

Ephesians 2013 Lessons 031 and 032

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.

Does Ephesians 1 support the Calvinistic view of election?

Ephesians 1 is another passage the Calvinist misuses to teach God chooses to save some and condemn others.

Let us examine the passage biblically:

Ephesians 1:3-12:

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

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10 That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."

This passage in Ephesians deals with God's plan for the believer who is saved by faith.

Verse 3 introduces the discourse and states that God has blessed believers with "spiritual blessings in heavenly places."

Note that the word "blessings" is plural; therefore, it is referring not to a single blessing, but to multiple blessings.

Verse 4 continues stating the believer is chosen in Christ before the foundations of the world to be holy and without blame before Him in love.

The verse does not say a person is chosen "to" Christ but "in" Christ.

The significance of using "in" instead of "to" means that the person who is saved and "in" Christ is chosen to accomplish a purpose of God.

God is revealing what redemption would accomplish in the believer's life.

His plan is that, through His love, God chose that believers would stand before Him.

Specifically, the passage says ". . . that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." (Ephesians

1:4b-6)

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

Further, God predestinated through His plan that the believer would become an adopted child in the Lord Jesus Christ, which was God's good pleasure to grant.

God is explaining that those who are saved become His children and part of His heavenly family. (See Col. 1:12, 3:24; Heb. 9:15; 1 Pet. 3-4)

The believer then is elected to be to the praise and glory of His grace.

All this God elected so that the believer becomes accepted in the "beloved" meaning Jesus Christ.

This passage does not say that God chose these to be saved, but rather He chose what they would become when they were saved.

As in Romans 8:29-30, this passage explains that God's plan for believers in salvation is what is being addressed.

These passages are not saying that God made a sovereign choice to call some to salvation and withhold that call from others.

This passage does not state that God elected some to be born destined for hell, but rather presents God's plan for the believer's life in Christ.

Verse 9, reveals that this was a mystery, which is a truth not previously revealed, that in the fullness of time, His plan was that He would gather together in one, all things in Christ (v10).

In the Old Testament, God instituted the nation of Israel to be His witness to the world and to be the people to whom the Messiah would be born.

In Ephesians 1, God is revealing His previously undisclosed plan for the institution of the local church, which is the Bride and Body of Jesus Christ on earth.

The special relationship with God, being in His family, was not offered to Israel.

The word "family" is found seventy three times in the Old Testament, but it is never used to refer to Israel as God's family.

Israel was never called the "the children of God."

The believers in this dispensation of the Church Age are called the children of God six times.

Believers today are in a special dispensation of being in the Body and Bride of Jesus Christ. (See Eph. 5:30, Rev. 21:9, 22:17)

This is the truth God that reveals in this passage.

He is certainly not stating that He only offers salvation to a select few who He elects to receive grace.

Verse 11 further explains that God's plan is that He willed or predestined "That we should be of his glory, who first trusted in Christ" (v12).

Believers are to bring glory to God, and this was a purpose of His plan or what God elected for those that 43 would believe.

Verses 12-13, which are addressed to believers, say, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13)."

It is noteworthy that those who are saved are not sealed with the "Holy Spirit of promise" until they believe. This is an important point.

Surely, if God had chosen them to be saved before the world existed, then in His sovereignty, He would have sealed them to salvation before they believed.

Ephesians 1 is not saying God predestined some individuals to be saved and others lost.

The passage states that God predestinated that all who believe would be saved and subsequently "sealed" with the "spirit of promise," meaning that they would not be lost. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

Does 1 Peter 2:8-10 Support Calvinism?

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

One major error of Calvinism is that it interprets the scriptures with the presupposition that Calvinism is a correct view.

This eisegetical hermeneutic imposes an interpretation of the passage that fits this preconceived premise.

The interpretation of a passage must be based on the definition of its words, grammatical construction, analogy of the faith, and its context. If these principles of interpretation are ignored it will produce an incorrect meaning.

Applying proper principles of interpretation, note that the verse states that Christ to the unbeliever is ". . . a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient." (2 Peter 2:8)

In other words, these people to whom this verse is referring heard the word and stumbled at it.

The word "stumble" is the Greek word "proskopto" and means to "strike or surge against."

They heard God's truth, yet they were deliberately disobedient to it.

They knew it was God's word, but they refused to accept Him or His word.

God then says ". . . whereunto they were appointed."

The word "whereunto" refers to God's plan, in which case their rejection of God's word results in their ruin.

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

The passage cannot be said to support the idea that God is revealing who He decreed to be appointed to condemnation.

