remembrance and forgetfulness is one of the primary themes throughout the Scriptures. When God’s people forget, they stumble and fall. When they remember, they’re able to set their focus on the things of God. That’s why in the Psalms we’re told that righteousness cannot be done in a land of forgetfulness. When we don’t know our past; when we don’t know the greatest lessons that the church has ever learned, and the greatest works that have ever been written, when some new heresy, which is really just an old heresy, comes along, we’re caught by surprise.

Dr. Thomas Ascol - Christians of all ages should be willing to learn from those who have gone before us. The Bible says that Christ gives gifts to His church including teachers. And those teachers are not just the elders and pastors of the local congregation, but men who have, throughout history, been entrusted with great ability to understand the Word of God and to teach that Word. It is the height of arrogance for us to close our ears to or ignore what God taught our fathers. He has taught those who’ve gone before us, we stand on their shoulders; we ought to be willing to learn from them. And so what councils have declared, what teachers have made known, the lessons that have stood the test of time, we ought to be willing to consider those and weigh those – not as final authority; not as an equal authority with the Word of God at all, but to measure them in the light of what the Word says. I think that is simply the Berean spirit, that is humility, that is what Christ would require of His disciples of any generation.

And this is precisely what we'll attempt to do throughout this presentation – examine church history in light of the testimony of Scripture.

The Augustinian / Pelagian Controversy Over Free-Will

“If I ought, I can.” ~ Pelagius

As Jesus prophesied, the early church suffered many trials and tribulations, most of them at the hands of the Pharisees and the Romans. However, as time passed and the church grew, the greatest trials were to come from within the church itself. Every so often a heretic would rise up, savage wolves, in the words of the Apostle Paul, who would come from within the church and not spare the flock, speaking perverse things in order to draw away disciples after themselves.

“...savage wolves will come among you, not sparing the flock...” ~ Acts 20:29

“...men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.” ~ Acts 20:30

There is a cycle that commonly occurs with the introduction of false doctrines. First, a person, or group of persons from within the Christian community, begin to challenge the already-established teachings of the church. This is important to understand. Heresies invariably arise in direct opposition to what is already being proclaimed throughout the body of believers. Second, the heresy is presented and then spread through the use of books, tracts and letters, and verbal proclamation. After the spurious teaching has gained enough followers and created sufficient controversy to warrant a response, a council of senior leaders, pastors, teachers and deacons is then convened to “search the Scriptures to find out whether these things were so”.

“...in that they received the Word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.” ~ Acts 17:11

In Acts 15, for example, we see just such a council meeting convened, in this case, to settle the question of how much of the Hebrew Law a gentile believer had to obey. And finally, a statement would be drawn up showing how and why the new doctrine would pervert an essential part of the Gospel. This is how creeds and confessions were developed. They were essentially a formal response to false or controversial teachings.

The Introduction of False Doctrine

1. Challenges established teachings.
2. Challenges are then circulated through the means of letters and tracts.

3. Church council is called to deal with the teaching.
4. The Church issues a written statement.

During the fifth century of the Christian era, a new controversy arose that shook the church. It started when the premier theologian of the time, Aurelius Augustine, also known as Saint Augustine of Hippo, wrote a simple prayer that began to circulate throughout Christendom.

“Lord, give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt.”
~ St. Augustine, *The Confessions of St. Augustine, Chapter XXIX, 40*

A British monk by the name of Pelagius vehemently disagreed with the prayer. He declared that God would never give a command unless man was capable, of his own free will and ability, to accomplish it. He further maintained that man was not overcome by sin to the point where he could do nothing to satisfy God. Tracing his ideas back to their logical beginning, Pelagius went on to assert that no one was contaminated by the Fall, nor were they “born in sin”. But a baby, instead, was *tabula rosa*, Latin for a blank sheet of paper, and was therefore perfectly capable of obeying and pleasing God.

As this controversy between Augustine and Pelagius developed, it became increasingly clear to everyone concerned that the debate was not centered around semantics or doctrinal hair-splitting. At issue were several principles at the core of the Christian belief system – doctrines concerning the fundamental nature of God, man and the Gospel. As the controversy came into clear focus, a simple, all-important question began to emerge: “Does man need God’s grace in order to stand before Him in righteousness?” Pelagius responded with an emphatic “No”. While God’s help is always appreciated, it’s not absolutely necessary. Man can simply exercise his free will and choose not to sin. Augustine was just as insistent when he declared, “Yes”. Man is utterly dependent upon God’s grace because he has been ruined by the sin of Adam and can do absolutely nothing to redeem himself before the wrath of the infinite, holy God. The stakes here were huge as many Christian scholars, both then and later, were quick to recognize. One such scholar noted,

“There has never, perhaps, been another crisis of equal importance in church history in which the opponents have expressed the principles at issue so clearly and abstractly. The Arian dispute before the Council of Nicea can alone compare with [the Pelagian Controversy]...” ~ Adolph Harnack, History of Dogma, part 2, book 2 trans. James Miller, 1898/1961, p. 169

If you think about it, Augustine’s prayer sounds innocent enough.

“Lord, give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt.”
~ *St. Augustine, The Confessions of St. Augustine, Chapter XXIX, 40*

What was Augustine asking of God?

Dr. Thomas Ascol – Augustine was recognizing that all of life is grace; that we live, we breathe; we do what we do because God enables us to be that way and to live that way. So by acknowledging our utter dependence upon God, he asks for the grace and then acknowledges: Command whatever you will; give the grace to do what you command. You’ve commanded us to worship; Lord grant us the ability to worship. You’ve commanded us to pray; grant us the ability to pray. You’ve commanded us to evangelize; grant us the ability to evangelize. And every real Christian at his best moment would acknowledge the rightness of both of those requests because when we pray we’re asking God to do for us what we can’t do for ourselves.

Dr. Thomas Nettles – God, command what you will and give what you command. In other words, we are dependent upon the grace You give us to accomplish in us Your own commands.

In essence, Augustine was simply asking God for help. So why would this seemingly-innocent prayer have caused such a backlash from Pelagius?

Dr. Thomas Nettles – He thought that this presented God in a bad light, and he also thought that this was an affront to human nature.

Dr. Thomas Ascol – Well, Pelagius was basically a moralist. Pelagius believed that man had not been so corrupted that he couldn’t be perfected in this life. And the prayer that God would have to grant something to us for us to perform what He required, to him was blasphemous. God had already done that. We were not so dependent upon God as to need that kind of supernatural empowering grace. What we needed is simply the act of our wills and the getting our lives together to pursue the things that God had really commanded us to do. So Pelagius did not see life as being a matter of grace and only grace. For him, Christianity was basically moralism. Man could do it. You don’t need to pray for that which you already have the ability to perform.

With the teachings of Pelagius, humanism and its doctrine of the natural ability of man came to the forefront of Christian thought. Though it had been a dominant belief system within the Greco-Roman culture that had greatly influenced the world for many centuries, now it sprang full-form into the culture of the church. Pelagius, as a humanist, believed that each person was created like a new Adam: perfect, untethered by the influence of a sinful nature. And perfectly capable of obeying the commands of

God. Of course, many do choose to sin from time to time. And so Jesus' atonement provided a real benefit to them. Understanding this, man could then use his own intelligence and free will to choose forgiveness in Christ without any necessary assistance from outside himself.

Dr. Thomas Nettles – Pelagius rejected the idea that there was any connection between Adam and what the books called “his posterity”, that means all the persons that have been born after him. But that Adam sinned for himself and for himself alone and that all of us are born with the same powers that Adam had.

What Pelagius denied was what the apostolic church labeled “original sin”. Original sin is the Biblical teaching that states, as a result of the Fall in which Adam died spiritually and ultimately physically, all of those born after Adam carry within themselves a corrupt nature and the guilt of Adam's first sin.

Dr. D. James Kennedy – And if you ignore or deny the doctrine of original sin, the doctrine of the Fall, and the Fallen nature of man as being, in his unregenerate state, dead in trespasses and sins – if you deny that and see him as in the same state as Adam was at his creation, then you're going to produce and create an entire superstructure of theology which is all wrong. And that's why I think the Pelagian heresy was so important.

So what impact would Pelagius' teaching have had upon the church if the leaders at that time had not spoken out against him? Listen again to Dr. Kennedy.

Dr. D. James Kennedy – If Pelagius were right and man today is born in the same way that Adam was created – that is Adam was created, we believe, immortal and sinless – and if we were created in the same way today, then we don't need Christ. We don't need a Savior.

Only sinners need a Savior. And, according to Pelagius, sin was not inevitable. In fact, he believed and taught that there were many who never committed a single sin. This, of course, led to the question, “Did these men who never sinned die?” Pelagius' answer sent him further away from the heart of orthodox Christianity. He asserted that death was a natural occurrence even to Adam, and that Adam would have eventually died even if he had never sinned. By combining the teaching that man has a will void of the consequences of the Fall and the denial of man's sin nature, as Dr. Kennedy already noted, Pelagius made salvation by grace through faith unnecessary.

“...shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” ~ Acts 20:28

As this controversy spread, those called “to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood”, convened a council to deal with it. Meeting in the northern African city of Carthage in 412 AD, both sides were present to argue their case. In the end, the council overwhelmingly agreed with Augustine. According to the Word of God, man was conceived and brought forth in sin.

“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.”

~ Psalm 51:5

Man’s will was not, in any way, “free” according to the doctrine of Pelagius, but was, instead, in bondage to his sinful nature. As a result of the Fall, given the opportunity to choose between good and evil, God or the devil, the unregenerate man would always and freely choose evil and the devil unless God Himself intervened.

Pelagius as well as anyone who followed his teaching were condemned as heretics. The decision of this council reads in part,

“Whoever says that Adam was created mortal and would, even without sin, have died by natural necessity, let him be anathema.” ~ The Council of Carthage, 412 A.D.

Dr. Thomas Nettles – The Scripture says that the wages of sin is death. Death was promised as a result of disobedience. And one of the chief evidences that we are all sinners, and it is set forth all the way through Scripture, is that death is a common occurrence. Physical death, which is an indication that we are all living in a corruptible state of spiritual death. Well, when Pelagius and Celestius taught that men were mortal from the beginning and would have died whether they’d sinned or not, this seemed to remove what was a Biblical evidence for the veracity of God in placing the curse on a disobedient humanity. If unfallen man had died anyway, then that means that the threat of God for disobedience would have been basically nonsense.

To our modern, pluralistic ears, declaring that someone should be anathema, or accursed for holding a sincere doctrinal viewpoint, sounds bizarre, even unchristian. Again, Dr. Nettles responds:

Dr. Thomas Nettles – Well, when these councils end some of these decisions with “let him be anathema”, they’re picking the phrase up from the Biblical example in Galatians 1 where Paul talks about if anyone preach a Gospel to you other than that which I have preached, let him be anathema. In other words, let that person be cut off from the church. But the real meaning is: let that person be cut off from the possibility of salvation, because Paul understood this to be something that was a destruction of the Gospel. And so when the church uses that kind of language – whether or not it’s

legitimate for a church council to do that is another question – but what they’re trying to say is that this is an issue that is so important that we feel that if a person believes this, they actually are destroying an essential aspect of the Gospel. And so it is better for that person simply to be cut off from the church than to allow them to continue to teach and have the possibility of destroying souls.

“But even if we preach any other Gospel to you other than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.” ~ Galatians 1:8

In total, three councils condemned Pelagianism in all its forms. Six years after the Council of Carthage, a general council of African churches reaffirmed the anathemas of 412 A.D. Unfortunately, in the interval between these two councils, the bishop of Rome, Zosimus, sided with Pelagius. In 412, he wrote a letter condemning the Council at Carthage for their anathema of Pelagius. Of course, understanding that they had the support of Scripture, the leaders of the Carthaginian council disregarded the bishop and his letter. Philip Schaff, noted church historian, observes,

“This temporary favor of the bishop of Rome towards the Pelagian heresy is a significant presage of the indulgence of later popes for Pelagianizing tendencies...” ~ Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Volume III, p. 798

It was these Pelagianizing tendencies advocated by the bishop of Rome that allowed for the later development of the works righteousness in the Roman Catholic belief system. This can perhaps be best illustrated by the life and writings of Cornelius Otto Jansen, a leader of the post-Reformation movement within Roman Catholicism. Most of his works were published and became popular after his death in 1640. Like Martin Luther, Jansen believed that the Church of Rome had departed from the early church’s position – that all of life was by the grace of God. And, like Augustine, he taught that man’s spirit was dead in sin and therefore needed to be regenerated – what the Bible called “born again”.

“Jesus answered him and said to him, ‘Most assuredly I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven.’ ~ John 3:3

Jansen understood that this experience was something that happened *to* man by God’s grace, and *not* something that a man made happen by his faith. On behalf of the pope, the Jesuits launched a violent attack on the Jansenist movement. In 1713, Pope Clement XI issued a Papal Bull or formal condemnation, against them denouncing 101 statements from their writings. What’s troubling is that many of these statements were direct quotations from the writings of Augustine against Pelagius.

How could this happen to a church that, at one time, sided with Augustine against Pelagius? Surely there was more than just one answer. But Philip Schaff has given us one slice of the pie. As the church continued into the Middle Ages and the bishop of Rome became the so-called “visible head of the church”, these Pelagianizing tendencies metastasized and, like a cancer, began to spread. By the time we reached the Reformation, Rome was teaching that man saved himself by cooperating with the grace of God – a position known as “semi-Pelagianism”.

Dr. D. James Kennedy – Then along came the mediating view of the semi-Pelagians that said, “Man is neither dead nor well. In this life man is born sick.” Now if man is born well, as Pelagius said, all he needs is a little guidance, a little moral guidance in his life to stay upon the path. If man is sick, then he needs the help of a physician. And if he will cooperate with his physician, then he and the physician can affect his cure. Augustine said that man today is born dead in trespasses and sin. He needs to be resurrected - that we are totally incapable of doing. So the practical result is, if you are a Pelagian, all you need is a teacher. If you are a semi-Pelagian, all you need is a little help from a physician. If you are an Augustinian, as I am, and most all of the historic orthodox church has been, then you will realize that man needs to be resurrected from the dead and that salvation, furthermore, is entirely of grace.

Dr. Kenneth Talbot – Semi-Pelagianism is a modification of the doctrinal teaching of Pelagius. It is a synergistic, rather than a monergistic, approach to redemption. It basically teaches that man and God are cooperating together in order to accomplish redemption.

The Reformation: Erasmus vs. Luther

“By free choice in this place we mean a power of the human will by which a man can apply himself to the things which lead to eternal salvation, or turn away from them.” ~ Desiderius Erasmus

On September 1, 1524, Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, a Roman Catholic apologist, published a work entitled *Diatribes Concerning Free Will*. Martin Luther, the German Reformer, responded with *On the Enslaved Will* or *The Bondage of the Will*, a masterful apologetic that referenced over 300 Bible verses. Luther maintained the full Augustinian position against the semi-Pelagian position of Erasmus. It would be difficult to overstate the significance of this book. Luther considered it to be his most important work because it spoke to the issues that went to the very heart of what it meant to be a Christian. Dr. B.B. Warfield, the great Princeton theologian, called *The Bondage of the Will*

"...the manifesto of the Protestant Reformation."~ B.B. Warfield, The Complete Works of B.B. Warfield, Volume IX, p. 471

Luther's book drew a line in the sand between the Roman Catholic view of justification and the Reformed view. And the debate that followed became known as the "Monergistic / Synergistic Controversy".

Dr. Thomas Nettles - When Erasmus wrote his *Diatribes Concerning Free Will* he was writing this against Martin Luther. The church really knew that Luther was making inroads and so they wanted the greatest continental humanist to take aim at Luther. Erasmus hesitated for a long time. But finally he found what he thought he could conscientiously focus on – that was Luther's recapture of Augustinian thought – that we are absolutely and utterly dependent upon a sovereign working of God and that we have nothing to contribute to our own salvation. And so in this book Erasmus opted for a view of salvation that says that God offers us grace but we still have some elements of freedom within us by which we can either choose this grace or reject this grace. And it is our choice that God rewards then with salvation.

Dr. Thomas Ascol – Erasmus' main thesis in his treatment of the will, this *Diatribes on the Will*, is that man has the ability to initiate the relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. He has the ability within himself to believe and, through that faith, then access all that goes with faith in justification and reconciliation with God.

Dr. Ascol explains the semi-Pelagian view of synergism:

Synergism:

Syn – with; together with; at the same time

Ergos – work

Dr. Thomas Ascol – Synergism comes from a compound word in Greek, "together, working together" and it basically teaches that man and God *cooperate* in the initiation of faith. That man does his part, God does His part. And so it is a cooperative work.

The prefix *syn* means, "with, together with, at the same time." It refers to two or more. It's used in words like "synchronize". *Ergos* is a Greek word for "work". In theological terms, as Dr. Ascol has already noted, "synergism" refers to divine and human cooperation; God and man work together to bring about the latter's conversion. Martin Luther saw this as little more than a "works-based salvation" dressed up in evening clothes.

Luther believed the semi-Pelagianism of Erasmus denied original sin; the full impact the Fall had on man. Instead of being dead in his trespasses and sins, man was, according to Erasmus, only wounded and therefore could help himself by helping God. Luther understood that Erasmus' view made the grace of God a reward for our faith. In other words, man believes the Gospel and as a result of his good work God gives him grace. And no matter how you slice it, in the end man deserves some of the credit, or the glory, for his salvation.

Dr. Thomas Nettles – And so it was the glory of God that was at stake in this view of salvation, according to Luther.

Against the synergistic view of Erasmus, Luther believed that being “born again” or “born from above” was monergistic.

Mono – one; alone

Monergism – Regeneration is the work of God alone.

Mono is the Greek word meaning “one or alone.” It's the prefix for words like “monotheism” – the belief in one God. Monergism, then, was the belief that regeneration or the new birth was to be understood as the work of God alone. Because man was dead in trespasses and sin, it was God, and only God, who brought man back to life, sending His Spirit to revive, regenerate, and resurrect man from the hopeless condition of spiritual death.

It may be helpful at this point to briefly explain that the terms “born-again” and what we deem as salvation or justification are *not* synonymous terms. Many modern day Christians equate the two. Luther emphatically taught that fallen man does not have faith in order to be born-again; but that man is born-again by the Spirit and the Word and, as a result, has faith.

Dr. Thomas Ascol – Luther rightly understood that when the Bible describes the condition of man in sin it is a desperate condition. Man in sin is not just sick – he is dead! A sick man can help himself a little bit, but a dead man needs a supernatural miraculous work of grace to bring him back to life. Luther recognized that and that's why in his *Bondage of the Will* he considered this to be the most important and significant work that he did; the most important book he ever wrote. And it's also why, in the conclusion of that book, he thanks Erasmus for writing against his view and commending the freedom of the will. He says, “Erasmus, you of all my opponents have really seen the issue. This is the hinge on which all else turns.” Luther understood that it's not enough to advocate *sola fide*, faith alone, but *sola fide* also is dependent on *sola gratia*, grace alone. And the faith, which we exercise in Jesus Christ, is itself the gift of

God. And it is produced in us by the work of the Spirit.

After the death of Martin Luther, the German Church forged a statement of faith that outlined many of the distinctives of the Lutheran Church. Collected into what became known as *The Book of Concord*, it became the standard statement of faith for all confessing Lutheran Churches. Among its articles was a clear affirmation of the monergistic position on salvation:

“... man of himself, or from his natural powers, cannot contribute ANYTHING or HELP to his conversion, and that conversion is not only in part, but altogether an operation, gift and present and work of the Holy Ghost alone, who accomplishes and effects it, by His virtue and power, through the Word, in the understanding, [of the] heart and will of man.” ~ The Book of Concord: Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord, Article II, Free Will: 89

Dr. Thomas Nettles - But *The Formula of Concord* set forth very clearly Luther’s historic view that it is only by the work of God’s Spirit and God’s Word that the human heart is changed and comes to faith in Christ. Again the monergistic view was affirmed very strongly in *The Formula of Concord*.

In response to the challenge and growth of the Reformation, Pope Paul III convened a council on the 13th of December, 1545, in the city of Trent in what is now northern Italy. Meeting periodically over the next 18 years, this council produced many doctrinal statements that were to serve as dogma – official and supposedly infallible statements concerning faith and morality that were to bind the consciences of all true Christians. Among them was an anathema, or condemnation, declared in the Fifth Canon of the Sixth Session.

“If anyone says that after the sin of Adam man’s free will was lost and destroyed...let him be anathema.”~ Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent: Original Text with English Translations, trans. H.J. Schroeder 1941 edition, pg. 43.

This acknowledgment of the semi-Pelagian doctrine of free will went straight to the heart of the dispute between the Roman church’s teaching on salvation and that of the Reformers. As Martin Luther observed:

*“If any man doth ascribe ought of salvation, even the very least, to the free will of man, he knoweth nothing of grace, and he hath not learnt Jesus Christ aright.”
~ Luther, Martin, quoted by C.H. Spurgeon, New Park Street Pulpit, Sermon 52 Free Will - A Slave (1855 London: Passmore and Alabaster, Reprinted by Pilgrim*

Charles Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher, later echoed Luther's statement when he declared:

"...he who in his soul believes that man does of his own free will turn to God, cannot have been taught of God..." ~ C.H. Spurgeon, Volume One, New Park Street Pulpit 1855, Sermon 52, Free Will – A Slave, p. 395

Luther and the Reformers knew that the issue of "free will" versus the "bondage of the will" went to the first principle of justification and, if compromised, it would not only put man in at least the co-driver's seat concerning the vital issue of salvation, it would give him some of the glory for having sense enough to get saved.

Dr. Thomas Ascol – Now this is important, because if it's not true or if we argue against this we are actually robbing God of His glory. Which gives God more glory? Which recognizes the greatness of His work? A helper who gives a little medicine to a sick man or a miracle worker who looks at a dead man and says "live"? Luther recognized the glory of God in salvation is much greater than just a medicine man who gives a little aid to someone who is sick. But rather, here's a miracle of grace. I was dead. I was lost. I was without hope, without help in the world. And all of those Bible verses that Luther was familiar with that teach that he saw clearly and he took seriously. And God came and saved me. God did it. It is His work; so all praise goes to God. It's not a question of "praise me" for trusting Jesus and Jesus for accepting my faith and saving me. It's praise God for saving me, because He quickened me. He changed me. He granted me faith and enabled me to trust His Son. All praise goes to Him. All glory goes to Him. No praise, no glory belongs to anyone else.

Dr. R.C. Sproul – At the heart of the Reformed faith is the phrase "*soli Deo gloria*", "to God alone goes the glory" and I know of no other system of thought that consistently honors God and gives the whole glory to God and no glory to us, than what we call Reformed Theology or Historic Calvinism. That to me is the one that is most consistent with the Biblical approach to honoring God.

Many of history's greatest evangelists and preachers would agree. Among them was George Whitefield, the lightning rod of The Great Awakening. A man used by God to bring tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands of souls to Christ. It was Whitefield who contended that the semi-Pelagian doctrine of free will ultimately compromised both preaching and the invitation for people to believe in the Lord Jesus. What did Whitefield mean?

Dr. R.C. Sproul, Jr. – One of the great things about the Good News that George Whitefield grasped when he said that the Arminian gospel is no gospel at all is that, in order for the good news to be “good”, it has to not just be abstract. It has to have the capacity to enter into us, to effect a change in us. If God made it possible for us to be saved and left us in our Total Depravity, that’s sort of hypothetical good news.

To use an analogy, the semi-Pelagian free will gospel is like taking a blind man to an art auction and then offering to purchase for him the painting he considers to be the most beautiful. This, of course, would be absurd. The blind man must first be given new eyes – a feat he can not accomplish by simply willing himself to see.

Living as we do in an age that has been so influenced by humanism, many Christians today view the Biblical Augustinian/Lutheran/Calvinistic monergistic position concerning salvation as strange, unbelievable and wrong—even heretical.

They would do well to consider what else and who else they would have to dismiss as also being in error. History is filled with champions of the faith who considered the synergistic view of free will as being directly opposed to both God’s sovereignty and the true Gospel. Ironically, many are revered by lots of modern day semi-Pelagians – Protestant and Roman Catholic alike. Among these defenders of the reformed view of free will and salvation are:

Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones 1919-1981
Pastor of Westminster Chapel in London

Jonathan Edwards 1703-1758
Another key leader of The Great Awakening

John Bunyan 1628-1688
Pastor and author of the classic work “Pilgrim’s Progress”

August Toplady 1740-1778
Writer of the classic hymn “Rock of Ages”

Dr. John Owen 1616-1683
Arguably England’s greatest non-conformist, pastor and theologian

William Wilberforce 1759-1833
English parliamentarian and champion of the abolition of slavery

John A. Broadus 1628-1688

Namesake of Broadman Press

- J.P. Boyce** 1827-1888
Founder of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
- B.H. Carroll** 1843-1914
Founder of Southwestern Theological Seminary
- Roger Williams** 1604-1683
Pastor and founder of the very first Baptist Church in America
- William Carey** 1761-1834
The Baptist minister known as "The Father of Modern Missions"
- John Foxe** 1516-1587
Author of "Foxe's Book of the Martyrs"
- J.C. Ryle** 1816-1900
The great Anglican bishop
- A.W. Pink** 1886-1952
Influential author and Baptist minister
- Dr. Francis Schaeffer** 1912-1984
Author of the classic "How Shall We Then Live"
- John Newton** 1725-1807
Writer of the classic hymn "Amazing Grace"
- Matthew Henry** 1662-1712
Of the "Matthew Henry Commentary" on the whole Bible
- Charles Spurgeon** 1834-1892
*Pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London and known as
"The Prince of Preachers"*

And these are just a few. Other champions could be mentioned who currently serve the church today. Among them:

*J.I. Packer
D. James Kennedy*

R.C. Sproul
Albert Moeller
John MacArthur, and
John Piper

And then there are the great confessions of faith that have guided and illuminated the church for centuries – each decisively monergistic:

The Waldensian Creed – 1120
The Belgic Confession – 1561
The Heidelberg Catechism – 1563
39 Articles of the Church of England – 1563
The Formula of Concord – 1577
The Westminster Confession of Faith – 1647
The Baptist Confession – 1689

We could go on and on.

