

Why Is Calvinism So Hated?

By Dr. Ken Matto

Preface

Since I became a Christian almost 40 years ago, upon studying my Bible I have come to the conclusion that what is referred to as Calvinism is the most important tool for the true understanding of the scriptures. Yet, it so hated by many Christians simply because it takes them off the throne of their own salvation and puts God rightly where he deserves to be, which is in charge of the salvation of every true believer right down through history. The main reason that it is hated so much is because it is the most misunderstood arrangement of biblical teachings. Free will proponents consistently attack it with erroneous interpretations and of course get a hearty amen from other free willers. Here are some comments I have received on Facebook concerning Calvinism. Each of these attacks are easily responded to but would fall on deaf ears.

Comments by People on Facebook who hate Calvinism

Read this entire diatribe against Calvinism made by an Arminianian. This attack shows the total ignorance the free willers have toward Calvinism!

Facebook comment on 4/18/19:

Irresistible Grace is that you have no free will, no choice in the matter, that when God reveals Himself and salvation to you that you are incapable of resisting Him and will be saved whether you want to be or not. However Hebrews 6:4-6 and Hebrews 10:26 clearly show that the unsaved can resist the enlightenment and knowledge of the truth and fall away from Salvation. Hebrews 6:4-6 and 10:26 is speaking about the unsaved falling away (rejecting) enlightenment, the knowledge of, the taste of salvation - they had not yet taken hold. This does not relate to the saved giving up or losing salvation as many think. So therefore you can resist His grace and you do have free will, that He does offer it to all not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Unconditional Election is the spawn of the previous 2, that if the other 2 are true then yes it is a pick and choose elected few. But since the previous are based on unscriptural heresy then that doctrine is false. This dogma states that you have no free will and are only a product of predetermination, that you have no chance or ability of your own - that you are damned to Hell or a special chosen one to Salvation, that Christ may or may not love you and may or may not have atoned for you - it's a gross and despicable hellish garbage heresy. Let alone that this nonsense also includes Infant Damnation as a special added bonus. That from the moment you are conceived, if you aren't one of the special lucky predestined ones, if you die as a Baby you still go straight to Hell to burn. Such a lovely theology, damning Babies to Hell.

The only aspects of Calvinistic theology that is true is the Total Depravity of Man, Perseverance of the Saints, and a modified variant of the chosen - that some are chosen, like John the Baptist for a work, but not all are. That sin is complete in degrading mankind to destruction, our sins have caught us away and separated us from God and condemned us to Hell, the Bible backs that up clearly - and that Once we are Saved we are Always Saved.

Perseverance of the Saints is a major Biblical truth. Saying that one could lose their Salvation or have it taken away would mean you would have to work to keep it. But our Salvation is by Grace through Faith alone, not of works.

Salvation is a free gift, no maintenance, no earning of favor, and once given it cannot be taken away. Ephesians 4:30) "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." - - if we do grieve Him we just confess and we are cleansed (1 John 2:1 / 1 John 1:9). The Father doesn't disown the wayward child, but like the prodigal son the goodness of God leads us to repentance and cleansing. - - When did the prodigal son cease to be a son of the Father? - - Not by works, Not by righteous works, Not by deeds of the law, and Not by sight. But by Faith alone, through Grace alone, by Jesus Christ who is God alone.

Titus 3:5 / Ephesians 2:8-9 / Galatians 2:16 / 2 Corinthians 5:7 / Romans 1:17 / Romans 6:14 / Hebrews 10:38

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:9-10)

After believing and repenting you are sealed/saved, then because of your love for Christ you want to follow Him. It's not because you have to but because you want to. The Will of the Father is that all would come to Christ, not follow laws and commandments (John 6:39-40)

Any idea of self-merit affecting salvation in earning to gain, maintaining to keep, or self- atonement for sins is heresy and the person is not saved. The same goes for believing that Baptism saves, forgives, or seals with the Spirit - it's still a belief in a form of righteous works that affects salvation - this is heresy too. It's all through Christ's merit on the Cross and His Resurrection, or else through attempting in your own merit you earn Hell.

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;" (Ephesians 1:7)

"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)

"To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:43)

James 2 is talking to Christians already saved, and it's talking about charity and Christian behavior for promotion of the Faith, not maintenance of salvation. If it was talking about works for salvation, then Paul is a liar, James and Paul are butting heads, God wrote a contradiction in His Word and is then the author of confusion, and would then not be God. Correlating with the rest of Scripture shows there is literally no way one could make works for salvation on any level truly work with the layout of Scripture. Salvation would then not be by Grace as it says if works were involved.

And this Salvation can never be lost or taken away - Romans 8:1 no condemnation unto those in Christ who walk in the Spirit - Galatians 5:18 and if you are led by the Spirit you are not under the law. Any sin after that brings chastisement, not disowning or a casting away. John 15:1-6 is paired with 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 / Psalms 66:18 / Proverbs 28:9 / James 1:6-7 about God's discipline, and nowhere does it relate to losing salvation or having it being taken away.

In addition, as mentioned previously: Hebrews 6:4-6 and 10:26 is speaking about the unsaved falling away (rejecting) enlightenment, the knowledge of, the taste of salvation - they had not yet taken hold. This does not relate to the saved giving up or losing salvation as many think.

Losing Salvation, or it being taken away, given up - denotes a working to keep it. But it's not by works or righteous works, deeds of the law, or by sight. It's by Grace alone through Faith alone.

By Grace are you saved through Faith - Not by works or self-merit.

The Hyper Calvinistic TULIP theology is corrupted and unbiblical, and it teaches another gospel - Galatians 1:8-9

Objection #1 to Calvinism: *Most will say "God died for some"; God Himself said, "Preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).*

Dr. Matto's response: We go to the entire world with the Gospel because we do not know who the Elect of God are. Only God knows who they are and they come to faith by means of hearing or reading gospel literature.

Objection #2 to Calvinism: *Calvinists never believe in a free will; The Faith offered by JESUS CHRIST Himself is for "whosoever will" to receive, and all men are permitted to reject it. (Revelation 22:17, John 3:16)*

Dr. Matto's response: There is no such thing as free will which will be heavily covered in this study. The word "whosoever" does not mean "anyplace, anywhere, or anytime according to their will can become saved." That word "whosever" carries with it the meaning of "everyone or all." This will also be covered in more detail.

Objection #3 to Calvinism: *Calvinism's perseverance of the saints is not the same as Eternal Security of the believer IN Christ which is preservation of the saints. Calvinism's perseverance of the saints is focusing on the saints not the Saviour whereas the Bible tells us clearly to focus on the Saviour alone because Jesus is the only Mediator and not ourselves. It is His POWER that keeps us forever secure IN HIM, not our perseverance.*

Dr. Matto's response: The Perseverance of the Saints occurs because the indwelling Holy Spirit empowers the true believer to endure any situation of which the martyrs of the faith attest to. Perseverance of the Saints focuses on God granting strength to his children to endure to the end. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. (Matthew 10:22)

**Comments from Facebook group: Exposing the Pentecostal/Charismatic Movement
Facebook comment on 4/6/19:**

Dear Calvinists,

Please don't promote Calvinism in this group. If you do, your posts will be removed without warning. Repeated offenders will be removed without warning!!!

What is this Facebook group moderator afraid of? Truth?

As you can plainly see that the three comments (objections) made above are easily refutable simply because we matched what was said to the scriptures. We will cover many of the pet teachings which free willers believe is biblical especially the diatribe above and we will see the Bible has tremendously different teachings than what the free willers espouse to be true. Beliefs such as the Age of Accountability, Loss of Salvation, Decisionism, the Offer of the Gospel and others are covered in this study because they are all linked to the free will movement and not found anywhere in Scripture. It is nothing more than the superimposition of personal beliefs upon the Scriptures.

We will look at what Calvinism really is and we will look at what Arminianism teaches which is the source of the entire free will movement. There will be repetition and many verses and teachings will overlap which will enforce the teaching at hand, this is intentional because many verses respond to the different free will beliefs and statements dealt with in this study. If you have read this far, I do hope that you continue because you will discover that Calvinism is really a more in depth study of the scriptures than the shallowness which comes from the free will camp. This study contains a massive amount of Scripture which you will also notice are not twisted in any form or fashion to fit them into a belief system. You will see that the system called Calvinism harmonizes and homogenizes the scriptures without any twisting or over-explanations. You will also discover that Calvinism sees God as the initiator of salvation and the one who performed it on behalf of his elect. **Calvinism is basically "The Hated Truth."**

All Scripture is from the Authorized Version of the Bible. This edition of the KJV conforms to the text of the King James Bible printed by Cambridge University Press, circa 1900.

What is Calvinism?

Calvinism is a moniker given to a system of beliefs that God is in charge of man's salvation and brings us out of a condition of spiritual death unto newness of life. *Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4)* Calvinism is not really an invented system of beliefs but is a system that believes the Bible teaches what it says. It is a solid biblical refutation of the teachings of Jacob Arminius and the present free will movement within the majority of churches. Another name for Calvinism would be the Doctrines of Grace which teach the true sovereignty of God and does not exalt man to a position he doesn't belong, that is, the belief that man has the ability to thwart God's plans in salvation or in anything based upon a mythical free will. Calvinism is really an erroneous description because it is nothing more than the teaching of Scriptures in the truest sense of the word without the addition of man's desires and man-centered teachings.

Calvinism was not an invented system by John Calvin but was the response to the 1610 Remonstrance which was created by the followers of Dutch Theologian Jacob Arminius. We will look at the Remonstrance in the next section. The response to the Remonstrance was given in 5 basic points which are easily borne out in the Scriptures and need not be twisted to make the Bible fit.

The five points of Calvinism are:

- T – Total Depravity
- U – Unconditional Election
- L – Limited Atonement
- I – Irresistible Grace
- P – Perseverance of the Saints

The TULIP was not created by John Calvin but the Synod of Dordrecht (Dort) which was convened between November 13, 1618 and May 9, 1619. John Calvin was born July 10, 1509 and died May 27, 1564, 54 years before the Synod of Dort was convened. The TULIP is a biblical response to the five articles of Jacob Arminius. Jacob Arminius had disagreed with the teachings of John Calvin and had desired to discuss his findings in a synod. Arminius died in 1609 and was not able to present his views. When the Synod of Dort was convened in the Netherlands in 1618, they reviewed the material created by Arminius and in the six months of studies, the Synod declared Jacob Arminius a heretic and condemned his views. Calvinism was then declared the official religion of the Netherlands. What Arminius did was not reject John Calvin but he rejected the Bible itself because Calvin only interpreted the scriptures according to what was taught in the Scriptures. Arminius imposed his own ideas on the scriptures and came up with a man centered system of beliefs. This is why he was declared a heretic and his teachings condemned.

The five articles of the 1610 Remonstrance are:

- 1) Free will of man to accept or reject Christ
- 2) Conditional Election
- 3) Universal Redemption
- 4) The Holy Spirit can be resisted

5) A Christian can lose their salvation

John Calvin has been seriously maligned by many Christians and especially by those who have never studied the issue but have been influenced by others especially free will pastors. Calvin was a very serious student of the Scriptures for his entire life. He lived only 55 years but he was a great influence on the people of Geneva. Calvin was not the only one who believed in the doctrine of predestination. Others who believed in predestination were Martin Luther, Thomas Cranmer, Huldrych Zwingli, Heinrich Bullinger, Martin Bucer, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles Haddon Spurgeon and many others were all strong believers in predestination as is the author of this study. John Calvin was the spiritual father of the United States because all the Pilgrims and Puritans who came here in 1620 & 1630 were "Calvinists" not followers of Arminius. The Pilgrims in 1620 came here from the Netherlands which was declared officially Calvinist the year before. Let us look at the TULIP and gain an understanding of what John Calvin extracted from the Holy Scriptures.

T – Total Depravity

U – Unconditional Election

L – Limited Atonement

I – Irresistible Grace

P – Perseverance of the Saints

Total Depravity

Total Depravity is the biblical teaching that man is so corrupted by sin that all his works are tainted by sin and that no amount of works can get a person to heaven.¹ Total Depravity also means that the soul of man was darkened by sin and is in total bondage to sin.² It also means that a person cannot understand the Gospel because they are in a state of spiritual death and a person who is dead is unable to understand spiritual things and also unable to reach out and ask for salvation.³ This person's will is not free because it is in bondage to sin.⁴ They also cannot exercise any type of saving faith because of the darkness of the soul.⁵ Yet even in a state of total depravity people still have the ability to show kindness to others but that does not extend into the spiritual realm of salvation.

1) Isaiah 64:6; Ephesians 2:8-9

2) John 3:19

3) Ephesians 2:1, 5

4) Romans 6:16-18

5) Galatians 5:22; James 2:14

Unconditional Election

God has chosen a people for himself from before the foundation of the world.¹ It was not done according to any person's abilities or social status. The people chosen were done so without any foreknowledge of God knowing who was going to accept Jesus or who wouldn't. God grants the faith and the repentance since it is impossible for a spiritually dead person to generate either.² It is God who has chosen the sinner to salvation and not the sinner choosing Christ because the seeking of the Lord is not within any spiritually dead person.³

1) Ephesians 1:4; Revelation 13:8; 17:8

2) John 14:17; 2 Timothy 2:25

3) John 15:16; Romans 3:11

Limited Atonement

Christ did not die on Calvary for the sins of every person in the world or else every person in the world would be saved.¹ He died for the people who were named from the foundation of the world and only them. Those whom Christ died for were spiritually resurrected so they could be raised from spiritual death to eternal life.² The Holy Spirit is also given to every true believer which means they are given the pledge of eternal life which begins at the moment of salvation.³ Limited Atonement can be seen in the Last Will and Testament of Christ.⁴

1) Matthew 1:21; John 13:1; John 17:9, 20; Titus 3:7

2) John 5:24; Romans 6:4; Revelation 20:6

3) Ephesians 1:13-14

4) Hebrews 9:15-17

Irresistible Grace

Irresistible Grace means that God does not ask a person if they want to accept Christ, instead if a person was named for salvation before the foundation of the world, then when their day of salvation comes, God plants the Holy Spirit within that person and they become born again at that moment.

There is no rejection or resistance because the action is very quick.¹ There is no process by which the Holy Spirit does this but indwells that person and they are saved for eternity. Now with the Holy Spirit indwelling a person they now have faith, the ability to understand the Bible, the ability to believe, and to admit they were sinners whereas before the indwelling they did not think they were sinners.² If God has named a person for salvation, sometime during that person's life they will become saved.³

1) John 6:37; 44

2) John 14:17; 16:13

3) Acts 22:6

Perseverance of the Saints

The Perseverance of the Saints occurs because the indwelling Holy Spirit empowers the true believer to endure any situation of which the martyrs of the faith attest to. Perseverance of the Saints focuses on God granting strength to his children to endure to the end.¹ It is the Perseverance of the Saints which has created many martyrs for the cause of Christ because they would not yield to outside pressure even at the cost of their earthly life.² This also means that with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit the true believer has eternal life and can never lose their salvation because it is eternal life and not temporary.³

1) Matthew 10:22

2) Matthew 14:1-10; Acts 7:59-60; 12:1-2

3) John 10:28

What is Arminianism?

Arminianism is the teaching of Jacob Arminius. (October 10, 1560 – October 19, 1609) Arminius was a Dutch Theologian of the Reformation. He was a proponent of “prevenient grace” which is a time period when God begins to show kindness to a person in hopes that the person will accept the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior. Prevenient grace does not guarantee a person’s salvation nor is it the grace of salvation but is a precursor to a person accepting God’s invitation. This is basically well-known as free will where God begins to woo a person to the point they make a decision to either accept Christ as savior or reject him. As you can see already that Arminius taught a man-centered gospel.

If I was to make an estimation about how many Christians are free will believers, I would probably say at least 95% of them are since most of them belong to free will churches. It is far and few in between when you can find a church which teaches the Doctrines of Grace void of man’s intervention. Jacob Arminius had desired to present his views to a duly called synod in the Netherlands but he died at his home in 1609. He was a professor at Leiden University and was there until the day of his death. One of the biggest proponents of Arminianism was John Wesley (1703-91) and that is why he was always at odds with George Whitefield (1714-70) who was a staunch Calvinist. The followers of Arminius wanted to remember their teacher so they took his teachings and compacted them into five basic articles which comprised the Remonstrance of 1610, one year after he died. The five points of Calvinism did not exist yet for another 9 years.

The Remonstrance of 1610

The followers of Arminius published their opposition to The Belgic Confession (1561) and the teaching of John Calvin and his followers especially regarding the doctrine of predestination. In the Five Arminian Articles, also known as the Five Articles of Remonstrance, they affirmed a conditional election upon the basis of foreseen faith, along with a universal atonement, the possibility of resisting grace, and the possibility of lapsing from grace. Their teaching was condemned at the Synod of Dort in 1618-1619 and those who continued to teach Arminianism were persecuted.

The five articles of the 1610 Remonstrance are:

- 1) Free will of man to accept or reject Christ
- 2) Universal Redemption
- 3) Conditional Election
- 4) The Holy Spirit can be resisted
- 5) A Christian can lose their salvation

FIRST ARTICLE.

Conditional Predestination.—God has immutably decreed, from eternity, to save those men who, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, believe in Jesus Christ, and by the same grace persevere in the obedience of faith to the end; and, on the other hand, to condemn the unbelievers and unconverted ([John 3:36](#)). Election and condemnation are thus conditioned by foreknowledge, and made dependent on the foreseen faith or unbelief of men.



SECOND ARTICLE.

Universal Atonement.—Christ, the Saviour of the world, died for all men and for every man, and his grace is extended to all. His atoning sacrifice is in and of itself sufficient for the redemption of the whole world, and is intended for all by God the Father. But its inherent sufficiency does not necessarily imply its actual efficiency. The grace of God may be resisted, and only those who accept it by faith are actually saved. He who is lost, is lost by his own guilt ([John 3:16](#); [1 John 2:2](#)).

THIRD ARTICLE.

Saving Faith.—Man in his fallen state is unable to accomplish anything really and truly good, and therefore also unable to attain to saving faith, unless he be regenerated and renewed by God in Christ through the Holy Spirit ([John 15:5](#)).

FOURTH ARTICLE.

Resistible Grace.—Grace is the beginning, continuation, and end of our spiritual life, so that man can neither think nor do any good or resist sin without preventing, co-operating, and assisting grace. But as for the manner of co-operation, this grace is not irresistible, for many resist the Holy Ghost ([Acts 7](#)).

FIFTH ARTICLE.

The Uncertainty of Perseverance.—Although grace is sufficient and abundant to preserve the faithful through all trials and temptations for life everlasting, it has not yet been proved from the Scriptures that grace, once given, can never be lost.

These five points the Remonstrants declare to be in harmony with the Word of God, edifying and, as far as they go, sufficient for salvation. They protest against the charge of changing the Christian Reformed religion, and claim toleration and legal protection for their doctrine.

Taken from the Christian Classics Ethereal Library: <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds1.ix.iii.v.html>

As you can plainly see in these five articles of the Remonstrance are all based in the belief that unsaved man has enough light to initiate and maintain salvation. It places the burden of salvation upon man and removes it from God who is the one who initiates and maintains a person's salvation.

Article 1 – States that the person hearing the gospel being preached has enough light within them to make a decision either for salvation or against it. Salvation is not based upon the doctrines of election and predestination but the belief that God looks down through history and sees who is going to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and who isn't.

Article 2 – It is the belief that Christ's atonement had paid for the sins of every single human being on earth, those who have lived in the past and those who are living at present and those who will be created in the future. However, even though the sins have been atoned for, one cannot have salvation unless they ask for it and then the atonement of Christ is applied to that person.

Article 3 – Man by himself does not have the ability to regenerate himself even within his own free will he is incapable but he must be regenerated by the Holy Spirit and therefore must be strengthened by Christ do so. *I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.* ([John 15:5](#))

Article 4 – Grace can be resisted in that even though God has been bestowing prevenient grace upon a person, they are still able to resist the wooing of God and completely reject his desire for their salvation.

Article 5 – It is believed that the Grace of God is active in a Christian's life and can give them the strength needed to endure any type of situation in this life, it is not yet proven that the Grace of God is sufficient to guarantee that the Christians will remain saved and can still lose their salvation.

Arminianism is an unbiblical response to straight and unadulterated biblical teachings. It is a total man-centered theology and makes no bones about man being in charge of his salvation and his entire Christian life. It dethrones God and places man on the throne of his own salvation and makes God his errand boy with the belief that they can command God. This is why the Synod of Dort declared Arminianism a blatant heresy because it is just as much a heresy today as it was in 1610.

One of the most heretical teachers who followed Jacob Arminius was Charles Finney and he was such a believer in loss of salvation that he believed Christians could actually be lost while in heaven and fall from salvation. Here is the quote from Finney's Systematic Theology: "Saints in Heaven can by natural possibility apostatize and fall, and be lost. Were not this naturally possible, there would be no virtue in perseverance." (Page 550)

Calvin's Ministry

John Calvin lived only 55 years but in that short span of time he was a voluminous writer and his ministry was a full one.

- Sunday's he taught the New Testament and some Psalms in the afternoon
- He took 5 years to complete the book of Acts
- He preached 46 sermons on Thessalonians
- 186 Sermons on Corinthians
- 86 sermons on the Pastoral letters
- 43 sermons on Galatians
- 48 sermons on Ephesians
- 5 years on the harmony of the Gospels

The above was what he taught only on Sundays!

During the week he taught the Old Testament:

- 159 sermons on Job
- 200 sermons on Deuteronomy
- 353 sermons on Isaiah
- 123 sermons on Genesis

He was still preaching when he died at age 55.

In 1536 He published the Institutes of the Christian Religion which was a major work for someone

who was 27 years old.

He led the French Reformation!

This is why he worked so well with Luther, Zwingli, Savonarola and others because he loved and taught the Bible. It is a total of 1244 sermons.

Calvin's teachings were based only upon Scripture and not upon anyone's opinion and therefore his teachings are vilified by modern day Christians because the majority of what is taught today is based upon three things: 1) Counterfeit Bible Versions; and 2) personal opinion; and 3) amalgamated teachings from the world. This is why the modern day free willer hates Calvin because he based his teachings solely on Scripture and Scripture does not pander to man's feelings, desires, and opinions.

Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism

Pelagianism comes from a man named (circa 354-420 A.D.) Pelagius who was a British Monk who had taught in Rome for a short period of time. He had gone to North Africa in 410 A.D. where he engaged Augustine, then Bishop of Hippo in a theological dispute. After that he went to Palestine and then disappeared from history. He was another cog in the wheel of heretical teachings.

Pelagianism – Denies original sin therefore denies that sin is passed down through having children. If there is no original sin, then what is the source of the sin that is handed down to each generation. He taught that people still had the capability of choosing good or evil without any divine intervention or assistance.

Pelagianism is condemned as a heresy

Pelagius has been condemned by many councils throughout church history including the following:

- Councils of Carthage (412, 416 and 418)
- Council of Ephesus (431)
- The Council of Orange (529)
- Council of Trent (1546) Roman Catholic
- 2nd Helvetic (1561/66) 8-9. (Swiss-German Reformed)
- Augsburg Confession (1530) Art. 9, 18 (Lutheran)
- Gallican Confession (1559) Art. 10 (French Reformed)
- Belgic Confession (1561) Art. 15 (Lowlands, French/Dutch/German Reformed)
- The Anglican Articles (1571), 9. (English)
- Canons of Dort (1618-9), 3/4.2 (Dutch/German/French Reformed).

The list of councils was taken from <http://public.csusm.edu/guests/rsclark/Pelagius.htm>
California State University San Marcos

It is very rare that you will come in contact with anyone who endorses full Pelagianism. The people you will come in contact with are those called semi-Pelagianists.

Semi-Pelagianism

Semi-Pelagianism teaches that God and man can cooperate to attain man's salvation. Have you ever heard the saying that you need 2 signatures on a spiritual paycheck, God's and yours? They also believe that the sinner has the ability to initiate belief in God. They also teach that God's grace is in response to man's initial effort of reaching out for salvation. It sounds like the theology found in free will churches today. Oh wait a minute, it is!

Semi-Pelagianism was condemned at the Council of Orange in 529 A.D. in Orange, France. The Council affirmed much of the theology of Augustine of Hippo, and made numerous proclamations against what later would come to be known as semi-Pelagian doctrine. The majority of Christians today are semi-Pelagian in doctrine, we know it as the belief in free will. In 412 A.D. Augustine came to the understanding of predestination in that there is absolutely no acceptance by man as a prerequisite for salvation but the choice was totally God's choice.

Calvinism and Evangelism

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

Another false accusation levied against the Calvinists is that there is no urgency in getting the gospel out to the world. They think that because we believe in the doctrines of election and predestination, then there is no need to send forth the gospel to the world because if God has already chosen those he is going to save, then why bother going to the streets and evangelize.

Quite frankly there are many who are called hyper-Calvinists who believe this and have done nothing to send forth the gospel to the world. William Carey (8/17/1761-6/9/1834) was a missionary to India who faced that particular mindset when he had a desire to go to India. He became associated with a group of particular Baptists and acquainted with men like Andrew Fuller and John Ryland. Carey had a burning desire for the souls of men and wanted to go to India to spread the gospel. He argued that Jesus' Great Commission applied to all Christians of all times, and he castigated fellow believers of his day for ignoring it: "Multitudes sit at ease and give themselves no concern about the far greater part of their fellow sinners, who to this day, are lost in ignorance and idolatry."

When Carey submitted the subject of world missions for discussion at a ministers' meeting, "Whether the command given to the apostles to teach all nations was not obligatory on all succeeding ministers to the end of the world, seeing that the accompanying promise was of equal extent." Dr. Ryland shouted, "Young man, sit down: when God pleases to covert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine."

So you see that even in the 1700's there was opposition to world missions. That must never be the attitude of any Christian who holds to the Doctrines of Grace. God has set up certain responsibilities for the Christian and one of them is to go forth with the gospel to all nations as we read in Mark 16:15 above. God has determined to save his people by means of the preaching of the gospel. *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17)* It does not matter if a person holds to election and predestination because the Great Commission is for all Christians.

Since we do not know who the Elect of God are we are to go out to the streets or give to missions and hand out tracts or preach the gospel to every creature as the Bible commands us to. We may hand out 100 tracts and there may only be 3 Elect within that group. It does not matter, our responsibility is to go forth with the gospel and it is God's responsibility to save those he has named before the foundation of the world and he will. *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)* 2 Peter 3:9 has to do with the Elect of God and not the entire world. God names the believers in eternity, he then predestines them, and then he saves them. The last seven words in that verse deals with repentance. God is the one who grants repentance because it is not in a person who is spiritually dead to repent. *In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; (2 Timothy 2:25)* If God is the one who grants repentance, then it is

not done out of a person's will because before salvation a person is spiritually dead but after salvation they are alive.

The next time you meet a person who holds to the Calvinist doctrines and believes they do not have to do world evangelism, then remind them the command came from the Lord and they are living in rebellion when they are shirking their spiritual responsibilities. Now you may not be able to go to the mission field but you can sure help those who can go or are sending forth the gospel by various methods. So the bottom line is that those who hold to the doctrines of election and predestination are not exempt from the command to go forth with the gospel.

Hearing the Gospel

{14} How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? {15} And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! {16} But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? {17} So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:14-17)

Many who advocate free will believe that all you have to do is just hear the gospel being preached and then based on what you hear you make a decision either accept or reject Christ. The problem is that they do not understand what the word hearing means. Yes there is a physical hearing of the gospel and if a person is deaf then they can read the gospel or have it signed to them. In the Bible there is a word behind the word “hearing or hear” which is tied specifically to the gospel.

