

Ephesians 2013 Lessons 27 and 28

Ephesians 1:3-14

Election, Predestination
and Calvinism

Believer's Adjustment

- *Psalms 66:18 If I perceive sin in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*
- *Psalms 32:5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*
- *1 Cor 11:31 But if we judge ourselves rightly, we should not be judged.*
- *1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all other unrighteousness.*

Invitation: If you have never trusted in Christ Alone for salvation...

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God*; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- Rom. 11:6, *"But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace."*
- Gal. 2:21, *"I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."*

- *Gal. 3:24, "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith."*
- *1 Corinthians 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'*
- *John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."*
- *"Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" Acts 16:31*

Ephesians 1:3--14

- 3. *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*
- 5 *Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*

- *6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*
- *7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*
- *8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;*
- *9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:*

- *10 That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:*
- *11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*
- *12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.*

- *13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*
- *14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."*

IS CALVINISM BIBLICAL? A BIBLICAL EXAMINATION OF CALVINISM AND ITS TEACHINGS

BY Cooper P. Abrams, III

Introduction

For centuries, Calvinism has been one of the most debated subject along with the doctrines of election and predestination as taught by the modern Reformed movement. The importance of the subject is manifest in that it deals directly with the doctrine of salvation by grace.

These two doctrines are widely debated by some professing Christians who have divided themselves into opposing camps of "Calvinists" and "Arminians." However, there is a third group that is often overlooked. This group is made up of those who accept neither of these extreme views and reject the tenets of both positions.

Those who believe the Bible to be the inerrant and infallible Word of God will take its doctrines seriously. The true biblist¹ appeals to God's word to find His truth in the doctrines of predestination and election, freewill and human responsibility.

He will insist, that based on God's word, the truth of the matter can be absolutely discerned.

To understand the problem, let us look at the various positions held, the terms used, and a brief history of the topic.

A Biblical Look at the Five Points of Calvinism (TULIP)

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

T - Total depravity of man.

U - Unconditional election.

L - Limited atonement.

I - Irresistible grace.

P - Perseverance of the saints.

TOTAL DEPRAVITY

The first article of Calvinism deals with man as a sinner and teaches that a man is “totally depraved,” unable, having no ability to receive salvation. The Bible clearly teaches that man is born in a spiritually corrupt state that affects his mind, intelligence, emotion, and will. The Bible calls this state “unrighteousness” which means not being right with God. When Adam sinned, he brought into the world both spiritual and physical death and passed his sinful nature to all his progeny. Ephesians 2:1 states man in his natural unregenerated state is indeed “... dead in trespasses and sins.”

On this truth, biblical Christians certainly agree. However, the Scriptures do not use the words “total depravity” nor teach this concept in the sense that the Calvinist does. Depravity means to be corrupt, debase, impaired, perverted, etc. The Calvinist goes to the extreme by applying this word to man’s sinful condition and concludes that man’s free will has no part in his coming to Christ and receiving salvation.

The Scriptures clearly teach that man apart from God’s intervention, cannot savingly come to Christ.

God says “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23) and that man’s righteousness is as “filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6)

Paul revealed the state of the carnal mind “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Romans 8:7-8) But that does not mean that a man cannot with God’s intervention believe and be saved. 12

Certainly, salvation cannot be merited or earned as Ephesians 2:8-9 teaches,

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

Therefore, a man cannot “will” himself to be saved because in his natural state he has no righteousness nor seeks God.

Jesus explained that, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:44)

Jesus' words reveal how an unrighteous man can be saved and receive salvation by faith. It is God the Father who draws the sinner to salvation.

This is the principle that Calvinism confuses and carries to the extreme.

What the Calvinist does not accept or understand is that man can respond to God, using his will, to accept salvation when convicted by the Holy Spirit. Without the intervention of the Holy Spirit, a person does not seek God or desire to receive God's forgiveness.

However, when the Holy Spirit illuminates the man's mind and reveals his lost state, God also gives that man the ability to respond with his will and be saved. The same man can also reject God's offer of salvation, and God will allow him to do so not forcing a man to accept what he does not want.

Carrying man's lost condition to the extreme, the Calvinist teaches that God, exercising His sovereignty, first elected and then decreed certain individuals to salvation in time past.