The condemnation from God resulted because the person was disobedient to God. (See verses 7 and 8)

That is what 44 these verses state.

Note that the disobedience was followed by condemnation.

The passage is not stating that God refused to offer His grace which resulted in the person being elected to be eternally lost.

It plainly states the reason for their condemnation was that they were disobedient to God, not because He decreed they would be lost.

If God decreed their condemnation He would not have referred to their disobedience as having any significance.

God is not the cause of man's disobedience, but it is man's love of sin and refusal to bow in faith to God that brings condemnation.

Then 1 Peter 2:9 says ". . . But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people . . ."

The misuse of 1 Peter 2 is another good example of the error of Calvinism.

The Calvinist sees the word "chosen" and concludes that this is referring to their view that God in the past decreed in His sovereignty whom He would save and who He would not.

They believe that God has chosen who He will allow to receive Him and from whom He will withhold His grace.

The ones chosen are the "elect," and the one's not elected, God condemns to the Lake of Fire with no chance of salvation.

However, this is a false premise that is not found in God's word.

The Calvinist does not use a correct exegetical approach to interpretation which finds the meaning within the words of the statement.

1 Peter 2:9-10 contextually states what the believer is chosen to, not who would be chosen.

The verse states that the believer is appointed to be a part of a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and a peculiar people."

Note that each of the words used describes what the believer is chosen to, and not addressing individuals, but groups or classes of saved people.

An individual cannot be described as a "chosen generation."

A "chosen generation" is not referring to an individual, but people within a time frame.

A "royal priesthood" is referring to a class of people.

Clearly, a "holy nation" cannot be applied to an individual, but to all believers, and a "peculiar people" is referring to humans considered as a group of indefinite numbers.

1 Peter 2:8-10 exegetically gives no support to Calvinism.

Like all the other passages, the Calvinist imposes his false view on these verses to support his faulty human idea.

This passage is revealing God's plan; not who would be saved or from whom He would withhold His grace.

Does 2 Peter 1:10-11 support Calvinism?

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

The Calvinists have distorted the meaning of this verse and passage to support the false idea that the "elect" are those specially chosen by God to receive His grace and that only those whom He has predestined can be saved.

To find the true meaning of this verse, carefully and exegetically look at the subject and words of the 45 verses.

The context of the passage is shown in verses 1-9, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Peter 1:2)

Grace and peace abounds to those who recognize (epignoss) acknowledge and know God and Jesus our Lord.

Verses 3-4 reveal that through God's power he gives the believer everything that pertains to life and godliness. (See Col. 2:10)

This completeness in Christ is achieved through our knowledge of Him, in which He calls us to glory and "virtue" (arete) excellence.

Verses 5-7 Peter instruct the believer to live a godly life and note the attributes of godliness.

Verses 8-9 say that if the believer has these attributes in his life he will not be barren or fruitless.

The one who is blind to these godly attributes has forgotten that God purged his old or past sins.

Verse 10 states: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (2 Peter 1:10)

In other words, to ensure you give diligence, or labor to make sure that you are living what God has called you to, which are the attributes earlier mentioned in verse 8-9.

The word "calling" is the word "klesis" and means an invitation.

"Ekloge" is translated "election" and means chosen.

Therefore the believer is invited (called) and chosen (elected) to live a godly life in Christ Jesus.

This passage, as well as others, shows that election is what God ordained salvation to accomplish and be in the life of the believer.

Election does not pertain to who God saves by His grace, but what those who believe will experience by receiving God's grace.

Verse 11, continues saying that if a believer heeds these instructions, he shall be richly supplied

(epichoregethesetai) into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord

Jesus Christ. 52(A.T. Robertson. See 1 Thess. 1:9 for use of the word)

Peter sums up the principle saying "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth." (2 Peter 1:12)

The Calvinist uses the passage falsely teaching that it addresses a "professing" Christian and admonishes him to make sure he is saved and one of God's "elect" or chosen.

A simple and honest reading shows their error.

This verse is written to believers who by their faith in Jesus Christ were saved, and who Peter is admonishing to live a godly life. Verse 9 shows the problem in some believer's lives in that they appear blind to their calling to live a godly life.

This disobedient and blind believer has forgotten that his sins were purged, thus plainly this is addressing a saved Christian.

The call to godly living is the subject of this passage, not who God chose to be saved, but how the saved should live.

This does not support Calvinism's false idea that God elected some to receive His grace and others from whom He with holds grace thus creating them to burn in the fires of hell (Gehenna).