For a person to become saved they must understand the Scriptures being expounded and we have learned that an unsaved person is spiritually dead and unable to understand spiritual things, namely the Scriptures. *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) Since the natural man is unable to receive the things of the Spirit of God, then how can a person accept the Lord if they are divinely deprived in that area?

This is explained very well in the following Scripture. *Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,* (Luke 24:45) This Scripture is taken from the section where the two disciples were on the road to Emmaus and met Jesus. They were traveling to Emmaus which would have been about 7½ miles (12 km) from Jerusalem. They were discussing the events which took place over that weekend namely the crucifixion. While they were discussing these things Jesus had joined them and an interesting thing happened. *But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.* (Luke 24:16) At this point they did not recognize Jesus because their spiritual eyes were not yet opened. The word in the Greek text for “were holden” carries with it the meaning of “were restrained.” Now that word is in the passive voice which means that their spiritual eyes were intentionally kept closed by the Lord and not the ignorance of the disciples. At this time He did not want them to recognize Him.

Why would the Lord keep their eyes closed? Those in the free will movement would not understand this because the initial meeting with the two disciples was not the time of their understanding. They must have travelled a long while because they also decided to make camp for the night and invited Jesus to stay with them. It wasn't until we get to verse 45 when we read that the Lord opened their understanding to the scriptures and at that point they recognized him. Just like He did to the two disciples from Emmaus, if the Lord Jesus does not open the Scriptures to us, we will not understand them and always come to a wrong conclusion. They would now be able to read the Hebrew Scriptures and then come to a proper conclusion concerning the Messiah when they came to passages about Him. No longer would the Scriptures be shrouded but by the Holy Spirit, they will all be open.

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not,

neither do they understand. 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. (Matthew 13:13-16)

The free willers believe and teach that God wants everyone to be saved. If that is the case, then why in the above verses is the Lord disdaining the idea of all of Israel becoming saved. Notice the term in verse 15 where it says "...lest at any time..." The free willers throw around the word "whosoever" as if it means any time and any place. Here the Lord is rejecting that idea of salvation being initiated by themselves. Notice in verse 16, the Lord speaks to the disciples that they are blessed because their spiritual eyes and spiritual ears are open.

We finally get to the essence of this section concerning the word "hear or hearing" found in Scripture. In the above verse Matthew 13:16 notice the Lord says to the disciples that their ears hear. This is not just speaking about physically hearing the gospel but is speaking about spiritually hearing the gospel. The word behind "hear" in Matthew 13:16 is the Greek word "akouw" which is pronounced "ah-koo-oh" which is used 438 times throughout the New Testament. It means hearing with understanding versus just physical hearing. Remember 1 Corinthians 2:14 at the beginning of this section? If a person is unsaved, that is, in the flesh they cannot understand the things of the Spirit and it is the Holy Spirit who inspired the Scriptures and therefore they must be spiritually discerned. The problem is that unsaved man cannot spiritually discern them because they are not given understanding. When a person becomes saved, then the Lord opens the Scriptures to them as he did to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. They were with Jesus a while before he opened their understanding. The key is that a person must become saved first before they can understand the Scriptures because the Holy Spirit will indwell them and then be able to give them understanding of the Scriptures. So it is not just a question of physically hearing the gospel, it is the fact of hearing with understanding and the only way a person understands is when salvation takes place first.

The two disciples on the road to Emmaus were with the Lord Jesus Christ a while before he opened their understanding. This teaches us that a person can hear the gospel being preached a number of times before they are given understanding, that is, before they become saved. Some may hear hundreds of sermons and never become saved because they were not predestined to be saved. Let me give a personal testimony here. When I was 12 years old I purchased a crystal AM radio receiver. When you connected the alligator clip to the screw on an electrical outlet, the whole house then became an antenna. After I went to bed, I would connect the alligator clip and would then listen to the stations I could pick up. At that time I lived 25 miles (40 km) south of New York City where I picked up WOR 710 AM which was a clear channel powerful station. Every Sunday night I would listen to them and they had broadcasted the ministry of blind evangelist Ralph Montanus. He was preaching the true gospel and at the age of 12 I heard the true gospel presented for the first time. However, at that time I did not become saved because it was not my time of visitation. I became saved at the age of 27. So I physically heard the gospel at 12 but did not have the hearing with understanding till I was 27 which was the predestined time of my salvation. If a person hears the gospel and does not respond, it does not mean they are lost for good, it may mean that that particular time was not their time of visitation.

There is another verse which the free willers like to toss around and they believe that it shows that

anyone at any time can become saved. It is Revelation 22:17. *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. (Revelation 22:17)* If you recall in the preface of this study I wrote the following. The word “whosoever” does not mean “anytime, anyplace, anywhere, or any time according to their will can become saved.” That word “whosoever” carries with it the meaning of “everyone or all.” That rules out the word “whosoever.” Then we come to another word which we have looked at in detail in this study and that is “heareth” which in this verse also is the Greek word “akouw.” Notice how Revelation 22:17 is worded. The word “heareth” is before “come” and “take.” This means that the prerequisite for those is to hear first which means only those who are saved will be thirsty to take the water freely.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. (Matthew 5:6) Matthew 5:6 answers “And him that is athirst”

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. (John 4:14) John 4:14 answers “...the water of life freely.”

The fact that it is the “Spirit and the bride” who are bidding it is only those who have become elected to salvation will respond. *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. (Revelation 22:11)* Those who are not elected to salvation will remain in their sinful state and those who are saved will remain in their righteous state.

This is an aside when I speak about the doctrine of predestination to someone I tell them I had a hand in saving both my parents before I was even born. I was born May 1, 1953. My father served in World War 2 in the Pacific. One day he was pinned down by a Japanese sniper until the mud Marines came in and quickly rectified that situation. Then in 1947 when my brother Rod was being born, my mother heard the nurse yell to the doctor that they were losing her as she was fading but she was revived. Now how did I save both my parents when I was not yet born. I look back with 20/20 hindsight and in understanding the doctrine of predestination knowing I had to be born so God could save me since he named me before the foundation of the world. *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)* 2 Peter 3:9 is erroneously used by the free willers to prove that God wants everyone saved. The real understanding of 2 Peter 3:9 is that none of the Elect whom God named before the foundation of the world will perish and I think that has been proven out in my life. Now I say it jokingly that I saved my parents because it was all of the Lord, after all how could I do any saving or anything if I was not born yet. The bottom line is that the biblical doctrine of predestination saved both my parent’s lives. If either of them died, I could not have been born, and if I could not be born, then one of the Elect would perish and that would mean the scripture would be broken. Isn’t it amazing how the doctrines of the Bible affect our lives and those around us?

What is the Resurrected Soul?

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (Revelation 20:5-6)

For many years I have used the term “resurrected soul” in describing the action which takes place in the believer’s life. We have previously read in the Scriptures that before a person is saved they are spiritually dead. I will repost those Scriptures here because repetition is a great teacher plus I will also add some more Scriptures which teach the same truth.

1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) (Ephesians 2:1-5)

Paul is writing to the Ephesian Christians that they were made alive (quickened) by Christ whom before was dead. Paul makes this statement in both verses 1 and 5. The word in the Greek behind “dead” in both cases is the word “nekrous” which means “dead, lifeless and useless.” Now the people he is speaking to were physically alive but Paul was showing before salvation, they had physical life but were spiritually dead.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. (John 5:25)

The general resurrection taught in John 5:28-29 is not in view here because the graves are mentioned in those verses. Here in John 5:25 Jesus is speaking about those who are spiritually dead. It is the same word “nekrous” which is used in Ephesians 2:1-5. In this verse, Jesus is speaking about those who will inherit salvation because he uses the word “akouw” for the word “hear.” Remember that means hearing with understanding.

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. (Romans 6:13)

Here the Apostle Paul is telling the Roman Christians that they are to use their bodies for righteousness and not to go back into sinful ways. They are to live as those “...that are alive from the dead...” The word for dead is “nekrous” which means “dead, lifeless, or useless.”

Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (Ephesians 5:14)

Here we see that the Apostle Paul is speaking in terms of resurrection when he tells the Ephesians they are to arise from the dead. The word for “dead” here is also “nekrous.” Now the word in the Greek for “arise” is “anistēmi” which means “bring to life, to rise again, raise, or stand up.” Now this is an interesting word because it has a cognate word used in the New Testament which is “anastasis” which means “rise, rising, or resurrection.” Have you ever had surgery where they place you under anesthesia? We get our word “anesthesia” from the word “anastasis.” When you go under anesthesia, your life is more in the hands of the Anesthesiologist than the surgeon. When the surgeon is done, the Anesthesiologist then brings you out of your sleep. Literally he or she is raising you back to life from the dead. Very interesting parallel isn’t it?

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Colossians 2:13

Here we read that the Apostle Paul is writing to the Colossians that those who were saved were once dead in their sins and Christ made them alive (quickened) them by means of forgiving all their trespasses. The word behind “dead” is also “nekrous.”

It is apparent from this groups of verses that before a person is saved, they are dead in sins and trespasses. A dead person cannot do anything but remain dead until they are resurrected by an outside source. We saw that a person can be alive physically but dead spiritually which is what happened to Adam and Eve, they died spiritually when they disobeyed God but lived on physically. I was physically alive for 27 years but spiritually dead and because Christ raised my soul up from the dead, I now have newness of life. The next section is the ultimate aid to understanding what happens in our soul when we go from death to life. It is in the Bible because it gives a huge picture of what takes place in the believer’s life when they become saved. It is the story of Lazarus.

The story of Lazarus is found in John 11:1-44. The name Lazarus means “God has helped or the help of God.” The reason why it takes up 44 verses because it conveys a strategic event which happens in the life of every believer. Without resurrection, we will remain dead for eternity.

Lazarus was sick and his sisters Mary and Martha had sent someone to bring the Lord Jesus Christ back to Bethany so the Lord could heal Lazarus. In verse 4 the Lord tells the person that this sickness is not unto death but unto the glory of God and for the glory of the Son of God. In verse 6 we are told that Lazarus had died and Jesus did not come immediately but decided to wait another two days before coming back to Bethany. Then in verse 11 Jesus tells the disciples that Lazarus was sleeping and they thought that Jesus was speaking about resting. Then in verse 14 Jesus plainly tells them that Lazarus had died. In verse 17 Jesus had arrived back in Bethany and was told that Lazarus was buried for four days already. The four day time period is significant because under Jewish belief, the spirit of a dead person stayed with the body for three days and then departs on the fourth. So Jesus waited till four days had elapsed so for those who believed this myth would realize that Lazarus was really dead and had no chance to ever live again especially if his spirit has departed. In verse 21 Martha went to meet Jesus and told him that if he would have been there then Lazarus would not have died. In verse 23 Jesus assured Martha that Lazarus would rise again and in verse 24 Martha thought that Jesus was talking about the general resurrection at the last day. In verse 28 we read that Martha told Mary but secretly that Jesus had come. It was secret because the Jews wanted to kill him as we read in verse 8.

In verse 31 we read that there were mourners in the house with Mary but when she got up to go meet Jesus, they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep. In verse 32 Mary also told Jesus that if he was there Lazarus would not have died. Then in verse 34 Jesus asked where the

tomb of Lazarus was. Verse 35 is the shortest verse in the Bible but one of the most deepest verses showing how the death of his saints affect Jesus. *Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. (Psalm 116:15)* Then in verse 39 Jesus commands them to roll away the stone. Just like a person who becomes saved they are given a new heart and their stony heart is removed. *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. (Ezekiel 36:26)*

Then Martha reminds him that Lazarus was dead for four days and he already would be stinking because of body decomposition. Then in verse 40 Jesus reminds Martha that if she believed she would see the glory of God. In verse 42 Jesus then prays a prayer to his Father thanking him that he always hears him. In verse 43, Jesus then called Lazarus by name to come forth. *To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. (John 10:3)* It is important that Jesus called Lazarus by name because first of all, Jesus knows the name of all those who are his and secondly, if Jesus would have just said come forth, then every dead person in the world would have come forth. Jesus was specifically raising Lazarus from the dead and no one else at this time. Then in verse 44 in response to the calling of Jesus Lazarus responded and came out of the tomb alive. He was still bound by the grave clothes and his face was bound by the face cloth. Jesus did not remove those instead he commanded the people around to loose him and let him go. The words "loose" and "let" in the Greek are in the Imperative Mood making them a command. Here we see Jesus saving Lazarus and the people loosing him. The picture is simple Jesus does the saving and the true believers are to train the new believer in the teachings of Scripture. The grave clothes represent the teachings of the world. As the new believer is taught the Scriptures, the worldly beliefs come off like the grave clothes come off. Worldly beliefs do not harmonize with the Christian life. If the church is a compromised church where the new believer goes, then that new believer will be secured in their grave clothes and never shed them.

Some principles spring forth from the story of Lazarus:

- 1) Lazarus was dead and could do nothing to raise himself and therefore had to be raised by Jesus.
- 2) Jesus called him by name which is how he calls every believer from spiritual death.
- 3) Did Lazarus have the free will to stay in the tomb if he wanted? Of course not, God stood outside his tomb and commanded him to come forth. *And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: (Acts 17:30)* God commands men everywhere to repent but only those whom God calls by name will repent, that is, become saved.
- 4) Before a person comes to salvation they have the stench of death on them but once God saves them they now have a fragrance of life. *But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God. (Philippians 4:18)*

Lazarus was completely dead and there was nothing that he could do to raise himself even though his two sisters probably did everything they could to prevent his death. Lazarus did not have a free will because he was dead. Lazarus was physically dead which is akin to a person who is unsaved being spiritually dead. The unsaved person is in the same boat as Lazarus having no ability whatsoever to bring about their own salvation because dead is dead. This is the basic biblical teaching that the free willers totally ignore and reject. They reject the belief that unsaved man is

spiritually dead and incapable of bringing about their own salvation. A spiritually dead person cannot will themselves into heaven because their spirit is dead even though they are walking around with physical life. They must be saved from an outside source just as Lazarus needed Jesus to resurrect him, we also need God to resurrect us from being spiritually dead and that brings us back to our opening verses.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (Revelation 20:5-6)

Notice in verse 5 it states "This is the first resurrection." Now dispensationalists look at this and claim it is the rapture. This is an erroneous teaching. The understanding of the first resurrection is found in verse 6. It speaks about those who had part in the first resurrection being blessed and holy which describes what the believer becomes because of salvation. Then the next phrase gives us the insight about what this is speaking about. "On such the second death has no power" speaks about the first resurrection removing the power of the second death. The first death is physical death. The second death is eternal damnation. Since we have received our resurrected souls which is the first resurrection we are passed from death unto life, the second death has no power in the life of the believer. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. (John 5:24)* The first resurrection is the resurrection of our dead souls unto eternal life which is personal and specific in the life of those God calls and the second resurrection will be on the last day when all believers and unbelievers will be raised if they have physically died before the Lord returns. No person on earth can will either the first or second resurrection. Lazarus couldn't will his own physical resurrection and no person can will their own spiritual resurrection. *12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13)*

It is Finished!

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. (John 19:30)

I am writing this section three days before Good Friday 2019. The Lord Jesus Christ was crucified and one of the attendants gave Jesus some vinegar which would only have increased his thirst but as soon as he received it, he said, "It is Finished." This is a very important saying that Jesus made. First of all, his days of suffering were now over as he gave up the ghost and physically died.

Before I comment on John 19:30, I want to dispel a belief which is very common today among churches and Christians yet is nowhere found in the Bible. It is the belief that after Jesus died, he went to hell

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: {19} By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; {20} Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. (1 Peter 3:18-20)

Here we have three verses which have been very misunderstood and really used in outrageous ways. I have heard these verses misused for over 35 years by those who insist that after Christ died, He went to Hell to preach to the spirits in prison, those of the fallen angels and unbelievers. However, this is far from Biblical truth. When the Lord Jesus died on the cross, He committed His spirit unto His Father and His body went into the grave.

Spirit

And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost. (Luke 23:46)

Body

And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid. (Luke 23:53)

There are no contradicting Scriptures which teach that anything else happened. If there were conscious souls in Hell at that time, there would be no purpose in bringing them the Gospel, since they would all be under condemnation and could never be saved.

Christ did not go to Hell but He endured the equivalency of an eternity in Hell to pay for the sins of the Believers. One thing we must realize that God never does anything which lacks purpose. The key to understanding this passage is found in verse 20. There we read about Noah who is called "preacher of righteousness." *And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; (2 Peter 2:5)*

While Noah was preparing the ark, he was also preaching about the coming judgment. This is why he is called "a preacher." There is one great principle found in verse 20 and I have it pasted in my Bible when I clipped it out of something many years ago, "Noah was faithful to God's message

even though there were no results.”

This is something that we must keep in mind. Many of us want to see instant results when we witness to someone. This is not always the case. Sometimes it does happen but very rarely. We are to remain faithful and vigilant even if there is no visible fruit. Now what does it mean that Christ preached to the spirits in prison? Jesus did not walk the earth at that time, so how could He have preached to the spirits in prison? The answer is simple. The Spirit of Christ was in Noah!

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)

Let us look at the very end of 1 Peter 3:18, “but quickened by the Spirit:” Isn’t every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ quickened (made alive) by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? We read this in Romans 8:9. The same Spirit quickened the Old Testament Saints as well as all those on the New Testament side of the cross. The Lord Jesus is not walking on earth today, yet He is preaching to the world through His regenerated Saints by the quickening of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is called the “Word of God” and it is through the Word of God we bring the Gospel.

Remember That Noah Found Grace in the Eyes of the Lord

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. (Genesis 6:8)

Grace in the life of a person is what? Salvation! Noah was a saved individual who preached the word of Christ to his generation. So then what is the prison that is in view? In Isaiah 14, we read about Satan, that he would not open the house of his prisoners.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! {13} For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: {14} I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. {15} Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. {16} They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; {17} That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? (Isaiah 14:12-17)

Isaiah 14:12-17 speaks about Satan and his desire to be like God. In verse 17, the Bible states that he did not open the house of his prisoners. Did Satan have a physical place where he locked up all his prisoners? The answer, of course, is no. The prison being spoken of here is the prison of unbelief. Satan will not allow any of his prisoners to hear and understand the Gospel.

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: {4} In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

Satan’s desire is to keep all those who are unbelievers as unbelievers by blinding their minds to the truth of the Gospel so salvation will not take place. While Satan will control many people until the last day, God has committed to save many and those that God will save will hear the Gospel and become saved which means they have been removed from the prison house or the power of Satan.

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his

dear Son: (Colossians 1:13)

Now let us go back to the time of Noah. What does this translate into? It means that Noah was preaching to all the unbelievers for the duration of the building of the ark. We have seen that those in spiritual prison are the unsaved. When a person becomes saved, they become free.

But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. (Romans 6:22)

Section Summary

So the prisoners that Christ was preaching to were all the unbelievers at the time of Noah, through Him indwelling Noah with the Holy Spirit. They were not in any special place but were all walking around the earth. How does this apply to us today? Well, it is the same principle, because all the unbelievers are still in spiritual prison and the only way a person becomes free from that prison is by receiving a full "Heavenly Pardon." Once this takes place, they are transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of God as we read in Colossians 1:13. When we look at 1 Peter 3:18-20, we see how much deeper they are than just a "homily in hell." These verses speak of the beauty of salvation which we can all thank God for this day. For we were once a prisoner but now we are set at liberty.

Now let us return to John 19:30. When the Lord Jesus stated that "it" is finished it marked the end of his sufferings as we noted before but the major teaching stemming from that verse is the fact that God's salvation plan was now complete, in that all that the feasts were looking forward to, all that the prophets spoke about and the teachings of Jesus himself. The free will movement believes that when Christ died, he opened the gates for anyone to walk through and that salvation was now available to the "whosoever."

Unfortunately this is another serious error being taught by the free willers because if you notice what the Lord said, "It is finished." He did not say, it is beginning. So what was finished? The Lord Jesus Christ came to save his people. *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)* This is where the doctrine of Limited Atonement comes in. Jesus died for his people and not for the whole world as we have previously read. When he died, the Elect were now saved and sealed because Christ fulfilled the demands of God's righteous law on their behalf. *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30)* These are the ones who were named by God from the foundation of the world to inherit salvation. Christ came to specifically die for his Elect and as we previously read there is no way Christ died for everyone in the world or else everyone will be saved. This is the error of the free will movement as it is built upon randomness which if one studies the creation and the Bible will not find any. Can you imagine the universe existing by random chance? Don't they call that the Big Bang which is totally ridiculous? Can you imagine if the sun was not controlled by God but by randomness? What would keep the sun from getting closer to the earth and burning it up? How about the fact that the sun rises and sets the same way every day, is this according to randomness or according to God being in control? Why God has saved some and not others is a mystery. One thing we must keep in mind and free willers ignore this principle too and that is, that man was the one who walked away from God in sin, God did not walk away from the human race. If he did we would all be going to hell. The great miracle is that God chose to save a great multitude from the penalty of hell. He didn't have to he could have just allowed the human race to die out by attrition. When you come to the section entitled "The Last Will and Testament of Christ" you will see according to the Scriptures that it will be legally impossible for anyone who is not named in it to have salvation. Once Christ died, his last will and

testament was now in force and included only those who were named in it, that is, the Elect of God. *And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.* (Revelation 21:27) Since unbelievers cannot regenerate themselves as we have previously read according to the Scriptures, then they are classified as defilers, liars, and those who perform abominations. There is the separation that only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life are qualified to go into heaven.

Let us look at three verses which illustrate the reality that a believer's name is already written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. (Luke 10:20)

The words "are written" are in the aorist tense. The aorist tense is a tense which indicates a past action.

And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Revelation 21:27)

The words "are written" are in the perfect tense. The perfect tense is a primary tense because it emphasizes the present, or ongoing result of a completed action. Remember, Christ was slain in principle from the foundation of the world and therefore the Lamb's book of Life was completed before the foundation of the world.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: (Matthew 25:34)

The words "prepared for you" are in the perfect tense which is the result of a past action which was completed. Keep in mind that in the order of the narratives when Luke 10:20 and Matthew 25:34 were penned, it was still before the time of the cross which means what is in view is the past action of the believer being named for salvation and a place being prepared for them in heaven. When you prepare for a wedding, do you prepare say for 100 guests and then throw open the doors for the whole town to come? Of course not, you prepare for those 100 invited guests and that is all you paid for. Just like Christ who paid for the sins of his Elect and that was it.

Does God love Everyone in the world?

The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. (Psalm 5:5)

One of the major teachings which goes along with the free will movement is that God loves everyone in the world. If that is so true then why does God demand that we become saved in Christ, repent of our sin, and turn our backs on the world? The old adage that God loves the sinner but hates the sin has been tossed around by free will preachers for years and they don't even search the Scriptures to see if those sayings are true. It is probably not researched because it keeps the attendance high and the good givers to keep on giving. Half of that saying is correct and it is half where God hates the sin.

The other half that God loves the sinner is nowhere found in scripture. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. (Psalm 5:5) The Hebrew word behind "hatest" means "to personally hate." I have never heard any free will preacher ever refer to this verse simply because they don't want to offend their listeners. The reality is that the unsaved person who is in rebellion to God is the enemy of God. One of the biggest mistakes that Christians make is to believe that just because an unbeliever has much money or is very handsome or beautiful that they are somehow in favor with God. *That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matthew 5:45)* The reality is that the more God has given to an individual, the more they are accountable to him. This applies to both believers and unbelievers. This also includes the gospel message. An unbeliever who physically hears the gospel and keeps snubbing it will be held accountable for what they heard and their actions afterward.

Here are some verses which show the condition of those who are unbelievers in which the Bible refers to them as sinners. You will see that they are not loved by God but they are detested.

5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish. (Psalm 1:5-6)

God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. (Psalm 7:11)

8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight. 9 The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness. (Proverbs 15:8-9)

For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesseth the covetous, whom the LORD abhorreth. (Psalm 10:3)

The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth. (Psalm 11:5)

Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. (Isaiah 1:14) This was told to ancient Israel.

He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination. (Proverbs 28:9)

I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. (Amos 5:21)

The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate. (Proverbs 8:13)

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Matthew 7:23)

These twelve verses alone show that God's anger is kindled against all those who are unbelievers because they are enemies of God. This message needs to be preached not only from the pulpits but also Christians must tell it to those whom they come in contact with. Preaching God loves you is false teaching to the unbeliever while it is correct teaching for the true believer. Many Bible tracts that are passed out by Christians do not have the truth of scripture on them and are just cute little stories. We must get back to "Thus Saith The Lord" and preach the reality of the fact that the unbeliever is an enemy of God.

Then the question remains, "how do I experience the love of God?" First we must realize that as an enemy of God the war must end between us and we must have peace. *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: (Romans 5:1)* Once a person becomes saved the war with God is over and we have peace and a new eternal relationship with him. God's love is qualified and is only for the believer in Christ. In scripture, God is never stated as loving the unbeliever but only loving the true believer as these verses show that truth.

Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. (John 13:1)

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. (John 14:21)

For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. (John 16:27)

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, (Ephesians 2:4)

Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, (2 Thessalonians 2:16)

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:10)

We love him, because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19)

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, (Revelation 1:5)

As you can easily see directly from the scriptures that the love of God is only for the true believer. When a person becomes saved, they have both the love of the Father and the Son. This is never said about the unbeliever. The only two major promises for the unbeliever are the two verses below:

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)

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)

As we plainly see in these two verse the stark contrast in the condition of the believer and that of the unbeliever. For the believer it is no condemnation and eternal life. *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (Romans 8:1)* For the unbeliever it is condemnation and the wrath of God. What the scripture is saying is that God hates the sin and the sinner because he is sending the sinner to hell on Judgment Day and not just the sin. Let's start teaching the truth about the condition of unsaved man and leave the results to God.

Praying for Someone's Salvation?

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; (Matthew 5:44)

One of the most hypocritical things that Arminian's do is to pray for someone's salvation. I know that does not sound right but praying to God for him to save a person goes totally against what they believe and teach. On one hand they are claiming that it is the person who decides whether they want to be saved or not and then on the other hand they loathe the idea that salvation is all of the Lord, yet they will pray to the Lord to open the spiritual eyes and heart of the person they want to see saved. D. James Kennedy had a good comeback for these hypocrites, "Shouldn't they be praying to the person that makes the decision and not God?" What they are stating by their actions is that they believe that God opens the spiritual eyes and ears of the person they are focusing on! Guess what? That is exactly what the Bible teaches and what Reformed theology teaches.

It goes as proof that they do not even believe their own doctrines because their actions are different than what they believe. It is the Reformed Christian who believes that the Lord is the one who initiates salvation and keeps a person during their tenure here on earth. Arminians believe that a person can lose their salvation as we read previously. I have been to the funerals of Christians who believed that a person can lose their salvation and funny thing, they all went to heaven according to the preacher. So even at their funerals they disbelieve the fifth point of Arminius in that a person can lose their salvation. Have you ever heard an Arminian preacher at a funeral state that the person went to hell? I haven't and I have been saved almost 40 years.

The Age Of Accountability

The belief we are researching is known as The Age of Accountability (TAA). TAA stems from the belief within free will teachings that a young child is covered by the blood of Christ until they reach a certain age in which understanding takes place concerning sin, namely the difference between right and wrong. Until they reach that age, if the child dies, they immediately go into the presence of the Lord. TAA is also built upon the emotionally based belief that a loving God would not send anyone to Hell without the opportunity to accept or reject Christ. TAA is also said to differ with the academic abilities of each individual child to be able to understand the teachings of Scripture.