According to them, Christ's death was not for all people as 1 John 2:2 states, "And he is the propitiation (full payment) for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2:2)

In order to support their theology they conclude that Jesus only died for the few whom He chose to save. This belief directly contradicts the clear statement of 1 John 2:2.

God then, according to Reformed Theology, extended "irresistible" grace to those whom He elected, meaning that God saves these people without any action on their part. In other words, God forced them to be saved.

Following their baseless logic therefore, a man has nothing to do with his receiving salvation because God chooses to save him and make him believe.

In other words "Election is God's choice for some persons."³⁷ This logically means that God does not elect to save anyone else but His few chosen "elect."

Even though the Scripture repeatedly, in presenting the Gospel, proclaims that a man must believe in order to be saved, the Calvinist teaches that only those whom God has predestined to be saved can believe and only when God supernaturally causes them to believe.

UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

The concept of unconditional election purports that God predestined who He would save and who He would not allow to be saved by withholding His grace, thus condemning them to the Lake of Fire. Biblical Christians have strong objections to this tenet of Calvinism. The reason is that unconditional election means that God chose to save some and not to save others. Those who reject Calvinism contend that this belief is an attack on God's very character and nature.

This belief contradicts the biblical teaching that Jesus Christ died and paid the sin debt of all men (1 John 2:2); and that God ". . . will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. 2:4); and that God's nature is love, which means seeking the best for all men (1 John 4:7-8, 16). These Scriptures and others refute the idea that God chooses to give life to most of mankind and gives them life in order to send them to hell. No-where in the Word of God does He say that He decreed who would be saved and who would not be saved.

Men are saved based on their acceptance or rejection of God's gift of grace which He offers to all men. Romans 1:18-23 plainly teaches that man is condemned because he refuses to believe God and accept God's grace. Jesus clearly stated "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." (John 3:19-20) The light without question is Jesus Christ and the Gospel.

Jesus said that men choose to reject the “light” because their deeds are evil, and they refuse to come to the “light” because the “light” reproves their sin. The basis of man’s condemnation is not God, but the man himself who knows the truth and refuses to believe and submit himself to his Creator and Savior. Proverbs 1:29 tells us, “For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD” (Proverbs 1:29) Those who hated the knowledge of God chose not to believe and fear God and thus they condemned themselves; God has always offered grace and mercy to all who will accept it.

LIMITED ATONEMENT

Limited atonement is another natural false assumption of the Calvinist. Calvinists assume that if only those who God has predestined to be saved will be saved, then God limits atonement to only those He elects. All men therefore cannot be saved because God's grace is offered only to those who He has chosen. This is a teaching based on human logic and not on God's word.

1 Peter 1:2 explains who are the elect. “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.” (1 Peter 1:2)

God says He elects according to His “foreknowledge” meaning His knowing in the future.

God is omniscient and knows all things past, present, and future. He knew who would believe, and thus He elected what salvation would be provided for those who believed.

The election was not for who would be saved, but what salvation would provide to those who accepted His grace. More will be said about this later.

IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

Being true to their human reasoning, the Calvinists conclude that grace then must be irresistible. If God is sovereign and forces a man to be saved, then the man cannot resist. Those to whom God elected to save will be saved a part from any action on their part. Thus, a man whom God has elected cannot resist God's grace and will be saved.

God says “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:3-4)

The Scriptures declare that God’s very nature is to love. God’s love is not conditional on a person meriting or deserving His love. No one deserves God’s mercy and grace. But God offers His love unconditionally to all who will believe. God says clearly His desire is that all men come to the knowledge of the truth. This precludes there being anyone whom God has excluded from His offer of grace.

God wants everyone to be saved. If grace is irresistible, as the Calvinist teaches, then why does He not, as a loving God and Creator, save everyone? The answer is plain that most men do not want to believe and they prevent God from giving them His free gift of salvation because they love their sin more than their souls.

PRESERVATION OF THE SAINTS.

The Calvinists continue in using human reasoning to confuse the doctrine of the security and assurance of salvation. They change the words the Bible uses of "assurance" and teach "the perseverance of the saints." (See 1 Thess. 1:5; Heb. 6:11, 10:22)

Calvinism correctly teaches that once saved, a person cannot lose their salvation. However, the term "perseverance of the saints" by definition presents a false understanding of the "security of the believer." Their word "perseverance" means to

"continue on a course of action" or refers to steadfastness.