Do passages such as Jeremiah 1:5 support Calvinism?

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“Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.” (Jeremiah 1:5)

This verse plainly states that God "knew" Jeremiah.

This clearly refers to God's foreknowledge of the birth of Jeremiah and of who and what Jeremiah would be.

God then, being omniscient, knew that Jeremiah would be a man of faith and serve Him, and He chose him to be a prophet to Judah and the nations in that area.

God says clearly that He chose Jeremiah to be a prophet by His foreknowledge.

Foreknowledge is not the same as "fore decreeing."

God was not taken by surprise as to what would be Jeremiah's character. If God was telling us He decreed to make Jeremiah a prophet without giving him a choice, why did He not say that?

Why did he say He "knew" Jeremiah? Knowing is not the same as decreeing.

God is omniscient; He knows all things, including who would be born on earth and how they would live their lives.

God knows all men and here emphasizes that He had knowledge of Jeremiah, meaning of his character and faith.

God then chose to use a man who would be faithful to him.

Again the Calvinist interprets this passage eisegetically, applying his presupposition that God decreed certain ones for salvation and withheld His grace from others.

They conclude that God did not give Jeremiah a choice, but forced him to obey His will.

Yet the passage does not state that or even suggest that idea. The Calvinist's problem is that he sees everything within the tenets of his false system of theology.

His interpretation of God's word will always support his Calvinistic ideas.

God is telling us that He "knew"

Jeremiah would be a man of faith and that God could use him as a prophet to Israel.

There is no support in this passage for opinions or presuppositions that go beyond what God has stated.

Clearly, Calvinists are grabbing at straws when they use Jeremiah or others like John the Baptist, who God chose as His prophets through His foreknowledge, to support their false teaching.

This explanation does not fit their erroneous theology, so they reject this truth.

The Bible does not teach that God predestined some to Heaven and others to hell.

Nowhere in these verses, or anywhere else in God's word, is it stated or implied that God predestined some to salvation and others to go to hell, having no chance to be saved.

Those that make such statements have gravely misapplied God's word to their false ideas.

What is predestined is God's plan of salvation, that a believer becomes a child of God, the result of salvation, and what the believer's position is with God once they are saved, and the life he then lives in Christ.

God's plan is what He predestined.

God's plan is that a man who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ is saved, and the one that rejects God's grace is lost and condemns himself.

When a man believes in Calvinism, it is always the result of accepting the teaching of some other man.

Calvinism is only accepted by those to whom it is taught.

If a man studies the Bible alone, he will never become a Calvinist.

Understanding that God is love and offers grace freely, it would never enter in a Bible student's mind that God would choose to send some individuals to hell and deny them the ability to respond to the Gospel.

The Bible's theme which is presented 47 repeatedly is that God is a God of love and grace.

Understanding God's unchanging character of love and justice would not allow me to be swayed in that false direction.

Calvinism seems to pride itself in praising and defending the sovereignty of God, which is the premier doctrine of Calvinism.

The believer who rejects Calvinism also accepts that God is absolutely sovereign.

But God's sovereignty cannot contradict His other attributes. God's attribute of love and justice would not allow Him to deny His grace to untold millions.

It would be against God's very nature for Him to do this.

Calvinism in reality misrepresents God's nature.

He demeans and degrades God's sovereignty, making God unloving and unjust, by saying that God uses His sovereignty unjustly, not allowing some to be saved.

Chapter Nine

What Does the Bible say about Salvation

The Bible Commands All Men to Believe

The Scriptures tell us that man must believe in Jesus Christ in order to be saved.

There are literally hundreds of Scriptures that teach that man must believe, trust or have faith in God.

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

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

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

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

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

A man must believe and by faith receive God's offer of salvation.

Belief is an act of man's will.

However, man has nothing to boast of in the process of exercising his will and believing what God has said.

The act of atonement for sin was accomplished by the Lord Jesus, not man.

Suppose you received a gift from someone that offered it to you out of the goodness of their heart.

You were not offered the gift because you deserved or had earned it, but because they "willed" or wanted you to have it.

In their care or love for you, they wanted you to have something nice.

Your act of reaching out and taking the gift does not change it into

something you deserved, does it?

Would your act of receiving the gift mean you had earned it or paid something for it?

Obviously the answer is no; the one who offers the gift decides, within themselves, why they give the gift, not the one who accepts it.

The Arminian is right when he
48 states that salvation is entirely the
act of a Sovereign God.