What surfaces at this point is a question of cruelty to a certain group of people. That group is the retarded, illiterate, deaf, and blind, or those who possess a learning disability are immediately disqualified because they may never understand the difference between good and bad. The question then remains, will God keep them under the blood for their entire life since they are incapable of understanding? The answer is a resounding no for two reasons: First, no human is ever granted salvation based on their physical handicaps; and secondly, this type of salvation is nowhere taught in Scripture.

If it is not taught in Scripture, then we cannot add our own ideas and teach it as doctrine. When

man begins to espouse free will doctrines, he must actually create peripheral doctrines to sustain the main idea. This sad fact remains for any kind of created doctrine. TAA is an extremely popular teaching among many famous evangelists and pastors. Many denominational and non-denominational churches have accepted this unbiblical doctrine as fact, when in essence there is not one bit of Scripture to support it. I do not want to venture deeply into free will in this section but TAA is a child of this doctrine. It puts man as the captain of his own salvation, which is nowhere taught in Scripture either. To make created doctrine acceptable, it must have reference to the Bible somewhere, so let me discuss with you some Scripture which seems to support the TAA doctrine.

2 Samuel 12:13-23

And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? {23} But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me. (2 Samuel 12:22-23)

As you probably know this section of Scripture deals with the death of David's son as a result of the adulterous sin of David and Bathsheba. David had pleaded with God to spare the life of the child, but God's judgment was firm and could not be reversed. The child eventually died which caused David to cease mourning and clean himself up, which bewildered those around him. We come to verse 23 and this is the main verse used as biblical reference to "prove" the age of accountability. If we isolate this verse and remove it from its context, we can easily make it say what we want it to, but we cannot and will not. If you read the entire passage of Scripture, you will see that it plainly deals with God's judgment on sin. God is not a respecter of persons, all who sin will face judgment.

This verse also reveals how our sins affect others, even if we sin in private. All one has to do is read the account of Achan in Joshua 7. When we read verse 23 in context we may arrive at two proper biblical conclusions:

First, David will someday die as his child did. The child will not return to him but he will go to the child. He is united with the child in the fact of death, which all humans must face.

Secondly, is that the child was one of the Elect of God and was saved so he went to be with the Lord and David would someday follow him as he goes into the presence of Christ upon the moment of his physical death.

Nowhere in this passage or anywhere in the Bible is there a teaching that all children are under the blood of Christ. The only ones under the blood of Christ are those whom God has chosen before the foundation of the world. (Ephesians 1:4) So this verse falls way short as a proof text for the Age of Accountability. That philosophy must be built into the explanation because by the very context of Scripture, it does not exist.

Psalms 69:27-28

Add iniquity unto their iniquity: and let them not come into thy righteousness. {28} Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous. (Psalms 69:27-28)

These verses have been sparingly used to show when a person commits sin, they may be blotted out of the book of the living. These verses are part of an imprecatory prayer of David. David was seeking the physical death of his enemies. These verses have nothing to do with proving that a person can lose their saved status at a certain age. These verses are used as a hopeful foundation for TAA but as we have seen, they too fall short.

Luke 18:15-17

And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. {16} But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. {17} Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein. (Luke 18:15-17)

As we survey these passages, we may conclude that the Lord Jesus Christ loved to tell stories to children and no doubt they were attracted to Him. Verse 16 states that the kingdom of God contains little children. If we were to isolate this verse, we could safely say that little children are in the kingdom of God, meaning they are all saved.

Remember in John 3:3, Jesus told Nicodemus that no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again. As with all Scripture, every verse must be interpreted in context and according to Scripture. Verses 15 to 17 constitute an entire paragraph, so we cannot chop any verse out and gain proper understanding. Verse 17 goes on to state that the kingdom of God must be received with a child-like perspective. Ephesians 5:1 applies here:

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; (Ephesians 5:1) In other words, Christ is making a statement of humility to every believer that they must have the faith of a child. Children are very trusting and will believe what they are told. This is how the true believer is to receive the things of God. We are to believe God with simple trust and child-like faith. The Christians are referred to as the children of God in many places in the Bible. (Matthew 5:9; Luke 20:36; John 11:52 and others) In these verses we may safely conclude that Jesus is speaking in parabolic language, that Christians in the kingdom of God are typified by little children in this world. (Mark 4:34) The key is faith without intellectual understanding.

As we have seen, when these verses are examined more closely, we may safely conclude that we cannot build the teaching of the Age of Accountability on them. If we forced these views on these verses, we would be guilty of eisegesis, which is putting ideas into the text which do not belong there. It is clear that the Age of Accountability is a created doctrine with no biblical foundation. This false doctrine was created out of an emotional belief that God would not send a child to hell, but we must keep in mind the whole human race is in rebellion against God and respect of age plays no part in that rebellion.

Does the Bible reveal at what age we are considered sinners by God? The answer is yes, at birth! Either we accept the biblical fact that the sin of Adam was imputed to every human being or we take the position of Pelagius and deny it. Let's not be so hard on the cults because whenever we create an unbiblical doctrine, we are doing the same thing we accuse them of doing, making the Bible say what we want it to say. Romans 3:10-12 states:

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: {11} There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. {12} They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. (Romans 3:10-12)

Read the entire passage from Verse 10 to 19 but for brevity I want to focus in on these verses. What we have in these ten verses is God's assessment of the human race before He chooses to save some. As we see in these verses, God is very careful to point out that not one person in the entire human race is righteous and not one does good. Are children part of the human race? Of course they are and there are no exceptions to the above verses? God did not exempt children

from being a part of condemned humanity, because He emphatically states NO ONE, and we cannot ignore this truth for want of emotionalism. We have two choices, either we accept the teachings of Scripture or we become part of the "itching ears" crowd. (2 Timothy 4:3) Now let us explore some verses from Scripture which plainly teach that the Age of Accountability is a created doctrine. No one is going to argue that this teaching is not emotive, but we must remain true to Scripture no matter how hard the truth is.

Psalm 58:3-4

The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. {4} Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; (Psalm 58:3-4)

What a lovely assessment of humanity. This verse plainly tells us that we go speaking lies right from the moment of birth. When you were young, who taught you to lie to your parents? No one did, right? It is because of indwelt sin that we possess a natural proclivity to commit sin. The word "estranged" may also be translated "to turn aside," which means as soon as we are born, we turn away from God. Remember Revelation 21:27, which states that no liar will enter the kingdom of God. God is showing us that there is evil from the moment of birth. Since there is evil from the moment of birth, how can this person be considered saved up to a certain age?

God is making it very clear that all are under condemnation unless they are saved. If TAA was a true biblical doctrine, then wouldn't God have said, "that we go speaking lies from the moment of understanding" instead of the moment of birth? These types of questions must be faced before we can embrace any doctrine. Get into the habit of questioning doctrines with no biblical foundation and you will save yourself many headaches. Isn't it interesting that God likens babies to snakes? When a baby rattlesnake comes out of the egg, it is still a rattlesnake. When a human baby comes out of the womb, it is a sinner in diapers.

Psalm 51:5

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. (Psalm 51:5)

In this verse David is speaking of his own birth as sin cursed. Now David's mother and father were married, so what sin was he speaking of? The sin he is speaking of is the imputed sin of Adam. David knew every human being is born with indwelling sin. He states that he was sinful at birth and sinful while still in the womb. David was probably saved at an early age. This verse in no way implies that David was not sinful from birth. His birth is typical of every human being. We are born under sin, not under the blood of Christ up to a certain age. Now it is true that God saves some right in the womb such as:

Jeremiah: 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)

Paul: But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, (Galatians 1:15)

John the Baptist: For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. (Luke 1:15)

Another danger of this false doctrine

Another key danger of this false doctrine is that it gives parents the mistaken notion that if their

child acts up or does something wrong, it is okay, since they are under the blood of Christ anyway. I have seen ungodly, rebellious children disturb church services by going up and down the center aisle and the mother sitting there throwing up her hands not knowing what to do. Children are nothing more than young sinners. If they grow up to adulthood and never become saved, they are as hell bound as if they died in childhood. No child comes in to this world in an innocent state as we have seen in Scripture.

Why a slaughter of the children?

Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. (1 Samuel 15:3)

Here is God giving the command to Saul to utterly destroy all the Amalekites and notice He even includes children and sucklings (babies). Is God being cruel? Of course not, God knows that if any of these ungodly children survive they will grow up to become Amalekites and continue in the evil tradition of their fathers. They would worship false gods and sacrifice human beings along with all the other things that go with false religion. God is showing us a principle that unless a child is one of God's elect, they will be hell bound via false religions and philosophies. So if an unsaved child dies they go right to a place of silence and will await the judgment just as an unsaved adult would.

The Aborted Babies

Since many countries allow wholesale slaughter of unborn babies, the question has arisen as to where all the aborted babies have gone? The pat answer which is given is "they all went to heaven." Unfortunately while that would be nice, it is a deceitful answer. The biblical truth on this matter is that if any of those aborted babies were God's elect, they went right into the presence of the Lord. If they were not God's elect, then they are awaiting judgment in a place of silence. If a baby is not God's elect, they will not become saved even if they grow up to be 90 years old. This also applies to a baby that dies of natural causes. If they were God's Elect, chosen from the foundation of the world, they go right into the presence of the Lord. *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. (2 Corinthians 5:8)* If they are not Elect, they will be raised on Judgment day to face the Judgment. *But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. (Luke 12:48)* As for the penalty, the Bible is not clear but according to Luke 12:48, it seems as if there will be levels of punishment in Hell. If every aborted baby goes to Heaven, then that would make abortion the greatest evangelistic method. It would mean that parents should abort every baby and that would mean they would go to Heaven. The problem is that abortion is murder and murder is not an evangelistic method, it is heinous sin. Do you see what problems we get into when we try and create doctrines where there are none?

Specific Ages?

The Jews set the age of accountability at 13 at Bar Mitzvah. Reformed Judaism sets it at 16 or 18. Many Christians place it between the ages of 6 to 13. J. Vernon McGee believed it was 20 years old believing a person is in full adulthood at 21 and then responsible. In all these ages which are set by differing opinions and theologies, one thing remains the same and that is each group is basically stating that sin is free and without consequence up until whatever age is determined by whatever religious belief. Let us take it to the extreme. A person is born on February 29, a leap year. According to the age beliefs, a person could hit 21 years of age in their 84th year, which means they are exempt from judgment for 84 years of sin. Either the teaching applies to everyone or no one!

Whenever we create an emotional, non-biblical doctrine it will continue to be embellished and then entrenched as a believable doctrine. We need to accept what God has written on this subject and not circumvent it with emotions. We must always keep in mind that sin is universal whereas salvation is not, meaning everyone has sin but not everyone is saved and that includes babies since they too are part of the sin cursed human race.

Are Calvinists Robots?

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:32)

One of the most common accusations that the free will camp throws at those who believe in the Doctrines of Grace is that God doesn't make anyone robots. Of course, they are talking about the idea that a person has a free will and possesses the ability to accept Christ and become saved any time they want to. They believe that God has done everything He could to facilitate the salvation of man and now it is up to the individual to exercise their free will to become saved. What irritates this camp is the biblical truth that God elects to salvation those whom He named before the foundation of the world.

The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (Revelation 17:8)

Those who believe in the Doctrines of Grace are normally labeled "Calvinists." Now where the free will camp errors is that we do not proclaim the doctrines of John Calvin as Gospel. Remember that John Calvin died in 1564 but it wasn't until 1618-19 at the Synod of Dort when a summary was created which laid out five basic points in response to the 1610 Remonstrance. They are represented in the following manner:

Total Depravity
 Unconditional Election
 Limited Atonement
 Irresistible Grace
 Perseverance of the Saints

These teachings have been described by a simple acronym TULIP. I do not plan on going into an in depth study of all the points here since we have already discussed them in a previous section. Basically, I want to address the incorrect moniker given to Calvinists as robots and show from Scripture that it is the believer who is free and not the unbeliever.

The Unbeliever's First Dilemma

If you are going to understand salvation, you must first start at the beginning, which is the condition that the unbeliever is in. Nothing will be left to conjecture but will be backed up by Scripture. Whether somebody believes the Scriptures or not is an indication of their spiritual level.

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. (Colossians 2:12)

In this Colossians verse, we are told that the Lord Jesus Christ was physically dead and it was God who raised Him from the dead. The word translated "dead" in the Greek is also the word "nekrous" which carries with it the meaning of "lifeless, useless, or dead." In other words, before the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead, He was dead! There is no other way to understand the above word. Nekrous is a derivative of the word "nekros" which means "dead, lifeless, or useless." Let us

look to see if this word will help us in our understanding of the unbeliever's state.

And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins: {2} Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: {3} Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. {4} But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, {5} Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) (Ephesians 2:1-5)

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; {14} Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; (Colossians 2:13-14)

As we look at these two groups of verses, three times we come across the word "dead." Each of these words are translated from the same word in the Greek which described the condition of the Lord Jesus before He was raised from the dead. The word being "nekrous" which means "dead, lifeless, or useless." This means that God is describing the spiritual condition of the unbeliever as being dead or lifeless. Since God is using the same word to describe the physical death of Jesus and the spiritual state of death for the unbeliever, that means God is placing the spiritual state of the unbeliever on par with the condition that the body of Jesus was in before His resurrection. God describes them equally as both being dead.

If you refuse to believe that the unbeliever is spiritually dead, as we have openly seen, then you also cannot believe that Christ was dead from the cross experience. How can I make that statement? Very easy, because God uses the same words to describe the physical condition of the body of Jesus and the spiritual condition of the unbeliever. The following two verses concerning the death of Lazarus reinforce this truth with the word "nekrous" used in each verse to describe the condition of Lazarus before he was raised from the dead.

Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. (John 12:1)

Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. (John 12:9)

Remember that Lazarus had died and was already in the tomb for four days when the Lord Jesus raised him from the dead. Did the Lord Jesus raise a living man or a dead man to life? The Scriptures are very clear that Lazarus was dead. In fact, in four days the body would have begun to decay a great deal. So we plainly see that the situation of the unbeliever is akin to the dead bodies of the Lord Jesus and Lazarus. So there is no question that a person is spiritually dead before God quickens them or makes them alive, also known as salvation.

The Unbeliever's Second Dilemma

Those who proclaim the free will of man in salvation, claim that a person has the ability to see their sin and to seek God for salvation. They will use a verse such as the following:

For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. (Luke 11:10)

Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: (Isaiah 55:6)

Now when we look at these verses, it may look quite obvious that anyone can seek the Lord and ask for salvation. These verses look like God has given man the ability to seek Him and if we allow these verses, and ones like them, to stand alone without comparing Scripture with Scripture, then we can come to that conclusion. However, for proper biblical understanding, we must take into account other Scriptures which deal with this subject.

The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God*. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is none that doeth good*. {2} The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, *and seek God*. {3} They are all gone aside, they are *all together become filthy*: *there is none that doeth good, no, not one*. (Psalm 14:1-3)

The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God*. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: *there is none that doeth good*. {2} God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were *any* that did understand, that did seek God. {3} Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; *there is none that doeth good, no, not one*. (Psalm 53:1-3)

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: {11} There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. (Romans 3:10-11)

On three occasions God says that there is none that seeks after God. One cannot read these verses and then claim that an unsaved person has the ability to seek God for salvation when God plainly says that no one seeks after Him. On one hand God is saying that no one seeks Him, yet on the other hand, He tells us to seek the Lord. Contradiction? Or must something happen before a person can seek the Lord?

The Unbeliever's Third Dilemma

One of the other major proclamations of the free will camp is that a person has to repent of their sins and then turn to Christ. First, the word repentance means a change of mind. How can a person who is dead in sins change their mind? A dead person cannot make any changes in their life. Now below is a verse from Acts where God is commanding people everywhere to repent.

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

Now when we look at this verse, we immediately ask the question. Is everybody in the world repenting of their sin? We get a quick answer to that question just by looking around us. Sin is multiplying at a faster rate than ever before which means everyone in the world has not repented. The same situation must occur in a person's life that occurs in the person that seeks God. Something must happen first before a spiritually dead person can repent. The following verse gives the completion of the above verse.

In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; (2 Timothy 2:25)

Here we see that while God commands that all people everywhere repent, the only way a person can repent, is if God grants it to them. God's command is fulfilled by His own action because of our inability to respond in a dead state. When God grants someone repentance, He is granting them

salvation. So we see plainly that a person cannot repent of their sins unless God initiates salvation in their life to be able to repent of sin. A person in a dead state does not respond to the commands of God because they are spiritually dead! So, even though God's command to repent is universal, only those whom God grants it to, will respond. It is akin to the Gospel going out to all the world but very few are elected to salvation.

The Unbeliever's Fourth Dilemma

Another tenet of the free will camp is that not only does a person repent before they come to Christ, they must exercise their faith. As we have seen, the unbeliever is dead and unable to seek or repent, then how could one believe that a spiritually dead person can initiate faith?

Behold, his soul *which* is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith. (Habakkuk 2:4)

Here God makes a distinction between the unbeliever and believer. The soul of the unbeliever is not upright in him but the just, meaning the saved, shall live by the faith of Christ. The word "upright" carries with it the meaning of "to be straight" or "to be right." The soul without salvation is dead.

To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; (1 Corinthians 12:9)

When we look at this verse, we see that faith was considered one of the provisional gifts in the early church. Once the Bible was completed, the gift of faith was transferred to every true Christian in the body of Christ. In other words, there are no special people walking around today that have a special gift of faith to work some kind of miracles. All the supernatural miracles had ended when the Bible was completed.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (Galatians 5:22)

Here we see that faith is listed among the fruits of the Spirit. A person who does not have the Holy Spirit cannot have faith. Therefore, faith is given to a person after they become saved and not before. Both the fruits of the spirit and the spiritual gifts are available only to those who are saved.

But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. (1 Timothy 6:11)

In this verse, Paul is counseling Timothy to flee the sins of the world and to follow after six things. What do we find among that list of six things? Faith! Only a saved person can have faith and follow after faith. The words "follow after" in the Greek carries with it the meaning of "pursue." So the Bible is counseling a saved person to pursue faith.

In this section, we see that an unbeliever cannot exercise any type of faith because of their spiritual deadness. We see faith comes from Christ, plus it is a universal spiritual gift in the body of Christ, a fruit of the spirit, and can only be engaged in by a child of God and not an unbeliever. In other words, faith comes after salvation and not before.

Section Summary

We have seen from Scripture and not from John Calvin or any other theologian the following

dilemmas the unbeliever faces.

- 1) They are spiritually dead
- 2) They cannot seek God
- 3) They cannot repent on their own
- 4) They do not have any working or effectual faith

Sad Result

The unbeliever is totally incapable of initiating any salvation in their life. Unless God opens their spiritual eyes and grants them salvation, they remain in a perpetual state of spiritual death, unable to seek God, repent, or have faith. This means the unbeliever lives in a state of sin. They go from sin to sin and can never break the cycle on their own.

Robot

Let us look at the etymology of the word “robot.” The word “robot” comes from the Latin word “orbis” which carries with it the meaning of “orphan.” The word has been around since 1923. The word “orphan” dates back to the Fifteenth century and, of course, carries with it the meaning of a child without parents normally because of their death.

A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, *is* God in his holy habitation. (Psalm 68:5)

In the above verse we read that God will be a father of the fatherless. Who are the fatherless? The Christians have God as their Father but the unbelievers do not have God as their Father, they have Him as their Judge. This means that the unbelievers are orphans. Which means they are the robots.

Now a modern definition of a robot is “a device that automatically performs complicated often repetitive tasks.” Unbelievers go from sin to sin which means their lives are sin. A robot does that which is repetitive. An unbeliever is one who sins repetitively. A person addicted to alcohol drinks it repetitively making them a sin robot. A person addicted to pornography is a sin robot. A person addicted to anything is a robot because they continue to do the same things repetitively. So those who are in an unsaved state are the robots of society since all they know and do is sin.

Calvinist Robots?

The reason the free will camp calls us robots is basically because of their willful ignorance of the truths of Scripture but primarily because they think they have free will and if God “imposes” Himself on a person by saving them without their permission, then they claim that God made a robot. They claim that God doesn’t make any robots because He respects our free will. However, we have already seen that it is God who initiates our salvation because we are spiritually dead, which is an indisputable biblical fact.

Free Will?

Man’s will is enslaved to sin and death, therefore a dead and enslaved will cannot be free at the same time it is a prisoner. *Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. (John 8:34)* The word “servant” in this verse means “slave.” What freedom does a person have when they are a slave? They are the property of their master. Sin is the master of the unbeliever. Humans have free will in small areas of life such as what car to drive or what kind of clothes to wear because these are all physical matters. Salvation is a spiritual matter and man has no control over spiritual matters. We have already seen that man’s will is enslaved to sin and the result of that enslavement to sin is spiritual death. Remember when Adam

and Eve sinned? God told them that they “would surely die.” What happened? When they fell, did they fall physically or spiritually? In other words, did they physically die at that moment or did they spiritually die? Of course, we know they lived on in the flesh which means a spiritual death took place. The problem with the free will camp is that they make no distinction between the physical and the spiritual, and that is their big mistake and the reason that their understanding is darkened in the arena of salvation. The spiritual must be separated from the physical. Once that happens, understanding of God’s salvation plan will take place.

Freedom in the Gospel

Before I get into the aspects of the glorious freedom of the believer, I want to address another attack which the free will crowd throws at us. They claim that the “once saved always saved” people preach that we can go out and sin and do anything we want because we are saved. This is one of the most ridiculous things I have ever encountered. It comes from the mind of a juvenile. No true Doctrines of Grace adherent would ever counsel anyone to sin as they please because their salvation is secure. I have seen more holiness among the Calvinist crowd than I have among the Holiness people. True Calvinists never presume upon the grace of God by living a sinful life. This does not mean that we do not sin but we respect our salvation a lot more than someone who thinks they are in control of it. *He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.* (1 John 3:8)

Since we have seen that the true robots are those who are of Satan, let us look at the freedoms the believer possesses in Christ.

The Soul is Free of Sin

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (1 John 1:7)

One of the greatest freedoms that the Christian possesses is that our souls are completely cleansed of sin. This means that we are free to serve Christ without any guilt or stain of guilt of sin on our souls. The moment that Christ cleansed us, we were qualified to go to Heaven because every vestige of sin was removed from our soul. Our soul is as clean as if we never sinned.

Free not to Obey Sin

Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? (Isaiah 58:6)

Another great freedom the believer has is the ability to say no to sin. The Christian has the Holy Spirit living within them and He gives them the strength to say no to sin. Whatever bound or oppressed us in our old life, need not bind us again since we now have the strength to avoid the pitfalls of the old man.

Free from the demands of Law for Salvation

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. (Romans 3:28)

The true Christian does not have to do anything to maintain their salvation since our salvation is all of Grace. We need not place ourselves under the yoke of any deeds of either the law or any institution for salvation. Our salvation was accomplished by Christ in total, lacking nothing.

The Son Makes Us Free

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. (John 8:36)

As Nicodemus did not understand the nature of salvation, neither do they who feel we must adhere to some type of rules or practices. The Christian is free from all of the bondage of religion and systems.

Free from Hell

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:2)

The believer does not have the penalty of Hell hanging over their heads. They know that if the Lord takes them, they will immediately go into the presence of the Lord for eternity.

Satan has no Authority over the True Christian

Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. (John 14:30)

As Satan has absolutely no authority over the Lord Jesus Christ, he possesses no authority over the redeemed of God. Satan is a defeated foe and we never have to worry about him. He may hinder our ministries and cause havoc, but we are secure in the Lord Jesus Christ who has total rule over Satan.

Summary

As we have seen, the true robots are the ones who are unsaved. They must obey their programmed impulses to sin, as they go from sin to sin. On the contrary, the true Christian is made free in Christ. A person who is free is not a robot as they are not programmed like a robot. Obedience to Christ is a joy because of the salvation being granted. The free will camp places themselves in charge of their salvation, which displaces God as the grantor. If anyone is in bondage to robotic salvation, it is the free will camp since they have to exercise their free will constantly to maintain their salvation, which is nothing more than maintaining it by works. No Thanks, I would rather have Grace because God is the one who sustains us.

Arminianism: The Golden Idol of Freewill

by **Augustus Toplady (1740-1778)** (Author of the hymn "Rock of Ages")

Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto Thy Name, give glory for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake (Psalm 115:1).

Some expositors have supposed, that this Psalm was penned by the prophet Daniel; on occasion of the miraculous deliverance of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, when they came out, unhurt, from the burning fiery furnace, into which they had been thrown by the command of king Nebuchadnezzar.

And, indeed, there are not wanting passages, in the Psalm itself, which seem to countenance this conjecture. As where we read, at the fourth verse (speaking of the idols of the heathens, and, perhaps, with particular reference to that golden image which Nebuchadnezzar commanded to be worshipped), their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands: they have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they but they see not.

I dare say, that, in such an auditory as this, a number of Arminians *are* present. I fear, that all our public assemblies have too many of them. Perhaps, however, even these people, idolaters as they are, may be apt to blame, and, indeed, with justice, the absurdity of those who worship idols of silver and gold, the work of men's hands. But let me ask: If it be so very absurd, to worship the work of other men's hands; what must it be, to worship the works of our own hands? Perhaps, you may ask, "God forbid that I should do so." Nevertheless, let me tell you, that trust, confidence, reliance, and dependence, for salvation, are all acts and very solemn ones too, of divine worship: and upon whatsoever you depend, whether in whole or in part, for your acceptance with God, and for your justification in His sight, whatsoever, you rely upon, and trust in, for the attainment of grace or glory; if it be anything short of God in Christ, you are an idolater to all intents and purposes.

Very different is the idea which Scripture gives us, of the ever-blessed God, from that of those false gods worshipped by the heathens; and from that degrading representation of the true God, which Arminianism would palm upon mankind. *"Our God [says this Psalm, verse the third] is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased."* This is not the Arminian idea of God: for our free-willers and our chance-mongers tell us, that God does not do whatsoever He pleases; that there are a great number of things, which God wishes to do, and tugs and strives to do, and yet cannot bring to pass: they tell us, as one ingeniously expresses it:

That all mankind He fain would save, But longs for what He cannot have. Industrious, thus, to sound abroad, A disappointed, changing God. How does this comport with that majestic description, *"Our God is in the heavens!"* He sits upon the throne, weighing out, and dispensing, the fates of men; holding all events in His own hand; and guiding every link of every chain of second causes, from the beginning to the end of time. Our God is in heaven, possessed of all power; and (which is the natural consequence of that) He hath done whatsoever He pleased: or as the Apostle expresses it, (the words are different, but the sense is the same) *"He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will"* (Ephesians 1:11).

Therefore it is, that we both labour, and suffer reproach: even because we say (and the utmost we can say upon the subject, amounts to no more than this: to wit, that) our God is in heaven, and has done whatsoever pleased Him. And do according to His own sovereign pleasure He will, to the end of the chapter; though all the Arminians upon earth were to endeavor to defeat the divine intention, and to clog the wheels of divine government. He, that sits in heaven, laughs them to scorn: and brings His own purposes to pass, sometimes, even through the means of those very incidents, which evil men endeavor to throw in His way, with a mad view to disappoint Him of His purposes. *'All things,'* saith the Psalmist, *"serve Thee"* (Psalm 119:91). They have, all, a direct tendency, either effectively or permissively, to carry on His unalterable designs of providence and grace. Observe: effectively, or permissively. For we never say, nor mean to say, that God is the worker of evil: we only maintain, that for reasons unknown to us, but well known to God, He is the efficacious permitter (not the agent, but the permitter) of whatsoever comes to pass. But when we talk of good, we then enlarge the term; and affirm, with the Psalmist, that all the help that is done upon earth, God does it Himself.