Dr. Joe Morecraft III – The greatest eras of evangelism, the greatest evangelistic movements, culture changing evangelistic movements, the greatest world mission enterprises have all been initiated in the past by men who've believed these great doctrines that we've been talking about of the reformed faith.

Unfortunately, many in the church refused to heed these councils and the cycles of false teaching continued to revolve.

THE ARMINIAN/CALVINIST CONTROVERSY

“The Synod (of Dort) rejects the errors of those who teach that, properly speaking, it cannot be said that original sin in itself is enough to condemn the whole human race or to warrant temporal and eternal punishments.” ~**The Canons of Dort, The Third and Fourth Main Points of Doctrine, Rejection of Errors, Article I**

As the gap between Rome and the Reformers grew, attempts were made, consciously and unconsciously, to find a compromise between the two positions. The next cycle of false teaching – this time growing up from within the ranks of the Protestant movement – involved a very sincere man by the name of James Arminius. Arminius was born at Oudewater, in the Netherlands. He became a pastor of an Amsterdam congregation and a professor at the University of Leiden from 1603 until his death in 1609. During the course of his life, Arminius rejected many of the teachings of the

Reformation and returned to the semi-Pelagian view of Rome.

In 1610, one year after Arminius' death, his follower's drafted five articles of faith based upon his teachings. These five points of what came to be called Arminianism stood in contradistinction to what the Church of Holland had been teaching since the Reformation. These five articles, also called the "Remonstrants" or "protests", were then presented to the Reformed Church. The Arminian party insisted that the Church's statements of faith, the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism, be adapted to conform to the five points of Arminianism.

In November of 1618, a national Synod, or council, was convened in the city of Dort for the purpose of examining the views of the Arminian party. Eighty-four members and eighteen civil commissioners, including twenty-seven delegates from Germany, Switzerland, England and elsewhere were in attendance. From the first day until the Synod's close in May of 1619, some 154 sessions were held. The result was an overwhelming rejection of the five points of Arminianism. Since the Arminian attack had been so focused and severe, the men who were part of the Synod believed a mere rejection of the five points of Arminianism would be insufficient to stem the tide of error. They therefore responded to each of the five points in turn, formulating what has come to be called the "Five Points of Calvinism".

Dr. Thomas Nettles – What the Synod of Dort did was to reaffirm the confessional statement that already existed in the Dutch Reformed Church. And they reaffirmed it in light of the particular objections that the Remonstrants had brought against it. It is known today as the "Five Points of Calvinism". But Calvin didn't sit down one day and say, "I am going to write my theology in five points," and then write out these five points. But the reason that they came out as five distinct points was because it was in response to the objections of the Arminians or the Remonstrants.

Dr. J.I. Packer, author of the classic work "Knowing God" summarized the Arminian position as put forth by the Remonstrants.

1) Man is never so completely corrupted by sin that he cannot savingly believe the Gospel when it is put before him;

2) Man is never so completely controlled by God that he cannot reject God's grace;

3) Election is a result of God, looking down through the corridors of time, foreseeing that a sinner will accept Christ. Therefore, God elects those who first elect Him;

4) Christ's death did not ensure the salvation of anyone, for it did not secure the gift of

faith (for the Remonstrants there was no such gift); what it did was rather to create a possibility of salvation for everyone if they would only choose to believe, and,

5) It ultimately rests with the believers to keep themselves in a state of grace by keeping up their faith; those who fail here fall away and are lost.

Dr. Packer concludes:

“Arminianism made man’s salvation depend ultimately on man himself, saving faith being viewed throughout as man’s own work.” ~ J.I. Packer, Introduction to John Owens’s Death in the Death of Christ Fourth Printing 1985, Introductory Essay, pp. 4, 5

In essence, Arminianism re-captured the *synergistic* position of semi-Pelagianism and Roman Catholicism; teaching that salvation is accomplished through the combined efforts of God (who takes the initiative) and man (who must respond) with man’s response being the ultimate determining factor. God has provided salvation for everyone, but His provision becomes effective only for those who, of their own free will, “choose” to cooperate with Him and accept His free offer of grace. At the crucial point, man’s will plays the decisive role, the catalyst or active ingredient. Thus man’s “good work”, and not God’s, determines who will be recipients of the gift of grace.

The Synod of Dort, as we’ve seen, responded to the five points of the Arminian party with what is known today as the Five Points of Calvinism. We’ll wait until the next section to examine each of these points in detail, but in essence they are as follows:

- 1) Total Depravity - in response to the Arminian view of free will.*
- 2) Unconditional Election - in contradistinction to conditional election.*
- 3) Particular (or what is commonly referred to as “limited”) Atonement - in opposition to general or universal atonement.*
- 4) Irresistible Grace - in reply to resistible grace.*
- 5) Perseverance of the Saints - in answer to the idea that a saved man could be unsaved.*

In short, the leaders at the Synod of Dort, like Luther, Calvin and Augustine, taught that salvation is accomplished by the almighty power of the Triune God. The Father chooses – or elects – people to be saved; the Son redeems them through His cross; and the Holy Spirit makes Christ’s death effective by bringing the elect to faith and repentance,

thereby causing them *willingly* to believe the Gospel. The entire process is the work of God and is by and through grace alone. Thus God's grace and not man's "good work" determines who will be saved.

The leaders assembled at Dort understood that the five points of Arminianism were on shaky ground; that if one point were proven wrong, the entire system would collapse.

Dr. Kenneth Talbot – The Arminians were ejected out of the church. Over 300 ministers were expelled as a result of their disagreement with the doctrinal teaching of the Dutch Church. That teaching was Reformational Theology or Calvinism, as it is more popularly known.

The Synod of Dort taught that salvation, from beginning to end, was a work of God's grace alone. They believed that Adam's Fall had ruined the whole race and plunged man into spiritual death that entangled his will in bondage to sin and Satan. To teach that man could save himself, by an exercise of his will apart from the grace of God (which is Pelagianism), or contribute to his own salvation, by having man cooperate with the grace of God (which is semi-Pelagianism), was heresy – a giant step away from the Reformation and back towards Roman Catholicism.

Dr. R.C. Sproul – The reformers felt that if they acquiesced to the protests or the remonstrations of the Arminians at that time that, in a very real way, they would have been putting their feet back on a path to Rome. Now let me clarify that. I don't think any of them believed that Arminianism was or is today Roman Catholicism. We are talking about putting your feet on a path that goes in a certain direction. Now, the big difference between historic Arminianism and Roman Catholicism is that Arminianism does believe and affirms categorically the doctrine of justification by faith alone. That is, an orthodox Arminian believes that the grounds for his justification, for his salvation, is not his own righteousness but the righteousness that has been won for him by the work of Jesus Christ. However, when you get down to the nitty gritty and you push Arminianism to its logical conclusion, there is where you see the extreme danger of slipping into a works righteousness.

Dr. D. James Kennedy – And if once you acknowledge free will, which Luther and all of the other Reformers denied, then you open the door for all of the various Roman Catholic heresies that came along as well as that one.

So did the reformers believe that man had a will, one that's free to choose one thing over another without the necessary intrusion of some outside force? Again, Dr. Kennedy:

Dr. D. James Kennedy – Are total depravity and free will compatible? Yes and no. As we said to an earlier question, free will can mean one of two things. If we are talking about the sense in which free will exists in every human being, whether regenerate or unregenerate, then we can say “Yes”, obviously they are compatible because unregenerate people do make choices. That is the sense in which man is free to choose whatever he wants to choose. All men are free to do that. The unregenerate man makes choices every day: what tie he will wear, what he will eat for dinner; whatever it may be. But in the significant sense in which its used in the Bible, which is man is free to do what he ought to do, (which is repent of his sins, turn from his wickedness, surrender his life to Christ and follow Him in godliness), unregenerate man is not free to do that. The more he hears of it, the more he dislikes it. And his will and heart and mind must be changed for him to do that.

The Reformers believed that man did have a will; and they believed that man's will is free to choose one thing over another without the necessary intrusion of some outside force. What they objected to was the Pelagian, semi-Pelagian, and Arminian *view* of free will. They unequivocally held that as a result of the Fall, man's will was now in bondage to sin and death and has lost the ability — apart from the outside influence of God's grace — to choose the perfect good in relation to the spiritual realm. Rather than a God-centered will, a will that desires to please and honor the Lord as the *prima facie* motivation for everything man says, does and thinks, the fallen will is ultimately grounded in self. And while this self may and often does choose things that are relatively good and that can occasionally even outwardly approximate the moral perfection modeled by Jesus —

“But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are like filthy rags.” ~ Isaiah 64:6

- in the consuming fire of God's perfect sight, fallen man's most righteous deeds are as “filthy rags” corrupted by the leaven of a self-directed will. In the end, man is free to choose, but can of necessity only choose from among the things that his fallen nature will of its own accord consider. Dying to self and living whole-heartedly for the true God is not something that would ever show up on fallen man's radar screen of options.

In spite of all the counsels, synods, creeds and confessions created to deal with this issue, most of the Bible-believing church today is Arminian. Of course, most are not consistent with respect to many aspects of their theology. People pray, for example, as if God were truly sovereign and omnipotent, leading the great Baptist preacher, Charles Spurgeon, to famously declare:

“...You have heard a great many Arminian sermons, I dare say; but you've never

heard an Arminian prayer—for the saints in prayer appear as one in word, and deed, and mind. An Arminian on his knees would pray desperately like a Calvinist.” ~ Charles Spurgeon

With his tongue planted firmly in his cheek, Spurgeon then went on to explain that if an Arminian were to pray in a way consistent with his free-will theology, he would sound something like this:

*“Lord, I thank thee I am not like those poor presumptuous Calvinists. Lord, I was born with a glorious free will; I was born with power by which I can turn to Thee of myself; I have improved my grace. If everybody had done the same with their grace that I have, they might all have been saved ... Thou givest grace to everybody; some do not improve it, but I do. There are many who will go to hell as much bought with the blood of Christ as I was; they had as much of the Holy Ghost given to them; they had as good a chance, and were as much blessed as I am. It was not Thy grace that made us to differ; I know it did a great deal, still I turned the point; I made use of what was given me, and others did not—this is the difference between me and them.”~ Spurgeon, C.H., *Sermon Free Will - A Slave, delivered on the Sabbath Morning Dec. 2, 1855. (London: Passmore and Alabaster: New Park Street Pulpit; Reprinted by Pilgrim Publications, Pasadena, TX), Vol. I, Sermon 52**

Of course, no true Christian would ever dare to utter such nonsense – blasphemy really – to the Lord. But if you are an Arminian, you need to think through your presuppositions. Though you would never say it with your mouth, isn't this where your theology ultimately leads?

The Apostle Paul declared that there is no room in the Gospel for boasting. (Eph. 2:9) Arminianism, at its root, allows for it. Thankfully more and more Bible-believing Christians today are coming to understand the doctrines of sovereign free grace and are now making their boasts in the Lord.

Dr. Kenneth Talbot – The doctrine of Calvinism has never been defeated because you can't defeat the Scripture. Calvin's teaching is the true teaching of Christ, Paul, as they are presented in the Scripture. Thus it is impossible to defeat this teaching. You might defeat hyper-Calvinism, a perversion of Calvinism, but you cannot defeat Calvin's theology because it is the true exposition of Scripture.

Section II: The Testimony of Scripture:

Clip from “Luther”, 1953, Gateway Films.

Luther: If only some of our people, all of our people could realize that in this Psalm David is telling us, "In thee, O Lord, I trust. In Thy righteousness deliver me." If only everybody could understand these words, how much better they would understand God's righteousness.

Priest: And what, dear brother, is God's righteousness?

Luther: Well exactly what Scripture says, Father: that it delivers and does not merely judge.

Priest: Rather an interesting interpretation of Scripture. Did you learn that in Rome?

Luther: Not that I recall, Father Prior.

Priest: From your studies of the church fathers?

Luther: No.

Priest: Your own?

Luther: To the best of my knowledge, yes.

Priest: There is only one proper interpretation of Scripture: that which the Church has established. What if Scripture were in the hands of common man, for every pot boy and swineherd to read in his own language and interpret for himself? What then?

Luther: Why, then we might have more Christians, Father!

T: Total Depravity

Wounded or Dead?

"It is a sad, harmful, and evil characteristic of sin not to recognize how serious it is and to excuse it by treating it lightly."~ Dr. James Montgomery Boice, "Whatever Happened to the Gospel of Grace"

Historically, whenever a church council was convened, it was, for all intents and purposes, a trial. It's telling that even today some denominations still call the gathering of elders, pastors and bishops the "Court of the Lord Jesus" or synod, another word for court. If a court was called to try a new teaching, each side in the controversy was allowed to present their arguments, evidence, and witnesses. At the conclusion, a verdict was then rendered. And so it happened when the Arminian party started

teaching things contrary to the confessions and accepted doctrine of the Dutch Church, the church was forced by the controversy that ensued to put these new teachings on trial.

The Court or Synod of Dort was convened in November of 1618 to deal with the Arminian challenge. While the key points of disagreement were relatively simple, they had many complex implications that went to the very heart of the Gospel. At its foundation was an ultimate question: How does fallen man come to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ?

The Arminian party's first point became known as "partial depravity" or "the wounded man theory." Although man is fallen, they insisted that his mind, will, and emotions were only wounded by the Fall. Therefore:

"the human will is free and [still] self-controlled, having power to yield to the influence of the truth and the Spirit, or to resist them and perish." ~ Articles of Faith of the National Association of Free Will Baptist X

The Synod of Dort responded to the contrary, articulating what has come to be known as "Total Depravity" or "the dead man theory". Simply stated: in the Fall, man didn't just become spiritually sick — he died. As a result, he is completely unable to do any ultimate good in the eyes of God, including believing the Gospel. Since the Fall of Adam every person is conceived and born by their very nature spiritually dead and a slave to sin. Though we still have a will and are free to choose what we want to choose, we are not able to choose what is contrary to our nature. In the end, the will of fallen man can only embrace sin and its ultimate wages: death.

Dr. Thomas Nettles – But what Total Depravity means is that every faculty that we have is affected by the Fall. Every faculty we have is predisposed to unholiness. Our mind, our will, our emotions, our memory, our conscience, all of these things are affected and impacted and are predisposed toward corruption and evil.

Dr. D. James Kennedy – It does not mean that man is as bad as he could be. Nor does it mean that every unregenerate man is equally bad. There are obviously some people who are worse than others. What it does mean is that the Fall of Adam and original sin does impact every part of man's being. Namely his mind, his heart, and his will.

So does the Bible, the Word of God, teach that man is partially or totally depraved — spiritually wounded or spiritually dead? Any answer must take into full account the following sober assessments of man's inherent nature. In our fallenness the Bible

describes us as:

- “Darkened in [our] understanding” (Ephesians 4:18, 1 Corinthians 2:14) and “carnally minded” (Romans 8:5-7) — at enmity with God and incapable of being subject to Him.
- “Haters of God” and “lovers of darkness.” (Romans 1:30; John 3:19)
- “Dead in [our] transgressions and sins” and “by nature children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:1- 5) —without the life of God in our souls.
- “Slaves” to our sinful nature (Titus 3:3; John 8:34), captive to a “my will be done” ethic and epistemology.
- With hearts that are so twisted with self-centeredness that out of them come “evil thoughts, vulgar deeds, stealing, murder, unfaithfulness in marriage, greed, meanness, deceit, indecency, envy, insults, pride and foolishness.” (Mark 7:21, 22)
- “We have turned everyone to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6), that even “the thoughts and imaginations of our hearts are evil continually from our youth.” (Gen. 6:5; 8:21)

A wise man once observed that the Bible doesn’t contain just *theology* — or man’s study of God. It’s also the Lord’s *anthropology* — God’s analysis of man. (~ **Abraham Heschel**, “**God in Search of Man**”) And that analysis is well-summed up by the Apostle Paul when he echoed the words of King David in the 14th Psalm:

“As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one...Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes....’” ~ Romans 3:10-18

Dr. Stephen Mansfield – We talk about free will a great deal, but the fact is man’s will is bound by his own sinfulness. So there’s only a certain range that he’s going to be able to choose within. He’s not able to choose all the best things, the highest things, the most Godly things because sin has bound his will.

The bottom line – the Calvinists saw that the Remonstrants was giving fallen man more credit than he deserved and attributing an ability that’s simply not there. And they understood that how one viewed the Fall would be reflected in how one understood, believed and preached the Gospel.

Dr. Thomas Ascol – I think most Arminians mean by free will: The power to initiate a relationship with God – to take that first step. It’s even in one of the most popular hymns that is used in Arminian churches,

“...if you’ll take the first step toward the Savior my friend you’ll find His arms open wide.” ~ The Savior is Waiting by Ralph Carmichael

Dr. Thomas Ascol - Well, I’ve heard preachers say, “If you take the first step, God will take all the rest.”

So – can fallen man, who is spiritually dead, take any steps? Can he cry out for help?

Rev. Walter Bowie – When a person is dead in trespasses and sin, I like to think of him, not as a man who has fallen off the second floor with a slight concussion, a broken leg and two fractured ribs but he can call for help. But rather he is like one who has fallen off the Sears Building in Chicago. He is splattered on the ground. So he doesn’t need a little help; what he needs is life, and only God can give that, you see.

Dr. Stephen Mansfield – You know, one of the things we must bring back into our approach to evangelism is to help the lost understand that they’re walking corpses; that they are dead in their sins. And what brings that to life is the Law. I know that we’ve moved a way from the Law a great deal in our modern church, but the fact is it’s the Law as applied to a human life that reveals the fact that that life is dead in their transgressions and sins.

To help us further understand the implications of both of these positions, consider the following lesson from two video series I did over the last fifteen years. In 1989 I produced an expose’ on “secular” rock music entitled: “*Hell’s Bells: The Dangers of Rock & Roll*”. This series was seen by tens of thousands of people around the world, and the Holy Spirit saw fit to use it as a tool to draw many thousands of people to Christ. In the last of the six parts of the series, as we were dialing in on the challenge to repent and believe the Gospel, I used the following analogy that perfectly reflects the “sick but still alive” position of modern Arminianism.

The Biblical picture of man without God is much like this poor fellow right here. He’s in critical condition, suffering from a sinful, wicked heart that

has separated him from God. Spiritually dead and unable to do even the least thing to help himself, when his heart stops beating he'll be launched into an eternity without hope. This person is in desperate need of help.

Implicit in this analogy is a foundational principle of modern Arminianism: that fallen man, though desperately sick, is still alive and has the ability to choose Christ if he so desires. Over the intervening decade before we produced the update or sequel, my theology, like so many others, began to change. I don't want to, in any way, sound patronizing to those who love God and His Word and still believe that fallen men have the ability to choose God. But as I became more familiar with the Bible and the doctrines of grace, as I began to better understand the nature of the God I serve, as well as the condition of man in his fallen state, I gradually became a convinced Calvinist. And so when it came time to remake the important point about the deceptions of pop music, the analogy took a significantly different slant.

The Biblical picture of man without God is much like this poor fellow right here - trapped in the coffin of his fallen nature and unable to do the least thing to help or redeem himself. While physically alive and brimming with potential from a human perspective, to an infinite and incomprehensibly holy God, our sin, our innate drive to live life on our own terms, has cut us off from God and His eternal life. To put it bluntly, we are spiritually dead and only a heartbeat away from eternal judgment.

"...dead in trespasses and sins." ~ **Ephesians 2:1**

The only way out of this black hole is to be "born again" – to have our sins blotted out through the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross.

"Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again'..." ~ **Jesus Christ, John 3:7**

Dr. George Grant – There are two analogies that the Scriptures use for someone who is dead in their trespasses. One is the analogy of the corpse. The other is the analogy of progressive corruption. In Romans 1, for instance, we see that someone who is dead in their trespasses can actually descend to deeper and deeper depths by giving themselves over to bestial impulses. As a result, we have to be careful to realize that, just because a person is lost, doesn't mean that they have descended to the depths of corruption that they could if just turned completely loose.

Dr. Stephen Mansfield – Even for the non-believer, even for the non-Christian, there are ranges of hardening. There are variations in the condition of heart. And so even a person who's not given to God can become progressively hardened and progressively more wicked based on what influences are operating in their lives.

Rev. Walter Bowie – An unrepentant, unregenerate child of the devil can never choose good as far as God is concerned. Total Depravity does not mean that the person can not do anything good as man counts good. It does not mean he's as bad as he can be. It simply means that he has been affected totally in his being as a result of the Fall. So he can never do anything good as far as God is concerned. As a matter of fact, the prophet Isaiah in 64:6 says all our righteousness is as filthy rags in His sight. So if our righteousness is as filthy rags, then you know what everything else is from there.

Pastor Bowie said it well. Fallen man can never choose what is good in the eyes of God. And yet the Arminians were teaching that unregenerate man, with help from God, could choose the greatest good, the Gospel. Man, in their view, is the archetypal "idiot savant" – retaining an "isle of genius" that is fundamentally untouched by the Fall. When presented with a choice between life and death, he is no longer a slave to sin – he is, in fact, free and possesses the ability to choose life.

It's important at this point to discuss the difference between the words "may" and "can."

Dr. Thomas Ascol – What grabbed me about Total Depravity, as I was reading the Scripture, is that little word "can." "Can" is a word of ability and "may" is a word of permission. And I am a stickler for making that distinction now even with my children because I want them to get right theology. It was because I confused those two words I didn't get right theology for a long time.

Rev. Walter Bowie – One of the passages that stands out very clearly in my mind, that drove home to me the point that I could not choose good, is what Jesus said in John 6:44, "No man CAN come except he is drawn by the Father." Prior to that time it always seemed to me that anybody "can" choose to come whenever they get ready. But then I found that no man CAN and "can" is a word of ability, you see.

The Bible makes it clear that every man, women and child SHOULD come to Christ. They have His permission. In fact, they are even commanded by God to repent and have faith in Him! The problem – the dilemma really – is that they're dead, buried away in the coffin of sin.

"...dead in trespasses and sins." ~ Ephesians 2:1

There's no spiritual life in them. They don't have the ability to see the Kingdom of God, to repent and have faith. They simply CAN'T do it.

Dr. Stephen Mansfield – Every human being on earth has the freedom to believe in the Gospel, but they don't have the ability. The fact is that sin has blinded their minds to the light of the Gospel of Jesus.

So let's apply this truth to the spiritual realm by asking the question: Given the opportunity to choose between good or evil, obedience or rebellion, God or Satan, eternal life with Jesus or death in the pool of sin, what will fallen man always choose? If you said death, to stay in the coffin of sin, according to the Bible, you're correct!

Dr. R.C. Sproul – Until God the Holy Spirit changes the disposition of my soul I will never have faith in Christ. I will never embrace Him. I will never decide for Him in any redemptive way. I will never truly choose Him because my heart is still bound up in sin.

As a result of these and many other passages, the men who sat for months at the Synod of Dort reaffirmed the Biblical and historical teaching of Total Depravity. In section three and four of the Canons of Dort:

*"...all people are conceived in sin and born children of wrath, unfit for any saving good, inclined to evil, dead in their sins, and slaves to sin; [and] without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit they are neither willing nor able to return to God, to reform their distorted nature, or even to dispose themselves to such reform."
~ The Canons of Dort, Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine*

You may be saying, "Well, if that's true, how, then, did I come to know the Lord? How is it that anyone is saved?" We will answer that question the same way as Jesus did:

"With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." ~ Matthew. 19:26

U: Unconditional Election

Many Are Called But Few Are Chosen

"God elected us before the foundation of the world. Before the creation, the Fall, the covenants, or the Law, we were sovereignly predestined by God to be His. He designed the church, the Body of His Son, before the world began." ~ John MacArthur

The Arminian party agreed that man fell in the Garden of Eden. They believed that this Fall was not Adam's alone, but that it was carried to all of his posterity by natural generation. So what was the point of contention?

Dr. R.C. Sproul Jr. – The Arminian doesn't deny the sinfulness of man. But what he does deny is the depth and the power of the sin in the life of the individual.

The Arminians and the Calvinists disagreed over the scope of the Fall as it related to the will of man. The Arminians, simply put, believed that man's will was wounded by the Fall and that he still had the ability to choose the good over evil in the spiritual realm. The Calvinist, on the other hand, held that since the Fall the only thing unregenerate man could and would choose was inevitably corrupted by his will, motivated by self and evil. The next logical question then becomes: If fallen man can only choose evil, how could he ever choose the ultimate good – the Gospel of the Lord Jesus? How can he ever be saved?

Dr. R.C. Sproul – People are not, in their natural state searching for God. God is the one who seeks us out. Christ is the one who comes to seek and to save the lost.

Before we deal with election in more depth, we must address one of the most misunderstood teachings of the modern era: what it means to be "born again."

Interviewee: It's kind of a deep subject; I don't really have all of the depths of my Christianity figured out. But the one thing that I do know is that God came and said to me that if I repented that I would be saved. And so that's what I did.

Most modern evangelical Christians have been taught that as a sinner repents of his sin and put his faith in God, he becomes born again. This is what the Arminian party was advocating and what the Calvinists rejected. How, they asked, can a dead man have faith?

Dr. Walter Bowie – The modern church teaches that you have to have faith in order to be born again. This is the exact opposite of what Jesus said in John 3. As a matter of fact, in response to the question how can a man be born again Jesus did not say "repent and believe". He said it is like the wind and you don't know where it is going or where it is coming. In other words, he's saying that the new birth is something that you can't program, you can't determine, it happens and you experience it.