He is wrong, however, when he
concludes that a man in receiving
Christ is in some way working for, or
meriting salvation.

The Calvinist's extreme views are
wrong when they take away man's
responsibility to receive Christ by
stating that God has decreed some to
be saved and others to be lost and
that grace is irresistible. God rightly
commands all men to believe and
receive His Son the Lord Jesus
Christ as their Savior. A man cannot
exercise his will outside the limits that
God has set in place.

Thus God has, in an act of His will, enabled all men to receive salvation. The Calvinist is right when he states that salvation is totally the act of a Sovereign God.

He is wrong, however, when he concludes that a man in believing and receiving Christ is in some way working for, or meriting salvation.

The Calvinist's extreme views are wrong when they take away man's responsibility to receive Christ, by stating that God has decreed some to be saved and others to be lost and that grace is irresistible.

God rightly commands all men to believe and receive His Son the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior.

God Will Not Violate a Man's Will

One important truth that further refutes Calvinism is that God will not violate a man's will.

God has not created man as a programmed robot with his life predestined at his creation.

In God's plan, He allows man the freedom to choose for himself the course of his life.

It was God's sovereign choice to create man with the ability to reason and to love, which are both acts of one's will.

Man can respond to God when the Holy Spirit enlightens the man's heart.

That happens when a man hears the Gospel or as Romans 1:19-20 states, when man responds to natural revelation that God shows him from nature.

God elected the plan of salvation and what He designed it to accomplish. He gave man a will, and in doing so He allows a man to respond to God willingly and in love.

Chapter Ten

The Biblical Explanation

Many believers who accept a literal and holistic interpretation of Scripture have the correct and biblical understanding of the matter, and they reject both the extremes of the Calvinist and Arminian systems.

Both the Calvinists and the Arminians have fallen into a trap set by human wisdom, that tries to explain and systematize every act of God.

They have used the poorest of hermeneutical principles and reached wrong conclusions even about God Himself.

God clearly has not told man everything about Himself or given us the "why" of all He has done.

But what He has plainly revealed is that we are to believe Him, trust Him, accept Him and live for Him.

It is unthinkable that God would leave us in a state of confusion over the matter of salvation!

Yet, that is what the Calvinist does even taking away a man's responsibility to respond to God offer of salvation.

All this confusion is not in God's word, but in the unsound reasoning of some men.

God made salvation so simple and clear that even a small child can believe and be saved, become a witness, and testimony to others.

What is the value of spending countless hours concocting theological systems that seek to second guess all God 49 has done? The Bible principle that "you can know the vine by its fruit" is well applied here.

What has been the fruit of Calvinism or Arminianism?

They have both led to confusion, division, and false teaching.

Therefore both systems should be rejected because both produce unbiblical results.

One response of those who hold to extreme views on the doctrine of election is often to condescend to judgmental and cult-like attacks on those who would differ with them. Almost every Calvinist writer I've studied, to some degree, harshly judges the motives of non-Calvinists. Calvinist Gordon Clark descends to criticizing those who differ from the Calvinist view by concluding they are not students of the Bible and not interested in doctrine 53. That is a meretricious and unscholarly attack on those who disagree with him.

A personal swipe at non-Calvinists establishes nothing and certainly does nothing to support one's position or credibility as a Bible scholar.

It is a childish response and out of place with biblical scholarship.

Many renowned and scholarly men with earned degrees in Bible disagree and reject Calvinism.

To say that they are not scholarly or interested in doctrine shows an extremely unsound bias on Clark's part.

The Calvinist C. D. Cole makes this harsh judgment toward those who do not accept Calvinism, saying, "Ah, the real trouble with the objector is not election; it is something else. His real objection is to total depravity or human inability to do good."⁵⁴

This is simply a false and foolish statement.

Most Bible scholars and students who reject to Calvinism accept that man is an unrighteous sinner lost in his sins as Romans 3:10 plainly states. God is clear that all men are corrupt, wicked, perverted and absolutely not able to save himself. Cole does not offer any real defense of his beliefs but makes a personal attack on those who will not accept his false beliefs using unfounded critical assertions.

John MacArthur also fits this mold and accuses the objectors to the Calvinistic system as doing so because of pride 55.

Kenneth Good, who falsely places all traditional Baptists as being in the Calvinist camp correctly says, "It is to be regretted that both confusion and emotion seem to reign in the current discussions on Calvinism versus Arminianism.

Considerably more heat than light is being generated by the energy presently expended in most quarters."⁵⁶

The Calvinist often resorts to defending his position by stating those that reject this false view are rejecting God's sovereignty.