I remember a saying of the great Monsieur Du Moulin, in his admirable book, entitled *Anatome Arminianismi*. His observation is, that the wicked, no less than the elect, accomplish the wise and holy and just decrees of God: but, says he, with this difference; God's own people, after they are converted, endeavor to His will from a principle of love: whereas they who are left to the perverseness of their own hearts (which is all the reprobation we contend for), who care not for God, nor is God in all their thoughts; these persons resemble men rowing in a boat, who make toward the very place on which they turn their backs. They turn their backs on the decree of God; and yet make to that very point, without knowing it.

One great contest, between the religion of Arminius, and the religion of Jesus Christ, is, who shall stand entitled to the praise and glory of a sinner's salvation? Conversion decides this point at once; for I think, that, without any imputation of uncharitableness, I may venture to say, that every truly awakened person, at least when he is under the shine of God's countenance upon his soul, will fall down upon his knees, with this hymn of praise ascending from his heart, "Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but to Thy Name, give the glory: I am saved not for my righteousness, but for Thy mercy and Thy truth's sake.."

And this holds true even as to the blessings of the life that now is. It is God that sets up one, and puts down another (see Psalm 75:7). Victory, for instance, when contending princes wage war, is all of God. *"The race is not to the swift, as swift; nor the battle to the strong"* (Ecclesiastes 9:11), as such. It is the decree, the will, the power, the providence of God, which effectually, though sometimes invisibly, order and dispose of every event.

At the famous battle of Azincourt, in France, where, if I mistake not, 80,000 French were totally defeated by about 9,000 English, under the command of our immortal King Henry V., after the great business of the day was over, and God had given that renowned prince the victory, he ordered the foregoing Psalm (that is, the 114th), and part of this Psalm from whence I have read you the passage now under consideration, to be sung in the field of battle: by way of acknowledging, that all success, and all blessings, of what kind soever, come down from the Father of lights. Some of our historians acquaint us, that, when the triumphant English came to those words which I have taken for my text, the whole victorious army fell down upon their knees, as one man, in the field of conquest; and shouted, with one heart, and with one voice, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy Name, give the glory, for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake."

And thus it will be when God has accomplished the number of His elect, and completely gathered in the fullness of His redeemed kingdom. What, do you think, your song will be, when you come to heaven? "Blessed be God, that He gave me free-will; and blessed be my own dear self, that made a good use of it"? O no, no. Such a song as that was never heard in heaven yet, nor ever will, while God is God, and heaven is heaven. Look into the Book of Revelation, and there you will find the employ of the blessed, and the strains which they sing. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by Thy Blood, out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation (Revelation 5:9).

There is discriminating grace for you! "Thou *hast redeemed us... out of every kindred,*" etc., that is, from among the rest of mankind. Is not this particular election and limited redemption?

The Church below may be liable to err: and if any visible church upon earth pretends to be infallible, the very pretension itself demonstrates that she is not so. But there is a Church, which I will venture to pronounce infallible. And what Church is that? The Church of the glorified, who shine as stars at God's right hand. And, upon the infallible testimony of that infallible Church; a testimony recorded in the infallible pages of inspiration; I will venture to assert, that not one grain of Arminianism ever attended a saint to heaven. If those of God's people, who are in the bonds of that iniquity, are not explicitly converted from it, while they live and converse among men; yet do they leave it all behind them, in Jordon (i.e. in the river of death) when they go through. They may be compared to Paul, when he went from Jerusalem to Damascus, and the grace of God struck him down: he fell, a free-willer; but he rose, a free-gracer. So, however, the rust of self-righteous pride (and a cursed rust it is: may God's Spirit file it off from all our souls) however that rust may adhere to us at present; yet, when we come to stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, it will be all done away, and we shall sing, in one, full, everlasting chorus, with elect angels and elect men, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us."

And why should we not sing that song now? Why should not we endeavor, under the influence of the Spirit, to anticipate the language of the skies, and be as heavenly as we can, before we get to heaven? Why should we condemn that song, upon earth; which we hope for ever to sing, before the throne of God above? It is, to me, really astonishing, that Protestants, and Church of England men, considered merely as rational creatures, and as people of common sense, who profess to be acquainted with the Scriptures, and to acknowledge the power of God, should have any objections to singing this song, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name, give glory, for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake."

Still more wonderful and deplorable it is, that some, who even make profession of spiritual religion, and talk of an inward work of God upon their hearts, should so far lose sight of humility and of truth, as to dream, either that their own arm helped the Almighty to save them, or at least that their own arm was able to have hindered Him from saving them. What can reflect deeper dishonor upon God, than such an idea? And what can have a direct tendency to engender and to nourish the pride of heart which deceive men?

It pleased God to deliver me from the Arminian snare, before I was quite eighteen. Antecedently to that period there was not (with the lowest self-abasement I confess it) a more haughty and violent free-willer within the compass of the four seas. One instance of my warm and bitter zeal, occurs just now to my memory. About a twelvemonth before the divine goodness gave me eyes to discern, and an heart to embrace the truth, I was haranguing one day, in company, (for I deemed myself

able to cope with all the predestinarians in the world), on the universality of grace, and the powers of human free agency. A good old gentleman (now with God) rose from his chair, and coming to mine, held me by one of my coat buttons, while he mildly addressed me to this effect: "My dear Sir, there are some marks of spirituality in your conversation; though tinged with an unhappy mixture of pride and self-righteousness. You have been speaking, largely, in favor of free-will: but, from your arguments, let us come to experience. Do let me ask you one question. How was it with you, when the Lord laid hold on you, in effectual calling? Had you any hand in obtaining that grace? Nay, would you not have resisted and baffled it, if God's Spirit had left you in the hand of your own counsel?"

I felt the conclusiveness of these simple, but forcible interrogations, more strongly than I was then willing to acknowledge. But, blessed be God, I have since been enabled to acknowledge the freeness and omnipotence of His grace, times without number; and to sing (what I trust will be my everlasting song when time shall be no more), "Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but unto Thy Name give all the glory."

We never know so much of heaven in our own souls, nor stand so high upon the mount of communion with God, as when His Spirit, breathing on our heart, makes us lie low at the footstool of sovereign grace, and inspires us with this cry, "O God, be mine the comfort of salvation, but Thine be the entire praise of it."

Let us briefly apply the rule and compass of God's Word, to the several parts, of which salvation is composed; and we shall soon perceive, that the whole building is made up of grace, and of grace alone. Do you ask, in what sense I here take the word grace? I mean, by that important term, the voluntary, sovereign, and gratuitous bounty of God; quite unconditioned by, and quite irrespective of, all and every shadow of human worthiness, whether antecedaneous, concomitant, or subsequent. This is, precisely, the scriptural idea of grace: to wit, that it (i.e. salvation in all its branches) is "*not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of God, Who sheweth mercy*" (Romans 9:16). And thus it is, that grace reigneth, unto the eternal life of sinners, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ our Lord (see Romans 5:21).

1. In canvassing this momentous truth, let us begin where God Himself began: namely, with election. To whom are we indebted, for that first of all spiritual blessings? Pride says, "To me." Self-righteousness says, "To me." Man's unconverted will says, "To me." But faith joins with God's Word in saying, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy Name, be the whole glory of thy electing love ascribed: Thou didst not choose us, on supposition of our first choosing Thee; but, through the victorious operation of Thy mighty Spirit, we choose Thee for our portion and our God, in consequence of Thy having first and freely chosen us to be Thy people."

Hear the testimony of that Apostle, who received the finishing of his spiritual education in the third heaven:

There is a remnant according to the election of grace. And, if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise, grace is no more grace. But if it [i.e. if election] be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise, work is no more work (Romans 11:5-6, KJV).

Let us sift this reasoning; and we shall find it invincible. There is "*a remnant*," i.e. some of fallen mankind, who shall be everlastingly saved through Christ. This remnant is "*according to election*". God's own will and choice are the determinate rule, by which the saved remnant is measured and numbered. This election is an "*election of grace*," or a free, sovereign and unmerited

act of God. The Apostle would not leave out the word grace, lest people should imagine that God elected them on account of something He saw in them above others.

"Well, but" (may some say) "admitting election to be by grace, might not our foreseen good works have a little hand in the matter? Might not God have some small regard to our future good behavior?" No, answers the Apostle, none at all. If election be by "*grace*," i.e. of mere mercy, and sovereign love; then it is no more of "*works*," whether directly or indirectly, in whole or in part; "*otherwise, grace is no more grace.*" Could anything human, though ever so little, be mixed with grace, as a motive with God for showing favor to Peter (for instance) above Judas; grace would all evaporate, and be annihilated, from that moment. For, as Augustine observes:

Grace ceases to be grace, unless it be totally and absolutely irrespective of anything and of everything, whether good or bad, in the object of it.

So that, as the Apostle adds, was it possible for election to be "of *works*," then would it be "*no more*" an act of "*grace*"; but a payment, instead of a gift: "*otherwise work were no more work.*" On one hand, "*work*" ceases to be considered as influential on election, if election is the daughter of "*grace*"; on the other hand, "*grace*" has nothing at all to do in election, if "*works*" have any concern in it. Grace, and conditionality, are two incompatible opposites; the one totally destroys the other; and they can no more subsist together, than two particles of matter can occupy the same individual portion of space at the same point of time.

Which, therefore, of these contrary songs, do you sing (for all the art and labour of mankind, united, can never throw the two songs into one)? Are you for burning incense to yourselves, saying, "Our righteousness, and the might of our own arm, have gotten us this spiritual wealth"? Or, with the angels and saints in light, do you lay down your brightest honor at the footstool of God's throne with; "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy Name give glory, for Thy loving mercy, and for Thy truth's sake."

Certainly, election is the act, not of man, but of God: founded, merely, upon the sovereign and gracious pleasure of His own will. It is "*not of works lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:9); but solely of Him, Who has said, 'I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion' (Romans 9:15).*" God merits of us, not we of Him: and it was His free-will, not ours, which drew the impassable line between the elect and the pretermitted.

2. God's covenant love to us in Christ is another stream, flowing from the fountain of unmingled grace. And here,- as in the preceding instance, every truly awakened person disclaims all title to praise; shoves it away from himself, with both hands; and not only with his hands, but with his heart also; while his lips acknowledge, "Not unto us, O Thou divine and coeternal Three, not unto us, but to Thy Name, give glory!"

How is it possible, that either God's purposes, or that His covenant concerning us, can be, in any respect whatever, suspended on the will or the works of men; seeing, both His purposes and His covenant were framed, and fixed, and agreed upon, by the Persons of the Trinity, not only before men existed, but before angels themselves were created, or time itself was born? All was vast eternity, when grace was federally given us in Christ ere the world began (see II Timothy 1:9). Well therefore might the Apostle, in the very text where he makes the above assertion, observe, that the holy calling, with which God effectually converts and sanctifies His people, in time, is bestowed upon us, "*not according to our works,*" but according to God's own free purpose and eternal destination.

Repentance and faith, new obedience and perseverance, are not conditions of interest in the covenant of grace (for then it would be a covenant of works); but consequences, and tokens, of covenant interest:

For, the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election [which is the standard of covenant mercy] might remain unshaken, it was said unto her, "The elder shall serve the younger"; as it is written, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Romans 9:11-13).

Now, whether you consider this passage as referring to the posterity of Jacob and Esau, or to Jacob and Esau themselves, or (which is evidently the Apostle's meaning) as referring to both; the argument will still come to the same point at last; namely, that the divine counsels and determinations, in whatever view you take them, are absolutely irrespective of works, because God's immanent decrees and covenant-transactions took place, before the objects of them had done either good or evil. Of course, all the good, that is wrought in men, comes from God, as the gracious effect, not as the cause, of His favor; and all the evil, which God permits (such are His wisdom and His power) is subservient to promote, instead of interfering to obstruct, the accomplishment of His most holy will. I mention God's permission of evil, only incidentally in this place: for, properly, it belongs to another argument. My present business is, to show, that the good, and the graces, which God works (not permissively, but effectively) in the hearts of His covenant people, are the fruit, not the root, of the love He bears to them.

3. To whom are we indebted, for the Atonement of Christ, and for redemption through His Blood, even the forgiveness of sins? Here likewise, "*Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us!*" *It was God, Who "found a ransom" (Job 33:24).* It was God, Who provided His own justice with a lamb for a burnt offering. It was God Who accepted the Atonement at our Surety's hand, instead of ours. It was God Who freely imparts the blessings of that completely finished redemption, to the comfort and everlasting restoration of all those who are enabled to trust and to glory in the cross of Christ. Against such persons divine justice has nothing to allege: and on them, it has no penalty to inflict. The sword of vengeance, having been already sheathed in the sinless human nature of Jehovah's equal, becomes, to them that believe, a Curtana, a sword of mercy, a sword without a point. Thanks to the reconciling mercy of God the Father, and to the bleeding grace of our Lord Jesus Christ! Human freewill and merit had nothing to do with the matter, from first to last.

4. As pardon exempts us from punishment, so justification (i.e. God's acceptance of us as perfect fulfillers of the whole Law) entitles us to the kingdom of heaven. The former is God's *papesis*, or passing by of our transgressions, so as not to take notice of them; and God's *aqeats*, or letting us go finally unpunished. But justification (which is the inseparable concomitant of forgiveness) is not merely negative, but carries in it more of positivity, and exalts us to an higher state of felicity, than mere pardon (was it possible to be conferred without justification) would do. It is God's *okatoats*, or pronouncing of us positively and actually just: not only innocent, but righteous also. St. Bernard, somewhere, preserves this obvious and just distinction. His words, I remember, are, that God is: "No less might to justify, than rich in mercy to forgive."

Now, the great enquiry is, whether God be indeed entitled to the whole praise of this unspeakable gift? Whether we should, as justified persons, sing to the praise and glory of ourselves; or to the praise and glory of God alone?

The Bible will determine this question, in a moment; and shew us, that Father, Son, and Spirit, are the sole authors, and, consequently, should receive the entire glory of our justification: "*It is*

God [the Father] Who *justifieth*" (Romans 8:33): i.e. Who accepts us unto eternal life; and that *"freely, by His grace... through the redemption that is in Christ, and through the imputation of Christ's righteousness, without works"* (Romans 3:24, 4:6): i.e. without being moved to it by any consideration of the good works, and without being restrained from it by any consideration of the evil works, wrought by the person or persons to whom Christ's righteousness is imputed, and who are pronounced just in consequence of that imputed righteousness.

Justification is also the act of God the Son, in concurrence with His Father. St. Paul expressly declares, that he sought to be justified by Christ (see Galatians 2:17). The second Person in the divinity joins, as such, in accepting of His people through that transferred merit, which, as Man, He wrought for this very end. Now, let me ask you, did you assist Christ in paying the price of your redemption, and in accomplishing a series of perfect obedience for your justification? If you did, you are entitled to a proportionable part of the praise. But, if Christ both obeyed, and died, and rose again, without your assistance, it invincibly follows, that you have no manner of claim to the least particle of that praise, which results from the benefits acquired and secured by His obedience, death, and resurrection. The benefits themselves are all your own, if He gives you faith to embrace them; but the honor, the glory, and the thanks, you cannot arrogate to yourself, without the utmost impiety and sacrilege.

God the Holy Ghost unites in justifying the redeemed of the Lord. We are, declaratively and evidentially, justified *"by the Spirit of our God"* (I Corinthians 6:11): Whose condescending and endearing office it is, to reveal a broken Saviour in the broken heart of a self-emptied sinner, and to shed abroad the justifying love of God in the human soul (see Romans 5:5). Herein the adorable Spirit neither needs, nor receives, any assistance from the sinners He visits. His gracious influence is sovereign, free, and independent. We can no more command, or prohibit, His agency, than we can command, or forbid, the shining of the sun.

The conclusion, from the whole, is; that not our goodness, but God's mercy; not our obedience, but Christ's righteousness; not our towardliness, but the Holy Spirit's beneficence; are to be thanked, for the whole of our justification. And it is no easy lesson, to say, from the heart, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us!" Self-righteousness, cleaves to us, as naturally, and as closely, as our skins: nor can any power, but that of an Almighty hand, flay us of it. I remember an instance, of a clergyman, now living and eminent, above many, for his labors and usefulness. This worthy person assured me, a year or two since, that he once visited a criminal, who was under sentence of death, for a capital offence (I think for murder). My friend endeavored to set before him the evil he had done; and to convince him, that he was lost and ruined, unless Christ saved him by His Blood, righteousness and grace. "I am not much concerned about that," answered the self-righteous malefactor; "I have not, certain, led so good a life as some have; but, I am certain, that many have gone to Tyburn, who were much worse men than myself." So you see, a murderer may go to the gallows, trusting in his own righteousness! And you and I should have gone to hell, trusting in our own righteousness, if Christ had not stopped us by the way.

I dare believe, that the above mentioned criminal, had the subject been started, would also have valued himself upon his free-agency. Free-agency, it is true, he had; and he was left to the power of it, and ruined himself accordingly: Free-will has carried many a man to Tyburn, and (it is to be feared) from Tyburn to hell: but it never yet carried a single soul to holiness and heaven. "*Oh Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself*"; free-will can do that for us; "*but in Me,*" says God, "*is thy help*" (Hosea 13:9). His free grace must be our refuge and our shelter from our own free-will: or it were good for the best of us that we had never been born.

In one word, all the glory of our pardon and justification belongs to the Trinity, and not to man. It is one of God's crown jewels, unalienable from Himself; and which He will never resign to, nor share with, any other beings. It is impossible, in the very nature of things, that He ever should: for how can any of depraved mankind be justified by works (and without being so justified, we can come in for no part of the praise); how, I say, can any of us be justified by our own doings, seeing we are utterly unable even to think one good thought until God Himself breathes it into our hearts (see II Corinthians 3:5).

Suffer me to observe one thing more, under this article: viz. that if God's Spirit has stripped you of your own righteousness, He has not stripped you in order to leave you naked, but will clothe you with "*change of raiment*" (Zechariah 3:4). He will give you a robe, for your rags; the righteousness of God, for the rotten righteousness of man. Rotten indeed we shall find it, if we make it a pillar of confidence. I will say of it, as Dr. Young says of the world, "Lean not upon it": lean not on thy own righteousness: if leaned upon, "it will pierce thee to the heart: at best, a broken reed; but oft a spear. On its sharpest point, peace bleeds and hope expires."

Self-reliance is the very bond of unbelief. It is essential infidelity, and one of its most deadly branches. You are an infidel, if you trust in your own righteousness. You a Christian? You a Churchman? No; you have, in the sight of God, neither part nor lot in the matter. You are spiritually dead, while you pretend to live. Until you are indued with faith in Christ's righteousness, your body, (as a great man expresses it) is no better than "the living coffin of a dead soul." A Christian is a believer (not in himself, but) in Christ. And what is the language of a believer? "Lord, I am, in myself, a poor, ruined, undone, sinner. Through the hand of Thy good Spirit upon me, I throw myself at the foot of Thy cross; and look to Thee for Blood to wash me, for righteousness to justify me, for grace to make me holy, for comfort to make me happy, and for strength to keep me in Thy ways."

5. For holiness, the inward principle of good works; and for good works, themselves, the outward evidences of inward holiness; we are obliged to the alone grace and power of God most high. We do not make Him a debtor to us, by loving and performing His commandments; but we become, additionally, debtors to Him, for crowning His other gifts of grace, by vouchsafing to work in us that which is "*well-pleasing in His sight*" (Hebrews 13:21).

Say not; "Upon this plan, sanctification is kicked out of doors, and good works are turned adrift." Nothing can be more palpable and flagrantly untrue. Newness of heart and of life is so essential to, and constitutes so vast a part of, the evangelical scheme of salvation, that were it possible for holiness and its moral fruits to be really struck out of the account, the chain would, at once, dissolve, and the whole fabric become an house of sand. The Arminians, have, of late, made a huge cry about "Antinomians!"

Antinomians!" From the abundance of experience, the mouth is apt to speak. The modern Arminians see so much real Antinomianism among themselves, and in their own tents, that Antinomianism is become the predominant idea, and the favorite watch-word, of the party. Because they have got the plague, they think everybody else has. Because the leprosy is in their walls, they imagine no house is without it. Thus: "All looks infected, that the infected spy: as all seems yellow, to the jaundiced eye."

It is cunning, I must confess, in these people, to raise a dust, for their own defense; and like some pick-pockets when closely pursued, to aim at slipping the stolen watch or handkerchief into the pocket of an innocent bystander, that the real sharper may elude the rod of justice. But unhappily for themselves, the Arminians are not complete masters of this art. The dust, they raise, forms too

thin a cloud to conceal them: and their bungling attempt to shift off the charge of Antinomianism upon others, rivets the charge but more firmly on themselves its true proprietors. The avowed effrontery, with which they openly trample on a certain commandment that says, "*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor*"; may stand as a sample of the little regard they pay to the other nine. Pretty people these, to look for justification from the "merit" of their own works, and to value themselves on their perfect love to God and man.

With regard to sanctification and obedience, truly so called; it can only flow, and cannot but flow, from a new heart: which new heart is of God's own making, and of God's own giving:

I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh [a soft, repenting, believing heart] and I will cause ye to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

Now, God accomplishes this promise, by the effectual working of His blessed Spirit: by the mystic fire of Whose agency having melted our hearts into penitential faith, He then applies to them the seal of His own holiness; from which time, we begin to bear the image and superscription of God upon our tempers, words, and actions.

This is our "licentious" doctrine: namely, a doctrine which (under the influence of the Holy Ghost) conforms the soul, more and more, to God: carefully referring, at the same time, all the praise of this active and passive conformity, to God Himself, Whose gift it is; singing, with the saints of old, "*Thou, Lord, hast wrought all our [good] works in us*" (Isaiah 26:12, KJV); and for all the works so wrought, for the will to please Thee, for the endeavor to please Thee, for the ability to please Thee, and for every act whereby we do please Thee- "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy Name, give glory."

And indeed, was not this the truth of the case, i.e. if conversion and sanctification and good works were not God's gifts and of His operation; men would have, not only somewhat, but much, even, very much, to boast offer they would be their own converters, sanctifiers, and saviors. Directly contrary to the plain letter of Scripture, which asks; "*Who maketh thee to differ from others, and what hast thou which thou didst not receive?*" (I Corinthians 4:7)- i.e. from above. Nor less contrary to the scriptural direction; "*He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord*" (I Corinthians 1:31).

6. Once more. Whom are we to thank for perseverance, in holiness and good works, to the end? "Oh," says an old Pharisee, perhaps, "the thanks are due to my own watchfulness, my own faithfulness, my own industry, and my own improvements." Your supposed watchfulness answers a very bad purpose, if you make a merit of it. The enemy of souls cares not the turning of a straw, whether you perish by open licentiousness, or by a delusive confidence in your own imaginary righteousness. It is all one to him, whether you go to hell in a black coat or a white one. Nay the whitest you can weave, will be found black, and a mere *san benito* to equip you for the flames, if God does not array in the imputed righteousness of His blessed Son.

But, for the present, leaving Pharisees and legalists to the hands of Him Who alone is able, and has a right, to save or to destroy; let me address myself to the true believer in Christ. You were called, it may be, ten or twenty years ago, or longer, to the knowledge of God; and you still are found, dwelling under the droppings of the sanctuary, and walking in Him your Lord; sometimes faint, yet always wishing to pursue; tossed, but not lost, occasionally cast down, but not destroyed. How comes all this? How is it, that many flaming professors, who blazed out, for a while, like luminaries of the first lustre, are quenched, extinguished, vanished; while your smoking flax, and feeble spark of grace, continue to survive, and sometimes afford both light and heat? While more

than a few, who, perhaps, once seemed to be rooted as rocks, and stable as pillars in the house of God, are become as water that runneth apace; Why are you standing, though in yourself, as weak, if not weaker than they, a child of God can soon answer this question. And he will answer it thus: *"Having obtained help of God, I continue to this day"* (Acts 26:22). Not by my own might and power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts (see Zechariah 4:6).

And He, that kept you until this day, will keep you all your days. His Spirit which He freely gives to His people, is a well of water, springing up, not for a year, not for a lifetime, only; but *"into everlasting life"* (John 4:14). God's faithfulness to you is the source of your faithfulness to Him. Christ prays for you: and therefore He keeps you watching unto prayer. He preserves you from falling; or, when fallen, He restores your soul, and leads you forth again in the path of righteousness, for His Name's sake. He had decreed, and covenanted, and promised, and sworn, to give you a crown of life; and, in order to that, He has no less solemnly engaged and irrevocably bound Himself, to make you faithful unto death.

"Well, then," says an Arminian, "if these things are so, I am safe at all events. I may fold up my arms, and even lay me down to sleep. Or, if I choose to rise and be active, I may live just as I list." Satan was the coiner of this reasoning: and he offered it, as current and sterling, to the Messiah, but Christ rejected it as false money. *"If Thou be the Son of God,"* said the enemy; "if Thou be indeed that Messiah Whom God upholds, and His elect, in Whom His soul delighteth; cast Thyself headlong; it is impossible Thou shouldest perish, do what Thou wilt: no fall can hurt Thee; and Thy Father has absolutely promised that His angels shall keep Thee in all Thy ways; jump, therefore, boldly, from the battlements, and fear no evil."

The devil's argumentation was equally insolent, and absurd, in every point of view. He reasoned, not like a serpent in his wits, but like a serpent whose head was bruised (see Genesis 3:15), and who had no more of understanding than of modesty. Christ silenced this battery of straw, with a single sentence: *"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"* (Matthew 4:7). So said the Messiah. And so say we. And this is answer enough, to a cavil, whose palpable irrationality would cut its own throat, without the help of any answer at all.

God's children would be very glad, if they could "live as they list." How so; Because it is the will, the desire, the wish, of a renewed soul (i.e. of the new man, or the believer's regenerate part; for old Adam never was a saint yet, nor ever will be); it is, I say, the will and the wish of a renewed soul, to please God in all things, and never to sin, on any occasion, or in any degree. This is the state to which our pantings aspire; and in which (would the imperfection of human nature admit of such happiness below) we "list" to walk. For every truly regenerated person can sincerely join the Apostle Paul, in saying, *"With my mind, I myself serve the Law of God"* (Romans 7:25), and wish I could keep it better.

God's preservation is the good man's perseverance. *"He will keep the feet of His saints"* (1 Samuel 2:9). Arminianism represents God's Spirit as if He acted like the guard of a stage coach, who sees the passengers safe out of town for a few miles; and then, making his bow, turns back, and leaves them to pursue the rest of their journey themselves. But divine grace does not thus deal by God's travelers. It accompanies them to their journey's end, and without end. So that the meanest pilgrim to Zion may shout, with David, in full certainty of faith, *"Surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all my days, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever"* (Psalm 23:6). Therefore, for preserving grace, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy name give the glory, for Thy loving mercy, and for Thy truth's sake."

7. After God has led His people through the wilderness of life, and brought them to the edge of that river which lies between them and the heavenly Canaan, will He intermit His care of them, in that article of deepest need? No, blessed be His Name. On the contrary, He (always, safely; and generally, comfortably) escorts them over to the other side; to that good land which is very far off, to that goodly mountain and Lebanon.

I know, there are some flaming Arminians, who tell us, that "a man may persevere until he comes to die, and yet perish in almost the very article of death": and they illustrate this wretched, God-dishonoring, and soul shocking doctrine, by the simile of "a ship's floundering in the harbor's mouth."

It is very true, that some wooden vessels have so perished. But it is no less true, that God's chosen vessels are infallibly safe from so perishing. For, through His goodness, every one of them is insured by Him Whom the winds and seas, both literal and metaphorical, obey. And their insurance runs this:

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and when through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee (Isaiah 43:2).

"The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion, with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads" (Isaiah 35:10); so far from floundering within sight of land.