Their word implies that God will not allow a believer to "backslide" or fall into sin. This may seem to be a minor point to differentiate between "perseverance" and "security," but the words have different meanings. A believer can and will sin, and can sin to the point that God will chasten him and even take the believers life if he will not repent. (See 1 John 1:8-10) The believer is assured that he is "secure" in Christ and will go to heaven.

Once saved, a person cannot be lost because he did nothing to earn his salvation and cannot do anything to keep it or lose it. (See Rom. 3:20, 27-28, 4:2, 8:38-39; 9:11, 11:6; 1 Cor. 1:29-31; Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 3:3-5)
Biblically, salvation is totally the work of God and once saved a person is kept secure by the power of God unto salvation.

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

The Bible clearly teaches that a man can "backslide" and can allow sin to rule his life. Hebrews 12:6-11, 1 Corinthians 11:32, and 1 John 5:16 teach that God will chasten an unrepentant, sinning believer even unto death to end his rebellion. The Biblical doctrine is the "security" not the "perseverance" of the saints. A saint of God can fail God, but God will not fail the saint. God gives eternal life to those who by faith repent and receive His free gift of salvation. Once saved the believer cannot be lost because God has forgiven all their past, present, and future sins.

Thus, a true believer is secure in God's grace. When a man receives Christ he becomes a new creature, a saved child of God and is indwelt by the spirit of God. He cannot be lost once saved. (See 2 Cor. 5:17) When the unrepentant believer dies he will in eternity be judged but not to condemnation. Christ's judgment of believers is for reward, not condemnation. Thus, the unrepentant sinner who dies will receive no reward as 1 Corinthians 3:14-15 states. "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he

himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” (1 Corinthians 3:14-15)
None of the tenets of TULIP meet the biblical test and they present a false view of the doctrines of election, God’s grace, and of salvation.

The Misuse of Words by the Calvinists

“Whosoever” - “pas” - The word “pas” (whosoever) in John 3:16, Acts 2:21, presents a problem for the Calvinist because the word means “whoever” and “whatever person: no matter who,” and in the verse it means “whoever believes.”⁴²

The Calvinist twists the word to infer it means “all the believing ones of those who were predestinated to believe by God, in contrast to the ones God will not allow to be saved because He withholds His grace from them.”

However this is not substantiated by the Greek definitions of the words used, or by teachings of the New Testament. "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Acts 2:21) In Acts 2:21, Robertson identifies the phrase "shall call on" as "First aorist middle subjunctive of epikaleo, common verb, to call to, middle voice for oneself in need. Indefinite relative clause with ean and so subjunctive, puncticular idea, in any single case, and so aorist."⁴³ It can accurately be translated as "whatever person would call on the Lord will be saved."

In other words, whatever person would call on the name of the Lord "sozo" (shall be saved), meaning shall be delivered.

In John 3:15-16, the word "pas" as a pronoun modifies the word believes. The verse literally says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever (whatever person or whoever) believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) The Greek dictionary by Arndt-Gingrich says this in the context John 3:15-16 it means "everyone who, whoever."44

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

“World” - kosmos. - The Calvinist insists that the word "world" used in verses such as John 3:16, and 1 John 2:2 does not mean the whole world, but only applies to the elected few who are decreed by God to receive irresistible grace. Note how explicit is 1 John 2:2, "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole (holos "all") world (kosmos)." The word when used with the article refers to the whole of something.

For example: "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. . ." (Acts 11:26) Barnabas and Saul taught at Antioch for one year. If the Calvinist was consistent he would have to translate the verse to mean they assembled for some indefinite or unspecified period of time. However, the use of the modifier "whole" restricts the phrase to mean one complete year.

Further, the word "world" is kosmos and denotes as Arndt-Gingrich states, ". . . in philposph. usage the world as the sum total of everything here, and now. . . 3. as the sum total of all beings above the level of the animals. . . 4. the world as the earth, the planet on which we live. . . b. the as the habitation of mankind. . . .c. the world in contrast to heaven, . . . 5. the world as all mankind, . . b. of all mankind, but especially believers. 8. totality, sum total."45 Note the use of "whole world" in 1 John 5:19 "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

The Calvinist interpretation contradicts the statement of the passage 1 John 2:2. John makes the unmistakable distinction between the whole world and those who are identified as believers. It is a gross misrepresentation of this phrase to limit it to any individuals elected by God through His supposed irresistible grace.