That too is an absurd statement.

Such a weak defense shows the unsound foundation on which their ideas are founded.

Certainly, Almighty God is absolutely sovereign, but that does not preclude that He can go against His own nature.

The true biblist correctly understands and accepts God's sovereignty, but this does not mean he must accept the theology of Calvinists which contradicts God's other attributes.

The true Bible scholar knows that God's sovereignty does not violate His own nature or His stated word. Both the Calvinists and the Arminians have taken extreme positions and neither has proved its system to be biblical or a correct explanation of the doctrines of election.

Huntsmen, of David Jeremiah's "Turning Point," in a weak attempt to defend Calvinism's contradictions, tells us not to attempt to "reconcile" the teachings of God on election and the sovereignty of God 57.

Both the Calvinist and the Arminian teachings contain some truth, but they go further than God does and that makes 50 them erroneous.

I have been a student of the Bible since I was saved in 1972 at 32 years of age.

With gratitude, I thank those that taught me that the first distinctive of a New Testament believer was to accept the Bible as my sole authority for faith and practice. The Bible is the authority, not the theological systems of man.

I am a Christian, a believer in Jesus Christ and I identify myself totally with Him and Him alone.

Paul condemned the error of identifying oneself with man or religious teachers in 1 Corinthians 1:12. In 1 Corinthians 3:4.

Paul says identifying oneself with anyone but Jesus Christ is a carnal act.

True believers identify themselves with Jesus Christ, He is the Word, and only His word is Truth.

The true believer is to accept God's word, as His only source for his faith and practice.

The Calvinist, by accepting John Calvin's "Institutes" as their source and explanation of their faith, make a serious mistake.

Chapter Eleven

The Conclusion on a Personal note.

I am not a Calvinist nor am I an Arminian.

I reject both titles and theological systems.

They both are the heretical and cult-like systems of fallible men.

I choose to call myself a Biblist, or simply a "Bible believer."

I identify myself with my Savior and His word.

I take no pride in the fact that I am saved, yet I am eternally grateful.

I am awed by the truth that the Lord Jesus Christ died on Calvary's cross for my sin.

I am deeply and eternally grateful to God who loved this blind sinner that much!

I totally reject the idea that I received salvation on any merit of my own!

I was, as God said, a sinner, dead in trespasses and sin, sold unto sin, a child of sin, and with no righteousness of my own.

I was saved by the sovereign act and plan of our loving God, who came to the earth, incarnate in man and totally paid my sin debt.

I did not merit salvation and was totally in bondage to my sinful nature. I absolutely had no spark of divinity in me.

Yet, God loved me, His created being, and suffered for me while I was yet in my sin.

He illuminated my heart and provided the way that I might receive His gift of grace and salvation.

I did nothing to merit my salvation,

but my gracious Creator offered His grace to me and I believed Him.

I am not going to try and put Almighty God in a box and systematize God's act of saving the sinner.

I am just going to believe His very Word and thank Him for loving me, the sinner that I am, and forgiving my sin and giving me eternal life.

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

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

Man has no goodness or righteousness in him upon which to base his salvation.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8) "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" 51 (Romans 3:23).

Many in history have fallen into the trap of going further than Scripture goes and trying, with human rationalization, to explain and systematize God's actions.

The result of such rationalization is that it leads to confusion and extremism.

Finite men with finite minds cannot systematize Almighty God! God's word reveal much about Himself, but He is ultimately beyond human comprehension.

It is an extreme and false view that says God predestined some men to be damned to hell and does not offer them salvation.

It is equally an extreme view that states man can in any way merit his salvation or lose the eternal life that God gives the believer.

Each view, whether Calvinism or Arminianism, when adhered to violates clear biblical teaching and therefore cannot be truth.

My position is that I reject the extremes of both the Calvinists and the Arminians and I do not use either name in identifying my stand on accepting what the Bible clearly teaches.

There was a time in which I did not think that these issues were of a great importance.

I have since changed my mind because I have seen the fruit of Calvinism.

Over the past years, many people have written and expressed of the confusion and anguish the teachings of Calvinism caused in their lives.

One dear lady wrote and said she refused to have children because she was afraid that God would not elect them to salvation 58.

Others instead of accepting the biblical assurance of their salvation, live in fear of not being among the “elected.”