Even an earthly parent is particularly careful and tender of a dying child: and, surely, when God's children are in that situation, He will (speaking after the manner of men) be doubly gracious to His helpless offspring, who are His by election, by adoption, by covenant, by redemption, by regeneration, and by a thousand other indissoluble ties.

There are no marks of shipwrecks, no remnants of lost vessels, floating upon that sea, which flows between God's Jerusalem below and the Jerusalem which is above. The excellent Dr. William Gouge has an observation full to the present point:

If a man were cast into a river, we should look upon him as safe, while he is able to keep his head above water. The Church, Christ's mystic body, is cast into the sea of the world [and, afterwards, into the sea of death]; and Christ, their Head, keeps Himself aloft, even in heaven. Is there, then, any fear, or possibility, of drowning a member of this body? If any should be drowned, then either Christ Himself must be drowned first, or else that member must be pulled from Christ: both which are impossible. By virtue, therefore, of this union, we see that on Christ's safety, ours depends. If he is safe, so are we. If we perish, so must He.

Well, therefore, may dying believers sing, "Not unto us, O Lord, but to Thy Name, give glory! Thy loving mercy carries us, when we cannot go: and, for Thy truth's sake, Thou wilt save us to the utmost without the loss of one."

8. When the emancipated soul is actually arrived in glory, what song will he sing then? The purport of the text will still be the language of the skies: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy Name give the praise."

Whilst we are upon earth, we have need of that remarkable caution, which Moses gave the children of Israel:

Speak not thou in thine heart.. after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, "For my righteousness, the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land." Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess this land....

Understand, therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land, to possess it, for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people (Deuteronomy 9:4-6).

Now, if the earthly Canaan, which was only a transitory inheritance, was unattainable by human merit; if even worldly possessions are not given us for our own righteousness sake; who shall dare to say, that heaven itself is the purchase of our own righteousness! If our works cannot merit even the vanishing conveniences and supplies of time: how is it possible, that we should be able to merit the endless riches of eternity? We shall need no cautions against self-righteousness, when we get safe to that better country. The language of our hearts, and of our voices, will be; and angels will join the concert; and all the elect, both angels and men, will, for ever and ever, strike their harps to this key; "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to Thy Name, give the glory, for Thy loving mercy, and for Thy truth's sake."

O, may a sense of that loving mercy and truth be, warmly and transformingly, experienced in our hearts! For indeed, my dear brethren, it is experience, of the felt power of God, upon the soul, which makes the Gospel a savor of life unto life. Notwithstanding God's purpose is steadfast as His throne; notwithstanding the whole of Christ's righteousness and redemption is finished and complete, as a divine and almighty agent could make it; notwithstanding I am convinced, that God will always be faithful, to every soul to whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light; and notwithstanding none can pluck the people of Christ from His hands; still, I am no less satisfied, that it must be the feeling sense of all this, i.e. a perception wrought in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, that will give you and me the comfort of the Father's gracious decrees, and of the Messiah's finished work.

I know it is growing very fashionable to talk against spiritual feelings. But I dare not join this cry. On the contrary, I adopt the Apostle's prayer, that our love to God, and the manifestations of His love to us, may abound yet more and more, "*in knowledge and all feeling*" (Philippians 1:9). And it is no enthusiastic wish, in behalf of you and of myself, that we may be of the number of those "godly persons," who, as our Church justly expresses it, "feel in themselves the workings of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the works of the flesh, and drawing up their minds to high and heavenly things." Indeed, the great business of God's Spirit is, to draw up and to bring down. To draw up our affections to Christ, and to bring down the unsearchable riches of grace into our hearts. The knowledge of which, and earnest desire for it, are all the feelings I plead for. And, for these feelings, I wish ever to plead. Satisfied as I am, that, without some experience and enjoyments of them, we cannot be happy, living or dying.

Let me ask you, as it were, one by one; has the Holy Spirit begun to reveal these deep things of God in your soul? If so, give Him the glory of it. And, as you prize communion with Him; as you value the comforts of the Holy Ghost; endeavor to be found in God's way, even the high way of humble faith and obedient love: sitting at the feet of Christ, and desirous to imbibe those sweet, ravishing, sanctifying, communications of grace, which are at once an earnest of, and a preparation for, complete heaven when you come to die. God forbid, that we should ever think lightly of religious feelings! For, if we do not in some degree feel ourselves sinners, and feel that Christ is precious; I doubt the Spirit of God has ever been savingly at work upon our souls.

Nay, so far from being at a stand in this, our desires after the feeling of God's presence within, ought to enlarge continually, the nearer we draw to the end of our earthly pilgrimage: and resemble the progressive expansion of a river, which, however narrow and straitened when it first begins to flow, never fails to widen and increase, in proportion as it approaches the ocean into which it falls.

God give us a gracious spring-tide of His Spirit, to replenish our thirsty channels, to swell our scanty stream, and to quicken our languid course! If this is not our cry, it is a sign, either that the work of grace is not yet begun in us; or that it is indeed at low water, and discolored with those dregs, which tend to dishonor God, to eclipse the glory of the Gospel, and to spread clouds and darkness upon our souls.

Some Christians are like decayed mile stones; which stand, it is true, in the right road, and bear some traces of the proper impression: but so wretchedly mutilated and defaced, that they, who go by, can hardly read or know what to make of them. May the blessed Spirit of God cause all our hearts, this morning, to undergo a fresh impression; and indulge us with a new edition of our evidences for heaven! O, may showers of blessing descend upon you, from above! May you see, that Christ, and the grace of God in Him, are all in all! Whilst you are upon earth, may you ever ascribe the whole glory to Him! And sure I am, that, when you come to heaven, you will never ascribe it to any other.

Decisionism

Does God call you or do you call God?

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. (John 6:37)

In this section we are going to discuss something called "decisionism." In the majority of churches today and in evangelistic circles, when there is a meeting and a sermon is preached, normally at the end of the meeting the preacher will call for people to make a decision to accept Christ as their personal Savior. This is known as the invitation and those who want to accept Christ are asked to come to the front, then when all are gathered, the speaker will lead the group with a small prayer, something called, "the Sinner's Prayer." The prayer normally consists of a confession of sin, a personal call for repentance, and asking Christ to be the savior of their life. These activities fall under the umbrella of "making a decision for Christ." I have been in meetings where the speaker asks everyone to bow their heads and he is the only one looking and then proceeds to do a long drawn out invitation. Basically, you will hear the term "anyone else" repeated about 50 times until someone else feels compelled to go down to the front. Whether that desire is from the Lord, or just a desire to shorten the invitation by giving the speaker one more notch on his spiritual belt, is yet to be seen.

WHAT IS IT?

The question we must pose is, "Is it possible for a person to make some kind of instant decision after a message and then accept Christ?" We must define what a decision is. This definition is from the Merriam Webster On Line Dictionary, "a: the act or process of deciding b: a determination arrived at after consideration." The speaker gets up behind the podium on the dais and preaches a message. He then begins to ask people to evaluate the message and to determine in their own mind what they heard. As the speaker begins to make a small homily concerning the contents of the message, he begins to wind down with a compendium of the essence of the message. He then conveys to his hearers that since they have now heard the gospel preached, it is the utmost importance that they now act on what they heard. The speaker is calling for a determination after the people consider the message. He then declares that they must now make a decision concerning their eternal destiny. If they accept Christ, they will have eternal life from the moment they come forward and give their heart to Christ. Essentially, decisionism is the person making an on the spot decision about accepting Christ. However, the process which precedes the coming forward is quite subjective to the speaker's ability to motivate people. When one looks at the Billy Graham Crusades in the earlier years or even Jimmy Swaggart at his height of popularity, these were two powerful speakers who had the ability to motivate. The Billy Graham people have admitted they acknowledge that not everyone who came forward in the meetings became saved. Many were caught up in the moment. Decisionism is a flawed method and a very dangerous system to try and bring souls into the Kingdom with. The truth is that decisionism is a contrived technique and not a biblical system.

WHAT IS ITS HISTORY?

For the first 1800 years of the church, there was no such thing as decisionism when it concerned salvation. There have been debates between theological systems for hundreds of years where

people make decisions concerning the materials they heard presented by the debaters. Decisionism for salvation was unheard of until the 1820's when Charles Finney (1792-1875) introduced this method. Up until this time, when people heard a message which moved them, they did not do anything, because the Holy Spirit would convict them and then they would begin their Christian life. It was Charles Finney who preached that people have to make a decision. He was very heavy into free will and even believed that a Christian can actually lose their salvation in Heaven. Here is the quote again from Finney's Systematic Theology: "Saints in Heaven can by natural possibility apostatize and fall, and be lost. Were not this naturally possible, there would be no virtue in perseverance." (Page 550) Finney even denied the blood atonement of Christ and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to those who became saved. Of course, if you do not believe that Christ imputes His righteousness, then a person would have to fall from Heaven, since they came in without a wedding garment.

And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. {13} Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matthew 22:12-13)

The truth is the believer is blessed with the robe of Christ's righteousness according to the following verse:

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. (Isaiah 61:10)

Finney did not believe that Christ died for the sins of His People. He had come to believe that Christ just removed the hindrances which kept people from making those decisions to accept Christ. Based upon these beliefs held by Finney, I cannot see how this man could even claim to be a Christian. His belief system was one of an apostate unbeliever. When we look at today's evangelistic methods, we see the technique of Finney being used on a large scale. Probably, the best example of Finney's technique we had in our time was that of Billy Graham who called people to make a decision for Christ. Even his magazine is called "Decision." If you enter any church today which espouses the Arminian doctrine of free will, you will find an invitation being given at the end of the service for people to come forward and accept Christ. Normally, accompanying this, you would be in for a fifteen-minute call.

IS IT FOUND IN THE BIBLE?

There is one great comparative mistake that those who believe in decisionism make. They compare those in the Bible who Jesus called in a public manner to those they are calling to accept Christ. In fact, Billy Graham said repeatedly, "Every person Jesus ever called, He called publicly." The question that I have is, "which ones did Jesus call publicly that made a decision to accept Him?" I cannot think of anyone whom Jesus called that accepted Him as Savior. Let us look at some of those public callings in Scripture, which the decisionists make their comparisons to:

Matthew

And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him. (Matthew 9:9)

The public calling of Matthew teaches us that Matthew was instantly convicted to who Jesus was, and instantly followed him. There is nothing hinting of a decision to follow Christ.

Zacchaeus

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. {6} And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. {7} And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. {8} And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. {9} And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. (Luke 19:5-9)

Zacchaeus was called publicly by Jesus, and instantly he came down from the tree and stood before the Lord. When he stood before the Lord, he was so convicted that he was going to make amends for the evil lifestyle he led. Jesus then pronounces that Zacchaeus had become saved and pronounced him a child of Abraham. *And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:29)* If you notice above in Luke 19:9, we see that salvation came to the house of Zacchaeus, he did not make a decision to accept Christ, yet he became saved because he was a predestined child of God whom the Lord came to seek and to save. *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. (Luke 19:10)* This is how the Lord winds up his episode with Zacchaeus.

The Calling of Peter, Andrew, James, and John

And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. {19} And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. {20} And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. {21} And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. {22} And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him. (Matthew 4:18-22)

Here we see Jesus calling four of His disciples. All four were fishermen which made them equal to working men today. Now, if they had the ability to make a decision concerning following Jesus or staying with their trade, think on this for a moment. As fishermen, they would no doubt have been poor men, so they literally would have had to factor this element into their decision. Do they give up their livelihood to follow this man, or do they stay on the job? If you notice in these five passages, that all four of these men immediately left their profession and followed the Lord. There was no contemplating as to whether they had to make a decision on it or not.

Lazarus

And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. {44} And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go. (John 11:43-44)

Here we see a man who was dead for four days being raised to life. Lazarus is a great picture of a person being called out of dead sins into salvation. Before a person becomes saved, they are dead in their sins and then Christ raises them up to newness of life. This is the great biblical truth that the raising of Lazarus gives us. *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) (Ephesians 2:5)* Now when the Lord called Lazarus forth, did Lazarus sit in the grave and decide whether he wanted to come forth or not? Of course not, as the Lord called the others and immediately they followed, Lazarus immediately came out of the grave alive.

Summary

The practice of comparing the public callings of Jesus to decisionism is a false comparison. When Jesus called someone, the person being called didn't stop to make a decision. There is no biblical precedent for decisionism. This method is a creation of man which makes him the final authority in salvation, and without biblical precedent, it makes it a false teaching and practice.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A RESPONSE AND A DECISION

Another area where the decisionists get confused, is when Jesus would speak to the people or individuals to elicit a response from them. Jesus never spoke with an individual in rote terms to try and persuade them to accept Him as their savior. That is because that is the job of the Holy Spirit to convict the unbeliever. Let us look at some of these conversations which were responsive and not decisionist in nature.

The Blind Man

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? {36} He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? {37} And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. {38} And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. (John 9:35-38)

Jesus healed this blind man who was given the third degree by the leaders. Finally, the leaders would not accept the fact that Jesus was the Messiah, and they excommunicated the healed man from their synagogue. When Jesus heard that this man was thrown out, he sought him out and asked him if he believed on the Son of God. When Jesus revealed this to him, he responded by saying, "I believe." There is nothing here to intimate that the man made a decision, instead, he responded to the Lord's query. This man was able to respond and worship the Lord Jesus because God had qualified him and prepared his heart to hear and understand. There is nothing in these passages to indicate a decision. Instead, it was a divine response.

Nathanael

Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. {49} Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. (John 1:48-49)

Nathanael had asked Jesus a simple question and the Lord's response to his question caused a response in Nathanael concerning the divine Sonship of the Lord and His position as King of Israel. Nathanael gave a response of a saved person. There was no decision on Nathanael's part as to whether or not he should accept the fact that Jesus was the Messiah and the King of Israel. Nathanael came to that conclusion based on a very short conversation with Jesus. This was because his heart, like the blind man's heart, was qualified by God to hear and to believe in Jesus.

Summary

The difference between a decision for Christ and a response is night and day. Those who respond in truth to the message are those who have been spiritually qualified by God to respond to the message. Those who feel they have to make a decision for Christ, are not being called. A dead man cannot decide himself and has to be regenerated by God first. Then when God makes you alive unto Him, God calls you and you cannot refuse. Look at the way the Lord called Matthew and the four fisherman as His disciples. They immediately left their professions and followed the Lord. It was a Holy Spirit conviction which caused these men to immediately follow the Lord.

DO WE REALLY DECIDE?

One of the most serious issues within decisionism or any aspect of soteriology, is, does man possess the ability to decide on salvation? The question may also be asked in the following manner, "Is man capable of deciding?" Salvation is a spiritual event and not an intellectual happening. When a person becomes saved, their physical body remains the same. The salvation happens in the spirit or the soul. A person becomes spiritually alive when they receive the Lord as their personal Savior. The first question which must be broached is, what is the spiritual condition of man prior to salvation? Once we ascertain that answer from the Scriptures, the answer to the other questions of ability fall right into place.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: (Ephesians 2:1)

Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) (Ephesians 2:5)

In the above two verses, we see the word "dead" used in both verses. The word dead is translated from the Greek word "nekrous" which carries with it the meaning of "lifeless, useless, dead." So here we see two plain verses, which teach us that before salvation, a person is absolutely dead and lifeless. We must first realize that what is in view here is not physical death, but a person being spiritually dead. God is telling us that we were dead in sins, that is, our life before salvation. Now, can a dead person make themselves alive? Of course, the answer is no. All of us have been to funerals and the guest of honor remains dead. Can a dead man choose his coffin? Of course, the answer is no.

In Scripture, we have an excellent example of a believer who goes from death to life. The example is Lazarus. We saw that before. Lazarus did not decide to come out of the tomb, he was summoned by God Himself who stood outside the tomb and called him. He then came forth in qualified response to the summons.

We see then that before salvation, a person is spiritually dead and absolutely incapable of making any spiritual decisions. So then how does a person come to Christ? The verse below says that a person will come to the Lord Jesus Christ. Doesn't that constitute a decision?

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. (John 6:37)

Let us look further on in the same section and see if a person makes that decision.

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)

Now, we gain a little more insight to the reason behind someone coming to the Lord Jesus Christ. We do not find a decision. Instead, we find a drawing by the Father who leads the saved person to His Son. Before someone can come to the Lord Jesus Christ, God qualifies them by giving them the Holy Spirit who makes them spiritually alive. In other words, the person has become saved. They are not making a decision, but a qualified response.

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)

Summary

We see that a person cannot make a decision for Christ, even though it may look like the person is making a decision. However, the person is coming to the Lord Jesus Christ only because they have been spiritually qualified to do so. God draws them and then gives them salvation. There is nothing in view in Scripture whereby a person makes a decision and then is given salvation. In fact, the opposite exists, whereby a person is first qualified to hear the gospel by being given a spirit that is alive unto God. Notice in both Ephesians 2:1 & 5, we see that God is the one who quickens us from being spiritually dead. We can also see that the entire action is God's, and there is no involvement by the person receiving the salvation, because they are totally passive.

DOES IT ACCURATELY REFLECT AN INWARD TRANSFORMATION?

Decisionism does not reflect outwardly that anything has taken place inwardly. Now, at the moment a person is making their decision, there may seem to be a certain piety on their face. True salvation does not emanate inward from the outward. Instead, it emanates outward from the inward transformation. Making a decision is an outward act in which no inward transformation has taken place. Saying a few words like a "Sinner's Prayer" or even coming to tears is not a valid manifestation of true salvation. These are expressions of religious emotionalism, triggered by a response to the preacher, who is probably going on incessantly with his "anyone else" campaign. People sit under this manipulative method and some think that maybe God is calling them, and then when they raise their hand, they feel they have responded to God's call, when in essence, they have responded to the preacher who is normally going for numbers. There is absolutely no precedent in Scripture for incessant calling to salvation by means of repetitive pleas. Many that respond to these pleas are back doing the same things they did before they made their decision. That is because there was no spiritual transformation in their life.

I GOT SAVED AT AN EARLY AGE, BUT I FELL AWAY

How many times have we heard this one? Almost every time you hear someone giving their testimony, they always start out by saying they got saved when they were very young, but walked away from the Lord. This contradicts the Bible in the area of God keeping His Saints. It says that the dead will of man is superior in force to God. This, of course, is the invention of the decisionist crowd who believe that they have the power and authority to control God and His salvation plan. I would be very frightened to believe that I have the authority to control God. Let me give an example of a radio program I heard almost on a daily basis. It was called the Christian Working Woman with Mary Whelchel. Now, many times she had some good practical pointers on living the Christian life in a tough arena called the job place. If you listen to the program for a while, you will hear her say in many different instances, "I give God permission to be Lord of my life" or "I give God permission for this or that, etc." This is the height of arrogance to believe that the clay controls the Potter! No human being, saved or unsaved, gives God permission to do anything! He is the Sovereign God of this universe, and no one tells Him what to do. Those who believe they became saved when they were young probably received a "parent's salvation." That is, they probably walked the aisle to please their parents, but never became saved. No one whom God truly saves can walk away from the Lord or lose their salvation. This is contrary to Scripture.

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

Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
(1 Peter 1:5)

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. (Romans 11:29)

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, {39} Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. (John 6:37)

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, (Jude 1:24)

For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. (2 Timothy 1:12)

Why would God speak about keeping His children unto the day of redemption, which would either be the Last Day or the day of our home going, when He would allow a Christian to walk out of salvation any time they want. These and many other verses speak to the eternal security of the true believer. The only reason those people “walked away” from God is because they were never saved. Parents should never force their children to run down the aisle and make a decision.

REDEDICATION

Here is another decisionist method of manipulation. A person who believes they are saved responds to the preacher who asks if anyone wants to rededicate their lives to the Lord. A true Christian is dedicated to the Lord by means of the inward transformation which took place at the time of salvation. Those who need to rededicate their lives to the Lord should really check if they are truly saved. No true Christian can ever walk back into the world and then decide to come back when they feel like it. We saw that God keeps His people right up unto the end. If God says that He is going to keep His people through His power, then those who have walked away either as adults or children, were never saved to begin with, because they were never kept. God does not lie, and we better not create our own prideful systems of salvation which gives the notion that He does lie, especially when we saw multiple Scriptures which refute the idea that any true believer can walk out of salvation.

IS THERE A TIME PERIOD TO TEST YOUR SALVATION?

We have already seen a little bit of this test concerning those who claim to have been saved, and then walked away from the Lord. Time will show the difference as to whether a person has been legitimately called of the Lord or if a person made a decision. There is one easy way to distinguish a decision maker versus the truly called Child of God. Normally, the decision maker is running to the altar every week. Some time ago I heard a preacher speaking about our works and that we will not know if the works we do will bear fruit until we get to glory. So here he was telling us that there is a period of time involved in determining if our works would bear fruit. Then at the end of his message, he asked everyone to bow their heads and then he went into his “decision call.” Now, he believes that if a person says those few words of “acceptance” then they have become instantly saved. Now, why do our works need a period of time to determine their value? Can a person who says a few words brings instant salvation and then accepted as effectual salvation?

The bottom line is that when a person claims to make a decision for Christ, a time period is also needed to determine if that person truly became saved. Normally, one year will suffice, because within that time period, you will see if that person has a desire to grow or a desire to go. This is why it is imperative that there be a follow-up ministry in every church. This way, the progress of the

person can be measured to see if their salvation was real or forced.

IS THERE A PROCESS TO SALVATION?

The following are three steps to salvation:

1. First, God named who He was going to save

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8)

2. Secondly, He called those He was going to save

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)

3. Thirdly, He drew those He was going to save

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)

These three steps were taken by God in the counsels of Heaven before the person who is going to become saved even knows. None of us know whom the Lord is going to save, and that is why we send forth the Gospel, so His Elect may hear. Now, these three biblical steps which are done by God shows us that those who are truly predestined for salvation will respond to the Gospel because they have already been named, called, and drawn. This is why those who have not been called cannot make any type of decision to "accept" the Lord. If God has not qualified someone to hear the gospel and become saved, then that person will NOT become saved. Plus, God has already named who is going to be saved from before the foundation of the world, and it is not a Guest Registry where He adds new names to it every day.

For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. {17} For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. (Hebrews 9:16-17)

When we look at salvation in terms of a legal document, it brings up the Scriptures above concerning the Last Will and Testament. When the Lord Jesus Christ, who was the testator, died on Calvary, that was the completion of God's salvation plan. The time period from Creation to the Last Day will be when God will be applying the contents of the will, which is grace, to all the beneficiaries which were named in the will. These were named before the foundation of the world because that is when Christ, in principle, was crucified (Revelation 13:8).

Now, let us ask a follow-up question. Is there a process to being saved on earth? The answer is no! Those whom God will save will be passive in their salvation and will receive it without any addition of any type of works. Trying to add any type of works to God's salvation plan adulterates it. Even if those works are just simple works, like praying to receive Christ. That is because any type of work, no matter how trivial, would make man a contributing factor in their own salvation. This is why when the Lord went to the Cross, He scattered the sheep, so no one could boast that they had a part in the salvation plan of God. It is solely of God and given by God to His Elect in God's timing. This is why those outside of the Last Will and Testament of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot make a decision for Christ, because they have not been named in the will.

Let us now follow up the follow-up question. Is there any process that the believer goes through? The answer is yes! It is the process of sanctification, which basically is the growth of the believer in

grace after salvation. There is never a process to attain salvation but afterwards, we begin our growth toward God and away from the world. We begin to grow in our commitment to the Lord. The desire to grow in grace is a revealing tenet that a person has truly become saved. Rededication or making a decision proves nothing.

IS DECISIONISM A WORKS GOSPEL?

Decisionism is definitely a works gospel. If you remember, we spoke of the difference between a person making a qualified response and someone who is uncalled trying to make a decision as to whether they should accept the Lord or not. A person whom God has qualified to hear the Gospel will, at the appointed time, when drawn, come to the Lord for salvation. If a person who is uncalled hears a message, and then tries to decide whether they should believe it or not, then they are actually performing a work, because by acceptance of the Gospel, they are having a part in their own salvation. We have all heard the analogy, "God wrote out the check and signed it, but now it is up to you to co-sign it." These analogies speak for themselves. If someone signs a check, they are working as they are signing. God's salvation plan is totally of God, and man does NOT have the slightest part, except for the Elect to receive it.

IS THE ALTAR CALL WRONG?

In my years of preaching, I have used the altar call, but from a Sovereign Grace standpoint and not from a free will view. I would say something to the effect of "If God has spoken to your heart this morning and you wish to speak to me or one of the elders, then please do." Never would I do one of those endless repetitions "anyone else?" If God had spoken to a heart, then only once it needed to be said. I must admit in my early years of preaching, I did call for a decision at a church where I filled in the pulpit, but only once. The altar call can be a valuable course of action, if it is not abused, whereby those whom God is dealing with may take the step and come forward, so the leaders of the church may get them into a New Believers class.

The altar call is not found in Scripture and should never be used to try and manipulate people into an emotional response. It should be used to identify those in the congregation whom God might be dealing with. As with everything in life, there will be some churches that will have a Christian coming down the aisle every week, but something like this should not deter using a good tool to identify those who God may be calling or dealing with. An option should also be given, that if a person does not want to come down the aisle and if they believe that God has been dealing with them, then the pastor and elders should have a room set aside for those who may want to talk privately.

The altar call has been misused down through the years by the decisionists who believe that when a person comes forward and says a few words, then they are saved. We saw this as being an erroneous practice, which yields emotional responses. To get up and walk the aisle would constitute a works gospel, because by getting up and walking, they would be co-signing that check that God wrote. We also saw that the dead cannot make a decision. The only ones who come for salvation are the ones whom God qualifies to do so.

SUMMARY

We have looked at decisionism and found that it really doesn't exist from a salvation point of view. Only those whom God has qualified will respond to the Gospel. That is because they have been named, called, and drawn. Decisionism creates an army of those who think they are saved and are under a dangerous delusion which can end in one heartbeat. Decisionism was basically adopted by a heretical evangelist, Charles Finney, and then of course, whenever a heretic is found in Christianity, what do we do? We follow them instead of rebuking them! So many churches have

adopted decisionism as a method of evangelism, which is resulting in people with false salvation beliefs. Because of this erroneous method, many are also walking around believing they are saved. This is one reason the Lord warns us:

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 7:21)

Let's just keep preaching Truth and let God do the saving. Believe me, it works!

Faith: Where Does It Originate?

God or Us?

And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. (Matthew 17:20)

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. (Romans 1:8)

One of the most confusing issues of our day is the subject of the origin of faith. On one hand in the above verses we read that one group had such great faith that it was spoken about by others and on the other hand another group of Jesus' followers did not even have the faith the size of a grain of Mustard Seed. How come one group had such great faith and the other had none?

First of all we must look at the words used in the Greek for faith, faithfulness, and believe. This is important because we must know how God uses the terms in Scripture. This will alleviate much confusion over the words.

Faith - "pistis" (pistis) - It is a noun which means it names a person, place or thing. The word "faith" in the New Testament is always translated as a noun.

Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. (Philippians 2:17)

Faithfulness - "pistos" (pistos) - It is an adjective which modifies a noun showing the quality of the thing named or to specify something as distinct from something else.

God *is* faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. The adjective points to God as being faithful. (1 Corinthians 1:9)

Believe - "pisteuw" (pisteuo) - It is a verb which denotes an action. The word "believe, believed, and believer in Acts 5:14" in the New Testament is always translated as a verb.

Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. (Acts 8:13)

Where does Faith originate?

Many feel that a person must exercise faith to become saved because we read in many places in the Bible where it teaches we are saved through faith. *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: (Ephesians 2:8) And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. (Luke 18:42)* Here are two verses which seem to indicate that our faith is the one that saves us and heals us. The question is not whether salvation or healing can come by faith, the question is where does the faith come from to believe. Faith is manifested in two ways and that is belief and action on that belief (James 2:14-26). These two methods show that a person does have faith but it still does not tell us the origin of our faith and that is what is at the

heart of this article.