Let's take a closer look at the Arminian view by way of the following analogy:

A man is sitting behind a card table with a stack of books on it. A banner is draped over the card table that reads "Book Signing Today". The book's title and the author's name come into focus. The title of the book is "Resurrect Yourself: How to Bring Yourself Back to Life If You Are Dead" by J.R. Minius. As the camera pulls back two things are very noticeable:

one, he is alone, and two, he is sitting in a graveyard.

After discounting his book several times, he finally places a "FREE" sign on the banner. Still, no takers.

Anybody here interested?

Of course no one is interested. If his target audience was simply sick and just needed some medicine, writing out a prescription would make perfect sense. But when the patient is dead, it becomes absurd on the face of it.

Dr. Roger Schultz – I think one of the problems that evangelists perhaps have had is to see people not as being dead, but as being sick. You're sick in your sins and you need a little therapy or you need a little medicine and then you can get better. But Scripture teaches that we are dead and what we need is a spiritual resurrection.

God works this miracle on spiritually dead people who have neither the ability nor the desire to live for Him. This is what the Bible, numerous church councils, and countless "champions of the faith" – some of whom we listed in part one – have taught; that being born again is a monergistic work, the effort of God alone.

Dr. Walter Bowie – As a matter of fact, in the New Testament, there are three figures used to designate the new life in Christ, they are birth, creation and resurrection. And in all of these three things the one thing they have in common is the fact that the person or that which is involved is passive. You do nothing to be born, you can do nothing to be resurrected if you're dead, you can do nothing to be created if you're not existing, you see. And so it all means that the initiative must all come from God's side, not man's side.

Dr. R.C. Sproul explains that Arminians have:

"...unconverted sinners who are dead in trespasses and sin bringing themselves to life by choosing to be born again. Christ made it clear that dead people cannot choose anything, that the flesh profits nothing and that a person must be born of the Spirit BEFORE he can even see the Kingdom of God, let alone enter it."~ Dr. R.C. Sproul, The Holiness of God, p. 232

Dr. Kenneth Talbot – Man believes the Gospel because he has been transformed by the Spirit of God. He is thus given the gift of faith in which he exercises that faith in believing what God has said about Christ in the Scripture. He also responds in repentance and seeks forgiveness from God.

Dr. R.C. Sproul Jr. – Now, if the Holy Spirit doesn't come down and give life and take those dry bones and knit them together what's going to happen? Nothing! They're dead which is what all of us are spiritually. We are dead in our trespasses and sins. That ought to be enough to settle the matter.

There is another misunderstanding many evangelicals have about being "born again." They view it and being justified or "saved" as being the same thing. But in reality they are two different terms that depict two related but nonetheless distinct events. Being born again enables us to have faith in Christ — something we can never do while still dead in our trespasses and sins. Being born-again is the first act, if you will, of God's grace. It makes us new creatures in Christ. And as new creatures we are no longer haters of God. We are no longer at enmity with God. As the prophet Ezekiel explained, God removes our hearts of stone and replaces them with hearts of flesh, and with the scales now removed from our eyes, we see the holiness of God and the sinfulness of ourselves. And as a result, we repent and have faith in God and what He has done for us through the cross. Being born again must, of necessity, precede faith.

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh." ~ Ezekiel 36:26

So the question remains, how is a sinner born again so that he can have faith in Christ?

Dr. Thomas Ascol - It's because of what God has done before the foundation of the world. He has elected an innumerable amount of people that will respond to the Gospel. They will be His followers. They will become disciples of the Lord Jesus. He guarantees it.

Here we come to an area of doctrine, which ultimately colors our entire understanding of salvation. Many, if not most, modern Christians tend to either ignore or lightly skim over words like "chosen," "predestination" and "election" when they see them in their Bibles. The reason for this is simple: the Biblical doctrine of election is, humanly speaking, counter-intuitive — an offense to the natural human tendency to believe that we played a part in our own salvation. But the Bible declares this awesome truth often and without apology. We need to come to terms with it.

- ❑ *Matthew. 20:16 & 22:14, "For many are called, but few are chosen."*
- ❑ *Mark 13:27, "And then He will send His angels, and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven."*
- ❑ *Luke 18:7, "And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him,*

though He bears long with them?"

- ❑ *John 15:16, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit..."*
- ❑ *Acts 13:48, "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."*
- ❑ *Romans 11:7, "What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded."*
- ❑ *Eph. 1:4-5, "...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will..."*

(Other verses: Matthew. 24:22, 24, 31; Mark 13:20,27; Romans 8:33; Colossians 3:12; 1 Timothy 5:21; 2 Timothy 2:10; Titus 1:1; 1 Peter 1:2; 1 Peter 5:13; 2 John 1:1, 13 2 John 1:13)

We could go on, reading Scripture after Scripture declaring that we didn't find God — instead He found and saved us. As another example, consider the fact that many of the New Testament letters were specifically addressed to the *elect*. Also consider that the word most often translated "church" in the New Testament is the Greek word *ekklesia* meaning, "the called out ones." The term comes from the same Greek root as *eklektos* — the word we translate as "the elect." So the terms "church" and "the elect" are roughly synonymous.

Ekklesia – "the Called-Out Ones"
Eklektos / The Elect
Beloved

The word "beloved" is another word that refers to the elect. Though the passages in which it appears are too numerous to mention, let's look at just one:

"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation..." ~ II Thessalonians 2:13

Another term God uses to refer to His elect children is "sheep." In John 10:26 Jesus declared to the unbelieving Jews,

"But you do not believe, because you are not My sheep..." ~ John 10:26

Note that Jesus did not say, "Because you did not believe, you are not My sheep." Instead, he declared the opposite — they did not believe BECAUSE they were not members of His flock. The word "because" assigns the reason for their unbelief — they simply were not His sheep or His elect. *His* sheep will believe.

Matthew Henry, who penned perhaps the most popular and enduring commentary on the Bible explains the meaning of this passage:

"Ye (speaking to a group of Jews) are not designed to be My followers; ye are not of those that were given Me by My Father, to be brought to grace and glory. Ye are not of the number of the elect; and your unbelief, if you persist in it, will be certain evidence that you are not..."~ Henry, Matthew, Commentary on the Whole Bible, The Comprehensive Commentary (Brattleboro: Published by Fressenden and Co., 1834), Volume IV, pg. 721

As stated earlier, many today either ignore or deny the concept of election. They see it as unfair or unjust. How could a loving God, they ask, choose to give mercy and grace to some and then withhold it from others? Well, before we dare to subject God and His Word to the bar of human conceptions of fairness, consider this:

Dr. R.C. Sproul Jr. – Nobody seems to have a problem that God called out Israel and set them apart and set his love upon them and distinguished them. And you can't argue that: Here's Moses who is born under a death sentence, who is born to a slave. And here's the Pharaoh who is born heir to the throne of the most powerful kingdom the world has ever known. Now, God didn't give Moses everything He gave this baby Pharaoh. Although eventually He did, of course. And then Moses, of course, is raised in Pharaoh's court. And then does God continue to treat them the same? No! God doesn't come in a bush to Pharaoh and say, "Hey Pharaoh, I'm going to be your God. I'm going to take care of you and all your people and I'm going to give you my Law and I'm going to place you in a land and I'm going to give you grace galore and through you the nations will be blessed." No, God did that first to Abraham and then later on through Moses. And, again, nobody seems to have a problem with that. But now in the New Testament, supposedly, God can't set his covenantal love upon this person in a way that's distinct from how He does so with that person. And therefore the difference has to be in the person. But God explicitly says in the Scripture several times, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy..."

Dr. Stephen Mansfield – You know, as much as we need to be doing theology and need

to be doing an apologetic for the things that we believe, we never need to lose the perspective that God is God and He can do what He wants to do. And who are we to question His ways and His sovereign choices?

Dr. Walter Bowie – Where do you get the standard, where do you stand to get a standard by which you measure God by, you see? He Himself is the standard. And He does what He pleases and only what He pleases.

Dr. Stephen Mansfield – The truth is that God is God and He can do whatever He wants. His job description is to do whatever pleases Him. That's how He makes decisions; that's how He conducts Himself – according to His own good pleasure, as Scripture says. Now that's good news to the believer, but it's bad news to those who are rebelling against God.

Given the theological climate of the time, the Arminian party had no choice but to deal with the doctrine of election. As we've seen, the Remonstrants insisted that the individual's response to God's offer of salvation helped spark their spiritual resurrection; their "born again" experience. But at the same time they acknowledged the clear Biblical teaching that God chooses who will be saved. And so they devised a way to supposedly reconcile the obvious tension between these two concepts. According to the Arminian party's formulation, God looks down from the corridors of time and foresaw those who would choose Him and then ratified their choice by electing them. Therefore election, to the Arminians was "conditional" based upon man's proper reaction.

Quoting again from the Articles of Faith of the National Association of Free Will Baptists,

"God determined from the beginning to save all who should comply with the conditions of salvation. Hence by faith in Christ men become His elect." ~ Articles of Faith of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, Article IX

This was, according to the Synod of Dort, pure Pelagianism. In their official denunciation of the Remonstrants they wrote;

"For this does away with all effective functioning of God's grace in our conversion and subjects the activity of Almighty God to the will of man; it is contrary to the apostles, who teach that we believe by virtue of the effective working of God's mighty strength (Eph. 1:19), and that God fulfills the undeserved good will of His kindness and the work of faith in us with power (2 Thess. 1:11), and likewise that His divine

power has given us everything we need for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3).~ Canons of Dort, Third and Fourth Head of Doctrine, Rejection of Errors, Article IX

Dr. Roger Schultz – We believe that our salvation is by grace. That even the faith that we have comes as a gift from God. There is nothing that we can lay claim to; nothing in which we can boast. Our salvation entirely comes from the Lord.

Dr. J.I. Packer explains,

“...the Arminians say, ‘I owe my election to my faith,’ the Calvinist says, ‘I owe my faith to my election.’”~ Dr. J.I. Packer, From the preface of John Owen’s: The Death of Death in the Death of Christ, p. 7

Dr. Thomas Nettles – People are either elect or non-elect before they are born. There is nothing a person can do to get himself elected. It is not like God has voted for you and the Devil has voted against you and now you make your election by voting one way or the other.

The Arminian position is not really election — it’s ratification. In the end, it’s man’s vote that decides the outcome. And while the Arminian may and likely will insist that the weight of God’s elective power is infinitely greater than Satan’s — that the ballot box has been radically stuffed in our favor — there remains no way to get around the final bottom line: that one man, with the devil’s help, can frustrate the vote and the desires of Almighty God.

Most learned Arminians would draw on numerous passages to buttress their doctrine. But they claim their greatest proof text is found in Romans chapter 8 verse 29,

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.” ~ Romans 8:29

The word “foreknew” was understood by the Arminians to mean that God knew or saw beforehand which sinners would believe and that He then predestined them to salvation based upon this knowledge.

Notice, however, that the text does not say that God knew something about particular individuals (that they would do this or that), or that He saw their actions (even though both statements are true). Rather it states that God knew the individuals themselves. The word “whom” is the object of the verb and the object denotes persons, not events or happenings.

Dr. Joe Morecraft III – But before the beginning of time the Bible says whom He foreknew He predestined to be conformed into the image of His Son. The word foreknow does not mean foresee. It means to fore love. In Genesis 4:1 we are told Adam knew his wife and she conceived. Well if all he did was intellectually foresee Eve, she never would have conceived. The point is, he made her the object of his loving affections and she conceived. And so in Romans 8 it says whom He foreloved, those whom He foreknew, those He predestined, whom He set his love upon. Those whom He chose according to the good pleasure of His will. He determined that in time they would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dr. Stephen Mansfield – You know, Romans 8 says, “Those He foreknew He predestined to become sons of God.” And, of course, the standard Arminian view is that to foreknow just means to foresee and just sort of know what’s going to happen without really affecting it. But the word really means to fore love kind of in an apprehended sense. That God is actively drawing that person and actively turned toward that person. Not just foreknowing in a distant sense, but in a relational sense.

Addressing the elect nation of Israel in Amos 3:2, God declares:

“You only have I KNOWN of all the families of the earth.” ~ Amos 3:2

Surely the Lord had knowledge of and can see all the actions of every family on the earth, but He “knew” or “loved” Israel in a special way and set His heart upon them alone.

The Arminian attempt to redefine the doctrine of election failed. In contradistinction to the doctrine of conditional election, the confessions of the Dutch Church taught what is called “Unconditional Election.” They believed that God elected certain individuals in Christ before the foundations of the world based upon Christ’s sacrifice. His reason for selecting the ones He did was solely based upon His own good will and pleasure. He loved them even though they were just as deserving of His wrath as those He did not love. And those whom He elected to love, through the power and regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, He causes them to be born again, whereby they willingly accept Christ. So what was the basis of God’s electing one and not another?

Dr. D. James Kennedy – That’s a fascinating question and I want to tell you the Bible never answers it. It answers it in the negative. It tells you what are NOT the things that are the basis for your election. If you go to I Corinthians chapter one, you will see that Paul says, “You see, your calling brethren....” Now he’s talking about “calling” in the theological sense where the Holy Spirit calls us unto Christ for salvation. He’s not talking about a calling as a musician or a preacher or something like that. “You see your

calling, brethren, how that not many mighty are called, not many noble are called; not many of the great people of this world are called.”

We don't have the time to look at all the verses that illuminate this doctrine. Perhaps the passage that most directly addresses it is found in the ninth chapter of Romans.

“For this is the word of promise: ‘At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son’. And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), it was said to her, ‘The older shall serve the younger.’ As it is written, ‘Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.’” ~ Romans 9:9-13

Paul gives us, as an illustration, two real, flesh and blood Old Testament figures: Jacob and his older brother Esau. And to remove all ambiguity concerning the mind-blowing implications of this passage; Paul throws diplomacy out the window and cuts right to the bottom-line. The reason for choosing one over the other is so that:

“...the purpose of God according to election might stand.” ~ Romans 9:11

Election, in other words, is of God, by God, and through God. Nowhere is man given even a scintilla of responsibility for his election. Nowhere does man have any room to boast. Paul concludes this passage by echoing a verse from Malachi — and in his mouth it becomes one of the most controversial statements in the entire Bible:

“Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.” ~ Romans 9:13; Malachi 1:2, 3

Charles Spurgeon comments on this passage,

“Why did God love Jacob and hate Esau? I can tell you why God loves Jacob; it is sovereign grace! There was nothing in Jacob that could make God love him; there was everything about him that might have made God hate him as much as He did Esau, and a great deal more. But it was because God is infinitely gracious that He loved Jacob and because He is sovereign in His dispensation of His grace that He chose Jacob as an object of that love.”~ Spurgeon, C.H., Jacob and Esau No. 239 (Ages Software, The Charles H. Spurgeon Library Version 1) Delivered on the Sabbath Evening Jan. 16th, 1859 at the New Park Street Chapel, Southwark, pg. 200

Dr. D. James Kennedy – But God has chosen the foolish things of the world, the base things of the world, the things that are nothing. These are the things that God has chosen that no flesh may glory in His sight. So, the only reasons that we are told why

anybody is chosen is because we are weak, foolish and base and don't amount to anything.

Modern day commentators, as well as the Arminian Remonstrants, attempted to soften the blow of this passage by saying that God loved Jacob more than He loved Esau and therefore it really wasn't hate. They argue that the word translated "hate" means "unloved" or "less loved" as if this really makes any difference.

Again quoting Charles Spurgeon,

"It is a terrible text, and I will be honest with it if I can. One man says the word 'hate' does not mean hate; it means, 'love less': — 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I loved less'. It may be so; but I don't believe it is. I like to take it and let it stand just as it is. The fact is, God loved Jacob, and He did not love Esau; He did choose Jacob, but He did not choose Esau. ~ Ibid pg. 195

However one wants to understand the word "hate", whether literally or figuratively, it is clear that whatever God had for Jacob He did not have for Esau! And it is clear from the text that the love God had for Jacob was not "conditional", but "unconditional", for neither Jacob nor Esau had yet been born nor done anything good or evil.

Rev. Walter J. Chantry – No one would say that a human being has to love everyone alike. God does have a general love for all men. He does love all men in the sense of sending sunshine and rain upon the wicked as well as upon the righteous. But there are some people for whom He has had a special love. And just as a man has a special love for his wife and his children, God has the right to have a special love for those that are the objects of His affection.

Pastor Spurgeon continues,

"Why did God hate Esau? Why does God hate any man? I defy anyone to give any answer but this... because that man deserves to be hated. No reply but that can be true. If God deals severely with any person, it is because that person deserves all that he gets." ~ Ibid. pg. 203

Dr. Roger Schultz – God owes salvation to know one. God would be entirely just if he had condemned Adam, condemned the race immediately after the Fall. God would be just to send every single person to hell because what our sin deserves is the eternal wrath and curse of God.

The Synod of Dort explained it this way;

“God does not owe this grace to anyone. For what could God owe to one who has nothing to give that can be paid back? Indeed, what could God owe to one who has nothing of his own to give but sin and falsehood?” ~ The Canons of Dort, Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine, The Corruption of Man, His Conversion to God, and the Manner Therefore, Article 15

Rev. Walter J. Chantry – It would be right of God to destroy all of us for our sins. And if He would have mercy on some, He has the right to do that.

Dr. Thomas Ascol – Well, Spurgeon uses an analogy of a man walking down the street and finding ten beggars. He is not obligated to give any of the beggars anything, but if he chooses to give one of the beggars some money, then what he has done is very gracious. And no one can charge him with injustice. And the reason is those beggars don't have any claims upon the man's money. In the same way, we have no claims upon God's goodness and God's favor. And the fact that God saves anyone declares Him to be an incredibly gracious and loving God.

Dr. D. James Kennedy – As I've said before, election puts nobody in hell and a vast multitude of people in heaven that wouldn't be there otherwise. In heaven we have nothing to boast about in ourselves. In hell we have no one to blame but ourselves.

Both the Holy Spirit and Paul knew that this teaching was going to be controversial and purposely set out to address the very natural human objections from the outset:

“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!” ~ Romans 9:14

Dr. R.C. Sproul – When I say that to people they say, “That's not fair!” This is exactly the objection that the apostle Paul anticipated in the ninth chapter of Romans when he talks about the doctrine of election and the difference between Jacob and Esau. Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated, before they were ever born, before they had done anything good or evil.

Dr. Thomas Ascol – The question I have for those that disagree with the doctrine of Unconditional Election is this, “Does your view of election provoke the same kind of antagonism that Paul's does? Would you have ever included the objection that the apostle Paul includes in Romans chapter nine? If election is based upon foreseen faith or based upon something in man, then why in the world does Paul anticipate this objection? Who would ever charge God with being unjust or unfair?”

This last observation is a vital point! The Arminian view attempts to make the doctrine of election seem fair to the mind of man. But the Apostle Paul takes the opposite tack: rather than making it more palatable, he continues to emphasize the absolute sovereignty of God by giving us another Old Testament example.

“For He says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.’ So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, ‘For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.’ Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.” ~ Romans 9:15-18

Is Paul saying that God actually hardens people’s hearts — that He makes them stonier than they already are? Well, there’s no getting around it. Six times in the Exodus account we are told:

“...the LORD hardened Pharaoh’s heart.” ~ Exodus 4:21, 9:12, 10:1; 11:10; 14:4, 8

But it is important to understand how God accomplished this. He didn’t just arbitrarily harden Pharaoh’s heart against his will – three times (Exodus 8:15, 32; 9:34) it declares that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. What happened is that God sovereignly created situations where Pharaoh was confronted with a decision as to whether to obey God or instead lean to his own will and understanding. Given his sinful nature and the fact that God didn’t grant him the grace to overcome that nature, Pharaoh chose sin of his own accord. And as sin always does, it brought forth spiritual decay and death.

“For the wages of sin is death...” ~ Romans 6:23

And so Pharaoh’s heart became harder with each successive act of rebellion. God brought forth the test, but it was Pharaoh that failed them.

This same principle, of withholding the gift of grace, was reflected in Jesus’ own earthly ministry many centuries later. When asked by his disciples why He spoke to the people in parables, the Lord replied:

“Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it has not been given.” ~ Matthew 13:11

In other words, as with Pharaoh, there are people that God has chosen not to help believe. And when confronted with the truth, it is these people who of their own accord

will chose to harden their hearts and persecute the truth. In fact, in their case, they opted to nail it to a cross.

Rev. Walter J. Chantry – Jesus, in Matthew chapter eleven, when He contemplates the fact that many of the people in the town where He did his main public ministry, in Caesarea, had not believed or received the Gospel, He thanked God that God had hidden the Gospel from the wise and the prudent and had revealed it unto babes. And then He went on to express His reason for that thanksgiving, because it was good in Your sight Father. So, it was the Father’s choice as to who would be the recipient of the Gospel and who would be hard hearted toward it.

Logically this answer raises another question. And Paul anticipates it by asking:

“You will say to me then, ‘Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?’” ~ Romans 9:19

His answer is a stiff rebuke to any man who would dare sit in judgment on God:

“But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to Him who formed it, ‘Why have you made me like this?’” ~ Romans 9:20

Paul insists that as sinners we have no rights before God. We have no claims on His mercy. God could have elected everyone. He could have elected no one. The choice, therefore, was His and His alone.

Dr. R.C. Sproul – Students come to me all the time and they ask me a myriad of theological questions. And I’ve never had a student come to me and say to me, “R.C., why does God save anybody?” That’s the real question. Not: Why is there only one way? Why does He save me? I can’t imagine why He would save a creation that is in manifest, consistent, impenitent rebellion against His glory and against His majesty. And yet, God’s grace is so profound that He sends His Son, and that He – God! –initiates a plan of salvation, a plan of redemption and it doesn’t include the salvation of everybody. I don’t know why He doesn’t save everybody. I don’t know why He saves anybody! So those are both questions that I’d like to have to ask Him because I can’t answer them for Him.

Paul continues,

“Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels

of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" ~ Romans 9:21-24

John Gill explains:

"God is represented as the potter, and men as clay in His hands...[and God] appoints[s] out of it persons to different uses and purposes, for His own glory, as He sees fit..." ~ John Gill, Gill's Expositor, Volume 7, p. 769

Dr. D. James Kennedy – Many people think they have trouble with election or predestination, but as I said earlier, their problem is really with the doctrine of man. They don't understand or believe the doctrine of the Fall of Man. They basically deny original sin. Because once you acknowledge that man is fallen and man is born in a sinful condition, that his heart, mind, and will are against God, then you will see that election is essential if anybody is going to go to heaven.

The ninth chapter of Romans, as well as numerous other passages, led the Synod of Dort to reject the Arminian doctrine of "conditional election." They labeled it heresy; likened it to Pelagianism, and called it an...

*"...error by which the Dutch Churches have for some time been disturbed."
~ The Synod of Dort*

Election, according to the Synod of Dort, does not save anyone. It simply marked those in Christ whom God, of His own free will, chose to be the objects of His affection and mercy. Election is in Christ, who, by His blood, purchased everything the chosen need for salvation, including regeneration and faith. And this teaching became the next big issue of contention for the Arminian party.

L: Limited Atonement

Payment or Possibility?

"I had rather believe a Limited Atonement that is efficacious for all men for whom it was intended, than a universal atonement that is not efficacious for anybody..."
~ Charles Spurgeon

Many Christians are familiar with the acronym T.U.L.I.P. – tulip – as shorthand for Reformed or Calvinistic theology. And there can be no doubt that the most controversial and misunderstood of all the so-called five points of Calvinism is found in the concept that is framed by the letter "L": "Limited Atonement!" When used to explain the work of Jesus on the cross, many believers respond with indignation. It's as if Calvinists are somehow downgrading – or limiting – what the Lord accomplished at Calvary.

Dr. R.C. Sproul Jr. – That's one of the reasons why it's important, when we use the language, to remind our Arminian friends that both views, in some sense, limit the atonement. We limit its intent. They limit its power.

The Calvinists believed that the atoning work of Christ was limited only to the elect. The cross purchased and guaranteed everything the elect sinner needs to be justified: including regeneration (or the new birth), faith and repentance unto salvation. The Arminians, on the other hand, believed that Jesus' work on the cross was not designed to purchase a specific people for Himself. Nor was it to secure salvation for any particular sinner. The intention was to simply make salvation "possible" for any person who would, of his or her own free will, repent and believe.

Dr. Stephen Mansfield – You know, we would expect that the idea of God choosing would be offensive to the rebellious human soul. But even more so in our culture where free will and "I'll have it my way" is almost at an idolatrous level. So it's not surprising to me that people are offended by the idea of God's sovereign choice in this generation.

Dr. Loraine Boettner, author of the book, The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination, explains that:

"...the Arminian view of the atonement can be compared to a wide bridge that extends most of the way across a river." ~ Loraine Boettner, The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination, p. 153

In order to reach the other side, the sinner must take the last and final step. The

Calvinists, on the other hand, believed that the bridge, while narrow, did in fact extend all the way to the other shore. The sinner does not and CANNOT take any steps. Regeneration is the rapture, if you will, of the sinner from one kingdom to the other, and it's the work of Christ alone.

The Synod of Dort asserted that the fundamental flaw of the Arminian view of the atonement goes back to their defective view of the fall of man into sin. John Owen, in his classic work *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* observed that:

"...[T]he merit [or atonement] of Christ [was to the Arminian]...an ointment in a box...set out in the Gospel to the view of all, [and] those who will, by their own strength, lay hold on it and apply it to themselves [would] be healed."~ Owen, John, The Death of Death in the Death of Christ (Edinburgh, Scotland; Carlisle, PA.: Banner of Truth Trust 1984), fourth printing pg. 38

Of course, if man were simply wounded by the Fall, this position would be reasonable. However, as we saw earlier, man is not merely wounded, — he's dead! And medicine to a dead man, as the old adage goes, is the supreme example of "a day late and a dollar short." Man needs much more than medicine to resurrect his dead spirit. He needs the Holy Spirit to bring him back to life!