These passages state that Jesus Christ was the full payment, the "propitiation, " for the believer's sins, and also for all mankind. Jesus' suffering and payment for sins was for all of mankind.

Sadly, only those who by faith believe will be saved and receive God free gift of grace. (Eph. 2:8-9)

Does Calvinism give a biblical explanation of election?

The beliefs of the Calvinistic system of theology misinterpret the Bible's teaching on election. However, biblically election does not refer to salvation as they contend, but to what salvation accomplishes in the life of the one who believes.

Election is God's plan for what He desired would be the benefit of those who believed and put their faith in Him.

Election then is God's plan or blueprint of salvation. Election is not what individual God will save, but what salvation would mean to those who accept His grace.

This is explained in Ephesians One.

Verse 3 introduces the subject and content of the discourse. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"

(Ephesians 1:3)

Paul is addressing how wonderful (blessed) is God who has blessed us with spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.

This is addressed to believers to remind them of the blessing of salvation to those "in Christ."

Verses 4-6 explain the blessing that God gives to believers and what salvation is to achieve in their lives.

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

God has chosen "us," meaning those who are saved, before He created the world, that the believer should be holy (separated) and without blame (forgiven all sins) before Him in love.

God's plan was that before the world existed, to make salvation a blessing to those who believed and received His grace by making those who are saved a part of the family of God, His children.

The verse does not say or even imply that God chose which individual He would save, but to what salvation would impart to them. God is stating His blueprint for salvation.

He is not saying that He is choosing some and rejecting others. There is not one hint of such a thought.

Verse 5 says God predestinated that believers would be "unto" (eis) the children adopted by Jesus Christ by the "good pleasure of His purpose will."(eudokia)

In other words, God purposed that believers would be the adopted children of God. The statement does not address who God would save, but the relationship of the believer who is saved.

Verse 6 states "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." (Ephesians 1:6)

God's plan that He chose, was that those who are saved would be holy, without blame, and they would be the adopted children of God.

Therefore it is His plan that is in view, not who would He would save.

His plan, which is the blessing that is being proclaimed, is that those who by faith received God's gift of grace are "to the praise of the glory of his grace."

It is God's grace, meaning His mercy and love, that are to His praise and glory.

God is glorified in His benevolence (grace) and love toward sinful men.

Verse 7 continues, proclaiming the basis of redemption, that God's plan is that the believer is made acceptable unto God through Jesus Christ's blood, being forgiven of his sins through the distribution (kata) of the "riches of His grace."

That certainly does not sound like God is limiting His grace, but rather abundantly offering it to those who will accept it.

Neither this passage nor the New Testament says God elected or chose who would be saved or to whom He would deny His grace. The glory of His grace is that it is freely offered to all.

This can be seen in the many passages of God's word stating that Christ died for all men.

Calvinism teaches that election or God's gift of grace is limited to a select few whom God chooses to save.

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the whole world and offers salvation to all who will believe. Note that this truth is plainly taught in the following verses:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Romans 5:18).
"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9).

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

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

It is understood that those that hold to limited atonement often counter by saying "the world" and "all men" does not mean the entire world or all men, but refers only to the "elect."

Surely, such a line of thinking is based on man's faulty reasoning and not on sound hermeneutical principles.

The clear meaning of the word "world" (cosmos), as used in the Bible, means the whole earth and everyone on it or the lost world.

It is never used in the Bible as referring to God's elect or those who are saved.

The word "all" is all-inclusive.

"All men" encompasses everyone.

If God had wanted to limit the scope of salvation, He could have easily chosen a better word than "all", "world" and "every" man!

He chose these words because they convey the meaning that God intended.

He paid the price for all men's sin everywhere in the entire world! He bought with His own blood the right to offer all men salvation.

Limited atonement would imply he only suffered for those that will be saved, and this clearly an unbiblical teaching.

The Calvinist must disagree with many portions of God's Word to continue to teach that Christ's death was limited to only a few men who would be saved.

Matthew 7:13-14 and Romans 3:10-26 explains why men are lost and are condemned to hell.