If we are going to understand faith we must first look at the condition of man before salvation. We have looked at this before but repetition is a great teacher. *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) (Ephesians 2:5)* Man in his unsaved state is dead. The word “dead” in Ephesians 2:5 is the word “nekrous” which means “dead, lifeless, or useless.” The next question which must be posed is what can generate from a person who is dead? The answer obviously is nothing because a dead person just continues to decay until they finally become bones and ashes. Just like a physically dead person, a spiritually dead person cannot generate anything either. When Lazarus was dead in the tomb was he able to bring himself back to life? The answer is no, the Lord Jesus Christ had to resurrect him to life before he could once again function as a human being. The raising of Lazarus was an example of the spiritual raising of the believer. We are spiritually dead as Lazarus was physically dead and after Christ saves us we are then spiritually alive as Lazarus was physically alive. Now, since man is spiritually dead, there is no way that faith can be generated from a dead person. That is just a stark reality.

Now we come to the part where we can find where faith originates. In the early church after the giving of the Holy Spirit, God had made faith one of the gifts. *To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; (1 Corinthians 12:9)* In 1 Corinthians 12:9, God had included the gift of faith as one of the spiritual gifts but then later on as the provisional gifts started to wane, God had made sure the gift of faith continued. At first, there were only some who had the gift of faith but then God made the gift of faith a fruit of the Spirit. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (Galatians 5:22)* Now faith, being a fruit of the Spirit, is given to every believer when they become saved and are indwelled by the Holy Spirit.

So now that we have seen that the Bible is clear that faith is now a fruit of the Spirit and given to those who become saved. This means that there is an order: First, salvation, then faith, then belief which is built upon that faith, then as we continue to believe and act we become faithful. So a person who is unsaved does not have the Holy Spirit living in them, which means they cannot have any faith because they are spiritually dead and are of the world. *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)* Another clear verse is Romans 8:9 which teaches us plainly that if a person does not have the Holy Spirit, then they are not of Christ, and they would then be void of all the fruits of the Spirit. The only way a person can have faith, is when they become saved first and are then given faith through the Holy Spirit. Remember Ephesians 2:8? For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: (Ephesians 2:8) Ephesians 2:8 is one of the most plainly written verses and the most ignored on this subject. We are saved by the grace of God which is not of ourselves, that is, we do not initiate salvation because we are spiritually dead and we cannot initiate the faith through which salvation comes because it too is a gift of God. It all comes in one package at one time, at the moment of salvation, and it all comes from God as He regenerates us.

Summary

We have clearly seen that faith is a fruit of the Holy Spirit and only those who are indwelled by the Holy Spirit can have faith. This means that no unsaved person can ever have believing faith before they are saved. Spiritually dead people cannot generate anything spiritually, just as a physically dead person cannot generate anything pertaining to physical life. So it is important that we know that salvation, faith, and belief are part and parcel of the Christian walk. It is always salvation first, never faith first! Never make the mistake of equating the faith the Holy Spirit gives us and natural faith that all people have, such as, I will sit in this chair and I have faith it will not fall over or I have

faith that my car will not break down. Natural faith cannot generate saving faith!

Free Will Tenets Not Found In Scripture

If there is one belief which has skyrocketed to fame in the church, it is the belief that a person can exercise free will to become saved. This belief puts man in charge of his salvation and takes it away from God. It places God in an ancillary position to man in reference to salvation as we shall see in the tenets which I will present. We must realize first that free will does not exist in regards to salvation. That would mean that man is both objective and neutral in the area of salvation. The following two verses show us that man is neither:

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. (Romans 6:17)

Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. (Romans 6:18)

As we see from these two verses that man is placed into two categories:

Servants of Sin - Unserved

Servants of Righteousness - Saved

Man is not objective since the human race is living in sin and each one born is living in sin. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. (Psalm 51:5)* As a matter of fact we are conceived in sin and even babies are sinners as shown by the following passages:

The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. {4} Their poison is like the poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; {5} Which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely. (Psalm 58:3-5)

From the moment a person is born, they are born in sin which means it is absolutely impossible for a person to objectively sit down and weigh God's salvation program to determine whether they want to accept Him or not. Being born in sin creates another major problem for the human race, and that is we are born dead:

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: {2} Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: {3} Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. {4} But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, {5} Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) (Ephesians 2:1-5)

The word "dead" in both passages is the word "nekrous" (nekrous) which means lifeless or useless. Before you became a Christian, how filled with life were you and how useful were you to the Kingdom of God? Until God saves us and gives us eternal life, we are of no value to the Kingdom of God. Even if you donated to your church before you were saved, here is what God thinks of the gifts of the unbeliever:

The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his

delight. (Proverbs 15:8)

The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind? (Proverbs 21:27)

How many times when we donated to the Lord or did things for the church in an unsaved state did we think we were impressing God? Because we had a wicked mind, we all thought God would be pleased at what we did for Him. It wasn't until we became saved that we realized the Scriptures taught that we can do nothing to please God. Free Will plays no part in salvation because as we saw we were dead and how can a dead person do anything for life? So with these few thoughts in mind let us attend to many of the common tenets taught by the free will proponents and let us compare their teachings to Scripture.

Accept Christ

Biblical Support: None

How many times have you gone to a church and heard your free will pastor say at the end of the message, and now I would like to invite any of you who would like to accept Christ as your personal savior to please come forward. Or have you ever endured an endless preacher who will do an invitation by telling everyone present to close their eyes, bow their heads, and then he goes into his invitation speech and keeps repeating "anyone else" about twenty times and many times I wanted to raise my hands just to give him the notch that he needed so badly. These things happen because man believes that he has enough intelligence to make a decision as to whether he wants to go to heaven or burn in hell. Imagine calling someone intelligent who makes a decision to burn forever in hell.

The term "accept Christ" is not found in the Scriptures anywhere and is nowhere implied in Scripture that a person can accept Christ at any time. Now the question arises about a few verses which you are thinking about right now, so let us look at the "whosoever" verses and see if the common interpretation of them fits into biblical truth.

That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life (John 3:15)

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)

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Acts 2:21)

For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. (Romans 10:11)

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

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. (1 John 5:1)

These 6 verses use the term "whosoever" which has been interpreted to mean that a person of their own free will can accept Christ if they so choose. However, the word which underlies "whosoever" is the Greek word "pas" (pas) which is used about 1,200 times in the New Testament.

The term simply translated means "each, all, everyone, every." There is absolutely no implication in the word "pas" of "anytime, anywhere, or choice." This word does not endorse any idea of a person having a free will to make a choice. To inject the idea of a person having the free will to do so is to bring in a foreign interpretation to the word. Now let us look at two more verses which seem to indicate the same teaching of free will.

And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.
{15} Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. (1 John 4:14-15)

The word "whosoever" in this verse is not the word "pas" but it is the word "Os" it is pronounced "hos" because of the heavy breathing mark over the O. My program does not have the ability to do that. It is a relative pronoun which may be translated "who." This word does not offer any implication as to a free will anytime, anywhere, or choice milieu.

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. (Revelation 22:17)

There are two words in this verse which need to be closely looked at. The first one is "heareth" which is the Greek word "akouw" (akouw) which means to hear with understanding not just the physical act of hearing. The second word is "whosoever" which is the Greek word "thelo" (thelo) which means "to wish to have or desire." Uh oh, does this mean that a person can desire the things of the Lord on their own? The word "thelo" is a word which is defined by the context it is used in. Remember the word "akouw" to hear with understanding? Who are the only ones who understand?

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)

Do you remember the passages of Scripture we started with in the beginning? Ephesians 2:1-5 showed us that were dead in sins. The only way a person can desire the things of the Lord is if God opens their eyes to the Scriptures. A dead man cannot raise himself nor do anything except remain dead. When God resurrects us with our resurrected souls, we then will have a desire for the things of the Lord since we are commanded to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.

Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, (Luke 24:45)

Jesus had to open the understanding of the disciples on the road to Emmaus for them to know who he was. It is the same way with anyone approaching the Scriptures, God must open the meaning of Scripture as well as granting salvation according to whom He chooses to draw. God does the drawing as well as the saving. Only those who God elects to salvation will hear and understand and then have a desire to come to the waters freely which is the water of the gospel. It is God who initiates salvation and it is God who completes salvation, we are only passive in the reception of that salvation. There is no way that any of these verses convey a free will, anytime, anywhere, salvation plan because the language will not support it. This is just another attempt for man to exalt himself to a position higher than God in the area of salvation.

Universal Atonement

Biblical Support: None

This is the teaching that Christ paid for the sins of every person in the world but the only way to appropriate the atonement is to receive Christ as your personal Savior. The problem with this view is that if Christ paid for the sins of all the people in the world, then no one would be going to hell for their sins. The very opposite is the reality in that hell is going to be a very populated place. The Bible teaches that Christ came to pay only for those who are His.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)

Even before Jesus was born into this world, He already had a group of people in which He was going to save. This truth is revealed in two verses:

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8)

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: (Ephesians 1:4)

We see revealed in these two verses, two specific truths regarding God's salvation plan concerning His people. First, in principle Christ was already slain before the foundation of the world for the people He came to save which is represented by the Lamb's book of life. Secondly, the people he came to save were chosen before the foundation of the world and were already recorded in the Lamb's book of life. Christ came to save a specific group of people which were His people. There is no indication in any verse in the Bible that a person's sins are atoned for and that they must accept Christ to secure that salvation.

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)

It seems like this verse is saying that Christ did die for everyone in the whole world. However, if we examine this verse closely, we will find that this is not the case. The word "only" is the Greek word "monon" (monon) which means "alone or only." In this passage, John, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is saying that Christ did not only die for the sins of those elect he was writing to but also the rest of the believers whom God would save which wasn't in the area where they lived. If you recall that the Jews of that day thought they were the special people of God because they had the Law of God and those on the outside were considered heathen dogs and by John stating that Christ died for the sins of all the elect of God in the world, he was dispelling that attitude before it took root.

The Offer of the Gospel

Biblical Support: None

I have heard many times that God offers the gospel to the world or He makes it available so a person can accept Christ. The truth is that the gospel goes out to the world but only the elect of God will respond to it because God qualifies them by giving them spiritual ears to receive it. Remember the disciples on the road to Emmaus when Jesus had to open their ears to the gospel? They physically heard it but it wasn't until Christ gave them spiritual ears did they understand the Scriptures. Remember the verse we looked at in our last section? *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)*

When Jesus came into the world, He already had a specific group of people He planned to save. He did not come into the world to die for people based on a "whoever feels like accepting Him" salvation plan. The names of those He planned to save were already determined before the foundation of the world.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: (Matthew 28:19)

This verse is one of the great commission verses where we are commanded to go into the world and teach all nations. The word "nations" is the word "ēqnos" (ethnos) where we derive the word "ethnic" from. Ethnos may also be translated people, heathens, or pagans. It is also translated "gentiles" in the New Testament. God commands us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to these groups of people because it is out of them that God saves one here and one there.

Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren. {9} Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, {10} Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. {11} And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:8-11)

We see that many of the Corinthian Christians came out of pagan cultures and were washed and sanctified by the Lord unto salvation. Another question arises concerning world missions. What about those groups of people who are in remote areas of the world and are unable to hear the gospel by radio or TV or even missionary? God has committed to save every elect person that He named before the foundation of the world. *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)

God has stated here that not one of His elect will perish but He will save every one He has chosen. The question still remains about the remote people of the world. If there are no elect in those areas to save then they need not hear the spoken word of salvation but they still have the witness of the skies.

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. {20} 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: (Romans 1:19-20)

However, if there is one of God's elect in a remote area, God will bring the gospel to them in some manner. I knew a fellow about 25 years ago who went canoeing and when he got into the canoe, there was a tract lying on the bottom of the canoe, so he picked it up to read it, and God saved him right there. So we must never worry about some remote area of the world, if God has His elect there, He will get the gospel to them somehow. He has committed Himself to the salvation of every single elect and He will bring it to pass.

Altar Calls or Invitations

Biblical Support: None

One of the highlights of a free will service is the invitation or altar call at the end of the meeting. It gives a person the opportunity to go down front and accept Christ if a person believes God has moved them to do so. Normally the people go down front and after they mumble a few words the evangelist or preacher pronounces them saved. Whenever Jesus or the apostles preached, they never gave the gospel invitation for someone to come up and accept Christ. This is simply not found in Scripture. When we look at the Sermon on the Mount, we see Jesus finishing His teachings and then just leaving the mount. He always spoke to people one on one whenever He was approached. We see this in the rich young ruler, the Centurion, etc. Jesus never made a public spectacle out of the gospel.

And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: {29} For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. {1} When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. (Matthew 7:28-8:1)

Altar calls and invitations can be very deceiving in that they give people a false notion that they did something to procure salvation. Invitations and altar calls are part of a recent church tradition which can be a deceiving practice. I remember when I was a teenager I was under the impression that if I took communion, my sins were forgiven. I grew up in a Reformed Church and it was only after I became saved that I realized the practices were deceiving the people into believing they were right with God. For many years I endorsed altar calls and invitations believing that if a person was preaching the truth and God was calling that person, then at that moment they could begin to be counseled. Since God does not offer the gospel to the world but applies it only to His elect, one needs to be very careful when doing an altar call. It requires great discernment. Now can a really elect person walk the aisle? I believe they can but the danger is those who are not elect may come forward under a false notion they are saved. Remember the parable of the wheat and tares in Matthew 13.

The type of invitation I really abhor is the guilt manipulating one. I have mentioned it already when the preacher gets up there and goes into an endless repetition of "anyone else?" The problem with invitations is that they become an advertisement for the evangelist or preacher as they count heads and then advertise it. "Oh 325 got saved last night under his preaching," and so on we hear these statements. Pride! Pride! Pride!

Saying Some Words to Receive Christ

Biblical Support: None

Another dogma of the free will movement is the belief that a person can say or repeat a few words and then they will become saved. This, of course, makes salvation a man controlled entity and takes it out of the control of God. This makes it a work and works play no part in obtaining salvation. God is the one who controls His salvation plan and saves whom He will regardless of whether a person mutters words or not. I cannot find one person in Scripture who prayed to receive Christ as personal Savior. Jesus told Matthew, "follow me" and he did. Jesus saved Paul on the road to Damascus and Paul didn't pray any sinner's prayer.

One of the most arrogant statements I have ever heard from free willers are those in which they proclaim, "I gave Jesus permission to be the Lord of my life." If you have enough power to command God and let Him rule your life that means you are not letting Him be Lord of your life since then you would also have enough power to remove Him. This means you are still king of your life. But what about the Publican? Didn't he cry out to God for salvation?

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. {11} The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. {12} I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. {13} And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. {14} I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. (Luke 18:10-14)

Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. (Romans 8:33)

Here we see God is the one who justifies His elect. Justification is declaring a person not guilty, as if they never sinned. The Publican went to his house a saved man because he was justified. God opened his eyes to his sin and saved him but the Pharisee was still unsaved because he was wrapped up in his own self-righteousness. So we see that the Publican did not "receive Christ" by any words he said but rather God opened his eyes to his sin and then saved him. Saying words to produce salvation is placing it in man's hand but salvation is the total work of God, man cannot add anything. Man can only be passive in salvation.

Receiving Jesus at an Early Age and then Departing from the Faith

Biblical Support: None

How many times have you heard people tell their testimonies of how they walked the aisle and received Christ and then became baptized at an early age and then shortly afterwards departed from the faith to enter the world of sin? This type of statement only proves one thing that an unsaved person can walk the aisle and say some words, and return to their seat still unsaved. If a person becomes truly saved they will never depart from the faith.

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, {4} To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, {5} 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)

These verses reveal that God keeps a person and will not let them go because salvation is irreversible. We have much corroborating evidence from Scripture that Christ will never lose any of His elect.

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

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. (Hebrews 13:5)

And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (John 6:39)

These verses are sufficient to prove God's intent that when He saves someone He will keep them until either the day of their death or the last day when the Lord will return. So it is an outright fabrication to claim that a person was saved at an early age and then walked away. The truth is

they were never saved. This teaching stems from the belief that a person is in control of their final destiny which feeds the pride of man. To say that a person can walk away from their salvation at any age is to make God out to be a liar. Quite frankly, I would not want to do that. Those who trust their supposed free will for their salvation are also trusting Satan because he is the author of independence from God.

Incomplete Atonement of Christ

Biblical Support: None

You don't hear it preached that way but that is exactly what you are hearing when the preacher gets up there and says something to this effect, "Well God has done all he could by sending Jesus to the cross to die for your sins, now it is up to you to complete the transaction by accepting Him. It is like God giving you a check with His signature on it but it does not become effective until you co-sign it." These kinds of persuasion techniques you can find in any soul winning seminars or so-called soul winning churches. The reason that many preachers use these religious marketing techniques is to get you to make that decision and accept Christ. It stems from what the theologians call "decisional regeneration" which means a person can accept Christ through a decision of their own.

The problem with decisional regeneration is that it places part of the salvation process in man's hands when the Bible explicitly states that salvation is totally of God from start to finish. A person cannot decide the common cold out of their body, how then can they decide themselves into heaven.

In the Beginning

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: (Ephesians 1:4)

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8)

The Lord Jesus Christ, in principle, was slain before the foundation of the world along with the choosing of the elect before the foundation of the world. This would exclude the idea that anyone can accept Christ since the reality is that Christ is accepting His elect until the last one becomes saved on the last day and then He will return. God named His elect before the foundation of the world and the only way a person becomes saved is when God applies the gospel to His elect through the ages.

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. (John 19:30)

Here we see the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross pronouncing that something was finished. What was finished was God's salvation plan and with the completion of the substitutionary atonement of Christ came the official sealing of all the elect. This would include both those in the Old Testament and those in the New Testament until the last day. Since Christ came to save His people (Matthew 1:21) only His people are saved and sealed until the last day which is the day of redemption unless the individual believer goes home to be with the Lord before the last day.

God pleads with sinners to accept Him

Biblical Support: None

I have heard ultra-free will ministers and radio preachers deliver the statement that God begs sinners to be saved. How could anyone preach that the Sovereign God of this universe will actually beg a reprobate sinner to come to salvation? This idea stems from the belief that man is exalted and has the final authority in all his matters. They claim that God is a gentleman and will not go where He is not wanted. There is not a verse in Scripture where God begs sinners to do anything. God brings the gospel to the entire world but applies it only to the elect. He does not beg anyone to accept Him because unbelievers are spiritually dead and only God Himself can resurrect a person's soul and give them the spiritual ears to understand the gospel.

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

Here is a verse in which we see that God commands the salvation of His elect and does not beg them to be saved. In other words, whether a person wants to be saved or not and they are predestined for salvation, God will save them whether they like it or not. So far in my Christian walk I have not met anyone who is sincerely sorry that God intervened in their life and saved them. I have met people who were discouraged in their walk but never regretted that God saved them. The word "commandeth" is in the Present Active Indicative. Which means the commanding has been present in every age since the writing in Acts. The word "commandeth" is an authoritative command. It is a present tense verb, which means it is still happening. It is in the active voice which means the subject of the sentence is performing the action of the verb. (God is commanding). It is in the indicative mood which means it is a matter of fact. So here we see that God commands the salvation of His elect and does not beg. We must get out of our thinking any idea which reduces God in any manner to a mere beggar while man exalts himself to the final decision maker.

Free Will Predestination

Biblical Support: None

I have heard many times by free willers the following explanation of predestination. "God looked down through the years and saw who was going to accept Christ and therefore named them as His predestined elect." My question is, if God already knew they were going to accept Christ, then why would He have to predestine them? There is not one verse in Scripture which supports such a pride filled idea. As we have seen, man is spiritually dead until God saves him so how then can a person accept Christ, even before the world was formed, without God regenerating them first.

As we have previously seen God chose His elect before the foundation of the world and did not use any outside source to make that decision. He made the decision to choose a people for Himself out of His own wisdom and choice. Why He chose some and not others, I do not know but the choices have been made and judging from the time period we are in, the salvation plan will be coming to an end very soon when all the elect will have been saved and then we can expect the call from heaven and then the second coming of Christ.

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: {30} And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. {31} And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (Matthew 24:29-31)

This world will go on until the last one of God's elect will be saved and then comes the great day when the wheat and chaff will be separated. Since it is impossible for a dead man to accept Christ, it is therefore impossible for a person to become part of God's elect by means of their fictitious free will.

For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. (Hebrews 4:3)

If the works were already finished before the foundation of the world, then what more or how can a person add to them? The answer is they can't because the works which were done was the choosing of the elect and the planning of Christ coming into the world to die for those elect. If any human tries to get into heaven by means of works, it will be an eternal failure.

God loves the Sinner but He hates the sin

Biblical Support: None

Here is another way the pride of man can exalt Himself. Create a doctrine in which God loves everybody and then no one will be in trouble with God.
Right? WRONG!!!

The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. {6} Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man. (Psalm 5:5-6)

Here we see that God hates all workers of iniquity. Who are the workers of iniquity? These are all the unsaved in the world. They are all at enmity with God. Even the predestined believer is at war with God until they become saved.

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

When a person becomes saved, the war between God and them are over and there is now eternal peace between them. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. (Matthew 5:9) Those who are peacemakers are those who bring the gospel which is the only entity which can bring peace between people and God. But what about those verses which seem to say that God loves everyone.

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

Here is one of those verses which is used as a so-called proof-text for the universal love of God for all humans. If we look at this verse really close, paying attention to the words, we will see this verse as speaking to a certain group of people. Notice the two words "us" and "we." These words do not mean everyone or all. They speak to a specific group of people, namely the believers. Am I on the right track? Let us check it out.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Romans 8:18)

Is the glory in view here to be fulfilled in the future life of the unbeliever or the Christian? Who will have a glorified spiritual body, the unbeliever or the true Christian?

Hell is the vindication of God's holiness and those who are not covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness will have to pay for their own sins in an eternity in Hell.

Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; {7} And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, {8} In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: {9} Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; {10} When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10)

Summary

The free will of man concerning salvation is a fable because it does not exist in Scripture and therefore does not exist in man. Either a person's will is living in sin or it is living in righteousness. The soul of man is not neutral in that it is either saved or unsaved. Man is a spiritually dead being and unless they are regenerated by the Lord, they will remain dead. There are no Scriptures which teach that man can accept or reject Christ but the Bible is brimming with Scriptures which teach that God is in control of His salvation plan from before the beginning of the world until the end of the world and man cannot add, accept, or reject it. The saved are saved, whether they want to be or not because once they are truly saved, they can never lose or walk out of their salvation. You cannot earn salvation and you cannot spurn salvation. I hope these small studies have helped you realize that free will in the area of salvation does not exist and if you are saved, it is because of the grace of God, not something you have done because you can do nothing since the works were finished before the foundations of the world.

Hostile Free Willers

They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly. (Amos 5:10)

In Amos 5:10, we read about an indictment of the wicked judges. They hated the prophet of the Lord especially Amos for the simple reason of him bringing the truth to the people. The word “rebuketh” in the Hebrew carries with it the meaning of “convince, rebuke, or reprove” and the word “uprightly” in the Hebrew carries with it the meaning of “without blemish, truth, or integrity.” In other words, Amos was bringing to light the real condition of the judges of his time and how they hated to be reproved with the truth. The Apostle Paul faced the same situation when he asked the people the following question:

Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? (Galatians 4:16)

The Apostle Paul was engaged in a battle between the Judaizers who tried to get the people to believe that one must be circumcised plus keep the Law of Moses to become saved. Then Pontius Pilate asked a most pertinent question concerning truth which is still apropos for today.

Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. (John 18:38)

Pilate’s question is very relevant to today’s mindset especially in the body of Christ which is being tossed around with every wind of doctrine, even to the point that many argue against truth and defend the false.

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; (Ephesians 4:14)

It seems every time someone writes a new prophecy book or suggests another person for the office of Antichrist, the church runs after them and adopts that belief until the next candidate comes along or a new prophecy book is written. In this section I want to approach the subject of Free Will and how its proponents actually hate those of us in the Reformed community who adhere to the doctrines of Free Grace. As we previously read, Calvinist is not a proper term because in this section you will not find one quote by Calvin but will find only Scripture but I will use the term “Calvinist” sparingly.

Recently there has been a resurgence of interest in the doctrines of Grace as many people are looking at the subject of salvation. With this rise in interest of the Doctrines of Grace, Satan has begun a war against that belief by his army of free willers in the church who have begun to act like attack dogs and attack every Calvinist as heretics and church dividers as the person from Facebook in the Preface of this study. (I use the term free willers not as a derogatory term but a term of identification.) There has been a serious rise in bitter attacks against Calvinists painting them as heretics and unbelievers. Those of us who adhere to the doctrines of Grace realize that according to the Scriptures, salvation is all in the hands of God without any addition by men. Free willers believe that Christ’s sacrifice was not complete until they complete it by “accepting it.”

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. (John 19:30)

Jesus stated in John 19:30 that it is finished. This meant that this portion of the salvation plan of God was complete, it would be completed totally upon His resurrection. However, the free willer does not believe that. Their belief is it is finished as soon as "I accept the Lord." Free willers believe in partial atonement in that it is not completed unless they do the work of accepting it. What it really means is that the free willer has to add a work to the finished work of Christ. This is why free will is so closely aligned with Roman Catholicism because they too add works to the finished work of Christ. Having to accept the Lord is no less a work than doing penance or saying 5 Hail Mary's.

When Christ stated that it was finished, it was the completion of the salvation of all those who were named before the foundation of the world as we have previously read. *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: (Ephesians 1:4)* The penalty had been paid and now from that time to the last day, those who are predestined to be saved will become saved according to God's timing.

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. (John 6:37)

Notice in John 6:37 that Jesus Himself states that all those the Father gives Him "shall" come to Him. The Father gives, the Lord Jesus receives the believer. Nothing about given a choice or anything about exercising free will. The free willers totally misunderstand what type of free will they have. It is true God has given us a free will concerning the things of this earth. We may buy the type of car we like, we may live in a city we like, we can wear one blue sock and one brown one if we choose, or we can even attend any church we like. That is the extent of the freedom of the unbeliever. Where the free willer makes their huge mistake is that because we have free will for earthly things, they take that to mean that we can extend that free will into the spiritual realm.

Nothing could be further from the truth. A free willer cannot will the common cold out of their body, how are they going to will themselves into Heaven? The great mistake they make is they neglect the biblical teaching that every human being is born in sin and that sin causes us to be spiritually dead.

Nekrous - Lifeless, Useless, or Dead

Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. {15} See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, (Ephesians 5:14-15)

But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead. (Matthew 8:22)

It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found. (Luke 15:32)

For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. (John 5:21)

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together

with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; (Colossians 2:13)

Thnesko - Be Dead or Die

But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth. (1 Timothy 5:6)

Thanatos - Death

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. (1 John 3:14)

Here we have just looked at seven verses where God uses three different words to describe the condition of those who are not saved. The Bible teaches us here that the only condition that the unbeliever is in is a state of spiritual death. This applies to every person who has ever lived and goes back as far as the Garden of Eden. So here we have biblical proof that a person is spiritually dead and dead means dead. There is no getting around it. *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Genesis 2:17)* God Himself pronounced death to Adam and Eve if they disobeyed Him in the Garden of Eden. Once they sinned, not only was physical death decreed it was also spiritual death. To deny this is to actually deny and reject the words of God Himself. Free willers are notorious at rejecting Scripture they do not like as we will see further down.

Free willers totally neglect this biblical truth and as a result they teach that a person can save themselves by just believing. Well how does a dead person believe when they are dead? When Lazarus was in the tomb, did he raise himself from the dead? The answer is no, Jesus stood at the entrance of his tomb and commanded him by name to come forth. *And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. (John 11:43)* The fact that He commanded him by name to come forth is an important fact.