This next point can get a little confusing, so try and pay close attention as we distinguish between historic and modern Arminianism. To illustrate the historical Arminian position as presented by the Remonstrants, consider this quote by Dr. J. Kenneth Grider, professor of Theology at the Nazarene Theological Seminary, a school that is self-consciously Arminian:

"... [M]any Arminians whose theology is not very precise say that Christ paid the penalty for our sins. Yet such a view is foreign to Arminianism, which teaches instead that Christ suffered for us. Arminians teach that what Christ did He did for every person; therefore what He did could not have been to pay the penalty, since no one would then ever go into eternal perdition [punishment]." ~ Elwell, Walter A. Editor Evangelical Dictionary of Theology (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Book House 1984), page 80

Dr. Grider is rightfully scolding his fellow Arminians for being inconsistent in their understanding of the design and purpose of Jesus' work on Calvary. In summary, Dr. Grider says:

- 1) Most modern Arminians do not know the teachings of historic Arminianism as represented by the Remonstrants;

- 2) Historic Arminianism believes that what Jesus did, He did for everyone equally, and;
- 3) Historic Arminianism as expressed in the Remonstrants does not teach that Christ died or paid for anyone's sins. He only suffered for them.

Concerning the first point, it's true that most Arminians today don't understand historical Arminianism very well and this does create some confusion as to precisely what the term means.

As for the second point: Does the Bible teach that what Jesus did, He did equally for everyone?

Arminians use as their proof texts passages that include the words "all", "whole" and "world" in relation to God's intentions in salvation, interpreting it to mean every single person. But does "all" mean "all" *all the time*?

Dr. D. James Kennedy – The Bible uses these universal terms, but many people don't understand, its not merely the Biblical use of terms like this, but in all language, in all of English language, it is constantly done that people use universal terms when they don't mean a universal fact that they're talking about. I mean, we all say that all the time. We all say "all" when we don't mean "all". For example the Bible says,

"...a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that ALL the world should be taxed." ~ Luke 2:1

No it didn't. You're either going to have to realize that that is figurative language, or you would have to say the Bible is in error. How much were the people in the Yucatan Peninsula taxed? How about the Chinese? How much taxes did they pay to Caesar? Did a decree go out from Caesar Augustus that the all world should be taxed? In actuality it never did. It went out that all of the Roman world should be taxed.

Another example can be found in Luke 2:10. We read that the angel who announced the birth of Christ to the shepherds declared,

"Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to ALL PEOPLE." ~ Luke 2:10

Should the word "all" be understood to mean "every single person" or was he speaking of all people in the sense of ethnicity? If you believe the former then we must ask if the birth of Christ brought "good tidings of great joy" to the Pharisees. How about to

Herod or Pontius Pilate? Did they find great joy in the birth of the Messiah?

And what about Colossians 1:5, 6? Paul declares that by 54 A.D. the truth of the Gospel has gone out into “**ALL THE WORLD.**”

“...because of the hope that is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world...” ~ Colossians 1:5, 6

Did Paul literally mean that the Gospel had been carried to the Americas or Australia? Of course not! Geography wasn't what he was speaking about. And the same is true for John 12:19:

“The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, ‘You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!’” ~ John 12:19

Dr. D. James Kennedy – We all say “all” all of the time when we don't mean it. No we don't! Some people never say “all.” They speak Chinese. You don't say “all” all of the time. Either when you mean it or when you don't mean it. There are sometimes that you sleep. There are sometimes that you eat. There are sometimes when you say other things. You really don't say “all” all of the time. Do you? And so, therefore, these people don't understand the figurative use of language. There are almost over six hundred different species of figures of speech found in the Bible. And they are found in most any large novel, or even in a big newspaper you will find them. They are everywhere! No they're not. They're not everywhere. They're here and there and the other place. You see we do that all the time and we don't even realize that we are doing it. No we don't do it all the time. You see if I called you every time you used a universal word and you didn't mean it universally, I would be having to stop you all the time. No I wouldn't!

The fact is that we all use this type of hyperbole, well, “all” the time. Newscasters refer to “the whole city” turning out to greet a World Championship team when what they technically mean is a very large crowd.

We talk about the entire world being fixated upon the news of Princess Diana's death. On and on it goes.

Well, if that's true for us, might not the same principle apply when we find similar expressions used in Scripture? The simple fact is that most scholars would suggest that it's even *more* true — that hyperbolic speech was very common within the Hebrew culture.

This is not to say that the words “all,” “world,” and “whole world” in the Bible can never be taken to mean every single person or thing. In some cases they can. But how we understand these words — like virtually every other word in the Bible — is based upon the context, when and to whom they were written, and then compared to other Scriptures.

The verse quoted most often to prove what Jesus did He did for every single person is perhaps the most well-known and loved passage in the *whole* world. John 3:16 states:

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” ~ John 3:16

In their universalistic interpretation of this verse, the Arminian fails to take into account when and to whom the Lord was speaking. They ignore the historical context — that a young Jewish rabbi was addressing a culture obsessed with race and ethnicity; that, while the occasional Gentile might somehow find his way into the Kingdom of God, it was to the physical descendants of Abraham that salvation really belonged.

Dr. D. James Kennedy – We need to understand the Jewish mindset was that a Messiah was going to come, and this was a Messiah of and for the Jews. And it never dawned on a Jewish mind that their Messiah was going to pay for the sins of a Roman. I mean these people needed to be destroyed and abolished and thrown out. Not redeemed and saved and taken to Heaven. This was almost an unthinkable thing. And so when John, on several different occasions said that He is the propitiation not only for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world, he is talking about the amazing thing is that a Messiah has come which is going to pay for the sins of the people in Israel and also for the people in all other countries in the world. The great Baptist scholar, John Gill, echoes this interpretation,

“Now, in opposition to such a notion, our Lord addresses this Jew [Nicodemus]; and it is as if He had said, you (Nicodemus) say, that when the Messiah comes, only the Israelites, the peculiar favorites of God, shall share in the blessings that come by, and with [the Messiah]; and that the Gentiles shall reap no advantage by Him, being hated of God, and rejected of Him: but I tell you, God has so loved the Gentiles, as well as the Jews...” ~ Gill, John D.D., Gill’s Expositor, (Streamwood, IL.: Baptist Library 1976), Volume IX, pg. 189)

Besides, if “the world” always means every single person, then the Arminians have a problem when he they get to verses like 1 John 2:15:

"If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." ~ 1 John 2:15

If consistent, Arminians should read this as saying: "If anyone loves *every single person*, the love of the Father is not in him." But this interpretation would contradict the express admonition that we are to love everybody, even our enemies.

Phrases like "all," "all men," and "whole world," were used by the writers of the New Testament to correct the Jewish mindset that the Messiah was coming to save them, meaning the physical descendants of Abraham alone. The writers used these words to show that Christ came to save all men without distinction of nationality or race; that Jesus died for Jews and Gentiles alike. These words were not used to suggest that He died for every single person without exception.

So the next question would be: Are there any passages that would seem to limit the extent of the atonement to less than every single person? And the answer to that question is an unqualified "Yes!"

In Isaiah 53 we read,

"He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify MANY, for He shall bear their iniquities." ~ Isaiah 53:11

And again in verse 12:

"He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of MANY, and made intercession for the transgressors." ~ Isaiah 53:12

Notice that the word is not "all", but "many"! No matter how one slices it, the word "many" cannot mean "every single person."

In a previous section we noted the words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 20:16:

"Many are called, but few are chosen." ~ Matthew 20:16

Twelve verses later Jesus, using the same language found in Isaiah 53, states concerning the scope of His atoning work:

"...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for MANY." ~ Matthew 20:28

Here the Messiah plainly states His ultimate mission: to offer His life as a ransom — as

the price paid to deliver somebody from slavery, death and imprisonment. And is this ransom on behalf of everyone? Well, Jesus said that it is for the benefit of many. Revelation 5:9 reads,

“And they sang a new song, saying: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation...’” ~ Revelation 5:9

Dr. Stephen Mansfield – You know what we often hear is that God redeemed every tribe, tongue and nation. But what it says in Revelation 5:9 is that He redeemed *out of* every tribe and tongue and nation, which emphasizes more His sovereign choice within the broader people group of the earth.

Let’s look at one last verse like this before we move on. In John’s Gospel, Jesus declares:

“I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep.”
~ **John 10:11**

Once again, the Messiah is referring to the atonement, the paying of the ransom, and He states that He does it on behalf of His sheep. Many of the Jews who heard this teaching declared that Jesus was mad and had a demon. Later, they caught up with Him and asked,

“How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.”
~ **John 10:24**

Jesus replies,

“I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me. But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep.” ~ John 10:25 & 26

J.P. Boyce, founder of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, the flagship school of the Southern Baptist Convention, notes:

1. The sheep here are those to whom He will give eternal life.
2. They are those for whom He lays down His life.
3. They are not all, because He tells those who were rejecting Him that they were not His sheep.

4. The whole language used implies that the salvation of the sheep alone is the object for which His life is laid down.

Dr. Joe Morecraft III – And in John 10, Jesus did not say, “I am the Good Shepherd and I lay down my life for the wolves, goats and sheep.” He said, “I am the Good Shepherd and I lay down my life for the sheep that they might have life. “

Dr. Thomas Ascol – That when Jesus was hanging upon the cross He was particularly dying for specific people. All those whom the Father had given to Him were on his heart. And He was laying down His life, shedding His blood for them. He was substituting Himself for them, His life for theirs, paying for their sins. This is what He meant when He talked about His sheep. He said I lay down My life for My sheep. And in the same chapter John 10 He turns to the Pharisees and says, “You don’t believe because you are not My sheep.” Jesus specifically substitutes Himself for God’s elect and those are the ones that will be saved by His death.”

Invariably, the Arminian will counter at this point with one of their favorite proof texts:

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that ALL should come to repentance.” ~ 2 Peter 3:9

Once again, it ALL comes down to ALL. Does this passage mean that God longs for every person to be saved and therefore that Jesus died for everyone so that at least his or her salvation is a possibility? Or does ALL here refer to every person within a particular category of humanity?

Dr. R.C. Sproul – Peter is talking about the people to whom he is writing. Us! What he is saying is that God is not willing that any of US should perish, that is why He delays these things to make it absolutely certain that all of US come to repentance and receive the benefits of salvation. Well, then you have to ask further who is the US? And again, if you look the people to whom both First and Second Peter is addressed, are whom? The elect! Peter goes out of his way to call the recipients of his letter the elect. And so what he is saying is that God is not willing that any of His elect would perish. Rather than defeating Calvinism this is one of the strongest Calvinistic passages that I think we can find anywhere in Scripture.

There’s a very similar passage of Scripture to which the Arminian also appeals:

“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” ~ I Timothy 2:3-4

Dr. Thomas Nettles – What Paul is doing in that passage; he is defending his ministry to the Gentiles. He said, “He appointed me as an apostle and a teacher to the Gentiles, I am telling the truth, I’m not lying.” And in justification of his ministry to the Gentiles he is emphasizing that the ransom of Christ is for all, not just the Jews, but for the Gentiles also.

Another favorite passage often quoted by Arminians is found in the Second Epistle of Peter:

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

~ 2 Peter 2:1

Focusing on the phrase “even denying the Lord who bought them” many modern-day Arminians teach that Christ’s work on Calvary purchased salvation for everyone, even for those who end up in Hell.

Dr. R.C. Sproul – John Owen would argue that this not only does not refer to Jesus, it does not refer to His act of purchasing redemption for the elect on the cross. That which is bought falls short of the purchase of redemption because there is nothing here about the blood of Christ, nothing here about the atonement, nothing here about the purchase of redemption. Those are things that we add into the text.

It is important to note that the word for “Lord” is not the common word used in relation to Jesus, “*kurios*.” It is the Greek word “*despotes*” from which we get the English word despot. Its meaning is Sovereign Master, Creator or Ruler, and conveys the idea of “owner.” The Greek word for “bought”, “*agorazo*”, in connection with “*despotes*” implies the Lord’s de facto right of ownership as Creator. Peter is not teaching a universal or general atonement. In fact, he is not teaching about the atonement of Christ at all. What he is saying is that these false teachers are denying the Lord God, their Creator, who made them, and as the Creator owns them.

If one maintains that Jesus purchased salvation for every single person — that what He did He did for every person equally — then one would naturally expect that Jesus would pray for everyone. Note again the great care and saving power Jesus has towards those for whom He died.

“Therefore (because Christ continues forever as the unchangeable High Priest) He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him,

since He always lives to make intercession for them.” ~ Hebrews 7:25

But does Jesus pray for everyone? In what is commonly referred to as the “high priestly prayer” in the 17th chapter of John, the Son of God intercedes before the Father,

“I pray for them (those whom the Father had given Him). I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.” ~ John 17:9

Jesus explicitly states that He does not pray for every single person, rather only those whom the Father had given Him. In fact, we would do well to carefully consider a few of the preceding verses, noting particularly the words we have set in bold:

“Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.’” ~ John 17:1,2,6,9

Let’s now move to the third point, that in the words of Dr. Grider, Christ never,

“... [P]aid the penalty for our sins... [Because] what Christ did He did for every person, therefore what He did could not have been to pay the penalty, since no one would then ever go into eternal perdition [punishment.]” ~ Elwell, Walter A. Editor, Evangelical Dictionary of Theology (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Book House 1984), page 80

From the position of the Remonstrants, what Dr. Grider is saying here is correct. Unlike many modern-day Arminians, he is being consistent with both his presuppositions and the meaning of words like “ransom”, “redemption” and “propitiation” as they are used in the Bible. He understands that when payment is made, ownership of the person or thing that has been ransomed now belongs to the one who made the payment. If Jesus paid for the sins of every single person, then everyone would belong to Him and be in Heaven with Him and no one would be lost to Hell. And yet — but for the rank liberal with little or no respect for Scripture — the concept of universal salvation is not an option. What’s left then for those who reject universalism on the one hand and “Limited Atonement” on the other is to say that Jesus’ sacrifice made redemption *possible* for people, but did not *pay the penalty* for anyone’s sins.

Dr. R.C. Sproul Jr. – One of the difficulties with affirming a doctrine that says that

Christ's goal, Christ's intention, Christ's work really did cover the sins of every human being that ever lived, is that it makes God out to be an unjust judge. If you borrow money from me and another gentleman comes along and pays off that debt for you, I can't then come after you and say, "Hey you need to pay that debt." It's been paid. In like manner, if Jesus died for all the sins of all people, then Hell must be empty.

Dr. D. James Kennedy – Owens said this, quoting the Arminian view, "If Christ died to pay for all of the sins of all the people in the world, which is what the Arminians hold, then why are not all of the people in the world saved?" To which they will respond, "Well, you see, that's only because they don't accept Christ by faith." Well, now, is not the rejection of Christ and unbelief, is that not also sin? Does not the Bible speak of a wicked heart of unbelief? Does not the Bible command us repeatedly to believe, to repent and believe the Gospel? That is not a well wish, it is a command; it is an imperative. Therefore, whatever God commands us to do, if we don't do it, that is a sin of omission. It is a sin. And if Christ paid for all of the sins of all of the people in the world and unbelief is also a sin that He also paid for, again I ask, why are not all of the people in the world saved? That has never been answered.

As a result of their belief in the universal application of the work of Christ, the Remonstrants was forced to reshuffle the historic teaching of the church and embrace a "governmental theory" of the atonement. The doctrine has two main points that we've looked at:

1. That [Jesus] Christ did not pay for anyone's sins, and
2. It's the sufferings of Christ that are the focal point of the atonement — not His death.

These two points may shock modern-day Arminians! But please realize this is not our opinion of what Remonstrants Arminians taught. These are the words of one who holds consistently to that position. Again, referencing the quote by Dr. Grider:

"[Arminianism] teaches instead [not that Christ paid the penalty for our sins, but] that he suffered for us." ~ Elwell, Walter A.: Editor, Evangelical Dictionary of Theology (Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Book House 1984), pg. 80

When modern-day Arminians tell sinners, "Christ paid for all of your sins," in the words of C.H. Spurgeon, they are uttering

"...a dangerous lie." ~ C.H. Spurgeon, Freewill – A Slave, #52; The Charles Haddon Spurgeon Library Version 1, pp. 703, 704

Spurgeon went on to explain what made it dangerous:

"...when justice once is satisfied it were injustice if it should ask for more...He has punished Christ, why should He punish twice for one offence? Christ has died for all His people's sins, and if thou art in covenant, thou art one of Christ's people. Damned thou canst not be. Suffer for thy sins thou canst not. Until God can be unjust, and demand two payments for one debt, He cannot destroy the soul for whom Jesus died." ~ Spurgeon, C.H., Justice Satisfied No. 255 (Ages Software, The Charles H. Spurgeon Library Version 1) Delivered on the Sabbath Morning, May 29th, 1859 at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens, pg. 418

Understanding this, Remonstrants Arminians insisted that Christ never paid for anyone's sins. Modern Arminians, on the other hand, have Him paying for MOST sins, but not every single one.

Dr. R.C. Sproul – The Arminian has the problem of Christ only dying for some sins. He doesn't really atone for all sins because the sin of unbelief can't really be incorporated there because if a person doesn't believe in the Cross - and in Christ, then they don't receive the benefit of the atonement.

Modern-day Arminians, though they rarely say it in such a matter-of-fact way, teach that Christ did 99% of the work in redemption. But unless man adds his faith, his small little fraction of effort — conjured up from the moral residue still in him after the Fall — then the 99% that Christ paid is of no effect. No matter how you slice it, the Gospel, as offered by Arminians, is NOT PAID IN FULL!

Dr. Stephen Mansfield – You know, though very few would say it, the implication of Arminian theology is that Jesus provided 99% of everything that we need in salvation. But still, that 1% is man's free will. Without man's free will, without the exercise of man's will, there is no salvation. The reality is, though, that Jesus provided everything that we need for salvation.

The Calvinists maintained the reason anyone believes is because they have received all the benefits of the atonement. Jesus paid for every sin committed by those given to Him by the Father, even the sin of unbelief. Understand Calvinism, as represented by the Synod of Dort, is the most grace-centered teaching on justification. It offers sinners absolutely no room for boasting. (Ephesians 2:9) As the old Calvinist hymn declares:

*Not the labors of my hands
Can fulfill Thy Law's demands;*

*Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and Thou alone.*
(*Rock of Ages, Augustus M. Toplady 1776.*)

Dr. Kenneth Talbot – The Arminian teaches a works-righteousness salvation. Even though he will teach that it is of grace, nevertheless he believes there is something man contributes to redemption. The Calvinist, on the other hand, says man’s righteousness is as filthy rags. He has nothing to contribute in order that God would accept him as right. Therefore, the righteousness must come from Christ. It is an alien righteousness. It is the works of Christ that saves us, not the works of man.

Prevenient Grace – A grace that works before saving grace.

In order to explain away this charge, modern Arminians developed the doctrine of “Prevenient Grace”. This concept suggests that there is a grace that works before saving grace — a sort of awakening or resuscitation of the dead sinner. He is not at this point born again and spiritually alive, but he has been made supernaturally aware of his state by the Holy Spirit and has been given sufficient light and power to repent and choose life if he so wills it. Or he can reject God’s offer, roll over and go back to his state of spiritual death.

Rev. Walter Bowie – The major problem with the idea of a prevenient grace, a grace that operates prior to salvation, that brings a person, as it were, up to the door of salvation and then it is up to him to take it from there, the problem with that is that it makes man the final determiner in his own salvation. And so salvation is a matter of man and God working together as opposed to salvation being all of grace. And so man has some ground whereby he can boast or at least he can look at his fellow creatures and say, “There is something special about me that you don’t have because I chose and you didn’t.”

Dr. R.C. Sproul – So, in the final analysis, the reason why you are in the kingdom and your neighbor isn’t is because you did the right thing and they did the wrong thing and that does give you something about which to boast. Now where that puts you in a precarious position is that if you really, in your heart of hearts, are trusting your right decision, your right action, as the reason why you are saved, now you’ve come perilously close to the Roman Catholic view because you are now trusting in something you did in some kind of action that is at least bearing what the Roman Church calls “congruous merit” because it’s on that basis that God accepts you. Because you did the right thing and your neighbor did the wrong thing. So even though you protest that

you are not trusting in your own righteousness and you're not trusting in your own works, when we scratch under the surface, so often what we find is that you really are trusting in your own works.

This was Spurgeon's conclusion also. He said,

"The doctrine of justification itself, as preached by an Arminian, is nothing but the doctrine of salvation by works." ~ C.H. Spurgeon, The Forgotten Spurgeon by Ian Murray, p. 80

And if justification comes by works, said the Apostle Paul,

"...then Christ has died in vain." ~ Galatians 2:21

Rev. Walter Bowie – Arminianism fundamentally glorifies man and it does not challenge his autonomy at any point. And anything that glorifies man, as opposed to God, is something we should not have anything to do with.

So what was the purpose and design of the atonement? Or to put it another way, for whom did Christ die?

Dr. D. James Kennedy – The sufficiency of the atonement, the value of the atonement is infinite. But it was designed to affect the redemption of all of God's elect and no one else.

Dr. R.C. Sproul – God is a God who elects for His purpose. And He sets a plan for His sheep. He knows His sheep and He prepares salvation for His sheep and He sends Christ to lay down His life for His sheep.

As stated at the beginning of this section, every view limits the atonement in some fashion.

Dr. R.C. Sproul Jr. – That both views, in some sense, limit the atonement. We limit its intent, they limit its power.

They teach that Christ paid for most, but not every sin of every person. It's therefore up to each individual to add their faith, their little penny, to the overall price of redemption. As for the Remonstrants Arminians, well they limited the Gospel's scope *and* power. They taught that Christ did not pay for the sins of anyone. And the Synod of Dort rightly concluded that their teaching brought,

"...out of hell the Pelagian error." ~ Canons of Dort, Second Head of Doctrine, The Rejection of Errors, Article III

I: Irresistible Grace

God or Chance: Which is Sovereign?

Does God have the right and the ability to do what He wills? Well, consider the words from the prophet Isaiah:

"Remember this, and show yourselves men; Recall to mind, O you transgressors. Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure.'... Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it." ~ Isaiah 46:8-11

The next question addressed by the Synod of Dort was how sinners, who are dead in their trespasses and sins, can come to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus? Since Christ died and purchased salvation for those whom the Father had given Him, was it inevitable that the elect would come to faith in Christ? The answer to this question went to the heart of the debate concerning the nature and sovereign power of God.

The Calvinist answered "Yes, it was inevitable..."

"For who has resisted His will?" ~ Roman 9:19

If God chose you in Christ, you will inevitably and inexorably come to faith. The Remonstrants, on the other hand, said no. Man's will is free from the ultimate effects of the Fall and therefore he can accept or reject God's offer of grace. To the Calvinists, this view reduced God to a concerned by-stander and placed man in the ultimate position of sovereignty.

Dr. Stephen Mansfield - One of the things that I really find funny in our culture is this emphasis on God as a lonely, old man who's up in heaven hoping that somebody turns to Him. Jesus is somebody who's standing outside the door knocking, hoping that somebody follows Him. The reality is, in Scripture, God goes after people. He has sovereignly chosen. He's chosen Paul, knocks him off the horse, and says, "I've sovereignly chosen you for this purpose – get busy." It's a sovereign God in operation, not a lonely old man hoping people will follow Him.

The former slave trader turned preacher John Newton — author of the hymn *Amazing Grace* — chided the Remonstrants when he wrote, “We zealously contend for this point in our debates with the Arminians; and are ready to wonder that any should be hardy enough to dispute the Creator's right to do what He wills.”

Again, this teaching goes to the heart of the Arminian’s misunderstanding of the extent and depth of the Fall. If man were merely wounded and not dead, then he’s still conscious and has a choice of whether to take the medicine. The Calvinist, on the other hand, taught that when man fell he died spiritually and therefore isn’t capable by himself of even choosing — much less taking — the medicine of God’s eternal life. Like a corpse in a morgue, all he can do is await the autopsy. He isn’t going to be able to respond to the Holy Spirit’s call to repentance and redemption unless the same Spirit makes him alive.

Dr. D. James Kennedy - The Bible talks about the outward call, which comes through our lips and our mouths as we proclaim the Gospel, and the inward call of the Holy Spirit. The outward call, as I was just telling people recently, is always invariably ineffective and ineffectual. It never works by itself. It is only when the outward call of the Gospel is accompanied by the inward call of the Holy Spirit that the heart is changed, the mind is opened, the will is transformed and then the person says, “It is the voice of my Beloved.”

Dr. Joe Morecraft III - The very moment that God regenerated you and raised you from the dead spiritually and gave you new life, changed your heart, that split second you began believing in the Lord Jesus Christ; loving Him, seeking to serve Him and repenting of your sins. But it is that initial act of God in Irresistible Grace....

As we discussed in a previous section, election in Christ marks sinners to be recipients of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. Once the Spirit regenerates, the formerly dead sinner is now alive and comes to faith in Christ.

As Jesus famously stated in the third chapter of John:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, that unless a man is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” ~ John 3:3

Here the Lord clearly identifies this quickening and the resultant ability to see and understand God’s kingdom as a spiritual rebirth, as being literally “born again.” Nicodemus asked, “How this can be?” and Jesus responded by first acknowledging the problem:

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh...” ~ John 3:6a

...and, as the Lord stated three chapters later:

“...the flesh profits nothing.” ~ John 6:63a

Being somewhat of a rationalist, Nicodemus wondered aloud, if it was left to man and his own flesh and ability, how *could* he be born again? Jesus responded — in both John 3 and 6 — with the solution to this dilemma:

“...and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” ~ John 3:6b

“...it is the Spirit that quickens...” ~ John 6:63a

The Holy Spirit has to first come and regenerate the person who is dead in their trespasses and sins before he or she can, in the words of Jesus “see the Kingdom of God” — let alone enter it.