Romans 1:18-22 says:

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

and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom. 1:18-22)

The verse says that God's wrath is revealed from heaven against men's sin and that man holds the truth in unrighteousness.

It states that God has revealed Himself to all men and therefore all men are without excuse.

This begs the question . . . "Why would God reveal Himself to all men and base His wrath on the fact that men know the truth, but reject it, IF some men could not respond to God's revelation of Himself?"

Furthermore, the Calvinist must conclude that when he preaches the Gospel and presents salvation to his listeners, he is doing so "tongue in cheek."

He must admit he is offering something that some hearing him cannot receive because God will not permit them to.

I listened to a popular radio preacher eloquently speaking on the love of God for sinners for about fifteen minutes and then tell his audience that if they would believe in Jesus Christ they would be saved.

Yet, as a Calvinist, his teaching contradicts his proclaiming of receiving salvation based on whether a person would believe. This radio and television preacher, because of his belief in Calvinism, does not believe that most who hear his messages can be saved because he believes God has chosen to withhold grace to most of the world and thus condemned them without any hope of salvation. The Gospel then becomes "Good News", only to the select few.

The others, whom the Calvinist says are born for hell, are wasting their time even hearing of Christ's death, burial and resurrection, because they cannot receive Christ.

They are, according to Calvinism, elected by God to an unalterable course to hell.

I heard John MacArthur on the radio clearly and passionately present the Gospel.

He calls his programs "Grace to You," but plainly believes that God's grace is only for the "few." What is baffling me is the fact that he and the Calvinists cannot see the contradiction in their beliefs and message.

For example, in his message on “God so loved the World- Part 1, John 3:16” John Piper states, “For God so loved the world . . .” The most common meaning for world in John is the created and fallen totality of mankind.

John 7:7: “The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.”

John 14:17 states “. . . the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him.”

That is the way John is using world here. The word refers to the great mass of fallen humanity that needs salvation.

It is from the countless number of perishing people from whom the “whoever” comes in the second part of the verse: “. . . that whoever believes in him should not perish.”

The world is the great ocean of perishing sinners from whom the whoever comes.”⁴⁷

Yet, in another message, Piper says about God’s love: “It’s not a saving love that he has for everybody. Else everybody would be saved, since they would not have to meet any conditions, not even faith.”⁴⁸

Can there be any question that what Piper believes and what he preaches is a contradiction?

To labor the point, if Calvinism is true, the Calvinists who preaches, teaches, and witnesses to the Gospel is in reality, according to Calvinism, lying to most of the people who hear him and he's doing so in Jesus' name.

It is a lie to tell a man that if he will believe in Jesus Christ that he will be saved (Romans 10:9-10) while, at the same time, believing and teaching that most cannot accept Christ because God will not allow them to be saved.

According to Calvinism, the unelected are not offered God's grace, and most of the human race is doomed to hell with no chance of redemption.

Technically and practically it is a lie to tell an unelected person he can be saved when one believes he cannot.

In all the literature I have read I have never found where the Calvinists gives any criteria for determining who is elected and who is not.

The reason is clear . . . not even the Calvinist would go that far in their false teaching.

Doctrinal error perverts God's truth and corrupts the very Gospel the Calvinist claims he believes.

The questions the Calvinist must answer are these: "How do you know someone is elected?"

On what basis do you make such a determination?"

Jesus speaking to Israel, warned them that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah would receive less punishment in the day of judgment, because Israel had the privilege of seeing and hearing the Messiah, but rejected Him. (See Matthew 10:15) He said the same thing of Chorazin and Bethsaida warning them of the results of their rejection of their Christ.

"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes" (Luke 10:13).

Jesus stated that their condemnation was because they had seen His miracles and heard His message, but had rejected Him as their Messiah.

This clear truth is but another death blow to the heresy of Calvinism.

Clearly, the people in these two cities, where Jesus presented the Gospel had a choice.

Yet, they willingly rejected the truth that they heard from Jesus Himself.

Because of their rejection, Jesus said they would be judged more harshly than those who had not been privileged to hear the truth. If the people in these cities in Israel could not have responded to the truth after hearing it, because they were predestined by God to Hell, then on what basis could God judge them more harshly than those who had not heard? Doubtlessly, God held them accountable for their sin of rejecting the truth and in doing so verified that they could have responded, but chose not to.