Calvinism for these has cast a shadow over their assurance of salvation, because they wondered if they were elected or rejected by God. One man wrote that when his church began teaching Calvinism, "I was sick for two weeks, couldn't sleep or eat. I was bothered because it took away the loving Savior I had known all my life."⁵⁹

Another young man wrote saying he was seeking the Lord and studying the claims of Christ when he stumbled across the teachings of Calvinism and said it shattered him.

He said, "My question to you is, am I able to make a choice to follow Christ? If I want to believe and follow Christ, can I do so? Or is it not my choice? I feel odd trying to put this question into words, but I've tried. The bottom line is, if I wished to become a Christian today, tomorrow or whenever I feel I am ready, can I do so? Calvinists have tried to tell me that I have the inability to call upon Christ, and that if not one of the elect, I won't be saved. Please help!" 60

For years I have corresponded with Calvinists, and found they will rarely concede to any plain biblical truth that does not agree with their theology.

From their statements, and often insulting and demeaning attacks, it is my personal conclusion that they seem to be a proud people who see themselves as having a superior intellect and spirituality above those who do not accept their theology. However, their fruit is corrupt because it ignores and distorts a great deal of God's word. Worse Calvinism distorts even the very nature of God.

Jesus said, "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." (Matthew 7:20)

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Romans 5: 1-2, 6-11 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ² Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare

even to die— ⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still

sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. **11** More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

The dangerous tentacles of Reformed Augustinian doctrine have invaded our theology to squeeze out Biblical truth and literal Biblical interpretation.

We need to learn to recognize the syntax of these tentacles and speak out against the errors which are especially menacing when it comes to a sound doctrine of election and predestination.

Believe the Bible or believe
Reformed Augustinian doctrine.

You can not do both.

Isaiah 53:6 says “All we like sheep
have gone astray; we have turned
every one to his own way; and the
LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of
us all.”

The late noted Evangelist Loren
Dawson said:

“This verse begins and ends with ‘all.’
If the first ‘all’ is without exception,
and it is, what gives us the right, what
hermeneutic or homiletic gives us the
right to say that the last all is just for
a few selected ones? That kind of
shoots limited atonement in the foot
doesn’t it. ... God doesn’t make that
choice, you make that choice!

The only thing in this world that is needed to bring down that idol of TULIP Theology is knowing that God in sovereign grace gives man a choice and then holds men accountable to that choice!

That just shoots their idol in the head and it all comes down just like Nebuchadnezzar's idol of gold and the wind blows it all away." - *The*

Biblical Doctrine of

Election and Predestination

Why a Baptist will never hold to a doctrine of Calvinism or Augustinian Predestination

By Pastor Edward G. Rice

Chapter 3 What is Election

To see what Biblical election is all about, lets first carefully examine the use of the term throughout the Bible.

To often one goes about this examination backward.

They determine what they believe about a subject, then go to the Bible trying to support their belief.

For most, this is the danger involved in examining the Biblical doctrine of election and predestination.

There is present an a-priori unction that election has to do with a soul receiving salvation or rejecting it.

It is a bold statement but it needs to be said here: 'Nowhere in the Bible is election concerned with the eternal, heaven or hell destiny of a soul.'

Always election is to *service* not to destiny.

Now with any a priori belief system well shaken and on the table for examination let us begin by examining the election of Israel.

Israel was elect, a chosen nation, a chosen people.

They were elect to do three major deeds;

- to deliver the Messiah to humanity;
- to deliver the written precepts of God to mankind; and
- to show monotheism to the whole world.

First, through Israel we trace the chosen seed.

This righteous seed goes through individuals, tribes, kings, harlots and Moabites.

For seed purposes, the Bible says that Jacob was loved and Esau was hated. (Mal 1:2-3, Rom 9:13)

Esau was not chosen for eternal damnation to hell in this hatred, he was just not chosen as the seed line of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The seed traced from Abraham through Judah, (Gen 12:7, Gen 49:10) through David (2Sam 7:16) then for Joseph through Solomon, but for Mary through Nathan.²⁴

This elect seed is carefully traced to the Messiah who was to be of the tribe of Judah and the seed of David.

This tracing of the seed line is a major drama of the Old Testament narrative, a drama that pits Satan against Jehovah God for the delivery of the seed that is to dash his head.

(Genesis 3) 24

Matthew 1 gives Joseph's lineage through Solomon while the lineage of Mary through Nathan is given in Luke 3, right after God announces of Jesus "Thou art my beloved Son."

The next verse in Luke 3 designates Joseph as the son-in-law of Heli, and follows the lineage of Mary, the mother of Jesus all the way back to Adam, calling him, Adam, the other son of God in complete accord with Romans 5, and 1Cor 15's 1st Adam vs God's 'last Adam'. Awesome.