Dr. Thomas Nettles – But we will be saved only when God reaches into our hearts and changes them. He is the seeker. He is the one who is aggressive. He is the one who reaches to us. If it was up to our searching and our finding, no one would ever be saved. It is not that we can find God, but it is that if we are saved, it is that we will be found by God. He will reach us by his Spirit and turn us around. He will arrest us and He will bring us to salvation by His own sovereign grace.

Dr. D. James Kennedy - In fact, the Bible teaches that the heart of man is at enmity with God that we hate God. The more we know about Him the more we will hate Him. Our heart has to be changed.

The Synod of Dort, in response to the Arminian view, said that the grace of God is IRRESISTIBLE — that as a result of His mercy and regenerating power the elect will repent and believe in the Son. God the Holy Spirit knows those who are chosen by the Father and given to the Son and in due time He regenerates them. And while later we will look at the means by which God has appointed to affect this work of regeneration — and the part man plays in these means — the actual act of regeneration is monergistic, the work of God alone. Nothing more, nothing less, and nothing else!

Dr. Joe Morecraft III - But it is that initial act of God in Irresistible Grace that takes you out of death into life and causes you to be a new creature in which act you are passive because you’re dead. But the moment it happens you are not passive anymore.

Think of it this way. The idea of being born is a process that begins with conception and ends with the actual birth. When you were conceived in your mother's womb, prior to that time you did not exist and therefore you had no conscious thoughts! You simply received biological life as a result of the union of your father and mother. And so it is with being born again of the Holy Spirit. As Pastor Walter Bowie noted earlier, in answer to Nicodemus' question, Jesus did not say repent and believe.

Pastor John Gil notes:

"This grace of the Spirit in regeneration, like the wind, is powerful and irresistible; it carries all before it; there is no withstanding it; it throws down Satan's strongholds, demolishes the fortifications of sin; the whole posse of hell, and the corruptions of a man's heart, are not a match for it; when the Spirit works, who can let?" ~ Gill, John D.D. LL.D., Gill's Expositor (Streamwood, IL: PB Library 1976), Volume 7 page 769

This understanding led John to write in the introduction to his Gospel,

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." ~ John 1:12-13

Dr. Thomas Ascol – I think John six is a wonderful passage that speaks of Irresistible Grace. When Jesus talks about all that the Father gives to Me will come to Me; no man can come to Me unless the Father draws him. The word "draw" is a powerful word. It was used of a drag net. When fishermen would go out to the sea, cast their nets in, they would draw the fish. This is a powerful descriptor of the work of Gods' grace.

Good point! Some have suggested that the phrase in John 6:44...

"No man may come to me unless the Father draws him..." ~ John 6:44

...is a type of wooing. But, as Dr. Ascol pointed out, the word means "to drag." The same Greek word is used in James 2:6,

"Do not the rich oppress you and drag you into the courts?" ~ James 2:6

To say instead, "Don't let the rich oppress and woo you into the courts" is, of course, absurd.

By rejecting Irresistible Grace, the Arminians made man and his will ultimately

sovereign. In an effort to satisfy man's humanistic standards of fairness, God's glory and power were inevitably compromised. Implicitly, He was reduced to a mere vice-regent, roaming the earth, knocking on the doors of human hearts and hoping that people would see the wonder of His plan and accept Jesus as their personal savior.

Dr. Kenneth Talbot – Revelation 3:20, referring to Christ standing at the door and knock, is not a reference to an individual person – Christ knocking at the door, trying to get in, allowing Him to redeem them. The passage is really directed to the church. The idea is that Christ is calling the churches to follow Him and not to fall into apostasy or idolatry, as some of the churches in Revelation had already been cited for. He was arguing that it is He who is to lead the church; it is He who is the head of the church. But if the church does not yield to the leadership of the Spirit in the direction of their church to follow the way of Christ, then He is one who stands outside knocking, and yet a church who is ignoring Him.

It's important to note that by "Irresistible Grace", the Calvinists were in no way saying that people can not resist the grace of God. Quite the contrary. Unless God made us alive, not a single one of us would ever *stop* resisting it.

Dr. Walter Bowie – When we say "Irresistible Grace", we are not saying that sinners do not resist Christ. We are simply saying that all men who are sinners naturally are not responsive to the sweet overtures of Gods love. But we simply mean that those whom God hath elected, for whom Christ died, the Holy Spirit would never fail to bring them to salvation. That's accomplished by opening their mind to understand divine truth, changing their affections so that they love that what they formally hated, and then releasing the power of sin in their will that they may respond and surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Resistible Grace? ~ Irresistible Grace?

This issue of saving grace — was it resistible or irresistible? — at its core was a theological battle over who was sovereign: God or man? Appealing to the Word of God, the Synod of Dort accused the Remonstrants of rejecting the God who IS and substituting, instead, one they had fashioned in their own image and to their own liking - one that was ultimately subservient to the will of man and some element of chance. As one noted Reformed scholar observed,

"[The debate was] not between some law intermingled with a doctrine of chance, miscalled freedom, on the one hand, and the doctrines of "rigid Calvinism" on the other, but simply between God and chance. If an iota of chance is allowed into the universe, then God's sovereignty is denied, and God is not God." ~ R.J.

P: Perseverance of the Saints

And I Will Lose None Of Them!

"...Perseverance of the Saints is the almighty work of God to keep us, through all affliction and suffering, for an inheritance of pleasures at God's right hand forever." ~ John Piper, The Legacy of Sovereign Joy, page 73

The grace that theologians from Augustine to Calvin were defending was truly amazing. Jesus went to a bloody cross, they said, in order to ransom the elect; those whom the Father had given Him. Looking over the porticos of Solomon's temple – the very symbol of salvation for God's elect children, Jesus declared:

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give them eternal life and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand." ~ John 10: 27-29

Later, at the Last Supper, He affirmed this bold guarantee when He joyfully presented the eleven disciples to the Father and declared,

"While I was with them, I kept them in Thy name...I have guarded them and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled." ~ John 17:12

...thereby affirming God's absolute sovereignty over everything, including even the evil decisions of His enemies. All this being true, it becomes logically necessary – to use the words of the Holy Spirit in the epistle to the Hebrews – that God and God alone is the

"...author and finisher of our (the elect's) faith." ~ Hebrews 12:2

This truth was summed up well in the 17th Chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith,

"They, whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved." ~ Westminster Confession of Faith, 17:1

Or, to put it in the vernacular of today: Once you're *truly* saved, that's it. Your eternal salvation is secure.

Arminians shake their heads in disbelief at this teaching. They look at the multitudes that profess faith in Christ while at the same time embracing the very sins that nailed Jesus to a bloody cross. This promise that "once you're saved, you're always saved" seems for them to be a recipe for disaster, an inducement to carnal living and compromise.

And as if to confirm their worst fears, more than a few theologians and Christian authors argue that "Lordship" is an option for mature believers only, a brass ring for those who want a "better resurrection." At the end of the day, these same authors insist, the gracious gift that is salvation could very well result in a person who remains a slave to sin their whole lives while professing to be blood-bought, redeemed sons and daughters of the living God. Good fruit then is incidental to the Christian life and the grace of God does not necessarily produce any outward effect.

Authors and theologians listed: Zane C. Hodges, C.I. Scofield, Charles Ryrie, J.N. Darby, Hal Lindsey

We'll come back to this point in a moment, but for now it should be noted that, concerning the doctrine of perseverance, the Arminian party again sided with the Church of Rome against the Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church, in fact, had accused the Protestant Reformation with rank presumption on this very issue, insisting that no man could be truly sure of his salvation.

"If any one saith, that man is truly absolved from his sins and justified...and that, by this faith alone, absolution and justification are effected; let him be anathema." ~ Council of Trent: Canons on Justification - Canon 14 (Roman Catholic Church)

I'm saved, the logic goes, because I asked Jesus into my heart when I was ten. And while I might not be living for Him now, I'm going to heaven because I prayed the prayer and walked an aisle.

Let me simply lay it on the line for our modern Arminian brethren. This is not the Reformed teaching of the "Perseverance of the Saints" and we stand with them in condemning this teaching as a doctrine of demons. Jesus made it clear that while the Law is not the Gospel — the Gospel is not lawless.

In the 7th chapter of Matthew, Jesus warned,

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” ~ Matthew 17:21-23

Any teaching that suggests that the Christian is, “free from the Law, oh happy condition! We may sin as we please and still have remission,” is a damnable lie and as much a perversion of God’s Word as the distortion breathed by the serpent in Eden’s garden.

“You will not surely die...and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ~ Genesis 3:4-5

“Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root, it withered away.” ~ Mark 4:5-6

Reformed Theology recognizes that:

1. People can hear the Word and respond with joy — but because there is no root of true regeneration in their heart, they soon fall away. It’s not that they were saved and then became unsaved, it’s that they were never truly saved at all. And this is why Jesus will say to them,

“I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!” ~ Matthew 7:23

Jesus is not saying I knew you but then, because of your lawlessness I have become forgetful. He said I **never** knew you!

2. Individuals can react to the Gospel with “worldly sorrow” — which is in fact the only type of repentance the unregenerate heart can muster. And this sorrow, while it may look to both the person and those around him as authentic and truly life giving, in the end it only produces death.

“For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.” ~ 2 Corinthians 7:10

3. People can experience a dimension of “enlightenment” as they hear “the good

Word of God"; "taste of the heavenly gift", the "powers of the world to come" and partake of the blessings wrought by the Holy Spirit as they attend a church or live within a Christian family, community or culture — and still go to hell when they die.

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance." ~ Hebrews 6:4-6

This passage in Hebrews 6 is a popular verse for Arminians looking to prove that the Perseverance of the Saints isn't true and that a Christian really can lose their salvation. There isn't time to look at all the reasons why this interpretation is wrong and why the true focus of this controversial passage is on outwardly Christian but inwardly unconverted people living among and sharing the blessings of a Christian family or community. If you would like to study this in more detail, allow me to recommend the commentaries of Matthew Henry, John Gill or Matthew Poole. We'll leave this passage, however, by pointing out that the Arminian interpretation leads to one inevitable, profoundly unpleasant and, yes, unbiblical conclusion: that there is no hope for the backslider.

Dr. George Grant - If Hebrews chapter 6, on the other hand, is simply saying that a person who persistently and consistently resists grace cannot be brought to repentance then that provides for us the basis for great hope. In fact, Hebrews chapter 6 is an incredible encouragement for us to take the benefits of covenant life seriously; to not take them for granted, to watch the working of the Holy Spirit and see the good Word of God and to taste the heavenly gift in such a way that the medicine of immortality brings us home to Jesus.

Dr. Stephen Mansfield - The standard Arminian interpretation of this passage doesn't wash. If a Christian can lose their salvation and someone who is backslidden even for a season has no hope of being restored, because the writer of Hebrews clearly says that the blood of Jesus cannot be shed for them again. And no Arminian would hold that view. They urge their backslidden friends to come back to Jesus. And so, clearly, they don't really believe their interpretation of this passage.

Dr. Thomas Ascol – "Perseverance of the Saints" is no license to sin. It is a confidence and assurance, as well as a call to a holy life. Which is why the author of Hebrews writes in Hebrews 12:14 that we are to pursue peace with all men and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. We have to pursue holiness because without that pursuit, without that holiness, we will not be saved. That doesn't mean that

salvation is up to me. God grants what he requires – which is precisely what Augustine prayed.

The Christian life is a call to holiness; growing in the fear and admonition of the Lord. This growth in sanctification is a necessary by-product, the evidence of a converted heart. It is birthed and nurtured by the grace of God, for:

“We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” ~ Ephesians 2:10

It was these “good works” that James referred to when he declared that the Christian should be able to show or demonstrate his faith through his works.

“I will show you my faith by my works.” ~ James 2:18

And that any faith without these good works is dead.

“But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?” ~ James 2:20

We do not live holy lives to make ourselves acceptable to God or to gain His love. But just as surely as light produces warmth, the regenerating presence of the Holy Spirit in our hearts will inevitably result in an increase of holiness in our lives. Without that holiness, no man should presume that he has been genuinely converted.

So does the Bible teach that one who has truly believed can never lose his salvation?

“For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about...” ~ Romans 4:2

Both Calvinists and most modern-day Arminians agree that justification is by grace and not works. Both agree that by definition, grace means “unconditional, unmerited or unearned.”

“...to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.” ~ Romans 4:4

We do not merit the merit of Christ. We, by grace through faith, a faith that is not of ourselves, but a gift from God, are given the merit of Christ.

“But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.” ~ Romans 4:5

If this is true; if there are no conditions to grace, how can you lose it unless you believe deep down that you have done something – even the smallest thing – to earn it?

“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.”

~ Romans 4:7

If there were conditions, then salvation would be earned and kept by obedience to those conditions. Salvation then would not be by grace, but works! In short, God would owe you salvation because you did something to deserve, earn or keep it. And if you earned it, it would stand to reason that you could unearn it.

There are numerous passages in the Scriptures that support the “Perseverance of the Saints” – the truth that God guarantees the eternal salvation of His elect. We’ve already looked at John 17 verse 12.

“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” ~ John 17:12

There is also Philippians 1 verse 6, which states:

“Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” ~ Philippians 1:6

Concerning this verse Dr. Gordon Clark has noted:

*“The work of salvation in the heart or soul was initiated by Christ, not by the human person. The text does NOT say that because Christ began to work after the sinner had started the good work, He, Christ, would continue His efforts too. The text says that Christ began the good work. He also will perfect or complete it, continuing His work throughout the now regenerated sinner’s life.” ~ Clark, Gordon H., *Philippians* (Hobbs, NM.: The Trinity Foundation 1996) pg. 10*

Then there’s this awesome promise found in the tenth chapter of John:

“And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father’s hand.” ~ John 10:28-29

The speaker is Jesus. He declares that He's the One who gives His followers eternal life and that they shall never perish! How long is never?

The issue of the Perseverance of the Saints emphasizes, not what man does to keep his salvation, but what Christ has already accomplished! Paul addresses this with respect to the question of how many sins are forgiven through the atonement. To the Colossian church he declared:

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

Concerning this verse, renowned scholar Dr. John Gill notes:

"...Forgiveness of sin is not done by piecemeals, or at different times, or by diverse acts, but is done at once, and includes sin past, present, and to come; and is universal, reaches to all sin, original and actual, before and after conversion; sins of thought, word, and action." ~ John Gill

Many people tend to think of their conversion as a moment when all their past sins were forgiven and washed away. But their post-conversion sins are somehow different. Consciously, or more often subconsciously, there's a sense that they must somehow atone to God for these particular sins. But while atonement "man-ward" may be necessary to restore relationships and preserve the integrity of human culture, "God-ward" our post-conversion sins are washed away in the same way as those that preceded our relationship with Christ — through His sacrifice on the cross.

The simple fact is that when Jesus made this sacrifice, *all* of our sins lay in the future. And so Paul, writing under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit, used the past tense (Colossians 2:13) "...having forgiven you." If you truly have believed on the Lord Jesus, you are one of those given to Him by the Father. And when He suffered and died He paid for every single one of your sins — past, present and future!

Dr. R.C. Sproul - Throughout John's Gospel, Jesus talks about those whom the Father has given Him - none of those will be lost. All of those come to Him and all of those are preserved by Him.

Dr. Roger Schultz – But our assurance of salvation never rests in what we do, what we accomplish and our own faithfulness, but entirely depends upon God, upon the perfect propitiation of Jesus Christ, the perfect sacrifice that He made and the meditation of our faithful High Priest who intercedes for us and the work of His Spirit in our lives. If you

look at Hebrews 6, we're told that we too have sure confidence and strong assurance. And the reason for it isn't because of anything we do, but because God interposed with an oath. He made that oath for Abraham and he makes that oath for us as well.

Invariably, there are those who will object to this based upon personal experience — that someone they once knew to be a Christian has fallen away from the faith.

"Ok, well, I knew a man who lived for Christ for twenty years. He was at church every single time that the doors were open. He ended up leaving his wife for another woman. Within the next year he had completely given up the faith and just written it off as a phase that he had gone through. About a year ago he was killed in a car accident. So, what you're telling me is that he's in heaven with the Lord today because 'once saved, always saved'?"

No, we're not saying he's in heaven. I didn't know the man, and really, nobody else but God truly does either. None of us can ultimately know his heart, either at the presumed point of his conversion or at the moment of his death. It certainly doesn't look good for him and, if he is in hell, we only have to remember the verse we looked at earlier:

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord', shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" ~ Matthew 17:21-23

Rev. Walter Bowie – It's possible for a person to go a long way and even convince those of us who are around that they are Christians. But, the bottom line is what John says, "...they went out from us because they were not of us." [I John 2:19]

Again, John teaches that those who truly fall away were never genuine believers to begin with! Now we need to be careful here. If we see a professing Christian committing a grievous sin, we shouldn't begin by questioning their salvation. We should love and pray for them and then do what Jesus commanded in Matthew 18:

"...go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established'." ~ Matthew 18: 15-16

This is what the prophet Nathan did after King David committed both adultery and murder. If we had been among King David's advisors and had seen all that had gone on

surrounding his relationship with Uriah and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11), we might have been tempted to conclude that David was not a true believer. We would have been wrong, however, as David later demonstrated through his repentance.

In conclusion, I should mention that Arminius himself was not fully convinced that a true believer could lose his salvation and advised that more study on the subject was needed. However, the vast majority of his followers would come to reject the "Perseverance of the Saints" and instead teach that a person could be saved and then lost, born again and unborn again, adopted and then divorced.

Like with other issues we looked at, the Calvinists believed that the teaching of the Remonstrants in this area was once again a direct result of their low view of the atonement. Because they held that Christ's sacrifice by itself didn't satisfy the penalty for anyone's sins – that it was left to the believer to do something to catalyze the process of forgiveness – it then made perfect sense that the believer could make that process ineffectual as well. And so not only our salvation but also the preservation of our salvation was ultimately dependent upon man.

The Synod of Dort emphatically disagreed:

"For God, who is rich in mercy, according to His unchangeable purpose of election does not take his Holy Spirit from His own completely, even when they fall grievously. Neither does He let them fall down so far that they forfeit the grace of adoption and the state of justification, or commit the sin which leads to death (the sin against the Holy Spirit), and plunge themselves, entirely forsaken by Him, into eternal ruin." ~ The Canons of Dort, The Fifth Main Point of Doctrine, The Perseverance of the Saints, Article Six

The Canons of Dort concluded by urging the Arminians to repent of the false doctrines contained within their protests and instead embrace the Biblical and historic teaching of the Reformation. It closes with a prayer for redemption and faithfulness to God:

"May God's Son Jesus Christ, who sits at the right hand of God and gives gifts to men, sanctify us in the truth, lead to the truth those who err, silence the mouths of those who lay false accusations against sound teaching, and equip faithful ministers of His Word with a spirit of wisdom and discretion, that all they say may be to the glory of God and the building up of their hearers. Amen."
~ Canons of Dort, Conclusion, Rejection of False Accusations

SUMMATION: The Consequences of Ideas

“Arminianism is ‘natural’ in one sense, in that it represents a characteristic perversion of Biblical teaching by the fallen mind of man.” ~ J. I. Packer

As we saw earlier, the Synod of Dort sat for six months. After reviewing the written protests and hearing the arguments, they declared the teaching of Arminius and his followers out of accord with the Bible and the confessions of the Dutch church. In fact, they went so far as to label the Remonstrants and their doctrines as a form of the Pelagian heresy, a label modern Arminians reject as both unfair and unduly harsh.

But was it unfair? First it needs to be understood that as the men who condemned the Arminian Remonstrants looked across the doctrinal divide they, at times, found themselves staring into the eyes of men whom they loved and with whom they had labored. Pastors, professors, students, fathers and sons came down on opposite sides of the theological fence. The final decision by the Synod of Dort was not made in haste, nor were the Calvinists filled with joy in seeing the Arminians condemned for teaching error, at best, and heresy, at worst. Repentance was their lofty goal. But as Martin Luther had declared just a century earlier, their thoughts were captive to the Word of God. When it came to the Gospel, family and friendships were laid aside.

“My conscience has been taken captive by the Word of God.” ~ Martin Luther

Second, there’s no getting around the fact that the Arminian controversy marked the beginning of liberalism in the modern church. The issue of how a sinner is justified, as serious as that was, was simply the symptom of a greater disease – the disease of unbelief that bore itself out in the years following the Synod of Dort.

Dr. Thomas Nettles – The doctrines of grace serve as a conserving factor for those central orthodox and evangelical doctrines that all true Christians hold dear. The doctrine of the deity of Christ, the doctrine of the necessity of salvation, the doctrine of the necessity of the atonement, the doctrine of justification by faith, the inspiration of the Scripture – all of these things have a much more secure and solid foundation on the doctrines of grace.

Dr. Philip Schaff confirmed this observation when he wrote:

“...Calvinism represented the consistent, logical, conservative orthodoxy; Arminianism an elastic, progressive, changing liberalism.” ~ Philip Schaff, The Creeds of Christendom, p. 509

But the ultimate reason that the Synod of Dort labeled the Remonstrants as being

heretical was that they understood how the Arminian view of free will opened a theological can of worms in regard to all kinds of foundational issues, among them the doctrine of the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture.

Dr. George Grant – Arminianism has real implications for the doctrine of Scripture. How can God superintend men’s words so carefully and so precisely as to ensure an inerrant Scripture if God is a God who allows absolute freedom and allows sinners like the apostle Paul, or sinners like the apostle Peter to make absolute choices. If the Arminian God is inspiring Scripture, we would expect it to be filled with some mistakes because that’s the nature of freedom. If, on the other hand, we have the sovereign God who exercises His good providence for the purpose of mercy upon His creatures, then we can expect that there are times when He does not allow freedom in order for a particular task to be accomplished, thus superintending every single word that the apostle Peter writes; though the apostle Peter, as we know, is prone to sin.

Dr. Thomas Nettles - The Arminian says, “No, you have to have free will that operates on its own and divine sovereignty respecting free will.” If that is so, how can we be guaranteed that the persons who penned the Bible did not, at some time, exert their free will apart from the sovereignty of God and put some mistakes in it? And this is the common way that Arminianism leads. It leads to higher criticism, it leads to a man-centered understanding of the Bible and of inspiration, and eventually you lose the doctrine of inerrancy.

Dr. Roger Schultz – Arminians have a problem defending the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture because of the way it would require God to override the free will of man.

Of course, this is not to say that all Arminians today are likely to compromise on the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture. Many, thankfully, do not. What we are saying, however, is that once one consistently holds to the Arminian doctrine of free will, the foundation for believing that the Bible is the infallible and inerrant Word of God will be ultimately compromised.

In fact, in another moment of candor, Dr. Grider acknowledges that while Arminians should have confidence that the Bible is inerrant on matters of faith and practice, they should remain open to the possibility of errors relating to math, history and geography.

“[Arminians should have] confidence that Scripture is inerrant on matters of faith and practice, while remaining open to the possibility of errors relating to math, history and geography.” ~ Dr. J. Kenneth Grider, Evangelical Dictionary of Theology by Walter A. Elwell, p. 81

Once inerrancy is questioned, all manner of other errors inevitably follow. It's a plain fact of history that many of the leaders of the Remonstrants, among them Conrad Vorstius and Simon Episcopius, ended up questioning, and in the case of Vorstius, denying the deity of Christ. Why? Because the Bible they held in their hand was written by men who had a free will, a will that was free from the full effects of the Fall and the sovereignty of God.

And it doesn't stop here. Whenever the tenets of Arminianism take root, the cancer of humanism inevitably creeps into the church and into the culture she's called to disciple. If man isn't completely fallen, as the Remonstrants argued, then it logically follows that he's capable of ascertaining Truth - philosophical or scientific - through his unaided reason. Thus began the, so called, "Enlightenment", culminating in David Humes skepticism on the one hand and the scientific naturalism of Charles Darwin on the other. Politically speaking, Arminianism also leaves the door open for stateism, the idea that man-made government, independent of the Word of God, can help fashion some form of Edenic paradise. It's no secret that a rigorous Calvinism, in large part, guided America's founding fathers and kept them from entrusting power to the state, intentionally binding it with the checks and balances of our tri-cameral system of government.

Rev. John Robinson - "Pastor to the Pilgrims" and debated Arminians prior to Synod of Dort.

Dr. George Grant - One of the things that Calvinism sees in the Scriptures is a kind of representative checks and balances system, where you have mixed government. It's where the founding fathers really got the idea for the great experiment in freedom that we call "American Liberty". It's really Presbyterianism applied to the civil sphere. In that sense, Calvinism is probably the most influential theological strain in all of constitutional history. This has shaped America in peculiar ways. Because of the checks and balances, and the separation of powers, we have had a free economy. Because of that checks and balances and separation of powers, we've been able to develop a system of the rule of law. Prosperity has been able to flourish side-by-side with freedom, a very unique thing in the history of the world.

Dr. Stephen Mansfield - You know the truth is, historically, once men begin to move away from a sovereign God, who sovereignly chooses; once they move away from Calvinism and the social institution that Calvinism produces, they move towards humanistic stateism. They move towards a reliance on other men, other institutions, and they move towards, essentially, what one scholar called "The Messianic State" - they believe that the state will rescue them. It's one of the great failings of the Arminian system.

Dr. George Grant – One of the things that Calvinism does is it leans toward a republican style of government, in other words, a representative government where there are mixed powers, checks and balances and so forth. Whereas Arminianism is so individualistic, it leans much more to a sort of mass egalitarian democratic system. That language sounds good to us as Americans, but, in fact, what it leads to is chaos – absolute chaos, every man for himself. And when you have every man for himself, chaos, egalitarianism, ultimately somebody is going to climb to the top and then what you’ve got is tyranny.