It was not God who chose to send them to hell simply because He could do so and because He decreed their condemnation. The people of these two cities condemned themselves because of their willing unbelief.

THIS one verse concisely sums up the Bible's argument against Calvinism:

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

Chapter Eight

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

The Great Commission stated in Matthew 28:19-20 "to go into all the world and teach the Gospel"

loses its purpose in Calvinistic teaching. Jesus' last words recorded in Acts 1:8 proclaim "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

(Acts 1:8)

Why teach salvation to all the world if God is going to save the

elect anyway? The Calvinist will counter by saying that God commands us to preach the Gospel and that is God's method to reach the elect. Again this is an example of the poor reasoning behind Calvinism and, indeed, a failure in human reasoning. If the Bible teaches that we are to tell all men everywhere they can be saved by trusting in Christ Jesus and God, but in fact has limited the offer to only a select few, then we become liars and God is sending us out into the “uttermost part of the earth” with a tainted message! Please excuse the redundancy in the following statement, but it is a lie for a man

to stand before an audience and preach that God will save those that hear him if they will believe and put their trust in Jesus Christ, if God has elected that some of them cannot respond! God is not the author of lies; Satan is the author of the sin of lying (John 8:44). What a gross insult to the truth and to Almighty God to make God a liar and His evangelists a party to it, though this false teaching.

Does John 11:49-52 teach the limited atonement

According to John 11:49-52, it seems that a good number of Jews, upon seeing Jesus' miracle, believed in Him. One of the

miracles the Jews had just witnessed was raising Lazarus from the grave. Some who saw the miracle went to their religious leaders, seeking advice and to understand what was happening. They were confused because the Jewish rulers were seeking to kill Jesus and denounced Him, even saying He preformed His miracles by demons. Thus, the people saw the miracles He preformed and knew only One from God could do these supernatural acts, and they were confused.

The chief priests and the Pharisees of the Sanhedrin met under the pressure from the people and Rome to keep the

peace. They were worried about the consequences of Jesus' miracles and message upon the people. The people were beginning to look upon Jesus as their new king because of His power. It is important to understand the context. Politically, this could lead to rebellion against the Romans. The rulers of the Jews served at the discretion of their Roman conquerors. Israel was looking for a civil Messiah and not a spiritual One. John 6:15 after the Lord had fed the five thousand, John records, "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by

force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain 32

himself alone." (John 6:15) The Jews, and even His disciples, did not see Him as the Messiah come to suffer and die for the sins of the world. They saw Him as a national hero with great power to throw off the Roman oppression and free Israel from its enemies. (Read John 7:1-5)

Therefore seeing Jesus as a civil Messiah and not really believing He could overcome the Roman rule of Israel, they concluded He was a great threat to them. They reasoned that Jesus should be destroyed before He could bring

down the wrath of Rome on them. Furthermore, religious leaders were afraid also that they would lose their position of power in Israel if Jesus did overthrow the Romans. They were used their supposed concern for Israel to hide their true intent, which was to destroy the Lord who was exposing their gross sin and hypocrisy. (see Matt. 23:13-29) This set the context of verse 51, where John states Caiaphas foretold that they (they Jewish rulers) would sacrifice Jesus to appease the Romans and thus spare the Jews from Roman reprisals.

Please note also that verse 52 is John's addition to Caiaphas' statement. Caiaphas did not make the statement of verse 52. John stated this would be the result of the high priest's prediction. In other words, Caiaphas' and the Sanhedrin's decision was to put Jesus to death, which would in truth, be a sacrifice for the Jews and the whole world. In verse 53, the Jewish rulers made the decision to put Jesus to death to save Israel from the Romans. There is absolutely nothing in this passage that teaches or even hints at Limited Atonement. Yet, this is the tactic of false teachers. I have often wondered, why does

the Calvinist go to such extraordinary lengths to "prove" his false theology. Wouldn't it make more sense just to believe God's word and literally accept His truth?

Does John 12:40 support Calvinism?