To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. (John 10:3)

Notice the verse is stating that the Shepherd "calls his own sheep by name." Those He calls by name are the very ones that shall come to Him as we read in John 6:37. In John 10:3, He calls his sheep by name and leads them out. There is no act of the will. They hear their name and they follow His calling. Just as the believer today is called by name into salvation and is led out of the world system. The scenario in John 10 is about the relationship between the Lord Jesus Christ and the eternal church. For a person to be saved means that a resurrection has taken place first before one can believe. Since a person is spiritually dead, for them to have the ability to believe and have faith unto salvation, they would literally have to resurrect themselves from the dead. The question remains, does any human being have the ability to raise themselves from the dead, whether physical or spiritual? The answer is no. The only qualified ones we know about who have the ability to raise the physical dead is God the Father and God the Son. Since the human cannot reach into the spiritual realm, the only qualified ones who are able to raise someone spiritually are God the Father and God the Son. Resurrection of the soul must take place before a person can believe and have faith unto salvation. Once a person is regenerated they now have the ability to believe simply because they now have the Holy Spirit indwelling them and they are no longer spiritually dead.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (Galatians 5:22)

According to Galatians 5:22, faith is a fruit of the Holy Spirit but if you do not have the Holy Spirit living in you, then you are dead but if He indwells you, you are able to have faith and believe. So we conclude biblically that one must be regenerated first and only then can that person believe. So the order is salvation first and belief second! This means that it is God doing the saving. No matter how many sinner's prayers a person prays, if they are not regenerated first, they will remain unsaved.

Here is a quotation from a free will preacher named Warren Wiersbe. "The fundamental problem lost sinners face isn't that they're sick and need a remedy. The problem is that they're dead in trespasses and sins and need to experience resurrection." (from The Voice, April 2017 Newsletter of the Bible Broadcasting Network)

How many testimonies have we heard from people where they claimed that they accepted Jesus when they were young but walked away from Him? The fact was that they said a few words and were pronounced saved by the "I want another jewel in my crown" preacher but they remained unsaved. Therein lies a great danger of the free will movement in that people think that by saying a few words they are automatically saved. There will be many standing at the Great White Throne Judgment thinking they were saved because they did something or said a few words and were lied to by being told they were saved.

Now I went through these biblical teachings to show that it is impossible for a person to save themselves by means of a simple prayer or by some type of free will which does not exist.

What is the Condition of the Will of Man?

For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. {21} What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. {22} But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. (Romans 6:20-22)

To further understand the condition of man, we must look at the will of man before and after salvation. We find a comparison in Romans 6:20 & 22. In Romans 6:20, we find the phrase "servants of sin." The word "servant" is the Greek word "doulos" which can be understood as slave. In any society that had slavery, the slave had no will of their own. Their will was to do the master's will. When a person is unsaved they are in the kingdom of Satan and Satan is their master and the only will that the unsaved person has is the will that serves Satan's will. Martin Luther understood this as the bondage of the will. Verse 21 gives further understanding that the things which were done in service to Satan's will would cause shame to those who became saved and not only that, but that life and its works would end in death. This is speaking of spiritual death, eternal damnation.

Now we move on to verse 22 and we find the same word "doulos" in reference to service to God. When a person becomes saved, they now become servants of God which produces fruit unto holiness and the saved are given eternal life. Jesus elevates the believer even higher.

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. (John 15:15)

In John 15:15, the words "servants and servant" are also the word "doulos" but here Jesus changes

the status of the believer from a servant to a friend. In fact, it may be understood as a “dear friend.”

Now I brought these verses in Romans up for a purpose. We read that either a person is a slave of sin, which means, their will is in bondage, or they are a servant of God which means they are saved. There is no in between these classifications. If a person is a slave they must be freed from that slavery but the slave does not have the authority to free themselves. It is their master who must free them from the bonds of slavery. According to the Scriptures, Satan will not free his prisoners.

That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners? (Isaiah 14:17)

Isaiah 14:17 teaches plainly that unbelievers are in the house or kingdom of Satan and he will not let any of his prisoners go. Therefore, they must be freed by an outside source. The battle is not between the slave and master but the battle is between master and master for the freedom of that slave.

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)

Now those who are in bondage to sin in Satan’s house but are named before the foundation of the world for salvation must be brought out of the kingdom of Satan and placed into the kingdom of God. We read in John 6:44 that a person who is predestined for salvation is drawn out of the kingdom of Satan. The word “draw” means to “drag or force.” It doesn’t sound like a free will choice. The reason is that Satan will put up a fight to keep every one of his captives and therefore the removing of the believer from the kingdom of Satan is like one being dragged plus man loves his sin and will do anything to remain in sin since it pleases the flesh. *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* (John 3:19) Since man loves darkness rather than light, they too will resist God from coming to Him in salvation. This is why God must do the saving since man cannot save himself because of the sinful condition he is in and the kingdom he is in, there is no way out unless God does the saving.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: {13} Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: (Colossians 1:12-13)

Colossians 1:13 gives us the reality of the situation that first of all it is that it is the Father who delivered us from the power of darkness just as John 6:44 states. The word “delivered” carries with it the meaning of “rescued.” The word “translated” carries with it the meaning of “carry away or remove.” Colossians 1:12 & 13 give clear Scriptural evidence that salvation is all of God. Remember, it is the Father who gives the believer to Jesus. *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.* (John 6:37) It is the Father that rescues us from the prison house of Satan and removes or translates us into the kingdom of His dear Son. The flesh may not like it because it loves sin but the soul is happy to receive that pardon.

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; {14} Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that

was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;
(Colossians 2:13-14)

God the Father not only takes us out of the prison house of Satan but with that release according to Colossians 2:13-14, all trespasses have been forgiven and all laws that we broke were nailed to the cross. It resulted in the indictment against us being blotted out. The charges no longer exist, they are gone for eternity. All of this was done by the hand of God as we read in the various verses. Nothing, not even a smidgeon of man's will is mentioned in that spiritual battle. The battle for the souls of the Elect takes place in the spiritual realm, not the physical realm.

The summary is clear. Man has no neutral ground, either a person is a slave to Satan or they are a servant of God. There is no in between or any neutral state of the soul whereby a person can make a choice. What we discovered was that the choice was made for us.

Now I wish to offer some reasons why the free willer hates the idea that they cannot save themselves thus hating the person bringing this biblically based truth.

Free Will Teaches that God is the Beggar and Man is the Sovereign

The Bible Teaches that God is the Sovereign and Man is the Beggar

By them placing salvation in their hands it makes God the Beggar like He is begging them to accept Jesus and they stand there with the attitude of "I'll think about it." What Calvinism does is it places man as the beggar and God as the Sovereign and the pride of man will not tolerate being second, even to God. This is why they make God out to be the beggar because it puffs up their pride. *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: {13} Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: (Colossians 1:12-13)* God does not beg, He just translates His Elect from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of Christ.

Free Will Teaches Its Own Salvation Plan

The Bible Teaches God's Salvation Plan

When the Lord Jesus Christ went to the cross, He died for the sins of His people and came to save His people. *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)* We already saw in John 10 how Jesus calls His people by their names just as He did Lazarus. If Jesus would have stood in front of the tomb of Lazarus and said "come forth" then all the dead in the world would have come forth. It is the same with salvation, if He would pronounce salvation, then everyone in the world would be saved. Instead, He calls those named from before the foundation of the world by their name unto salvation. *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: (Ephesians 1:4)* Notice the verse uses the word "us and we" which denotes a specific group of people. Free willers do not believe that the sacrifice of Christ was for His own people but it was a random death which means anybody and their brother can get saved. It made people savable rather than saved which is not a biblical teaching. God's salvation plan was all of grace for the believer but the free willer believes you have to accept it for salvation making it a works gospel. The gospel of grace applies salvation to those whom God has chosen without the approval of the person receiving it.

Free Will Teaches You Have a Choice

The Bible Teaches a No-Choice Salvation

Free willers would have you believe that your salvation is totally a choice that you make out of your own free will. As we have already seen, there is no such thing as a neutral position for a person to

go either way. The biblical plan of salvation is simple. If you were named from the foundation of the world to become saved, at some point in your life God will apply His grace to you upon hearing the word of God. *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8) 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: (Ephesians 1:4)*

Free Will Teaches You Have To Give God Permission to work in Your Life

The Bible Teaches that God works in a Person's Life without their Permission

Free Will teaches a dangerous myth that you have the authority to actually give God permission to work in your life. This self-aggrandizing myth is nowhere taught in Scripture. *Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. (Jonah 1:17)* Did Jonah give God permission to work in his life? If Jonah had free will and the authority to give God permission to intervene in his life, would God have pursued Jonah or let him go his way? If God gave us free will, then God would have appointed someone else to go to Nineveh, but He didn't! Jonah was the chosen prophet to go to Nineveh! Free willers forget who the Potter is and who is the clay!

Free Will Rejects the Biblical Teaching that Man is Spiritually Dead

The Bible Teaches Plainly that Man is Spiritually Dead

We have already studied the subject that unsaved man is in a state of spiritual death and is incapable of anything but being dead. Free Willers totally ignore this truth and espouse the teaching that all one has to do is just hear the word of God and then make their choice. This teaching is as heretical as those who teach the Holy Spirit is only a force. *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17)* Romans 10:17 is used as the key verse for those who teach the "hearing only doctrine." However, the two words in this verse must be looked at, they are the words "hearing and hearing." Both of these words are translated from the same Greek word and that is "akouw" (pronounced ah-koo-oh) which means not just hearing physically but "hearing with understanding." For a person to have faith, they must understand the words of the Scriptures to generate faith. *And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? (Luke 24:32)* The two disciples on the road to Emmaus had talked with Jesus while they walked together but they did not know it was Jesus until one event happened. Jesus opened to them the Scriptures. The word "opened" carries with it the meaning of "opened thoroughly."

Here were two disciples that didn't even know that they were in the presence of Jesus until He opened their understanding of the Scriptures. *Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, (Luke 24:45)* Then when they reported back to the Disciples that they met Jesus on the road and it was He who opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. The first use of understanding in that verse carries with it the meaning of "opening of the intellect or mind or will" and the second usage of understanding carries with it the meaning of "comprehend, to put together." Notice that it was not man who opened his understanding, it was Jesus who opened their understanding. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: {13} Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13)* This is why John 1:12-13 state that those who are saved are not saved by the will of man but by the will of God. It was Jesus who opened the will of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, not them.

Free Will Teaches that Each Person is given a Measure of Faith

The Bible Teaches that only the Saved receive that Measure of Faith

Free willers espouse the belief that every person in the world has been given a measure of faith. This way they believe that a person can hear the word of God and when they hear it, they can then exercise their faith if they choose to become saved. However, this cannot be because the Bible does not contradict itself. We saw in Galatians 5:22 that faith is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. If one does not have the Holy Spirit, they cannot have the fruit associated with it. *For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. (Romans 12:3)* Romans 12:3 is used or I should say misused by the free willers to try and prove every person has some faith. If we look at the context of Romans 12:3, we read that Paul is about ready to discuss the spiritual gifts and only those who are saved have the spiritual gifts. What is in view is that God gives the measure of faith to the believer according to the spiritual gifts they receive. Where the free willer gets confused is when they associate secular faith with biblical faith. In other words, I have faith to sit in a chair hoping it will not tip over. I have faith to drive my car in hopes it will get me to my destination without it breaking down. I have faith in using my home burglar alarm to protect my home when I am absent. These things are all types of faith but they are not fruits of the Holy Spirit. In fact they may be more of a confidence or an anticipated assurance instead of faith.

Free Will Teaches You Can Lose Your Salvation

The Bible Teaches You Cannot Lose Your Salvation

Free willers espouse the belief that a person can lose their salvation. They come up with this by believing that a person attained salvation by their free will and therefore can lose it by their free will. Charles Finney was one of the most ardent believers in free will and he even believed that a Christian who was already in Heaven could actually still lose their salvation.

I will re-quote Finney's ungodly teaching here from his Systematic Theology: "It is not intended that saints, or the truly regenerated, cannot fall from grace, and be finally lost, by natural possibility. It must be naturally possible for all moral agents to sin at any time. Saints on earth and in heaven can by natural possibility apostatize and fall, and be lost. Were not this naturally possible, there would be no virtue in perseverance" (Page 550).

Unfortunately this is the belief of many free willers but the Bible is very clear that when one has truly become saved, they cannot lose their salvation. *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:5)* 1 Peter 1:5 states that the believer is kept by the power of God. Does the power that the free willer thinks they have is more powerful than God's? *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. (John 10:28)* Here Jesus states that the believer has eternal life and they shall never perish nor shall any man pluck them out of His hand. Does the free willer think that they have the power to pluck themselves out of the hands of Jesus, who by the way is eternal God! *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, {39} Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)* Romans 8:38-39 clearly proclaims that nothing shall separate us from the love of God in Christ, that is, nothing can sever us from the salvation that Christ gives us.

For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:3)

This verse teaches us that the believer has died and their life is now hidden in Christ. The believer's identity is with the Lord Jesus Christ. The words "is hid" is the Greek word "krupto" which

carries with it the meaning of “kept secret and kept safe.” So this verse is telling us that we are kept safe and secret in the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember the passages of John 6:37-39 where Jesus stated that He will lose none? Now we know why, because our eternal lives are kept safe and secret with the Lord Jesus Christ. How is it possible for sin to be able to break that safekeeping by eternal God Himself? It is impossible.

So we see in these few examples (and there are many more) that it is impossible for a saved person to lose their salvation since we are kept by the power of God and nothing can cause a loss of salvation and the fact that we are hid with Christ in God makes the believer totally secure. For those who believe you can lose your salvation, it is obvious they have no clue as to what happened on Calvary and who died there. But then again why would they since free willers only focus on themselves.

Summary

From the information we have gathered in this section from the Bible, it is obvious that free will is another Gospel. It does not adhere to the teachings of Scripture instead exalts man and his mythical free will as having authority even over God believing that they have to give Him permission to work in their lives. Free will is a total myth and does not exist in the Scriptures in any form concerning salvation. The only time man had free will was in the Garden of Eden and look where that got us. I have been told that Reformed Theology is fatalism and yet the gospel that free willers teach is nowhere found in the Bible. They must take verses out of context and give an erroneous interpretation to make their non-existent belief system palatable to the hearers. Free will is a total lie in that it seeks to exalt man rather than God. We in the Reformed community laud God for our salvation knowing it was totally of Him. The free willers can only laud themselves for saving themselves. Free will is a cult like the Mormons or the Jehovah’s Witnesses because it is an extra-biblical teaching with a following and that is very dangerous. I am not saying that everyone who espouses free will is unsaved because even their salvation is by grace and without their permission. I am saying they have a very bad understanding of Scripture to the point they exude false teachings.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. {9} As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:8-9)

The warning in Galatians 1:8-9 needs to be heeded since Free Will is a false gospel which is taught in the majority of churches and that false gospel is accursed. Now you understand why free willers are so hostile because the true gospel invades their territory of self-aggrandizement and pride. They want nothing to do with the true gospel because it takes them out of the forefront and puts them in the background. On Facebook there is one free will preacher who exalts himself so much that in his posts he places the biggest picture of himself that he can.

Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom. (Proverbs 13:10)

Last Will and Testament of Christ

For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. (Hebrews 9:16)

In Hebrews 9, we read in verses 14-17, the subject of a will. A will is a legal document which allows the lawyer of the deceased or testator to divide their estate according to their wishes while they were still alive. While the testator lives, the will may be changed but once that person dies, there can be no more changes to that will because it now is in force. The testator is a person who makes or leaves a testament or will to give instruction on how to divide up their estate to those named in that will after their death and not before. This is another section of Scripture which puts the death knell to the myth of free will.

In Hebrews 9:14-17, we read about the last will and testament of the Lord Jesus Christ.

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:14) The word "your" in this verse is a pronoun, second person plural and in the genitive case (case of possession) which means that the author is speaking to a certain group of people. If you notice that this verse is dripping with the words of salvation. It speaks about a person who is having their conscience purged from dead works to serve the living God. This means that a person has become saved because they go from dead works to serve the living God. If you notice, the verse is also stating that it was the blood of Christ, through the eternal Spirit that has done the purging. It is not done by the will of man but by the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the blood of Christ.

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. (Hebrews 9:15) Verse 15 builds upon the teaching of verse 14. It speaks about Christ being the mediator. The mediator is one who comes between two parties, especially in a legal situation. *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; (1 Timothy 2:5)* The Bible is very clear that Christ is the mediator between God and man. *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (John 14:6)* It is also clear that no one comes to the Father except through Christ making Him the only mediator of salvation. The first testament was the law of Sinai which no one would be able to keep. Salvation was unattainable by means of the Law. Hebrews 9:15 then speaks about those who are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. It sounds like those who are called unto salvation may not receive it. This is easily explainable by the following passage. *For many are called, but few are chosen. (Matthew 22:14)* Many are called by means of the Gospel proclamation but not everyone will become saved. Only those who are chosen unto salvation will receive the promise. *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: (Ephesians 1:4)* According to Ephesians 1:4, only a certain group of people were chosen before the foundation of the earth and that is the Elect of God. *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)* We are elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father. Notice that in this verse also the blood of Christ is working in conjunction with the Holy Spirit.

Back to Hebrews 9:15. We read that it was the death of Christ that was made for the redemption of His elect from their transgressions made under the first covenant or the Law. Every person in this world that is unsaved at the time of death will be judged according to the Law. If therefore any transgression of the law be found in an individual, it will be like they have broken the entire law and will be sentenced to eternal damnation. *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. (James 2:10)* Therefore since Christ died for His Elect, they will no longer be held guilty for the transgression of the law because Christ fulfilled all the requirements of the Law by means of His sacrifice. Since the believer is in Christ, it is like they too have kept every tenet of the Law. *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Since we are hidden in Christ, no accusation of the law can ever touch us. (Colossians 3:3)*

For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. (Hebrews 9:16) Now comes the legal, binding part of the testament. The testament is changeable only while the testator lives and has no legal or binding authority but once the testator is dead, the testament now goes into force and has legal authority and cannot be changed anymore. The testament is to remain as is at the point of the death of the testator. Christ was the testator of the New Testament or Covenant and His death at Calvary sealed the contents of His Testament or will. Just as a person makes a will, it can be changed any time the person is still alive but once they are dead, the will is now sealed and no more changes are to take place.

For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. (Hebrews 9:17) A will is a dead document and carries no legal authority until the death of the testator occurs. It is not like a power of attorney which a person has over another which is a document that is in force as long as the person it is designed to protect is still alive. Once that person passes away, then the power of attorney is null and void and at that time the will or testament is activated and the final wishes of the testator are then carried out.

Now here is the part which puts another death knell into the myth of free will. Once the Lord Jesus Christ died, then all those who were named before the foundation of the world unto salvation were now sealed. *Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. (2 Corinthians 1:22)* Then until the last one is saved, the call goes out to the world but only the elect will be chosen unto salvation. Only those whose names who were written in the Lamb's Book of Life will become saved. *And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. (Revelation 21:27)* The place in Heaven was already prepared for the believer from the foundation of the world. *Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: (Matthew 25:34)*

Now here is the boot to free will. Have you ever been to the reading of a will? If not let me make up a typical scenario.

John Jones had died and now his family has come to the Lawyer's office for the reading of the will. Now John Jones was worth one million dollars so the reading of the will is important.

The Lawyer now reads the will which John made ten years ago and for the purpose of better understanding, we will say that his wife had predeceased him and only the children are now in the will.

"To my three children I hereby bequeath my entire estate which is to be divided up equally. My

three children being Abigail, Claudia, and Deborah. Now the will has been executed and the estate has been legally divided up.

BUT WAIT!

Before the session is over, a neighbor comes in and says to the Lawyer, add my name to that list and divide up the estate four ways.

The lawyer tells the man, "I am sorry but you cannot just add your name to the will because once a person dies, the will is in force and cannot be changed."

Neighbor says, "Yes, but I choose to be part of that estate."

Lawyer says, "I am sorry but you cannot add your name to a document which has been sealed and is now in force."

Neighbor says, "But I am using my free will to be part of that estate."

Lawyer says, "Sorry, but you cannot add your name to a will already in force and with all the named inheritors now please leave because 'we never knew you.'"

And so it is with those who think that they can add their names to Christ's last will and testament. He died for His people, the Elect of God, and those who were named before the foundation of the world and only those who are named will become saved and because the testament is in force, no other names can be added to it. No amount of free will, will ever get anyone into Heaven, simply because no one can add their names to the will. This is why on the last day, Jesus will say to the unbelievers. *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (Matthew 7:23)* This is why Jesus says to the unbelievers that He never knew them because they were not named in His will and therefore He did not die for them. So no matter who thinks or preaches that a person has free will and can "accept Christ" they are teaching a rank heresy and need to study their Bibles. Christ died for a specific group, namely His Elect.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)

Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. (John 13:1)

I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. (John 17:9)

Notice in these three verses, we read that Christ is only praying for and saving His people, which are the Elect of God and not the whole world. Now just one more section and that is back to legal talk. Remember in a will the beneficiaries receive an inheritance and that is exactly the language which God uses in describing what the believers receive.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. (Acts 20:32)

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: (Ephesians 1:11)

Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:14)

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, (Ephesians 1:18)

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. (Hebrews 9:15)

To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, (1 Peter 1:4)

The word "inheritance" is used 203 times in the Bible and the word "inherit" is used 61 times. These are legal terms with only specifically named people in view, just as the six verses above show us.

Summary

To summarize this section, we have learned that a will, when the testator is still alive can be changed but once the testator dies, the will is now in force and nothing can be added or changed anymore. What makes us think that the Last Will and Testament of Christ is any different? No one of their own "supposed" free will can add their name to a document which is now in force, especially since Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8)* This means that in principle Christ was already slain before the first man was formed and that means the last will and testament of Christ was already in force when the world was created. The mythical free will of man is an affront to God when He already has everything worked out since the dawn of time. *For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. (Hebrews 4:3)* Free will is the feeble attempt of man to usurp the authority of God by believing he can add his name to a finished document and then believe that God is obligated to save him. Those who are to be saved have already been named, whether the free willer accepts it or not.

Man the Sovereign and God the Beggar

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:20)

The most prevalent teaching in the extreme majority of churches today is that it is possible for one to "accept Christ" as their savior at any time. They believe that God is begging you to accept His Son and that you are the Sovereign determining the final decision as to whether to accept or not.

This is based on the belief that man has free will giving him or her the ability to understand the Gospel and to accept Christ. This stems from the belief that Christ died for every sinner in the world and not just for a certain number. It is normally based upon the complete misunderstanding of verses like 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 world. (1 John 2:2)

Propitiation - Expiation or sin offering

It is a sad thing that this verse is very misused by those who advocate free will. If you will notice in the beginning of this verse it talks about the Lord Jesus being the sin offering for the believer. The word "our" is in the genitive or possessive case which means it belongs to us. So what is in view here is that the Lord Jesus Christ was the sin bearer for all the believers. Now the second part of this verse could trip a person up if they do not connect what the rest of the Bible teaches on this. It is a given fact in Scripture that not every person in the world is going to be saved, in fact, there is only going to be a small remnant saved out of all the billions in population.

The second part of this verse is not teaching universal atonement because that is simply not true based upon the Scriptures and what we see in life. We can see unbelievers all around us who die in that condition. What this verse is simply teaching, based upon all the collateral biblical evidence, is that the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ was not only sufficient for the believers in John's time, but that sufficiency will extend to the end of time to all the Elect all around the world. It in no way implies universal atonement, in that Christ paid for the sins of every person in the world and all they have to do is "accept Christ" and the atonement will be applied. This is taught nowhere in Scripture because saying a few words does not apply the forgiveness of God.

God Himself is the one who chooses who He is going to save and applies the sacrifice of Christ to that person and then indwells them with the Holy Spirit. Man has no part whatsoever except to receive it. If Christ paid for every sin of every human being on earth, then what will the unbeliever be cast into hell for at the Great White Throne Judgment? It is for their sins because they had no savior for their sins. Many state that Christ was the final sacrifice for sins but that is not true. He was the first sacrifice for sins in that he died to pay for the sins of all the Elect and removed them from their souls. All the animal sacrifices done under the Mosaic Law were only foreshadows and could not take away sins. *For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. (Hebrews 10:4)* Christ was the only one was able to take away sins by His sacrifice on Calvary. The unbeliever who dies will stand at the Great White Throne Judgment on the last day and without Christ as their Savior, will now be forced to pay for their sins eternally in hell. In

essence, they are their own sacrifice for sins and this sacrifice never ends as it is eternal. This would make the unbeliever the final sacrifice for sin but only for their own sin and not the sins of another. The sacrifice of Christ removed the sins from the Elect and gave them eternal life. The sacrifice of the unbeliever gives them eternal damnation and no separation from their sin.

I want to look at some teachings of the free will movement concerning salvation which have absolutely no basis in Scripture. It is born out of the minds of men who wish to make themselves sovereign and make God the beggar. As we look at some very plain scriptures, we will see that free will, in reference to salvation is a total fallacy and needs to be abandoned so a better understanding of Scripture will follow.

Spiritual Condition Before Salvation

And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins: (Ephesians 2:1)

Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) (Ephesians 2:5)

It is very important to know our pre-salvation condition. The Bible is very clear that before salvation, a person is spiritually dead. The word "dead" in both verses carries with it the meaning of "lifeless." This means that our spirit and soul were dead yet we are still physically alive. This means that this verse is stating that a person can be physically alive while being spiritually dead. This is very important to understand.

This is why we are able to buy the car we want, wear the clothes we want, or are able to drive from one place to another. We have physical life and are able to make decisions which pertain to the physical. Many free willers make the erroneous comparison that because they can do certain things in the flesh, they can accept Christ. As we see above, the spirit of unsaved man is dead and salvation does not take place in the physical body but takes place in the spirit. If the spirit is dead, then it has absolutely no way of knowing it is dead and no way of regeneration on its own. Like Lazarus, if spiritual regeneration is to come to a person, then it must be initiated by an outside source which of course is God. So unsaved man being dead, must be regenerated from the outside in, not from the inside out. This is shown in the following verses:

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name: {13} Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13)

How many times have we heard John 1:12 given as proof that we can accept Christ and if we do, we then become sons of God. Let us briefly look at that verse. First of all it speaks about "receiving him." It does not state that you can accept Him, but it states that "you receive." That word for "receive" in the Greek means just that. First, a person receives Christ, which means a person is passive in their salvation and all they do is receive it. Then the verse goes on to say that "He" gave power to become the sons of God. First a person receives the Lord and then they have power to become the sons of God, and then there is ability to believe, once they are saved and I will cover faith in the next section. Now connect this plain understanding to verse 13 where we read that a person is not born of the will of the flesh (because remember salvation does not take place in the flesh) nor of the will of man which is still only pertains to the physical before salvation, but they are born again by the Will of God. How much clearer can God make it that being born again is totally separate from the physical and not according to man's will, which is flesh driven before salvation, but by God's Will. Here we plainly see that man does not initiate salvation, God does and He does

it according to His will.