And, finally, the Arminian view of free will, as we’ve already seen, makes man, rather than God, ultimately sovereign over the fundamental issue of salvation. Like the proverbial “nose in the camels tent”, man’s supposed free will choice then begins to extend itself into other areas where God’s will, as revealed by His Word, is to reign supreme. Left unchecked, this untrammelled free will has led to the insanity of our modern age, a world where “choice” determines if an unborn child will live or die, or whether a man will be allowed to marry another man.

Few people noticed it amid the hoopla surrounding the kiss between Britney Spears and Madonna at the 2003 MTV Music Video Awards, but their statement at the end of the performance, revealed the true root of their rebellion: “We are bored with the concept of right and wrong.” In their minds, God’s Word is no longer the supreme arbiter of right and wrong. Neither are they fallen creatures whose minds and wills had been warped by sin. They are free to choose their own moralities – a right that Pelagianism and Arminianism ultimately makes possible.

In the same eerie way, the spirit behind the infamous half-time show at Super Bowl XXXIX was missed amidst the furor around the bearing of Janet Jackson’s breast. Throughout her performance, the audience was exhorted over and over to choose, to be different; to be whatever they wanted to be. Once again, perverse behavior was merely a byproduct of a far more insidious idea that man is the master of his own fate and the arbiter of his own reality. Man’s choice, rather than God’s, is ultimately sovereign.

The only antidote to the sickness of our present evil age: The Gospel of the Kingdom of God, the proclamation that God is dread sovereign over everything in heaven and on earth, that He is holy, a consuming fire whose wrath will be revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man, that He has satisfied the demands of justice in the sufferings and death of His Son on the cross, that man is completely dead in his trespasses and sins and cannot lift a finger to help himself, that what is impossible for man is possible with God, that He, and He alone, can make us alive again through Christ. Understanding this, it’s time that we were about our Father’s business, calling men everywhere to repent and believe the Gospel.

(Daniel 4:25; Hebrews 12:29; Romans 1:18; Romans 3:25; Ephesians 2:1; Mark 10:27)

“But, wait a minute,” you might ask, “why should we preach the Gospel if the Synod of Dort is right and God and God alone is sovereign in election? If He chooses certain individuals to be saved, and sends His Son to die for them and them alone, and leaves others in their fallen state, and if He guarantees that His elect will be irresistibly drawn to Christ and can never be lost, then why bother evangelizing?” Well, we’ll answer that question in our next and final section.

Section III: Evangelism

Clip from “Luther”, 1953, Gateway Films

Luther: “When will you understand that we must win brothers and sisters from the other side with love and not with force? I tell you, the fruit of the Gospel is not only righteousness, it is love. Here is how I must use my freedom: I must give myself to my neighbor, as Jesus Christ, in love, gave Himself to me. I must do nothing in life that is not needful to my neighbor because, through faith, I have all that I need myself. In this way, and in this way only, can I become a true son of a gracious God.”

Onward Christian Soldier

There are two questions that often arise when discussing the reformed view of man and salvation, particularly from people who are used to viewing the subject from a humanistic or Arminian perspective. The first and most common is, “If all this is true, then why bother evangelizing?” And, related to this, is the manner in which we are to present the Gospel. “If man is spiritually dead and completely unable to choose life, how are we to present God’s good news, the offer of eternal life through Christ?” Let’s look at each of these issues in turn.

Why Evangelize?

First, why evangelize? If God has an elect, and they’re already predestined to come to Christ, why do we need to do anything to help make it happen?

Dr. Thomas Ascol – Well, we evangelize because God’s commanded us to. If God is God and we are His creatures, the fact that He says to do it is enough.

Rev. Walter Bowie – Well, first of all, we should evangelize, if for no other reason, simply because Christ said do it, okay? If there was no logic, no rhyme or reason, if we had nothing but the simple command, “Go, therefore, and preach,” that’s why we should evangelize – number one. But then, secondly, a more comprehensive answer is that evangelism is the means by which God has purposed to bring His will to pass. And so the God of the ends is also the God of the means.

And what are the means that God has ordained?

Dr. D. James Kennedy – God is pleased to use human means to accomplish glorious, divine and eternal ends. And we have the incredible privilege of being co-laborers with Christ in bringing to pass the greatest, most glorious ends imaginable – the redemption of all of God’s elect.

Rev. Walter J. Chantry – God has intended to save men through the means of mortal human beings. It’s absolutely astounding that God would use a weak, frail, sinful human being to testify to the Lord Jesus Christ.

This raises another question and needs to be addressed. Is God helpless without you or me to evangelize? Are His arms so short that He cannot save without our help?

Dr. R.C. Sproul – God doesn’t need me to round up the elect. But He gives me the unspeakable privilege of participating in this work of redemption. I think it’s a delight for us to be able to be engaged in, and it’s the same thing with prayer.

As a result of free will theology, much of modern evangelism falsely assumes God is helpless without us to proclaim the Gospel. Though they would never say it this way, the impression one gets is that, without us, God can do nothing. Scripture, however, teaches the exact opposite. Jesus put the axe to the root to such humanistic thinking when He responded to the Pharisee’s plea that He tell the crowd to stop praising Him.

“But He answered and said to them, ‘I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out.’” ~ Luke 19:40

In the same way, His cousin, John the Baptist, rebuked a crowd for only trusting in their religious heritage.

“For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.” ~ Luke 3:8

Mr. William Carey - It is our duty, sir, as Christians, to attempt the

spreading of the Gospel by speaking to these heathen nations.

Church Leader - Mr. Carey, Mr. Carey, calm yourself down. If it pleases God to save the heathen, He shall do it without your aid or mine. For God is sovereign...

Fortunately, William Carey didn't listen to that church leader. Some friends helped him start the English Baptist Missionary Society, and under its auspices in 1793, he sailed for India and became:

"...the greatest and most versatile Christian missionary sent out in modern times."

Carey was a Calvinist.

Evangelism is a responsibility and a privilege. Arminians sometimes think that, if the church embraces Calvinism, evangelism will die. However, when you consider that many of the greatest preachers and evangelists in history were Calvinists, this fear can be seen as unwarranted. In Section I, we gave a short list of these men. If time would permit, we could spend hours, even days, naming off others. Who would ever charge Jonathan Edwards, or Spurgeon, or Whitefield, or J.C. Ryle, or John Piper, or Dr. Kennedy with being slothful in their responsibility to evangelize? Well, no one - at least no one in their right mind.

Dr. Roger Schultz – We look at the history of the United States, we see that our greatest revivals, the most impressive ones in our country's history, were produced through the sovereignty of God by people who were committed to the doctrines of grace. The first "Great Awakening" in 1740, 1730's and 40's, with Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield were remarkable outpourings of God's grace and they were outpourings of God's revival by people who proclaimed the doctrines of grace.

Dr. Stephen Mansfield – You know the standard knock on Calvinism is that it undermines the reason for evangelism, that, if God has already chosen men, there's no reason to evangelize. But the fact is, the greatest evangelists in the history of the church have, for the most part, been Calvinist. George Whitefield, certainly one of the greatest evangelists in the whole history of the church, and one of the founders of America, really, a Calvinist who led a huge number of people to Jesus. And others have been as well. So the reality is that a man is more likely to preach the Gospel when he knows that God has already sovereignly chosen to make him a success at his efforts than he is if it's just based on human will.

The fact is, not only does Calvinism with its high view of God demand that we obey the Lord and take the Gospel to the four corners of the world, it also guarantees our success

in the enterprise. Because we know that He has ordained that His elect, those that will believe, will be saved through the foolishness of preaching, we can have every confidence that, as we obey the Lord in both prayer and proclamation,

"[God's] Word shall not return void, But it shall accomplish what [He] pleases, And it shall prosper in the thing for which [He] sent it." ~ Isaiah 55:11

Now on to the second question: In light of these truths, how, and to whom, should we present the Gospel? The answer to the second part of that question is really quite easy. We're to be ready in season and out of season to present the Gospel to everyone we meet.

"Preach the Word! Be ready in season and out of season." ~ 2 Timothy 4:2

Or, as Jesus put it:

"Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." ~ Mark 16:15

At this point, the Arminian will often ask, "Why every creature? If God is only going to save His elect, why waste your time sharing with people who've not been appointed unto salvation?" Well, quite simply, God doesn't tell us who the elect are.

Dr. Stephen Mansfield – When people say, "Why preach the Gospel to every creature if only the elect are going to respond?" there are two answers. First of all, it is part of the indictment against the lost that the Gospel is preached to them and they don't respond, number one. And, number two, part of the Gospel is its leavening effect in the culture as a whole. So even unsaved men are affected by the Gospel that seeps into their lives.

A man once came to Charles Spurgeon and said, "If I believed like you, Mr. Spurgeon, that God saved some and passed by others, I'd give up preaching." To this, Spurgeon replied,

"God has called me to preach His Word and if I knew that all the elect had a yellow strip painted down their backs, then I would give up preaching the Gospel and go lift up shirt tails!" ~ Charles Spurgeon

We don't know who the elect are, and so, instead, strive to be all things to all men so that by all means some, meaning the elect, might be saved.

"I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." ~ 1 Corinthians 9:22

As we now look at the content of our message, we would do well to consider what to avoid. As we've already seen, much of what passes for ministry today has been compromised by the leaven of humanism that often treats its audience as autonomous creatures that have every right to sit in judgment on both God and His Word, picking out what they like and throwing away the rest. Along with this has come a "result-oriented" approach to soul winning, where people seem more concerned with how many walk down the aisle than with the content of the message. If the number is not high enough, then the message is changed to make it more palatable so as to get the maximum number of people to make a decision.

Dr. Stephen Mansfield – You know, surveys show that 82% of Americans believe in God and believe themselves to be Christians. And yet we have less influence as Christians in American culture today than at any other time. So the question has to come up, "What kind of Gospel are we preaching? What's wrong with what we're believing?"

There have been studies that suggest that, both numerically as well as by percent of the total population, more people profess to believe in God and be "born again" than at any other time in US history. And yet, with all these numbers, the church has less influence in our culture today than she's had in years past. We need to ask ourselves, "What's wrong with this picture?"

In part, the answer may be that, instead of seeking the elect by presenting food for the sheep – the preached Word of God which the Holy Spirit uses to convict the elect of their sins – many are seeking the bottom line: numbers. And since numbers have often become the standard by which to judge a ministry's success, and not wanting to offend and drive people away, much of the modern church is no longer preaching the sinfulness of man or the bloody offense of the cross. As a result, the church is offering the wrong kind of food. Instead of food for sheep, much of today's preaching and evangelism is food for goats. And goats are now everywhere.

Dr. George Grant – Jesus told us that the Gospel was an offense, that the cross was an offense, it offends our sensibilities. How do you package that? How do you market that? How do you make an offense "seeker sensitive"? Well, what you have to do is you have to take away the offense. And when you take away the offense, you take away the Gospel.

Examining what he termed the "Superficiality of Modern Evangelism", the renowned scholar and soul winner Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones presented the solution:

“Evangelism must start with the holiness of God, the sinfulness of man, the demands of the Law, and the eternal consequences of evil.” ~ Dr. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, Studies in the Sermon on the Mount, p. 235

Of course, the fear today is that, if you’re not positive and entertaining, people will not come. As Pastor Steven Lawson noted in his book, Made In Our Image,

“Step into the average church these days and you will likely see that the services are designed more to remove the fear of God than to promote it. ~ Steven J. Lawson, Made in Our Image: What Shall We Do with a User-Friendly God?, p. 194

Dr. R.C. Sproul - In the sixteenth century, the heart of the Reformation, Luther warned his contemporaries, he said anytime the Gospel is preached clearly and boldly, it will produce conflict. And people don’t like conflict. And so, as a result, they will change the Gospel, water it down, or try to take away its offense.

Rev. Walter J. Chantry – When the evangelistic meeting is all designed to produce the effect of large numbers of people walking forward at the end of the meeting, you tend to do things very differently than you do when you’re pressing the Gospel upon the hearts of men, and urging them to respond in prayer to God.

A.W. Pink, Baptist minister and author of the classic book The Sovereignty of God observed,

“The nature of Christ’s salvation is woefully misrepresented by the present-day evangelist. He announces a Savior from hell rather than a Savior from sin. And that is why so many are fatally deceived, for there are multitudes who wish to escape the Lake of Fire who have no desire to be delivered from their carnality and worldliness.” ~ Article entitled Saving Faith: Part 1 Signs of the Times by A.W. Pink, circa 1930

Instead of preaching the Law of God to convict men of sin and expose their guilt before a just and holy God, many churches opt for a non-confrontational approach to both preaching and evangelism. Ray Comfort explains:

“The modern gospel says: ‘Put on the Lord Jesus Christ. He gives you love, joy, peace, fulfillment, and lasting happiness.’ The sinner responds, and in an experimental fashion puts on the Savior to see if the claims are true. And what does he get? The promised temptation, tribulation, and persecution...” ~ Ray Comfort

Peace and joy are fruits of the Gospel. They are not the tree and definitely not the root. If we really love people, then we need to tell them the truth. And what is the truth? That if they're outside of Christ, if they have not submitted to Him as Lord and Savior, then they're sinners in the hands of an angry God.

As Jonathan Edwards preached in perhaps the most famous sermon in American history,

"The sentence of the Law of God, that eternal and immutable rule of righteousness that God has fixed between Him and mankind, is gone out against them, and stands against them; so that they are bound over to hell." ~ Jonathan Edwards, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, Enfield, Connecticut, July 8, 1741

Dr. R.C. Sproul – We tell people they don't need to repent because God loves them just the way they are and the only reason to come to Jesus is to have greater peace or greater happiness or a better trip than they'll get from drugs. That's not the Gospel at all.

Dr. George Grant – God is love. But God is not promiscuous love. Promiscuity throws love around sentimentally without discretion or discernment. God's not that way at all. God's love has a purpose. God's love has the purpose of redeeming us and changing us. God does not love us just the way we are. God loves us so that we can be what He wants us to be.

Dr. Stephen Mansfield – You know, the standard evangelistic approach is to tell non-believers, "God loves you just the way you are." Well, a wise non-believer is going to say, "Well, if God loves me the way I am, why should I change?" We've got to get rid of that kind of humanistic nonsense.

The goodness of the Gospel, the "Good News", becomes truly good only in direct relation to the bad news that it comes to address: That all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, that we have violated God's righteous standards more times than we can number, that the wages of our sin is death, and that the holy anger of God abides against us in anticipation of the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God when all those whose names are not written in the *Lamb's Book of Life* will be cast into the Lake of Fire. Without understanding the depth of our sin and our offense against a thrice-holy God, the "Good News" becomes the "Okay News", just another twelve-step program in our modern, therapeutic culture.

(Other verses: Romans 3:23; James 2:10; Romans 6:23; John 3:36; Romans 2:5; Revelation 20:15)

Martin Luther understood this. He explained that presenting a cure without explaining the disease was a trick and device of the arch enemy of man,

“Satan, the god of all dissention stirs up daily new sects...he has raised up a sect such as teach that men should not be terrified by the Law, but gently exhorted by the preaching of the grace of Christ.” ~ Martin Luther, The Evidence Bible, Compiled by Ray Comfort, p. 503

A Thought Experiment: *Imagine a city where everyone is infected with a deadly cancer but no one is yet aware of it.*

Doctor: “Excuse me sir, I have the cure for cancer; for stage-four, non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma.”

Man: “That’s great! Good luck with that.”

Doctor: “Sir, sir? (to another man...) It’s for the stage-four, non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma.”

Man with child: “Yeah right.”

Child: “What is that?”

Doctor to yet another man: “I have the cure for cancer.”

Doctor to a woman: “For the stage-four non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma.”

Woman: “OK.”

Doctor to another man: “Excuse me sir, I have the cure for cancer, it’s for stage-four non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma.”

Man: “I’m proud of you. Thank you.”

Doctor to family: “In this test tube, I have the cure for cancer.”

Doctor to woman: “I have the cure for cancer.”

Doctor to man ignoring him: “It’s for stage-four non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma.”

Doctor to a group of people: “The stage-four non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma.”

Doctor to a woman: “It’s for the stage-four non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma.”

Woman: “I don’t have cancer, thanks.”

Man: “I don’t have cancer, thanks very much. But I wish you the best, and hopefully you’ll find somebody that you can help.”

Man: “That’s great, but I gotta get to...another spot.”

Doctor: “But it’s for stage-four non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma.”

Now...imagine the city where the people ARE aware that they have the cancer.

Doctor: “Mr. Goodman, I’m afraid I have some bad news.”

Mr. Goodman: “How bad is it doc?”

Doctor: “The test results have come back positive for cancer.”

Mr. Goodman: “Cancer?”

Doctor: “That’s right. I’m afraid it’s the worst kind – a stage-four non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma.”

Mr. Goodman: “I mean, look at me. Do I look like somebody who has cancer?”

Doctor: “However well you feel on the outside, the cancer is killing you from the inside.”

Mr. Goodman: “No. There’s no way that I’m dying. I mean, look at me

doc. I'm dying, you're telling me I'm dying?"

Doctor: "Not necessarily. The good news is that we have a complete cure. One dose and the cancer will be completely gone."

Mr. Goodman: "You're telling me, in that vial, there's something that can heal me?"

Doctor: "Just one dose."

Mr. Goodman: "I mean, Doc, I don't know what to say. I mean, that's the best news that you could have ever told me."

One of the most important and sadly often-ignored keys to effective evangelizing is showing people that they're dead in trespasses and sins; a walking corpse in desperate need of a resurrection. And the primary means that God has appointed to bring men to an awareness of the sin and death that rages in their very being is through His Law, the Ten Commandments. Like a CAT scan that can find the silent killer, the cancer or the clogged artery, the Commandments reveal the true state of our souls.

Dr. George Grant – So what the Law of God does is it provides us with the guide line, the plumb line, the reality check that enables us to hold the line and to produce something that is genuinely and objectively good rather than just subjectively good.

Dr. R.C. Sproul – We study the Law of God because the Law reveals to us not only the righteousness of God and His holiness, but, by contrast, it stands as a mirror – I look in the mirror of God's Law and I realize my utter helplessness in and of myself.

Much of the church today, unlike the church of decades and centuries past, has a definite problem with the Law of God as found in the Ten Commandments. Many believe it to be antiquated, harsh, or part of the Old Testament and therefore of no use to "New Testament Christians". But as Paul wrote to Timothy,

"...we know that the Law is good if one uses it lawfully." ~ 1 Timothy 1:8

By way of an analogy, the Law of God is good in the same way that fire can be good. Fire, if used lawfully, can produce energy, heat a home on a cold morning, or cook a hot meal after a long day's work. If used unlawfully, fire can cause pain, suffering, and destruction on a grand scale.

And so it is with the Ten Commandments. If one uses it as a tool for self-righteousness, or to earn heaven, he will eventually find that, at the end of the Law, there is nothing but death. The Law of God was never intended to save. The apostle Paul explains,

"...for by the Law is the knowledge of sin." ~ Romans 3:20

That as fallen creatures we

"...would not have known sin except through the Law." ~ Romans 7:17

He further observed that the Law has the unique ability to magnify the horror of our transgressions

"...so that sin through the Commandments might become exceedingly sinful." ~ Romans 7:13

The Law is also universal in its scope

"...that every mouth may be stopped, and the entire world may become guilty before God." ~ Romans 3:19

And pedagogical in its purpose and impact.

"Therefore the Law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might become justified by faith." ~ Galatians 3:24

"The Law of the Lord is perfect," sang the psalmist, "converting the soul." ~ Psalm 19:7

In commenting on this passage, Matthew Henry notes that the Law,

"...shows us our sinfulness and misery in our departures from God and the indispensable necessity of our return to Him." ~ Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible, Volume II, Job-Malachi, p. 125

Tragically, the Law of God today has largely fallen into disuse in our lawless, relativistic, "do what is right in your own eyes" culture. Less than one professing Christian in a hundred can quote the Ten Commandments from memory. And, in perhaps one of the greatest ironies of our time, Christians rally by the thousands to support the posting of the Ten Commandments in the courthouse even while the Law is missing from their hearts and pulpits. It's for this very reason that renowned evangelist and author Ray Comfort calls the preaching of the Law that brings the knowledge and conviction of sin "Hell's Best Kept Secret".

It didn't always used to be this way. St. Augustine observed,

"Sin cannot be overcome without the grace of God, so the Law was given to convert the soul by anxiety about its guilt, so that it might be ready to receive grace." ~ St. Augustine, Ancient Christian Commentary on the Scriptures, Romans, Volume VI, p. 182

He continued...

“The Law was therefore given not to take away sin but to include all under sin... so that by this humiliation they might know that their salvation was not in their own hands.” ~ St. Augustine, Ancient Christian Commentary on the Scriptures, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Volume VIII, p. 49

It was this same understanding that provoked John Wycliffe, the “Morning Star of the Reformation” to cry out,

“The highest service to which a man may obtain on earth is to preach the Law of God.” ~ John Wycliffe

Martin Luther echoed this conviction when he declared,

“The first duty of a preacher of the Gospel is through his revealing of the Law and of sin...” ~ Martin Luther, Letter of St. Paul to the Romans, Translated by Bro. Andrew Thornton, OS Bed. Hans Volz, and Heinz Blanke, Volume 2, p. iii

And then explained,

“Thou art killed by the Law that through Christ thou mayest be quickened and restored to life.” ~ Martin Luther, Commentary on Galatians, p. 212

Quoting again Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones,

“The essence of evangelism is to start by preaching the Law; and it is because the Law has not been preached that we have so much superficial evangelism.” ~ Dr. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, Studies in the Sermon on the Mount, p. 235

Charles Spurgeon also spoke about the tragic implications of minimizing the preaching of the Law.

“By lowering the Law you weaken its power in the hands of God as a convincer of sin. It is the looking glass which shows us our spots, and that is the most powerful thing, though nothing but the Gospel can wash them away... Lower the Law and you dim the light by which man perceives his guilt. This is a very serious loss to the sinner rather than a gain.” ~ Charles H. Spurgeon, Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Volume 28, pp. 284, 285

Spurgeon then lays it on the line.

“[A sinner] will never receive grace until he first trembles before a just and holy Law.” ~ Charles H. Spurgeon, from Ray Comfort’s Ten Canons of God’s Law

John Bunyan declared,

“The man who does not know the nature of the Law cannot know the nature of sin, and he who does not know the nature of sin cannot know the nature of the Savior.”
~ John Bunyan, from Ernest C. Reisinger’s *The Law and The Gospel*, p. 33

The lightning rod of “The Great Awakening”, George Whitefield, also gave primary emphasis to the Law in effecting true conversions.

“That is the reason we have so many ‘mushroom’ converts... because their stony heart is not plowed; they have not got a conviction of the Law; they are stony-ground hearers.” ~ George Whitefield, *The Evidence Bible*, compiled by Ray Comfort, p. 227

The Baptist Confession of 1689 explains that the Ten Commandments shows the

“...need they [sinners] have of Christ and the perfection of His obedience.” ~ *London Baptist Confession of 1689*, Chapter 19:6

The Westminster Confession of Faith states that

“The Moral Law is of use to unregenerate men, to awaken their consciences to flee from the wrath to come, and drive them to Christ.” ~ *Westminster Confession of Faith*, Larger Catechism, Number 96

John Wesley, the great Arminian evangelist understood that true Biblical evangelism did not start by offering grace but by expounding the Law of God.

“The first use of the Law, without question, is to convince the world of sin. By this is the sinner discovered to himself. All his fig leaves are torn away, and he sees that he is ‘wretched and poor and miserable, blind and naked.’ The Law flashes conviction on every side. He feels himself a mere sinner. He has nothing to pay. His ‘mouth is stopped’ and he stands ‘guilty before God.’” ~ John Wesley, *Quoted from The Evidence Bible*, compiled by Ray Comfort, p. 437

With this truth in mind, Wesley encouraged a friend to

“Preach 90 percent Law and 10 percent grace.” ~ *Ibid*

Tragically, much of today’s church has forgotten the wisdom of these great men. Too often we have forsaken the Law as the primary school master that drives rebellious sinners to Christ. We have exchanged our birthright for a mess of cheap pottage, embracing slick marketing techniques, pizza blowouts, and seeker-friendly gimmicks in

the hope of increasing the numbers that walk our aisles and fill our seats.

"...so the Law was given to convert the soul." ~ Augustine

"The highest service a man may obtain on earth is to preach the Law of God." ~ Wycliffe

"The first duty of a preacher is through the revealing of the Law." ~ Luther

"By lowering the Law, you weaken its power..." ~ Spurgeon

"He who does not know the nature of the Law cannot know the nature of sin." ~ Bunyan

"...they have got a conviction of the Law; they are stony-ground hearers." ~ Whitefield

"The Law flashes conviction on each side." ~ Wesley

If the church does not repent of her lawless, man-centered gospel she will continue to reap false conversions. She will find herself powerless and her pews filled with unrepentant sinners who will one day hear, perhaps, the most horrifying words that will ever be uttered by the Lord of Hosts:

"I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" ~ Matthew 7:23

That said, this in no way means that we aren't to be winsome, loving, and sensitive in our presentation of the Gospel. Being uncompromising and faithful to the Law of God and the power of the cross is not a license for being insensitive or obnoxious.

How not to use the Law of God in evangelism

[Two men conversing in a restaurant.]

Christian: You know the problem with the church today is that we're preaching a costless Gospel, right, where "Jesus loves you just the way you are".

[As they're talking, two men walk into the restaurant and are seen ogling a blonde girl who walks by.]