"That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and

be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." (John 12:38-41)

The statement God had ". . . blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them" must be interpreted in the analogy of the faith. John quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 which is quoted six times in the New Testament. (Matt. 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; Acts 28:26-27; Rom. 11:8) At first reading it seems that the passage is saying God is the cause of Israel's unbelief because

He blinded their eyes so they could not see and be saved and healed. However, this interpretation is inconsistent with other statements of God's desire to see all men believe and be saved. God cannot contradict Himself, so this is not the correct interpretation. God states that His desire is that none perish and all come to repentance. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count 33 slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9) It would be a contradiction of

God's word for Him to desire that no one perish, and then to blind their eyes to the truth, thus preventing them from believing and being saved. Therefore, we must look closer for God's meaning.

Jesus explained why men are condemned, saying, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." (John 3:19-20) Why did that Jesus say men reject the light? He says it is because their

deeds are evil and they reject the truth because it exposes and reproves them of their sin. Note that Jesus plainly states that this is the reason that men are condemned. He does not say, nor does the Bible anywhere say, that God condemns men inadvertently by decreeing their condemnation to the Lake of Fire by withholding His grace. Nowhere does God say He predetermined and elected anyone to spend eternity in hell by withholding His grace and mercy. God is love and that false teaching of limited atonement contradicts the very nature of God who desires all men to be saved.

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

God did blind their eyes and hardened their hearts, but it was because they refused to believe. In other words, they refused to believe in God and therefore, He honored their desire and stopped seeking to bring them to salvation. What He blinded their eyes to was to spiritual truth their harden hearts would not accept. The unsaved do not understand God's word or spiritual things. Paul explains this saying, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Corinthians 2:14)

God will not let the lost man see more than the truth of the Gospel. Only the saved born again believer who has the new nature and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit can see the deep things of God. "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Corinthians 2:10) There is no support in this passage for God's decreeing to not offer His grace to mankind. Does John 15:16 teach that God only chose some for salvation? "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring

forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever
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ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.” (John 15:16)

Always in interpreting God's word, one must consider the context of the statement, that is, who is being addressed and what is the situation. Jesus was speaking to His disciples whom He had chosen. (John 6:70, 13:18, 15:19). He was not making a general statement as to their salvation. Jesus is addressing saved people, except for Judas as John 6:70 states. Jesus was expressing His choosing them for service so that

they would "go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." Furthermore, He promised to fulfill their requests in prayer for help in fulfilling His commission to them. The choosing was to service...not to salvation as the words state. One of the most serious mistakes made by those that misinterpret God's word is to ignore biblical hermeneutical principles of interpretation. The context, grammar, analogy of the faith, historical and cultural details are vital to making a proper interpretation. Ignoring these principles is the foundation of false doctrines such as Calvinism.⁴⁹

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

In this verse, God commands "all" men "everywhere" to repent. As shown earlier, the use of the words "all" and "everywhere" makes it undoubtedly clear that this command is not limited to a select few, but to everyone,

everywhere and none are excluded. This passage teaches that man is responsible and will be judged for his sins. The basis of this judgment is the fact that Christ came into the world and brought salvation. Taking away man's responsibility to receive Christ as Savior takes away a man's chance to be saved. Taking away God's offer of grace leaves God without a basis for judgment. God cannot unjustly condemn a man for not receiving something he was unable to receive. Revelation 20:12 states, that at the final judgment of the lost, the unsaved will be judged according to their works, and not because God

decreed their damnation by not offering them grace. How could a just God, by His sovereign choice, judge men according to their works when He had decreed them only able to do sinful works, since He had denied salvation to them? God says, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:18) The false conclusion of Calvinism is that some cannot be saved, because God decreed their damnation. This verse says the unsaved are condemned because they would not believe. Calvinism

denies this biblical truth. The teaching of the Bible regarding the nature of God shows us that He cannot be just if He decrees some to hell without the possibility of their accepting or

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rejecting God.

Going back to the many verses stating that Christ died for the sins of the "world," one must assume that Christ's death was for the of salvation of those who believe and at the same time the grounds of condemnation for those who do not believe⁵⁰. The basis of man's condemnation is that man is a sinner and justly deserves hell. That is mirrored by the marvelous

love of God that offers man redemption, but it does not force him to receive it. If a man, under the convicting and enabling ministry of the Holy Spirit responds, his sins are forgiven completely; he becomes a child of God and receives eternal life. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where [emphasis added] to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men , in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).