Secondly, Israel was elect to deliver the written precepts of God to mankind. (Rom 3:1-2)

Through Israel the 39 books of the Bible's Old Testament were written and preserved, and through them the 27 books of the Bible's New Testament were written 25.

Thirdly, Israel was elect to show to the whole world that “the LORD our God *is* one LORD” (Deut. 6:4, Mar 12:29) and that the world's polytheism was idolatry.

In Mark 12:29 Jesus called this the first of all the commandments, and through Israel this message of monotheism was manifest to the world.

He says to Isaiah “Ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I *am* he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, *even* I, *am* the LORD; and beside me *there is* no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when *there was* no strange *god* among

you: therefore ye *are* my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I *am* God.” (Isa 43:10-12)

The election of individuals and of people in the Old Testament was thus an election to accomplish a task.

Nowhere in this election of a people to do these tasks is an individual soul elected or predestined to an eternity in heaven or an eternity in hell.

Election in the Old Testament is always for service, to work the purposes of God in this life, here on this earth.

As in the Old Testament where individuals are chosen to accomplish three major tasks on this earth, so in the New Testament God has chosen individuals to accomplish three major tasks on this earth.

Those with this tasking are called the elect.

They are not chosen because of merit, not chosen at birth, nor before creation, but they become chosen, or elect, when they are born again into the body of the Elect One, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Those who are 'in Christ' are as elect as the Christ [they are in].

They were not chosen to be 'in Christ' but once they are 'in Christ,' through their new birth, they are elect for three major tasks.

They are elect in Him:

- to be his witnesses to the lost dying world,
- to manifest Christ in this world, and
- to be the temple the Holy Spirit of God.

Acts 1:8 says: "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 Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Christians are the elect in this world to be His witnesses.

They become elect when they receive the Holy Spirit.

They receive the Holy Spirit when they are born-again, converted, regenerated, saved, and ... not until.

Through the Church we are commissioned to preach the gospel to every creature. (Mar 16:15)

We, as born again believers are to witness to every creature, even house to house, and to every nation, how God saved us, and can save anybody.

They went house to house in Acts 2:46. Paul did so in Acts 20:20.

We, who are in Christ, are elect to be His witnesses.

Christians are also elect in Him to be the manifestation of Christ to the lost dying world.

That is why they were first called Christians; because they looked like, acted like, reacted like, and talked like the Christ.

Believers are elect to be the manifestation of Christ in this world.

Jesus said it this way; *“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*

*Let your light so shine before men,
that they may see your good works,
and glorify your Father which is in
heaven” (Matt 5:14-16)*

The apostles regularly exhort us as the elect.

Peter writes to 'strangers scattered about ... elect according to the foreknowledge of God' and then tells these elect “Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they ...” (1Pet 2:11-

12) Peter is not here writing to someone who is elect for a salvation experience down the road!

No, he is exhorting those who are elect for service.

The Apostle Paul regularly exhorts believers to behave like elect ones, and regularly reminds believers that they are the elect, because they are 'in Christ' not as if they will get 'in Christ.'

Note his wording in Col 3:12-13, “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do ye.*”

This is not a challenge to those who are elect for salvation.

It is a charge that the elect in Christ might be the manifestation of Christ in this world.

A charge to the elect to the service that they are chosen for now that they are 'in Christ.'

Thirdly we are elect in Him as a people to be the temple of the Holy Spirit of God in this world.

The Spirit that reproves the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment dwells only in the elect.²⁷

It does not dwell in one prior to salvation and no one prior to salvation can hold the title of 'elect.'

The spirit enters in at salvation, one is then added to the kingdom of God, (John 3) added to the family²⁸ of God (as adopted, as dear children, as having a new Father) and therein we become the elect, the tabernacle of God.

The late Evangelist Loren Dawson said it most clearly this way “In the Old Testament God builds a tabernacle for His people, in the New Testament God builds a people for His tabernacle.”

If you are saved you are the elect, the temple of the Holy Ghost.

If you are yet in your sins, unsaved, not yet regenerated, no matter how much Calvin and Augustine may call you elect before the foundation of the world, you cannot be elect for this service until you are ushered into the kingdom of God.

There is a time when this presence of the Holy Spirit will be taken out of the world.²⁹

Until that time it is the elect who are housing the Holy Spirit of God in this world.

The New Testament elect are his chosen vessels for this purpose.