Christian: What we need to be teaching is that they need Christ by preaching the Law of God. Here, let me show you what I mean... [To man walking by] Hey, you got a second?

Ogler: Yeah, what's up?

Christian: Was that girl your wife?

Ogler: [Laughing] No, she's not, why?

Christian: Well, you know that when you look at a woman and it's not your wife and you got lust in your eyes, you're breaking God's

seventh commandment.

Ogler: Excuse me?

Christian: You're, you're an adulterer. But Jesus Christ went to the cross to pay the price for your adultery. If you repent of your sins and ask God's forgiveness, He can make you a child of God. What do you think?

Ogler: I think you're an idiot. [Walks away.]

Christian: [To friend at table] You know, I had a feeling that he was just another vessel of dishonor.

In direct contradistinction to this unpleasant scenario, the prophet Isaiah painted a very different picture of how the Gospel should appear.

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, Who proclaims peace, Who brings glad tidings of good things, Who proclaims salvation, Who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'" ~ Isaiah 52:7

It was said of Jesus, the greatest evangelist who will ever live, that

"...the common people heard Him gladly." ~ Mark 12:37

So how can we see our Gospel-shod feet be made truly beautiful? How can we ensure that our ambassadorship is faithful to both God and His truth and yet is gracious and winsome at the same time – so much so that the people we minister to can hear us gladly? While not necessarily exhaustive, and in no particular order as far as importance, let's close by considering nine important keys to Biblical evangelism.

1. Pray for and love the people to whom you bring the Gospel.

As Christians, we really need to get involved in prayer. Prayer for the unsaved, prayer for the lost. It's not enough to just say, "Thy will be done," and just hope that God will somehow reach people who don't know Him. They won't. Even Jesus prayed for people who didn't know Him. He said not just the disciples was He praying for, but for people who would come to know Him through their word. And I really believe we have the privilege, we have the opportunity and the responsibility to fervently pray and intercede with God. And that's love! Love basically is doing something. It's taking action.

2. Strive to reflect the nature and truth of God in your life and character.

Sometimes the greatest evangelism happens when we are just living our lives; just being Christ-like, building up a reputation of reflecting Christ. I think 2 Corinthians 3:2 puts it best. We are to be "living epistles", being known of by all men.

3. Ask God for wisdom.

Proverbs 11:30 says that the one who wins souls is wise.

Well, no doubt, working with God to see people saved is a wise career choice. The Scripture speaks of benefits – retirement benefits, if you will – concerning a better resurrection in Hebrews 11:35. So doing evangelism and partnering with God to reach souls is just a wonderful way to go.

But Hebrew is a notoriously ambiguous language and this verse can just as easily mean that it takes wisdom to win souls. We're called to be as gentle as doves but as wise as serpents and nowhere is this more necessary than in the art of ambassadorship, particularly when you find yourself amongst wolves. Knowing when to "answer a fool according to his folly" and when not to is just one example of our great need for wisdom.

4. As we've already seen, present the Law of God.

5. Sow the Word of God.

Most specifically, the good news of the atonement, the cross of Calvary.

The Bible says that Jesus was the Word made flesh. And Jesus said that if He, the Word, be lifted up, He would draw all men unto Himself. Now that carries within it the power, and with the Holy Spirit's help, to produce faith.

6. Be a vessel of the Holy Ghost through both your life and your testimony.

Whether I'm sharing the Gospel in a preaching context or if I'm sharing my faith one-on-one, I just find that God wants to use me. Sometimes feeling inadequate or frail, this is really a good thing because the Bible tells us that we're jars of clay. We are frail vessels. But we can be conduits of His presence and of His glory, not only with our words, but with our lives. When people are watching us, when no words are coming out of our mouth and people are marking us from a distance, the glory of God, the presence of God, can flow through us to touch people's lives so that they can come to Christ.

You know, really, Satan is the one we struggle with. 2 Corinthians 4:4 says that he has actively blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the Gospel who is Christ. Christ is the image of God. And through that blinding, there's no doubt about it, that people don't have a testimony. It's the Word of our testimony and a changed life that actually shows people the impact of the Gospel.

7. Move your audience into a place of doubt – concerning the way they're living their lives.

Help them to see the futility, vanity, and inconsistencies of their worldview by

"...casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." ~ 2 Corinthians 10:5

To put it another way, to get them to doubt the efficacy of the idolatrous belief system, the babbling tower their flesh, the world and the devil have created for them. The spiritual weapons we use to accomplish this are both prayer and apologetics. And, when it comes to the latter, being always ready, as the apostle Peter put it,

"...to give a defense to everyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." ~ 1 Peter 3:15

There's just no substitute for being a well-read and thoughtful believer; someone who, according to Hebrews 5:14, is mature, used to the solid food of the Word, and, through use and practice, has trained their senses, their judgment, to discern both good and evil.

"But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." ~ Hebrews 5:14

A brief aside here: One of the controversies today among theologians and Christian philosophers concerns which apologetical method is the most effective and faithful to Scripture. Without getting into a lot of detail, an argument can be made that, when it comes to Proverbs 26 verse 4, not answering a fool in his folly to avoid becoming like him, the presuppositional method developed by Gordon Clark, Cornelius van Til, and others, is perhaps the best way to go.

*Classicalism
Evidentialism
Testimonialism
Verificationalism
Presuppositionalism
Cumulative Case Method*

"Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him." ~ Proverbs 26:4

Christian: I mean, do you see what I'm saying? Can you comprehend what I'm talking about?

Unbeliever: JT, I don't believe in God. I mean, that's your truth. That's not my truth. But I'm cool with that, man, you do what's real to you, but you can't tell me there's this good and evil and...there's no

absolute truth. It's your perspective. I've got my perspective too and there's a truth inside of me that I'm living by. I'm doing what I need to do. Being true to me, being true to me.

Christian: Okay.

Christian brother begins taking the unbelieving friend's things and placing them in a laundry basket.

Unbeliever: What are you doing? Dude! Dude, what are you doing? Bro! That's my stuff, what are you doing? Hey, listen, just put it back! Dude, those are my brand new shoes! Hey, my mom got me that. What are you, what are you...?

Christian: Yeah, man, I'll holler at you later. See ya.

Unbeliever: Dude, you can't just come in here and take my stuff!

Christian: I can't? You judging me? Man, look, I'm just doing what you said. You know, following my heart. You got some nice stuff – I need some nice stuff. Uh, you are still cool with that, right?

Unbeliever: No, I'm not cool with that!

Christian: Well, look man, I gotta bounce. Are your keys still in the ignition?

Unbeliever: My keys?

“Truth...it's more absolute than you think.”

But when it comes to the flip side of Proverbs 26:5, answering the fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes, every apologetical method may have a roll to play.

*“Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him.” ~
Proverbs 26:4*

*Classicalism
Evidentialism
Testimonialism
Verificationism
Presuppositionalism
Cumulative Case Method*

As we follow in His footsteps and practice incarnational Christianity entering into the world of the unbeliever, we relate to people on whatever level we can. Yes, in our hearts, we understand that their questions and doubts are ultimately expressions of their own sinfulness and rebellion. But, as we love people and connect with them, as we pray

for them and carry the living water of the Gospel to them through the vessels of our lives and the words of our testimony, and as we challenge them with the truth of God's Word while looking for ways to engage them in a conversation about eternal things, we become a conduit for the grace and the mercy of God. We are never to trust in our evangelistic abilities or our apologetical skills. We trust in the God above, beyond and behind all these things. Closely related to this is our next point.

8. Help your audience acknowledge the truth...

...that God has already placed in their hearts but that they are desperately working to suppress in their unrighteousness.

"...what may be known of God is in them..."

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is in them, for God has shown it to them." ~ Romans 1:18,19

Again, take great confidence in knowing that deep down, and very possibly now gushing to the surface, they know what you're saying is true. In teaching on this truth to a Christian audience, I'll often use a "Jack-in-the-box" as a visual aid. Picture Jack as the Truth, the knowledge that Jesus is Lord, and that we're not; that we're all sinners in desperate need of a Savior, and that Jesus is that Savior. In his fallenness and his sinful desire to be his own god, to do what's right in his own eyes, the unregenerate person squeezes Jack down into the box of his heart and then sets out to do everything he can to forget that Jack's down there. But as we love and pray for them, and faithfully do the work of an ambassador, as we discussed, we – meaning you and the Holy Spirit – are turning the crank on their heart box, waiting for the tumbler to click and for Jack to pop out.

And lastly,

9. Clearly challenge your audience to repent and believe the Gospel...to be reconciled to God.

The Bible tells us that no one is seeking God. The lost are not seeking God. God Himself is seeking the lost. And our part in evangelism is to tell people what God requires of them which, primarily, is to repent. It's to change your mind about the good news of the Gospel.

Our job as Christ's ambassadors is to strive to be faithful and to grow in all nine areas as much as we can. What happens as a result of our ambassadorship, however, is up to God. Some of those you minister to may experience the mercy of God and regeneration,

repentance, and salvation. Others may leave with seed planted for another day of watering and eventual harvest. And there may be some who only experience God's anger, who leave with hearts all the more hardened with the truth pushed and locked back down into their heart boxes waiting for the day when God will bring it forth and judge the secrets of men's hearts through Jesus Christ.

"...in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ..." ~ Romans 2:16

All three of these potential scenarios bring glory to God and are the righteous fruits of a successful ambassadorship. It's been well said that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

"Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God and to fully enjoy Him forever." ~ The Westminster Confession: The Larger Catechism, Question and Answer #1, p. 129

Glorifying and enjoying God is not just some greeting card piety, however. It carries with it a host of things we must both believe and do – chief among them is to understand who He is and who we are in relation to Him. It's here where the truly amazing grace we've looked at in the previous two sections is so vitally important. A close second, however, is to share the same passions and desires of our Heavenly Father. And chief among them as regards the world of man is the salvation of His elect and the restoration of this world into its intended purpose.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." ~ John 3:16

The Great Shepherd, Jesus, humbled Himself to redeem the lost sheep of His pasture. Can we be satisfied with anything less?

We close with this last thought:

For better or worse, one characteristic of today's church, or at least the one in America, is the great interest in Biblical prophecy and the events that will accompany the end of the age and the return of Christ. What's interesting about this is that scholars disagree as to which events are yet in the future and which ones have been fulfilled. From the "Great Tribulation" to the Gospel being preached in all the world, it is by no means certain that these events weren't accomplished before the end of the first century. There is one thing, however, that everyone agrees has yet to be fulfilled. Perhaps the clearest and most universally accepted scriptural tipping point for the consummation of our present age, the apostle Peter spoke very clearly about the eschaton, the end of the world when the present cosmos will be transformed.

"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the

earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.” ~ 2 Peter 3:10

He specifically addresses the mystery of this event’s timing, calling us to patient labor, and reminding us that God’s timetable is not the same as ours.

“But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years is as one day.” ~ 2 Peter 3:8

But then the Holy Spirit, through Peter, gives us the rationale for all the waiting and patient toil.

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” ~ 2 Peter 3:9

And so we see that Jesus is patiently waiting before He returns and breaks down the tent, so to speak, of the present cosmos. And why is He waiting? That none of us would perish but that all come to repentance.

And who is this “all”? Well, it certainly can’t mean all people. Scripture makes it abundantly clear that there are many who travel the wide path to destruction and end up in hell. In addition, if He’s not willing that any should perish, and yet many do, we’re left with a God who cannot accomplish His perfect will. And this is certainly not the God of the Bible.

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” ~ 2 Peter 3:9

No, the “all” that Jesus is waiting for, the “none” that He’s not willing to let perish, are the sheep of His flock – the elect that He died for and is committed to saving. And so the ultimate tipping point of the eschaton is the day when the last lost sheep is ushered into His pasture. Understanding all this, how should we then live? Peter tells us.

“Therefore... what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God...” ~ 2 Peter 3:11,12a

And so we end. The banquet of God’s amazing grace lay before us. Not only has our great Lord paid the ultimate price to redeem us and raise us from the dead, and not only is He patiently waiting for our other brothers and sisters to be saved, He has blessed us with the inexpressible privilege and honor of working with Him in bringing those elect brethren into His kingdom. Let us long for our King’s return. Let us hasten the day. Let us seek so that He might save the lost.

Recommended Reading:

The Sovereignty of God by A.W. Pink

The Cause of God and Truth by John Gill

The Freedom of the Will by Jonathan Edwards

Willing to Believe: The Controversy Over Free Will by R.C. Sproul

The Death of Death by John Owen

The Bondage of the Will by Martin Luther

The Atonement by Gordon H. Clark

Predestination by Gordon H. Clark

The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination by Loraine Boettner

The Five Points of Calvinism by Robert L. Dabney

The Plan of Salvation by B.B. Warfield

Redemption Accomplished and Applied by John Murray

Truths That Transform by D. James Kennedy

A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith by Robert L. Reymond

Almighty Over All by R.C. Sproul

By His Grace and For His Glory by Thomas Nettles

A Southern Baptist Looks at the Biblical Doctrine of Election by Ernest Reisinger

Justification by Faith Alone by Charles Hodges

The Legacy of Sovereign Joy by John Piper

The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, Documented by Daniel Steele

After Darkness, Light by R.C. Sproul Jr.

Everlasting Righteousness by Horatius Bonar

Whatever Happened to the Gospel of Grace by James M. Boice

Also: the writings of C.H. Spurgeon and Martin Lloyd-Jones

QUESTION & ANSWER KEY

Chapter 1: Opening/Overture

1. How exactly is a fallen, fallible and finite human – a sinner – redeemed before an infinitely just and holy God? Give some examples of how Christians may answer that question. What are the key truths that underlie redemption that would be common to all evangelicals? On what points do they sometimes disagree? (You can use examples from the video, your own thoughts or what you have heard from others.)

2. Jesus taught that each one of us will be brought before God in a final judgment. As every person has to stand before an infinitely Holy God, the supreme question of life will be: _____

3. The next related question is: Who gets the glory in this process of redeeming man from his sins and pardoning him from the judgment those sins deserve?

4. All true Christians will say that God alone gets the glory for redemption. But how is that inconsistent with certain aspects of the answer that many people give to the question about how a person is saved? _____

Chapter 2: The History of the Debate

1. How do many people resolve the debate surrounding the question of how people are saved? _____

2. Why is it that ultimately these responses are not profitable? _____

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3. According to the philosopher George Santayana, those who don't remember the past are _____
 4. By examining the past, we may, by God's grace, avoid its _____ and draw wisdom and encouragement from its victories.

Chapter 3: Church History

1. The beliefs of the Jehovah's Witnesses concerning Christ are simply a re-hash of what ancient heresy? _____ The heresy was named after its chief proponent, _____.
2. Where did the church council meet that ultimately condemned this view as heresy? _____ In what year did this council meet? _____
3. Who was the champion of the orthodox view? _____
4. Why have so many in the modern church forsaken the treasures of wisdom and experience won by Christians in centuries past? Some blame an _____ to the errors of Roman Catholicism – where the traditions and councils of the Church were elevated to be virtually equivalent to the Word of God... They have thrown the baby out with the bath water. Because we don't remember the past we are caught by surprise and fooled by old heresies.
5. Can you think of other reasons why modern Christians are so often ignorant of Church history and specifically the councils that met to deal with early heresies and the creeds that were formulated as a response? _____

Chapter 4: Free-Will Controversy

1. This is how creeds and confessions were developed. They were essentially a formal _____ to false or controversial teachings.
2. As this controversy between Augustine and Pelagius developed, it became increasingly clear that at issue were several principles at the core of the Christian belief system; doctrines concerning the fundamental nature of _____.

3. Pelagius responded with an emphatic, "No!" While God's help is always appreciated, it is not absolutely necessary. Man can simply exercise his _____ and choose not to sin.
4. Augustine was just as insistent when he declared, "Yes!" Man is utterly dependant upon God's grace because he has been ruined by _____ and can do absolutely nothing to redeem himself from the wrath of the infinite holy God.
5. Pelagius was basically a _____.
6. With the teachings of Pelagius, humanism and its doctrine of the natural ability of man came to the forefront of Christian thought. Though it had been a dominant belief system within the _____ that had greatly influenced the world for many centuries, now it sprang full-formed into the culture of the Church.
7. Pelagius denied what the apostolic Church labeled " _____ " – that as a result of the fall, in which Adam died spiritually and ultimately physically, all of those born after Adam carry within themselves a corrupt nature and the guilt of his first sin.
8. If Pelagius was right and man today is born in the same way Adam was created (sinless and immortal), then we don't need Christ. We don't need a _____.
9. Pelagius, as well as anyone who followed his teaching, were condemned as _____.
10. In total, _____ councils condemned Pelagianism in all its forms.
11. It was these "pelagianizing tendencies" advocated by the Bishop of Rome that allowed for the later development of the works righteousness in the _____ belief system.
12. Jansen believed in salvation by the grace of God. On behalf of the Pope, the Jesuits launched a violent attack on the movement (Jansenist) he spawned. In 1713, Pope Clement XI issued a papal bull, or formal condemnation, against them, denouncing 101 statements from their writings. Many of these statements were direct quotations from the writings of _____.
13. So the practical result is that if you are a Pelagian, all you need is a _____. If you are a semi-Pelagian all you need is a little help from a _____. And if you are an Augustinian, then you realize that man needs to be _____ and that salvation furthermore is entirely of grace.
14. Semi-Pelagianism was a doctrine that was a restructuring of Pelagius' teachings. It was a synergistic rather than a _____ approach. It said that God and man must work together to bring redemption.

Chapter 5: The Reformation

1. Dr. B.B. Warfield, the great Princeton Theologian, called Martin Luther's *The Bondage of the Will* the "_____ of the Protestant Reformation."
2. Luther's book drew a line in the sand between the Roman Catholic view of justification and the Reformed view. And the debate that followed became known as the _____ controversy.
3. Etymology of *synergism*: *syn*- _____ *ergos*- _____
4. What does *monergism* mean? _____

5. Did the reformers believe the Bible taught that being born-again and being justified were the same thing? _____
6. In theological terms, "synergism" refers to divine and human cooperation; God and man work together to bring about the latter's conversion. Martin Luther saw this as little more than a _____ dressed up in evening clothes.
7. Luther believed that Erasmus' semi-Pelagianism denied _____; the full impact the Fall had on man.
8. Instead of being dead in his trespasses and sins, man was, according to Erasmus, only _____ and therefore could help himself by helping God.
9. Luther understood that Erasmus' view made the grace of God a _____ for our faith. In other words, man believes the gospel and as a result of this good work, God gives him grace. In the end, man deserves some of the credit – some of the glory – for his salvation.
10. Against Erasmus' synergistic view, Luther believed that being *born-again* or *born from above* was a *monergistic* act. *Mono* is the Greek word meaning _____. It is the prefix for words like "monotheism" – the belief in one God. Monergism, then, is the belief that regeneration or the new birth is to be understood as the work of God alone."
11. The terms _____ and what we deem as "salvation" or "justification" are not synonymous terms.
12. Luther rightly understood that when the Bible describes the condition of man in sin it is a desperate condition. Man in sin is not just sick; he's _____!
13. In response to the challenge and growth of the Reformation, Pope Paul III convened a council on the December 13, 1545 in the city of _____, in what is now northern Italy.
14. Now this (salvation as a monergistic work of God) is important, because if we argue against this we are actually _____ God of His glory.

15. At the heart of the Reformed faith is the phrase "*soli Deo gloria*" meaning _____.

16. George Whitfield contended that the semi-pelagian doctrine of free will ultimately compromised both preaching and the invitation for people to believe in the LORD Jesus. What did Whitefield mean? _____

17. Living as we do in an age that has been so influenced by humanism, many Christians today view the monergistic position concerning salvation as strange. However, history is filled with champions of the Faith who considered the synergistic view of free will as directly opposed to both God's sovereignty and the true Gospel. Ironically, many of them are revered today by _____.

Chapter 6: Arminianism vs. Calvinism

1. During the course of his life, Arminius rejected the teachings of the Reformation and returned to the _____ - _____ view of the Church of Rome.
2. The five points of what came to be called Arminianism stood in contradistinction to what the Church of Holland had been teaching since the Reformation. These five articles, also called the "remonstrance" or "_____", were then presented to the Reformed Church.
3. In November of 1618, a national Synod, or council, was convened in the city of Dordt for the purpose of examining the views of the Arminian party. Some 154 sessions were held. The result was an overwhelming _____ of the five points of Arminianism.
4. The Synod responded to each of the five points in return, formulating what has come to be called the _____.
5. Arminianism re-captured the _____ position of semi-pelagianism and _____; teaching that salvation is accomplished through the combined efforts of God (who takes the initiative) and man (who must respond) with man's response being the ultimate _____ factor.

The "Five Points of Calvinism," as they are now popularly known, are:

6. Total _____, in response to the Arminian view of free will.
7. Unconditional _____, in contradistinction to conditional election.

8. Limited (or Particular) _____, in opposition to general or universal atonement.

9. Irresistible _____, in reply to resistible grace.

10. Perseverance of the _____, in place of the idea that a saved man can become “unsaved.”

11. The leaders at the Synod of Dordt, like Luther, Calvin and Augustine, taught that salvation is accomplished by the almighty power of the Triune God. The _____ chooses – or elects – people to be saved; the _____ redeems them through His cross; and the _____ makes Christ’s death effective by bringing the elect to faith and repentance, thereby causing them willingly to believe the gospel. The entire process is the work of God and is by and through _____ alone. Thus God’s grace and not man’s _____ determines who will be saved.

12. The Arminians were ejected out of the church. Over three hundred ministers were expelled as a result of their disagreements with the doctrinal teaching of the Dutch Church. That teaching was Reformational theology or _____, as it has become more popularly known.

13. The Synod of Dordt taught that _____, from beginning to end, was a work of God’s grace alone. They believed that Adam’s fall had ruined the whole race and plunged man into a spiritual death that entangled his will in bondage to _____. To teach that man could save himself, by an exercise of his will apart from the grace of God (_____), or contribute to his own salvation, by having man cooperate with the grace of God (_____), was heresy – a giant step away from the Reformation and back towards Roman Catholicism.

14. Free will can be defined in a number of ways. If we are talking about the sense in which every human being, regenerate or unregenerate, is free – for example to choose what tie he will wear or what to have for dinner – the answer is _____. But in the significant sense in which it is used in the Bible, that is that man is free to do what he ought to do – repent of his sins, surrender his life to Christ and follow Him in godliness – the _____ man is not free to do that. The more he hears of it, the more he dislikes it. His _____ must be changed for him to do that.

15. As a result of the Fall, man’s will is in bondage to sin and death and has lost the _____, apart from the outside influence of God’s grace, to choose the perfect good in relation to the spiritual realm. The fallen will is ultimately grounded in _____. And while this self may and often does choose things that are relatively good and that can occasionally even outwardly _____ the moral perfection modeled by Jesus – in the

consuming fire of God's perfect sight, fallen man's most righteous deeds are as "filthy rags" – corrupted by the leaven of a self-directed will.

16. If you are an Arminian, you need to think through your _____.

17. The Apostle Paul declared that there is no room in the gospel for _____.

Chapter 8: Total Depravity

1. Whenever a church council was convened, it was, for all intents and purposes, a _____.
2. The court or Synod of Dort was convened to address the primary question: "How does fallen man come to a _____ knowledge of the LORD Jesus Christ?"
3. The Arminian party's first point has become known as "partial depravity" or "the _____ man theory."
4. The Synod of Dort responded to the contrary, articulating what has come to be known as "total depravity" or "the _____ man theory. Since the fall of Adam every person is conceived and born a _____. Though we still have a will and are free to choose what we want to choose, we are not _____ to choose what is _____ to our nature. In the end, the will of fallen man can only embrace sin and face its ultimate wages: _____.
5. A wise man once observed that the Bible doesn't contain just *theology*—God's revelation of Himself. It's also the LORD's _____— God's analysis of man.
6. We talk about free will a great deal but the fact is that man's will is _____ by his own sinfulness.
7. The Calvinists saw that the remonstrance was giving fallen man more _____ than he deserved, and attributing an ability that was simply not there. And they understood that how one viewed the _____ would be reflected in how one understood, believed and preached the gospel.
8. One of the things we must bring back into our approach to evangelism is to help the lost understand that they are walking corpses; that they are dead in their sins. What brings that to light is the _____.
9. There are two analogies that Scripture uses for someone who is dead in their trespasses. One is the analogy of the corpse. The other is the analogy of progressive corruption. We see in Romans 1, that someone that is dead in their trespasses can actually _____ to deeper and deeper depths by giving themselves over to bestial impulses.

10. It is important at this point to discuss the difference between the words "_____" and "_____."
11. "Can" is a word of _____ and "may" is a word of _____.
12. The Bible makes it clear that every man, women and child SHOULD come to Christ. They have His _____. In fact, they are even _____ by God to repent and have faith in Him!
13. Given the opportunity to choose between good or evil, obedience or rebellion, God or Satan, eternal life with LORD Jesus or death in the pool of sin, what will fallen man always choose?" _____
14. Until God the Holy Spirit changes the _____ of our soul; we will never have faith in Christ.
15. The Arminian doesn't deny the sinfulness of man. But what he does deny is the _____ and the _____ of sin in the life of the individual.
16. The Arminians and the Calvinists disagreed over the _____ of the Fall as it related to the will of man. The Arminians, simply put, believed that man's will was _____ by the Fall and that he still had the ability to choose the good over evil in the spiritual realm.
17. People are not, in their natural state searching for God. God is the one who seeks us out. _____ is the one who comes to seek and save the lost.
18. The modern church teaches that you have to have faith in order to be born-again. This is the exact _____ of what Jesus said in John 3. The new birth is something that you can't _____, you can't _____, it happens and you experience it.
19. Scripture teaches that we are dead and what we need is a spiritual _____.
20. The Bible, numerous church councils, and countless "champions of the faith" have taught that being born-again is a _____ work: the effort of God alone.
21. In the New Testament, there are three figures used to designate the new life in Christ, they are _____, _____ and _____. The one thing they all have in common is the fact that the person or the thing that involved is _____.
22. Christ made it clear that dead people cannot choose anything, that the _____ and that a person must be born of the Spirit BEFORE he can even see the kingdom of God, let alone enter it."