Does Romans 8:29-30 support Calvinism?

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

There is much debate over what God's foreknowledge means. The word "foreknow" is the Greek word "proginsko" ("pro" = before and "gingko" means "to know"). The definition of the word is simple, meaning "to know beforehand."

God is omniscient and knows all things past, present and future. God is not subject to time and sees all things as present. The problem is that the Calvinist defines foreknowledge as being determinative. In other words, the Calvinists conclude that if God fore knows something, it means He causes it to happen. In Romans 8:29, the Lord used two words to convey His truth. He said, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate." The wording of the verse communicates two separate actions. One, God knew through His omniscience who would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Second, those He foreknew would believe, He predestinated "to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ." If foreknowledge was causative He would not have stated that He predestinated what they would become. Because God knows the future ahead of time, it does not mean He makes it happen. In His foreknowledge he also knows what would happen under different circumstances. For example, in 1 Samuel 23:12, David asked the Lord if the men of Keilah would hand him over to Saul. God replied that they would hand him over to Saul. However, it never happened. David and his men left and went into the

mountains of Ziph. God's foreknowledge is simply that He is omniscient and knows all things without the limitation of time. But God's foreknowledge does not make an event happen. Proper hermeneutical principles would dictate that a passage be interpreted literally, observing the definition of the words and their grammatical construction within the sentences. In other words, we must take the statement

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literally at its face value.

Commenting on the word

"foreknowledge" Barnes says:

"The literal meaning of the word cannot be a matter of dispute. It

denotes, properly, to know beforehand; to be acquainted with future events."51

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

The word "conformed" means "to be made unto like fashion." God's plan is that believers are to be

made in like fashion to Christ, meaning to be like Christ and to live godly lives.

1 John 3:2 states that believers will be like Christ, "we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Election then explains God's plan for those who believe and whom He saves. God's election did not pertain to which individuals would be saved, but what to salvation would bring to those who are saved.

Paul, in Romans 8, states several blessings that God's predestined plan gives the believer. Please note that these truths are in the context of Romans 8:28-29. The believer becomes a spiritual being

as Christ, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." (Romans 8:9) Additionally, Paul explains that the ones who believe are made joint heirs with Jesus Christ. "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (Romans 8:17) Romans 8:29 explains that this is God's plan as to what believers become in Christ. Ephesians 2:10, states "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which

God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Election or "fore-ordination" established the result of salvation for those who will believe in Jesus Christ.

It ordained that those who believe would be made alive (given eternal life) and declared in God's favor forever. The Calvinist, in his blind sided view of Scripture, concludes that this verse means election is to salvation by God. Election rightly refers to the plan of what salvation accomplishes for the believer, not to whom God

offers His grace, or from whom He withholds it.

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

The context of verse 29-30 is clear. God is talking about a Christian living within the purposes

of God. He is referring to His plan for believers. He is certainly not telling us that He chooses only to save certain individuals and chooses to condemn 37 the rest to Hell. The passage does not say or even infer that idea. In other words, God is saying He is in control of all that salvation is deemed to accomplish in the life of a believer. It is God's plan that whatever happens to the believer will work out for good. Furthermore, the verse says this is applicable to those who are "called according to his purposes". Called to what purposes? The answer is the part of His purpose that all things work for good in a believer's

life. The verse does not address who will be allowed to receive salvation, but the circumstances of life that the believer faces and their result. God is saying that believers are called by Him to live according to His plan. It is the plan of what God purposed salvation to accomplish that is in view; not who would be saved.

Verses 29-30 continue the discussion and state that God predestined, or to say it another way, God planned that believers were to be conformed to the image of Christ. That means to grow or strive to live like Christ. Christ is the standard that believers are to live by and judge

their lives. Again, the verse is not talking about initial salvation but rather God's plan for the believer after salvation.

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

assured that God will carry out His plan.

In 1 John 5:13, the Lord bases assurance of salvation on one's belief in the name of the Son of God. The verse says, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." The basis of assurance of salvation given in the New Testament is one's belief in Jesus Christ. It is never presented as being based on election to salvation by God. A person knows he is saved because he truly believes in Jesus Christ, not

because he was elected to salvation by God. There is not one word, stated or implied in Romans 8:29-30 that says God predestined some to salvation and the rest He condemned to Hell.