As before, in the Old Testament, this New Testament election is for *service* to work God's purposes in this life on this earth.

Nowhere in the use of this term is an individual soul elected to an eternity in heaven or an eternity in hell.

Further, nowhere in the New Testament's presentation of election, is any individual elected or chosen prior to his acceptance of Christ as Lord and Saviour.

So how has Christendom so readily departed from this Biblical representation of who the elect are? How have even Baptists succumbed to teaching that God foreknows who will be saved and who will be lost, thus sealing fates for eternity?

In studying the Biblical doctrine of election we find that Augustine was wrong when he read into Scripture the predestination of individual souls into heaven.

We see that John Calvin, who systematized this error into a theology and saw it permeate the Geneva Bible, did a great travesty to truth and theology.

It is clear that the reformed theologian who preaches election as the predestination of individual souls into heaven or hell is so twisting the Bible doctrine of election as to make some two fold more the child of hell. So too the Baptist who believes and preaches the individual election of souls to heaven or hell is dabbling in error and false teaching which malign his very election to service as a witness to the world, as the manifestation of the love of Christ in the world, and as a temple of the Holy Spirit to reprove the world.

Nowhere in Scripture is an individual elected *to be in* Christ.

But those that are in Christ are elect. Once 'in' they are the elect for special service in this world.

One does not enter the kingdom of God because he was elected to enter (Eph 2:8-9 says “for by grace are ye saved” not by election), but one becomes the elect *because* he is born into the kingdom.

(Eph 2:10 says “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”)

One does not get in by election (John 3:14-19), but once 'in', one is elect and tasked to service.

Again examine Col 3:12 as it clarifies that election is for work not for justification; “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”

Now that we are in the kingdom of God, 'whosoever *wills*' that are installed by grace through faith, and that not of election, we are to behave as elect ones with work to do. Again, how does one get 'in'? You must make an individual decision of your will to accept Christ as your Lord and Saviour.

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Rom 10:13)

Once 'in' you are elected to service for your Lord, as you walk here in this life.

Ergo election is to service, not to salvation.

A table of Old Testament election and New Testament election helps clarify that election is always for service and not for an eternal destiny.

It also points out the parallels in the two elections.

<i>Old Testament Elections</i>	<i>New Testament Elections</i>
To be the seed by which the Messiah would be brought into the world. Gen 12	To be the witness to a lost dying world that the Christ has come. Acts 1:8
To Deliver the written Word of God to the world. Rom 3:1-2	To be a manifestation of The Word, the Christ, in this world John 17
To show the world that "The LORD our God is one LORD" Deut 6:4, Mar 12:9	To be the temple of the Holy Spirit of God in this world. 1Cor 6:19-20

In “*Subjects Of Sovereignty*,” Andrew Telford says:

“Nowhere in the Bible is Election connected with the salvation or damnation of a human soul. ... The most important phase of Election pertains to service ... Election has to do with service. It is God's elect who serve him.” 30

In “*The Theology Of The New Testament*,” George B. Stevens states that:

“What was the nature and the purpose of this divine election of Israel? I answer that Paul conceives of it as a historic action of God in setting apart the Jewish nation to a special mission or function in the world as the bearer of his revelation to all mankind. ...

These chapters (Rom 9-11) speak of election to a historic function or mission, not of eternal destiny. ...

Theology has often applied these ideas to the subject of man's final destiny.

Whatever may be the logic of such an application, it is exegetically³¹ unjustifiable. ... Paul does not teach the doctrine of predestination which Calvin taught, nor does he teach the doctrine as held by historic Calvinism.” 32

And in *“Word Studies In The New Testament”* Marvin R. Vincent clarifies:

“ 'Ekloge' election ... and kindred words, to 'choose', and 'chosen' or 'elect', are used of God's selection of men or agencies for special missions or attainments; but neither here (1Thes 1:4) nor elsewhere in the New Testament is there any warrant for the revolting doctrine that God has predestined a definite number of mankind to eternal life, and the rest to eternal destruction.”³³

In the pages that follow the Biblical doctrine of election will be explored. It will differ greatly from Reformed theology because it will be based on Biblical exegesis rather than on Augustinian error.

It will contend with and dis-spell the Calvinistic theology and the reformed TULIP 34 that sprang from the fertile protestant ground of misrepresented Scripture from a vulgar Vulgate,35 and the erred doctrines that came from Alexandria Egypt.

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A BIBLICAL EXAMINATION OF CALVINISM AND ITS TEACHINGS BY Cooper P. Abrams, III

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