Chapter 9: Unconditional Election

1. Being born-again must, of necessity, _____ faith.
2. Because of what God has done before the foundation of the world. He has _____ an innumerable amount of people that will respond to the gospel.
3. The Biblical doctrine of election is, humanly speaking, _____ — an offense to the natural human tendency to believe that we play a part in our own salvation.
4. The terms “_____” and “_____” are roughly synonymous.
5. Note that Jesus did not say, “_____ you did not believe, you are not my sheep.”
6. Nobody seems to have a problem that God called out Israel and set them apart and set his love upon them and distinguished them... But now in the New Testament, many people suddenly say that God cannot set his _____ upon this person as distinct for that person.
7. Election, to the Arminians was “_____,” based upon man’s proper reaction.
8. According to the Synod of Dordt, the Arminian position was pure _____.
9. The Arminian position is not really election; it’s _____. In the end, it’s man’s vote that decides the outcome.
10. In Romans 8:29, the word “whom” is the _____ of the verb and the _____ denotes persons, not events or happenings.
11. The word foreknow does not mean foresee. It means to _____.
12. In contradistinction to the Arminian position, the confessions of the Dutch Church taught what is called “_____ election.”
13. Dr. D. James Kennedy: Why God elects one person and not another a fascinating question and I want to tell you that the Bible never answers it. It answers it in the _____.
14. God has chosen the foolish things of the world, the base things of the world, the things that are nothing. These are the things that God has chosen that _____ may glory in His sight.
15. God does have a general love for all men. He does love all men in the sense that he sends sunshine and rain upon the wicked as well as upon the righteous. But there are some people for whom he has had a _____. Just as a man has a _____ for his wife and his children, God has the right to have a _____ for those who are the objects of his

affection.

16. According to Spurgeon, why does God hate any man? Because that man _____ to be hated.

17. Election puts nobody in _____ and a vast multitude in _____ that wouldn't be there otherwise. In heaven we have nothing to boast about in _____. In hell we have no one to blame but _____.

18. If election is based upon foreseen faith or based upon something in man, who would ever charge God with being _____?

19. The Arminian view attempts to make the doctrine of election seem _____ to the mind of man. But the Apostle Paul takes the opposite tack: rather than making it more _____, he continues to emphasize the absolute sovereignty of God in ways that will no doubt offend many.

20. Given his sinful nature and the fact that God did not _____ to overcome that nature, Pharaoh chose sin of his own accord. As a sin always does, it brought forth spiritual decay and death. (Romans 6:23) And so Pharaoh's heart became harder with each successive act of rebellion. God brought forth the test, but it was Pharaoh that failed them.

21. This same principle, of _____ the gift of grace, was reflected in Jesus' earthly ministry many centuries later.

22. Jesus contemplated the fact that many of the people in _____, where He did His main public ministry, did not believe or receive the gospel, He thanked God that He had hidden the gospel from the wise and the prudent and had revealed it unto _____. And then He went on to express his reason for that thanksgiving, because it was good in His Father's sight. So, it was the Father's _____, who would receive and believe the Gospel and who would remain hard-hearted.

23. Paul insists that as sinners we have no _____ before God.

24. Dr. R.C. Sproul: Students come to me all the time and they ask me a myriad of theological questions. And I have never had a student come to me and say "R.C. why does God save _____?" That is the _____ question.

25. Many people think they have trouble with election or predestination, but their problem really is with doctrine of _____. They don't understand or believe the doctrine of the fall of man. They basically deny _____.

Chapter 10: Limited Atonement

1. _____ is one of the most controversial and misunderstood of all five of the points of Calvinism.
2. Arminianism and Calvinism both limit atonement. The Arminian limits its _____ and the Calvinist limits its _____.
3. The Calvinist believes that regeneration “raptures” the believer out of one _____ and into another.
4. Arminians believe that Christ “_____” but did not die to _____ for sin.
5. Does “all” mean “all” all the time? _____
6. “All” is an example of _____ speech.
7. For proper interpretation, we must look at Scripture based on its _____ and compared to other Scripture.
8. The Jewish mind-set tended to believe that the _____ was coming only to save them. The term “_____” in the Bible was used to correct this exclusive notion and to convey that people from out of _____ would be chosen.
9. Jesus did not say he came to lay his life down for the wolves, goats and the sheep, but that he came for the _____.
10. When Peter said that God would have none perish, to whom was Peter writing? _____
11. What reason did Jesus give as to why the Pharisees did not believe?

12. Jesus explicitly states that He does not pray for _____, rather only those whom the Father has _____ Him.
13. When the payment for sin (and remember that unbelief is a sin) is made for all, then all would _____. This is called universal salvation.
14. Modern Arminians believe that Christ died for “_____” sins. Christ did not pay for our sins _____.
15. Because Arminians believe that man must contribute something (belief, or repentance) to gain his salvation there is no way to escape the fact that theirs is a _____-based righteousness.
16. _____ grace is the modern Arminian’s notion that there is a special grace that works before saving grace; a sort of awakening or _____ of the sinner.

Chapter 11: Irresistible Grace

1. Can the LORD do whatever He wills? Check one: No _____ Maybe _____
Sometimes _____ YES! _____
2. The next question addressed by the Synod of Dordt was: How can sinners, who are dead in their trespasses and sins, come to a _____ knowledge of the LORD Jesus?
3. The answer to this question went to the heart of the debate concerning the nature and _____ power of God.
4. The Calvinist answered “ _____”, God’s sovereignty was inevitable for “who has resisted His will?” (Roman 9:19)
5. The Remonstrance, on the other hand, said “ _____,” that man’s will is free from the ultimate effects of the Fall and therefore he can accept or reject God’s offer of grace.
6. To the Calvinists, this view reduced God to little more than a concerned _____ and placed _____ in the ultimate position of sovereignty.
7. When it comes down to redeeming His elect, God goes _____ people.
8. The heart of the Arminian’s misunderstanding is the extent and depth of the _____. If man is merely wounded and not _____, then he’s still conscious and has a choice of whether to take the medicine.
9. The Calvinist, on the other hand, taught that when man fell he _____ and therefore isn’t capable by himself of even choosing — much less taking — the medicine of God’s eternal life.
10. Concerning preaching the Gospel, there is the a.) _____ call, which comes through our lips and our mouths as we proclaim the gospel, and the b.) _____ call of the Holy Spirit. The outward call, by itself, is always invariably ineffective and ineffectual. It is only when the outward call of the gospel is _____ by the inward call of the Holy Spirit that the heart is changed, the mind is open, the _____ is transformed. Only then can the recipient of this grace say “it is the voice of my beloved.”
11. As a result of the Holy Spirit’s regenerating power, the newly alive person begins believing in the LORD Jesus Christ; loving Him, seeking to serve Him and _____ of his sins.
12. The LORD identifies this quickening and the resultant capacity to see and understand God’s kingdom as a spiritual rebirth. This is called being _____.
13. The Holy Spirit has to first come and _____ the person who is dead in their trespasses and sins before he or she can, in the words of Jesus “see the Kingdom of God” — let alone enter it.

14. We will be saved only when God reaches in to our hearts and changes them. He is the _____. He is the one who is aggressive. He is the one who reaches to us.
15. Dr. D. James Kennedy: (In our natural condition) we _____ God. The more we know about Him the more we _____ Him.
16. The senate of Dordt said the grace of God is _____. And the work of God is _____.
17. In John 6:44, the word “draw” is a powerful word. It was used of a _____.
18. The word “draw,” in this context, means _____.
19. By rejecting irresistible grace, the Arminians made man and his _____ ultimately sovereign.
20. When Jesus said, “I stand at the door and knock’ the passage was not referring to an individual but to the _____.
21. It is important to note that by “Irresistible Grace” the Calvinists were in no way saying that people cannot resist the grace of God. Quite the contrary, unless God makes us alive not a single one of us would ever _____ resisting it.
22. This issue of saving grace — was it resistible or irresistible? — was at its core a theological battle over who was _____: God or man?

Chapter 12: Perseverance

1. Jesus affirmed God’s absolute sovereignty over everything, including even the evil decisions of His _____.
2. To put it in the vernacular of today: “Once you have been *truly* saved by God, that’s it. Your eternal salvation is _____.”
3. For Arminians, the idea that “once you’re saved, you’re always saved” seems to be a recipe for disaster, an inducement to _____ living and _____.
4. More than a few theologians and Christian authors argue that “_____” is an option for mature believers only, a brass ring for those who want a “better resurrection.” At the end of the day, these same authors insist, the gracious gift that is salvation could very well result in a person who remains a _____ to sin their whole lives while professing to be blood-bought, redeemed sons and daughters of the living God. _____ then is incidental to the Christian life and the grace of God does not *necessarily* produce any outward effect.
5. The Arminian party again sided with the _____ against the Reformation, insisting that no man could be truly sure of his

salvation.

6. What are some common things that people point to as “proof” that someone is saved which by themselves, in fact, prove nothing? _____

7. The idea that one is saved by “praying the sinner’s prayer” or “walking the aisle” without the subsequent fruit of a changed life is **not** the Reformed teaching of the “perseverance of the saints” and we stand with them in condemning this teaching as a doctrine of demons. Jesus made it clear that **while the law is not the gospel — the gospel is not**_____.

8. Any teaching that suggests that the Christian is free from the law and may sin as he pleases and still have _____ is a damnable lie and as much a _____ of God’s word as the distortion breathed by the serpent in Eden’s garden.

9. It’s not that the those we find are lost are lost were once saved and then became _____: it’s that they were never truly saved at all. And this is why Jesus will say to them “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!” Jesus is not saying I knew you but then, because of your lawlessness, I have become forgetful. He said I _____ knew you!

10. Individuals can react to the gospel with “_____” which is in fact the only type of repentance the unregenerate heart can muster.

11. People can experience a dimension of _____ as they hear “the good word of God”, taste of the “heavenly gift and the powers of the world to come” and partake of the blessings wrought by the Holy Spirit as they attend a church or live within a Christian family, community or culture **and still go to hell when they die.**

12. The Arminian interpretation leads to one unpleasant and unbiblical conclusion: that there is no hope for the _____.

13. Perseverance of the Saints is no license to_____. It is a _____ and _____, as well as a call to a holy life.

14. The Christian life is a call to _____; growing in the fear and admonition of the LORD. This growth in sanctification is a necessary by-product, the _____ of a converted heart.

15. We do not live holy lives to make ourselves _____ to God or to gain His love.

16. If this is true; if there are no _____ to grace, how can you lose it unless you believe deep down that you have done something — even the smallest thing — to earn it?

17. In short, God would _____ you salvation because you did something to

deserve or earn it.

18. The issue of perseverance of the saints emphasizes, not what man does to keep his salvation, but what Christ has already _____!

19. Many people see their conversion as the moment when all their past sins were forgiven and washed away. But their _____ are somehow different.

20. But while atonement “____-_____” may be necessary to restore relationships and preserve the integrity of human culture, “____-_____” our post-conversion sins are washed away in the same way as those that preceded our relationship with Christ – through His sacrifice on the cross.

21. Our assurance of salvation never rests on what we do, what we accomplish and our own faithfulness, but entirely depends upon God, upon the perfect _____ of Jesus Christ, the _____ that he made and the meditation of our faithful high priest who intercedes for us and the work of His Spirit in our lives. The reason for it is not because of anything we do, but because God interposed with an _____. He made that _____ for Abraham and he makes that _____ for us as well.

22. There are those who will object to this based upon _____, that someone they once knew as a Christian has fallen away from the faith.

23. If we had been among King David’s advisors and had seen all that went on surrounding his relationship with Uriah and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11) we would have been tempted to conclude that David was not a true believer. But we would have been wrong -- as David later demonstrated through his _____.

24. The vast majority Arminius’ followers came to reject “the perseverance of the saints” and instead teach that a person could be saved and then lost, born-again and unborn-again, _____ and then _____.

25. The Calvinists believed that the Arminians’ teaching in this area was once again a direct result of the Remonstrance’s low view of the _____. Because they held that Christ’s sacrifice by itself didn’t satisfy the penalty for anyone’s sin, it was left to the believer to do something to catalyze the process of forgiveness. It then made perfect sense that the believer could make the process _____ as well. And so not only our _____ but also the _____ of our salvation was ultimately dependent on man.

Chapter 13: Evangelism

1. There are two questions that often arise when discussing the reformed view of man and salvation. The first and most common is: 1) "If all this is true, then why bother _____?" and 2) If man is spiritually dead and completely unable to choose life, *how* are we to present God's good news?
2. First, we evangelize because God has _____ us to.
3. Secondly, evangelism is the _____ by which God has purposed to bring His will to pass.
4. God is pleased to use human means to accomplish His gloriously divine and eternal ends. And we have the incredible privilege of being _____ with Christ in bringing to pass the greatest most glorious end imaginable, the redemption of God's elect.
5. Does God specifically need you or me to evangelize? _____ but it is a _____.
6. As a result of free-will theology, much of modern evangelism falsely assumes that God **needs** us to proclaim the gospel. Though they would never say it this way, the impression one gets is that *without us God can do nothing*. Scripture, however, teaches the exact _____.
7. Evangelism is a responsibility and a _____.
8. One of the most common objections Arminians have against Calvinism is thinking that if God is sovereign in election and salvation and man is unable to choose salvation on his own the need for evangelism goes right out the window. Is this true? Give some examples of why or why not.
9. Not only does Calvinism – with its high view of God – demand that we obey the LORD and take the gospel to the four corners of the world; it also guarantees our _____ in the enterprise.
10. The Arminian will often ask, "Why preach to every creature? If God is only going to save His elect, why waste your time sharing with people who have not been appointed unto salvation?" Quite simply, God doesn't _____ us who the elect are.
11. When people say, "Why preach the gospel to every creature when only the elect are going to respond?" there are two answers. First of all it is part of the indictment against the lost that the gospel is preached to them and they don't respond, number one. And number two, part of the gospel is its _____ effect on the culture as a whole. So even unsaved men are affected by the gospel that seeps into their lives.

Chapter 14: The Law of God

1. Much of what passes for ministry today has been compromised with the leaven of humanism. It often treats its audience as autonomous creatures that have every right to sit in judgment on both God and His word – picking out what they like and throwing out the rest. Along with this has come a “_____ -orientated” approach to soul winning.
2. In part, the answer may be, that instead of seeking the elect by putting forth food for the sheep, the preached word of God, which the Holy Spirit uses to convict and convince the elect of their sins, many are seeking the bottom line, _____. And since numbers have often become the standard by which to judge a ministry’s success, and not wanting to _____ and drive people away much of the modern church is not preaching the **sinfulness of man** or the **bloody offense of the cross**.
3. In the sixteenth century, during the heart of the Reformation, Luther warned his contemporaries; he said that anytime the gospel is preached clearly and boldly it will produce _____.
4. Peace and joy are fruits of the gospel. They are not the tree and definitely not the _____. If we really love people, then we need to tell them truth! And what is the truth? That if they are _____, if they have not submitted to Him as LORD and Savior then they are “sinners in the hands of an angry God!”
5. God is not _____ in His love. Promiscuous love throws love around sentimentally without discretion or discernment. God is not that way at all. God’s love has a purpose, the purpose of _____.
6. Without understanding the depth of our _____ and our _____ against a thrice-holy God, the “good news” becomes the “_____ news;” just another twelve-step program in our modern therapeutic culture.
7. Martin Luther explained that presenting a cure without explaining the _____ was a trick and device of the arch-enemy of man.
8. The primary means that God has appointed to bring men to the awareness of the sin and death that rages in their very being is through His law, the _____.
9. The Church of today has a problem with the law of God as found in the Ten Commandments. Many believe it to be antiquated, _____ or part of the _____ and therefore of no use to “New Testament” Christians.
10. If one uses the law of God as a tool for _____

or to earn _____ he will eventually find that at the end of the law there is nothing but death. The law of God was never intended to _____.

11. Less than _____ in 100 professing Christians can quote the Ten Commandments from memory.

12. If the Church does not repent of her lawless, man-centered Gospel, she will continue to reap _____ conversions.

13. How can we – how can you – prepare yourself so that you can effectively share the Gospel with the people that God brings into your life?

Chapter 15: Nine Keys to Evangelism

1. _____ for and love the people to whom you bring the Gospel. Get beyond a perfunctory “thy will be done” _____ prayer. Beseech Him, wrestling in prayer that He might save so-and-so. This is true love and prevailing prayer.

2. Strive to _____ the nature and truth of God in your life and character; to be a living epistle, known and read of all men.

3. Ask God for _____. Proverbs 11:30 says that the one who wins souls is wise. Working with God to see people saved is a wise career choice. For example, there is the _____ mentioned in Hebrews 11:35.

4. Hebrew is a notoriously ambiguous language and this verse can just as easily mean that it takes wisdom _____. We are called to be as gentle as doves but “as wise as serpents” (Matthew 10:16) and nowhere is this more necessary than in the art of _____, particularly when you find yourself amongst wolves. Knowing when to “answer a fool according to his folly” and when not to (Proverbs 26:4 & 5) is just one example of our need for wisdom.

5. _____ the law of God.

6. _____ the word of God, most specifically the Good News of the atonement: the Cross of Calvary. As faithful sowers we should ever be mindful of the _____ – *spora* or “spore” – that carries within it the power, with the Holy Spirit’s help, to produce faith.

7. Be a _____ of the Holy Spirit through both your life and your testimony

8. How do we overcome Satan and the forces of darkness – keeping in mind that in evangelization our battle is in large part with spiritual forces as they strive to _____ so that they cannot

see the light of Christ who is the image of God? (2 Corinthians 4:4) One way is through the word of our _____ . (Revelation 12:11)

9. _____ your audience into a place of doubt! To put it another way, to get them to doubt the efficacy of their idolatrous _____, the “babbling tower” their flesh, the world and the devil have created for them.
10. Help your audience acknowledge the _____ that God has already placed in their hearts but that they are desperately working to suppress in their unrighteousness. Take great confidence in knowing that deep down _____ what you are saying to them about God is true.
11. Clearly challenge your audience to _____ and _____ the Gospel; to be reconciled to God.
12. It has been well-said that the chief end of man is to _____.
13. There is one thing that all Biblical scholars can agree has not yet been fulfilled; perhaps the clearest and most universally accepted scriptural “_____” for the consummation of our present age.
14. Jesus is patiently waiting before He returns and “breaks down the tent”, so to speak, of the present cosmos. And why is He waiting? _____
15. The ultimate “tipping point” of the eschaton is the day when the _____ is ushered into His pasture!

Answers for Chapter 1: Opening/Overture

1. (various) 2. How do I escape the righteous judgment of God? 3. God 4. If man has to do something – further if man has the ability to do something – that contributes to his salvation, then at least some of the glory (no matter how infinitesimal) would be credited to the person who cooperated with God in their redemption.

Answers for Chapter 2: The History of the Debate

1. People just accept the contradictions or try to ignore them. 2. The issues are too important to just gloss over; touching as they do on some of the most important issues of life. 3. ...condemned to repeat it 4. mistakes

Answers for Chapter 3: Church History

1. Arianism; Arius. 2. Nicea; 325 A.D. 3. Athanasius 4. overreaction 5. (various) e.g. general antipathy toward history in our culture; the idea that with Constantine and the acceptance of Christianity by the Roman Empire the church became fully corrupt and so its councils are to be viewed with suspicion or as being irrelevant; spread of fundamentalism and its “Bible only,” “No Creed but Christ” mentality; postmodernism with its “truth is whatever I think it is” which tends to denigrate tradition and the opinions of others.

Answers for Chapter 4: Free-Will Controversy

1. Response 2. God, man, and the Gospel 3. free will 4. the sin of Adam 5. moralist 6.

Greco-Roman culture 7. Original Sin 8. Savior 9. Heretics 10. Three 11. Roman Catholic
12. Augustine against Pelagius 13. teacher, physician, resurrected from the dead 14.
monergistic

Answers for Chapter 5: The Reformation

1. Manifesto 2. Monergistic vs. Synergistic 3. *syn*: with, together with, at the same time; *ergos*:
work. *Synergism* then means *working together with*; man and God work together to save man. 4.
“alone,” or “single,” or “one” work; the idea that God alone saves without the cooperation of the
individual. 5. No 6. works-based salvation 7. Original sin 8. Wounded 9. Reward 10. One
or alone 11. Born-again 12. Dead 13. Trent; anathema 14. Robbing 15. To God Alone Be the
Glory 16. For the Gospel (the “good news”) to be truly good it has to be effectual, it has to have
the power to save and not just offer the possibility of salvation; a salvation, by the way, that
according to the Arminian formulation can be lost. It also puts the burden of salvation on man
(asking him to do something that he cannot do on his own steam) and presents an inaccurate
view of God’s power, sovereignty and glory. 17. semi-Pelagians

Answers for Chapter 6: Arminianism vs. Calvinism

Semi-pelagian 2. “Protest” 3. rejection 4. Five Points of Calvinism 5. synergistic, Roman
Catholicism, determining 6. Depravity 7. Election 8. Atonement 9. Grace 10. Saints
11. Father, Son, Holy Spirit, grace, good works 12. Calvinism 13. Salvation, sin and Satan,
Pelagianism, semi-Pelagianism 14. Yes, unregenerate, will and heart 15. ability; self,
approximate 16. presuppositions 17. boasting

Answers for Chapter 8: Total Depravity

1. trial 2. saving 3. wounded 4. dead, slave, able, contrary, death 5. anthropology 6. bound
7. credit, Fall 8. law 9. descend 10. may, can 11. ability, permission 12. permission,
commanded 13. death 14. disposition 15. depth, power 16. scope, wounded 17. Christ
18. opposite, program, determine 19. resurrection 20. monergistic 21. birth, creation,
resurrection, passive 22. flesh profits nothing

Answers for Chapter 9: Unconditional Election

1. precede 2. elected 3. counter-intuitive 4. church, the elect 5. Because
6. covenantal love 7. conditional 8. pelagianism 9. ratification 10. object, object
11. fore-love 12. unconditional 13. negative 14. no flesh 15. special love 16. deserves
17. hell, heaven, ourselves 18. unjust or unfair 19. fair, palatable 20. grant him the grace
21. withholding 22. Caesarea, babes, choice 23. rights 24. anybody, real 25. man, original sin

Answers for Chapter 10: Limited Atonement

1. Limited Atonement 2. power, intent 3. kingdom 4. suffered, pay the penalty
5. No 6. figurative 7. context 8. Messiah, all tribes, all nations 9. sheep 10. The elect
11. They were not his sheep 12. The whole world, given 13. be saved, or go to heaven
14. most, in full 15. works 16. Prevenient, resuscitation

Answers for Chapter 11: Irresistible Grace

YES!!!!!! 2. saving 3. sovereign 4. Yes 5. No 6. by-stander, man 7. after 8. Fall, dead
9. died spiritually 10. outward, inward, accompanied, will 11. repenting 12. born-again
13. regenerate 14. seeker 15. hate 16. irresistible, monergistic 17. drag net 18. Drag 19. will
20. Church 21. stop 22. sovereign

Answers for Chapter 12: Perseverance

1. enemies
2. secure
3. carnal, compromise
4. LORDship, slave, Good fruit
5. Roman Catholic Church (Church of Rome)
6. being baptized, praying the sinner's prayer, walking the aisle or in some other way responding to an altar call, shaking the pastor's hand, speaking in tongues, being on the church rolls, attending church, etc.
7. lawless
8. remission, perversion
9. unsaved, never
10. worldly sorrow
11. enlightenment
12. backslider
13. Sin, confidence, assurance
14. holiness, evidence
15. acceptable
16. conditions
17. owe
18. accomplished
19. post-conversion sins
20. man-ward, God-ward
21. propitiation, perfect sacrifice, oath
22. personal experience
23. repentance
24. adopted, divorced
25. atonement, ineffectual, salvation, preservation

Answers for Chapter 13: Evangelism

1. evangelizing
2. commanded
3. means
4. co-laborers
5. No, privilege
6. opposite
7. privilege
8. No, it is absolutely not true. Some of the greatest in-gatherings in history occurred under the ministry of Calvinists: think Whitefield, Spurgeon and more recently Dr. Kennedy's Evangelism Explosion. The fact is that true Calvinists love to evangelize because they know that God commands them to and also because they understand that it is the very means that God has appointed to save those whom He wants to save.
9. success
10. tell
11. leavening

Answers for Chapter 14: The Law of God

1. results
2. numbers, offend
3. conflict
4. root, outside of Christ
5. promiscuous, redeeming us and changing us
6. sin, offense, OK
7. Disease
8. Ten Commandments
9. harsh, Old Testament
10. self-righteousness, heaven, save
11. one
12. false
13. Pray and prepare for divine appointments and open hearts, for love for the lost and for wisdom in knowing how to minister to people; memorize and meditate on the law and look for relevant and winsome ways to apply the law to people's lives so that the Holy Spirit can use it to bring the conviction of sin; practice sharing your testimony; learn about the various apologetical methods and gather material that will support each of them; etc.

Answers for Chapter 15: Nine Keys to Evangelism

1. Pray, hyper-Calvinistic
2. reflect
3. wisdom, better resurrection
4. to win souls, ambassadorship
5. Present
6. Sow, seed
7. vessel
8. blind the minds of the unbelieving, testimony
9. Move, belief-system
10. truth, they know
11. repent, believe
12. glorify God and enjoy Him forever
13. tipping point
14. That none of us would perish but that all come to repentance.
15. last lost sheep