You Must Exercise Saving Faith

How many times have you heard some free will preacher make a plea for salvation and telling you that you must exercise faith in Christ to accept Him as savior? I am sure we all have heard it many times and will hear it many times more. There is a major problem with this theory because as we saw previously that before salvation a person is spiritually dead. A verse which completely rejects this theory is found in Galatians 5:22.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (Galatians 5:22)

Basically, we need to ask the question. Where does faith come from? Galatians 5:22 answers that plainly. Faith is a fruit of the Holy Spirit and therefore is not given until a person becomes saved. Remember John 1:12? *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: (John 1:12)* One can become a child of God, only if they believe on His name. Now the words "faith" and "believing" are related in the Greek. Faith is the noun and believing is the verb. For one to believe in Christ, they must have faith to believe. Belief is built on faith because faith is the foundation of belief. However, one does not receive faith until one has already become saved allowing them to believe on Christ. So the free willer has another dilemma in that faith is given after salvation as we saw in Galatians 5:22. *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. (Rom 8:9)* What is Romans 8:9 reminding us of? The main thesis is that if a person does not have the Holy Spirit, they are not of Christ, which means they are still unsaved and in the kingdom of Satan. If a person is still unsaved, they cannot exercise "saving faith" simply because they do not have any faith at all. The only way they can have faith, is if the Holy Spirit indwells them and that means they are saved. So the order is simple. Salvation first - Faith second - Believing third. Once again we see that a dead man does not initiate salvation, God does.

Lamb's Book of Life

On 4/1/11 I was listening to Dr. Charles Stanley who stated that if you accept Christ then your name will be entered in the Lamb's Book of Life. He is not the only one who teaches this as all free will proponents teach it. They believe that once you accept Christ, your name is then written in the Lamb's Book of Life at the moment you accept. The following two verses refute that teaching.

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8)

The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (Revelation 17:8)

Notice what it says in these two verses concerning the Lamb's Book of Life. It states plainly that the names of all those whom God plans to save were written in it before the foundation of the world. This means that before the world was created, God already had chosen out a people to save and named them in the Lamb's Book of Life. To those who believe in free will, where were you when the Lamb's Book of Life was written? You were not yet created which means you could not accept anything. The Lamb's Book of Life was completed before Adam and Eve and is not an ongoing

journal.

You Must Repent of Your Sins

Probably we have all heard this ones especially if we have listened to Billy Graham. When he made the altar call, he stated that the first thing a person must do is repent of their sins. Keep in mind what we have learned so far that man is spiritually dead. Repentance is one of those things which falls under spiritual renewal. Just think for a moment, a person is out there sinning for 20, 30, 40 years and all of a sudden he is going to repent of his sins. He may get caught up in the moment and say that he will repent but can he? The answer is absolutely no! No one in an unsaved state can ever repent of their sins because they have no strength to do it. There is such a thing as carnal repentance where someone commits an act and hurts someone and then repents of it and will never do it again. Or someone may go to an Alcoholic Rehabilitation Center to try and give up drinking. This is not the kind of repentance which is associated with salvation. Why? The Alcoholic may come out of the Center without a desire to drink, but he will still have a desire to commit other sins because he is still dead in sins. So true repentance does not take place.

For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. (2 Corinthians 7:10)

In 2 Corinthians 7:10, we read about two contrasting views of repentance. We will look at the second one first. The second type of repentance is the worldly type which basically is described as “whoops I got caught.” Worldly repentance may bring a few tears but it is not a genuine repentance which leads to salvation because this type of repentance is man-centered. We see this all the time as someone commits a crime and then goes to court and cries, in hopes the judge will be lenient with them. So their repentance is not to salvation but is for their own selfish benefit. This is why it leads to death because it remains man-centered and for manipulation. The first type of repentance is the godly repentance that pertains to salvation, then he states that it is not to be repented of. This means that when a person is truly saved, they can never go back to being unsaved. The word “repentance” in the Greek carries with it the idea of a “change of mind.” The true believer goes from a state of totally carnal thinking and is given a change of mind by means of salvation. *For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Corinthians 2:16)* The true believer has the mind of Christ which means they have a renewed mind from spiritual death. *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. (Romans 12:2)*

Now the question remains, can an unsaved man repent of his sins? The answer is two-fold and given to us in the following verse. *In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; (2 Timothy 2:25)* 2 Timothy 2:25 teaches us that it is God who gives repentance. So the answer to our question is that a person can repent of their sins only if God grants it and the second answer is that a person cannot repent of their sins on their own. Repentance like faith is given to the believer at the moment of salvation because it is at that time we receive the mind of Christ. The unbeliever still has a mind which goes along with the world system and it is only when we become saved, is when we start seeing what we are doing is sin, because we have the change of mind and now see things differently.

Whosoever...

There is one word which the free willer likes to throw around and that is “whosoever.” This is where I wish they would take a few moments and investigate the word as used in the Scriptures. It is the

Greek word “pas” which is used many times in the New Testament but we will look at one verse which is a representative verse using “whosoever.”

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)

John 3:16 has been used and misused probably more than any other verse in the Bible. This verse is used as a capstone for those who tout free will but the word “whosoever” does not mean that anyone at any time according to their will can become saved. That word “whosoever” carries with it the meaning of “everyone or all.” It means those whom God has qualified to hear the Gospel and saves them by giving them faith to believe in Jesus and this happens to everyone who God saves. Man is spiritually dead and needs to be raised from the dead and that can only happen when God makes the first move, and that is salvation. We receive salvation before we can believe. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (Galatians 5:22)* As we previously saw, a fruit of the Holy Spirit is faith and only those who are saved will receive the Holy Spirit. When we are saved, we are given faith, and then we have the ability to believe. So verse 16 is a declaration that those who are the Elect of God will never perish but have everlasting life. It is not an offer of the Gospel because there is no such thing in Scripture. God applies salvation to the Elect. I know because I did not ask for salvation before I was saved. I was the Elect of God and therefore He applied grace to my life and I became saved.

And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. (Revelation 21:6)

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. (Revelation 22:17)

Here we have two verses which are very close in meaning as they both speak of the water of life freely. In 22:17, we read “whosoever will” take the water of life freely. Remember now the spiritual condition of man before salvation, they are spiritually dead and incapable of making a spiritual decision. When we walked in darkness, we did not believe we needed a Savior especially if we thought we were good. We were not thirsty for the true Gospel, in fact, being dead in sins we were at war with God because we were members of the kingdom of Satan. It was only when our spiritual eyes were opened is when we thirsted for the water of life. The water of life is the Gospel which when applied to a person, brings eternal life in Christ. Another key in Rev. 22:17, is the word “heareth” which does not only mean physically hearing, but it means hearing with understanding. *And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? (Luke 24:32)* Only those who are saved are capable of hearing with understanding. Just as Jesus opened the spiritual ears of the disciples on the Road to Emmaus in Luke 24, He opens the ears of the “whosoever” He saves to allow them to understand the Gospel.

Sinner's Prayer

Many who believe in free will state that saying a sinner's prayer somehow initiates salvation. That is not true because that would mean salvation by works and it is only by grace. The ones who are truly saved may say a sinner's prayer at the moment of salvation but that is in response to salvation and not for salvation. Remember we have openly read that a person is spiritually dead and incapable of initiating salvation. Many who say those prayers remain unsaved and it is deceitful for some preacher to claim that if someone says a sinner's prayer, that means they are saved. Prayer is a result of salvation whereby we communicate with our heavenly Father. *But your iniquities have*

separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. (Isaiah 59:2) Just as God did not hear the prayers of the sinning nation of Judah, He does not hear the prayer of any He has not saved. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24)

Samaria was surrounded by many pagan nations for many years and those pagan nations all had some type of physical representations of their false god, of course, which were all idols. Some were Dagon, Milcom, and Baal. The true God is a spirit and those that worship Him, must do it according to Spirit. This means that a spiritually dead person, the unsaved, cannot truly worship God nor can they have a true prayer life, because they are dead. Those who are born again are indwelt by the Holy Spirit who makes us alive unto God and teaches us the truth about God and as we come into more and more truth about God from the Scriptures, we continually worship Him as our understanding of God grows.

Draw

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) The word “draw” in John 6:44 carries with it the meaning of “drag or force.” The fact is clear that the sinner, which the Christian used to be, is spiritually dead and loves their sin. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (John 3:19) Since man is dead in sins, there is no way that they can come to Christ, and this verse shows us that no man is able or has the power to come to Christ of their own volition. The way that a person comes to Christ is that the Father must draw or literally drag them. Since they are in a state of spiritual death, all they know is sin and this world. God has to take them and resurrect their souls, grant them spiritual ears and eyes, place the Holy Spirit in them, thus giving them salvation. God then takes them and transfers them from the kingdom of Satan to the Kingdom of God. How could anyone believe that a free will can accomplish all that? Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: {13} Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: (Colossians 1:12-13) Colossians 1:12-13 speaks about God the Father qualifying us to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints and then translating us from darkness to the Kingdom of God. So this verse completely squelches the false notion of free will because we see that it is the Father who does the work of salvation in the life of the believer. Those who claim that they can save themselves by their own will are basically stating that they have as much strength and authority as the Father. Think about it.

Summary

I have heard free will preachers claim to their congregations that “it is your choice.” Based upon what we have looked at in this short study, there is no way that it is our choice. This means that Christ died indiscriminately and that is not what the Bible teaches. He died for the Elect which was named before the foundation of the world. This idea that Christ died for everybody in the world is foreign to the Scriptures. What we have also found out is that neither God nor man is the beggar in salvation. God does not beg because He applies salvation to those He named before the foundation of the world. The unbeliever who is predestined to be a believer does not come of his own volition but needs to be forced or dragged, revealing how deep in sin we really are. Free will in salvation does not exist. God named before the foundation of the world those He was going to save and the reason that we go into all the world with the Gospel is because we do not know who the Elect of God are because He calls them “whosoever” and does not name them. If you believe in free will, you do not have any biblical basis for that view. It is held in pride and arrogance, not truth. The Bible nowhere states that man has a choice in salvation. God is not begging and you and you are not sovereign as to whether you are going to accept Him. The fact is that he accepts us! Jonah

had it right *But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD. (Jonah 2:9)*

Repentance: The Requirement for or the Results of Salvation!

Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; (1 Kings 8:47)

Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? (Jonah 3:9)

And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. (Matthew 3:2)

But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. (Matthew 9:13)

He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. (Matthew 21:29)

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. (Romans 11:29)

When doing a study on a word like "repent" it is necessary to understand what that word means. In the Bible one English word can be translated out of several Hebrew and/or Greek words. That is the case with the biblical word "repent" and it behooves us to understand the word so we may be able to grasp the true biblical meaning. In other words, we want to make sure we are using the word the way God meant it to be used.

Let us look briefly at the words for "repent" used in the above verses.

1 Kings 8:47 - The Hebrew Word is "shawb" which means to turn back.

Jonah 3:9 - The Hebrew Word is "nawkham" which carries with the idea of sighing, or sorrow or pity.

Matthew 3:2 - The Greek word is "metanoeo" means "to change one's mind or be converted."

Matthew 9:13 - The Greek word is "metanoia" which means "a change of mind or a turning about."

Matthew 21:29 - The Greek word is "metamelomai" which means "regret, feel sorry for."

Romans 11:29 - The Greek word is "ametameletos" which means "not to be taken back or regretted."

If you notice every Greek word undergirding the English word repentance has in it the preposition "meta." According to Vine's the root word "meta" really means mid or middle and meta goes with whatever case it is attached to. It can mean "with, after, behind or among." When used with the words above it brings to the surface a meaning of change and that is the focus of this study. The major question involved with repentance is, does man effect the change or is he changed as a result of salvation?

We have all heard famous evangelists, when giving their invitation, call for repentance by the seeker. Billy Graham makes repentance the first on his list of requirements for salvation but he is not the only one, many preachers seem to make it part of their list when doing an invitation. Is it

wrong to call for repentance? The answer is no but in the case of asking a person to repent before salvation, it reverses the order. When repentance is called for prior to salvation, it is classified as a work for salvation. When repentance takes place after salvation it is a result of salvation. A vast difference!

One good example in Scripture which shows the correct order that salvation comes before repentance is the Thessalonians. Paul is commending them for their tremendous growth in the gospel and their outward showing of their true salvation by doing one of the most dangerous works of all, especially in ancient times.

Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. (1 Thessalonians 1:4)

For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; (1 Thessalonians 1:9)

Notice the order here. Paul speaks that they are elect of God and as a result the true works follow, namely, they turned from idols to God. I am not speaking in terms of order of verses but in terms of which came first. Salvation or repentance (the turning around or change of mind)? The next question which must be answered is, when was salvation initiated and then imputed to the individual?

The answer to this question is quite simple in that God gives five verses attesting to the fact that salvation comes first. How first does it come? How about from before the foundation of the world! If a person had to repent before they received salvation, this means they would have had to repent before they were created.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: (Matthew 25:34)

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: (Ephesians 1:4)

For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. (Hebrews 4:3)

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8)

The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (Revelation 17:8)

These five verses teach us some forthright principles concerning the salvation of the Elect of God. Let's summarize them: The Kingdom was prepared, we were chosen, the works of Christ, and we were written in the Lamb's Book of Life all from the foundation of the world. With God revealing this aspect of His salvation program, those who teach repentance as a pre-condition or requirement for salvation do err greatly as they are placing an unreachable goal on an unbeliever. So then let us raise another question. If God then saves first, then how does one repent since it is a biblical

principle. The answer to that question is found in 2 Timothy 2:23-25:

But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. {24} And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, {25} In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; (2 Timothy 2:23-25)

Here in no ambiguous terms God tells us that He is the one who grants repentance and man does not have the ability to repent unless salvation takes place first. Therefore repentance is a result of salvation not a requirement. When you were an unbeliever, how much concern did you have for the things of God? When you sinned, were you worried about the consequences you would face or did you believe there were any?

If we are honest we will answer by saying that we did not concern ourselves with the things of God and didn't worry about the consequences. Why is that? I believe God gives us an understanding in two verses of why the unregenerate mind cannot comprehend the things of God:

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (2 Corinthians 4:4)

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

[Note: Psychologists and Psychiatrists think they know the mind] The reason people cannot repent of their own "free will" is because their minds are blinded, deceitful, and desperately wicked. If you notice in the Scriptures, God speaks to believers about repenting of evil deeds and sins, but never unbelievers. Instead, he warns and judges them. As you go through the New Testament, note how many admonitions there are for Godly and holy living. Are these admonitions aimed at the unbeliever or believer? Only the believer.

Can an unbeliever repent of a sin in their life? Yes, they can, but that repentance is of a different nature. Let's say a person is a drunk for 10 years and then goes into a rehabilitation program at a hospital and never drinks again. Have they had repentance unto salvation or a moral repentance? It is a moral repentance which is good for society in that the sober person will no longer be a danger on the highway. Has this repentance won any favor with God in fulfilling a requirement for salvation? The answer is no, because that person is still unregenerate which means they are still under the wrath of God and even though they are sober now, they will still stand before God and give account for those 10 years of drunkenness. Too many times, Christians make the mistake of believing that a moral repentance is a repentance from salvation. The two are totally different. If the person who makes a moral repentance is being given assurance they are in good standing before God because of their actions, they are being lied to and the person assuring them is guilty of lying.

We must realize that those who are not saved are under the condemnation of God, no matter what they do in the physical realm or how exemplary they live their lives. The Scripture is clear on this in two ways: Even if a person is good, they still have the wrath of God abiding on them and if they do not have the Holy Spirit, then they are not a child of God. It is the Holy Spirit who indwells us that makes us sensitive to sin and disobedience in our lives. As a Christian, have you ever sinned and felt very convicted about it? That was not your dead conscience, that was the fact you grieved the Holy Spirit. Your dead conscience couldn't care less what you do although God in His mercy has not allowed sin to develop to its fullest potential or else the human race would have destroyed itself.

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)

So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. {9} 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 8:8-9)

In ending this section let's take a look at some salvation experiences from the Bible and see what came first, salvation or repentance?

For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. {48} And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. (Acts 13:47-48)

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. {12} Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few. (Acts 17:11-12)

At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me. {14} And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. {15} And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. {16} But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; {17} Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, {18} To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. (Acts 26:13-18)

I saved the best for last!

And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. {2} And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. {3} And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. {4} And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. {5} And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. {6} And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. {7} And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. {8} And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. {9} And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. {10} For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. (Luke 19:1-10)

Acts 13:47-48 - They Believed

Acts 17:11-12 - Received the Word and Believed

Acts 26:13 -18 - Saul asked "Who art thou Lord?"

Let's take a look at Zacchaeus for a minute. Jesus saw Zacchaeus and told him that he must abide at his house. Notice what happened next, Zacchaeus was convicted of his thievery and pledged to return to those he stole from four fold and that he was going to give half of his goods to the poor. Then Jesus makes a major statement, "This day is salvation come to this house,..." Was Jesus saying that because of the conviction of Zacchaeus, he was saved by the act of confession and restitution? To understand this statement, we must see what this statement points to and it brings us right to the book of James. Let's look at James 2: *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. {18} Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. (James 2:17-18)*

Jesus is showing us that genuine salvation contains works, confession, and repentance. It is interesting to note that Jesus seeks and saves, not man. In these four examples (and there are others in Scripture) before someone believed, did they repent? No, repentance came as a result of salvation not as a prerequisite. We must teach this biblical truth in the way God gave it to us or else we will be liars.

The chronology is:

1. Salvation
2. Repentance
3. Spiritual Warfare

The Christian life always begins with salvation and every other element is built on that. We must discern between transformational and moral repentance. When we understand the distinction, our gospel understanding will grow rapidly because we will begin to see everything from God's point of view. Salvation was initiated before the foundation of the world and sometime in our life, because God named us, imputes that salvation to us and we become a child of God:

And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (John 6:39)

Safe In The Arms Of Jesus

Can We Lose Our Salvation?

And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? (John 11:26)

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. (1 John 5:13)

The words “may know” is the Greek word “oida” which means to “know fully or understand.” In this verse it seems that God is telling us that it is possible for us to know that we have eternal life. The question is, I know that I am saved but am I secure in that salvation? That is the subject matter of this section which fall under the heading of Perseverance of the Saints. It is the subject of eternal security. There are many today who feel that they can lose their salvation by sinning. Is this what the Bible teaches? Well we are going to probe the Scriptures and look at verses which teach that we cannot lose the salvation God has given us and we are also going to look at those verses which seem to teach that we can lose our salvation.

Opposing Schools of Thought

If we are going to broach this issue, we must first take a look at what the two opposing schools of thought teach. Every church follows one of these two schools of thought.

The first school of thought was initiated by John Calvin but was not published till 54 years after his death. In 1618-19 the Synod of Dort published a resumé in which they summarized the teachings of Calvin in five points. This was done in response to the five points which the followers of Jacob Arminius published in 1610. In 1609, the Netherlands were declared independent and Calvinism was declared the official state religion. The acronym for systematic Calvinism is TULIP. Here they are again.

- T - Total Depravity
- U - Unconditional Election
- L - Limited Atonement
- I - Irresistible Grace
- P - Perseverance of the Saints

Many churches have adopted the fifth point of Calvinism but have rejected the other four. There is a quaint little moniker given to those who only accept the fifth one, they are called “Whiskey Calvinists,” because they only accept the “fifth.” It is this fifth point which we are going to discuss in this article.

In contrast to the fifth point of Calvinism, a Dutch theologian by the name of Jacob Arminius had written five points which was a refutation of the teachings of John Calvin. They are discussed in a previous section and need not be repeated here. It was Arminius who was the father of modern free will and loss of salvation theology. Here is his statement which was responded to by the fifth point of Calvinism:

“Those who are saved possess sufficient grace to overcome sin and who accept Christ’s help will be kept from falling into the hands of Satan - Matthew 10:22”

Arminius rejected Calvinistic theology and the idea that man has no control in the arena of salvation. In 1609, he called for a national synod to discuss Calvinism. He had stated that he would give his views more fully. Shortly after, he was stricken with an ailment and died in the same year. The Synod of Dort was called in 1618 and the views of Arminius were rejected, yet this school of thought was embraced by many theologians such as John Wesley. Today those churches that embrace Arminianism are known as “free will” churches. The idea that a person can lose their salvation has caused great consternation in the church and has led many Christians to adopt a system of works to maintain their salvation. This, of course, is nowhere taught in the Scriptures. Works are the result of salvation and not for the keeping of it, or else Christians in nursing homes and those who are sickly who cannot do any works, have lost their salvation. Now, we have gleaned what the theologians believe and teach, now let us see what the Scriptures teach on Eternal Security.

John 6:37-39 & 2 Peter 3:9

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. {38} For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. {39} And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (John 6:37-39)

Here are some verses which plainly teach that the Lord Jesus will not lose one person plus He will not cast any out. Notice that in verse 37, there is no exception clause. Jesus states that He will cast none of His true children out because He is the one who blood bought them. He doesn’t say that if you do a certain sin or a number of sins, then you get thrown out. He will not cast out nor will He lose one soul.

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)

This verse has been misused by all in the free will camp that it is God’s will that no one should perish. It is used with the understanding that God doesn’t want anyone going to hell and that is why a person needs to accept Christ. This verse is not speaking about a general call to mankind but is speaking about the elect of God. It is God’s will that none of those He has chosen before the foundation of the world will perish. If God names a person to salvation, during their lifetime, God will intervene and save them. This is God’s will, that none of His chosen will perish. This is why those who are truly saved will never be cast out or lost, because God’s will for their lives is eternal salvation.

John 10:28

And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. (John 10:28)

This verse tells us that we have eternal life. The term “eternal life” is found 30 times in the New Testament. If the believer has eternal life, and we shall never perish, then how can some teach that we have temporary life in Christ? It is a wrong assumption on the part of many who feel they must work for their salvation. Eternal life begins at the moment a person becomes truly saved and not at the moment of death. What looks like a person losing their salvation is when a person makes some kind of verbal profession and then they quickly go back into their former lifestyle, having never been

truly regenerated. So those who believe that a person can lose their salvation looks at this person and thinks they have living proof of that doctrine. The truth is, if a person never becomes saved, they cannot live the regenerated lifestyle. This verse also tells us that Jesus gives eternal life, that it is not something that we work for. No one shall pluck or take us out of the hand of the Lord Jesus either. This also means WE cannot pluck ourselves out of His hand. Once we are given eternal life, there are no breaches in it nor any way to lose it.

John 13:1

Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. (John 13:1)

In this verse we are reminded that Jesus loves His own. He is not saying that He loves everyone in the world but that He loves His own and He loves them unto the end. Whenever we see God or Jesus loving someone, it is always a synonym for salvation. The love of Christ for the believer continues into the new Heaven and the new Earth. There is not one passage in Scripture where it teaches that God loves the unbeliever. On the contrary, He hates the workers of iniquity. *The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. (Psalm 5:5)* This verse is avoided by those who teach the universal love of God for all mankind. So when we compare the two Scriptures, we see that there is love for the believer but an abhorrence of the unbeliever. If a person could lose their salvation by sinning, then Jesus would not be able to love them to the end, then He would only be able to love them till their next sin. This is not taught anywhere in Scripture.

John 17:6, 9-10, 20

I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. (John 17:6)

I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. {10} And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. (John 17:9-10)

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; (John 17:20)

These particular verses confirm what was taught in John 6:37-39. God the Father draws people to the Lord Jesus Christ and then they become saved. We also see that Jesus is praying for those that are His and He is not praying for the unbelievers. The Lord Jesus Christ is not glorified in the unbeliever but only in the believer. Jesus prays for the disciples plus He also includes those that will be saved through their words which we have written in the Bible.

Romans 8:38-39

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, {39} Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

These are some of the most powerful verses in Scripture which teach that a believer can never be separated from God. This means that no matter what happens to the believer, they can never be separated nor lose their salvation. The love of God is a synonym for salvation as we have previously seen.

Romans 11:29

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. (Romans 11:29)

The term “without repentance” means “irrevocable.” When God saves someone that calling and gift of salvation to that believer is not revocable. That is because God is only saving those whom He named before the foundation of the world. This is why salvation cannot be revoked. As stated previously salvation is applied only to those whom God has chosen and salvation is not an “offer” to the world. The following three verses teach this truth very plainly.

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Revelation 13:8)

The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. (Revelation 17:8)

For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. (Hebrews 4:3)

For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back? (Isaiah 14:27)

Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it? (Isaiah 43:13)

Here are two verses from Isaiah which plainly teach that whatever God sets out to do, He will accomplish it and no one can thwart His plans. When He speaks of being delivered out of His hands, it means that nothing can be taken from Him. We saw this principle taught in John 6:37-39 that the Lord Jesus will lose no one. In Isaiah 43:13, “who shall let it” may be understood as “who can turn it back.” If God saves a person, then who, including that person that God saved, has the power to reverse God’s work? I don’t know anyone powerful enough to do that, do you? Certainly sin cannot hold more power than God. *Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: (Romans 5:20)* So here we see that not even sin has the power to fracture Grace. Knowing this, how can a person believe that they can lose their salvation if they sin? They can believe it only through biblical ignorance or willful evasion of the truth.

Ephesians 2:8-9

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

Here are probably two of the most used, yet misunderstood verses. Those who teach that you must accept Christ as Savior misuse the verse, although maybe not intentionally. There are many Pastors and Theologians who know that salvation is by grace alone yet attach a work to it. That work being a person having to take an action by accepting Christ. Even though it does not look like a work, yet in God’s sight, it is adding to the salvation plan. Any addition of even the most minute work, makes it an adulterated grace. As we have previously seen that God applies the Grace of Salvation to those He has predestined and there is no work on the part of the individual receiving salvation. This means that if a person received salvation without the addition of any work, then

there is no work that anyone can do to lose it. Sin is a work of evil, but nevertheless it is a work. Therefore since it is impossible to work for salvation, it is also impossible to lose salvation by any sinful work.

Ephesians 4:30

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

This verse teaches us that the believer is sealed unto the day of redemption which will either be the return of the Lord or the believer's home going. The term grieve carries with it the meaning of "sorrow." We are being admonished to refrain from sin because sin grieves the Holy Spirit. If you notice, the Holy Spirit is grieved when we sin but the Scripture does not say that He will leave us if we sin. This is because we are eternally sealed by the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit stays with us during a time of sin and does not leave us, that means we cannot lose our salvation, since He is still dwelling in us. Only those without the Holy Spirit are unsaved. *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)*

Colossians 3:3

For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. (Colossians 3:3)

This verse teaches us that the believer has died and their life is now hidden in Christ. The believer's identity is with the Lord Jesus Christ. The words "is hid" is the Greek word "krupto" which carries with it the meaning of "kept secret and kept safe." So this verse is telling us that we are kept safe and secret in the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember the passages of John 6:37-39 where Jesus stated that He will lose none? Now we know why, because our eternal lives are kept safe and secret with the Lord Jesus Christ. How is it possible for sin to be able to break that safekeeping by eternal God Himself? It is impossible.

Hebrews 8:12 & 10:17; Isaiah 43:25; Jeremiah 31:34

For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. (Hebrews 8:12)

And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. (Hebrews 10:17)

I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. (Isaiah 43:25)

And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jeremiah 31:34)

These four verses all carry with them the same theme. When God forgives a person of their sins, He has elected to forget those sins. Nowhere in Scripture is it written that God chooses to remember our sins thus causing a loss of salvation. When God removes our sins, He annihilates them. In other words, they can never be held against us.

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; {14} Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

(Colossians 2:13-14)

Notice in these verses we read that ALL trespasses have been forgiven, God's perfect and holy law was satisfied (handwriting of ordinances) which means there will be no more penalty for sins committed by a believer. Some will object by asking, "what about sins committed in the future?" When Colossians 2:13-14 was written, which was about 60-64 AD, where were you? You were not scheduled to be born for another 19 centuries. This would mean that all the sins you were forgiven for, were not even committed yet. Those sins that you are yet to commit in the future, have all been atoned for by Christ. When God applied Grace to you, it carried the full effect of the atonement of Christ, which means every sin you have committed or will commit has been blotted out. You don't have a sin to your name before God. *And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God. (Revelation 14:5)* If you still cling to the belief that you can lose your salvation, then you are also under the belief that the atonement of Christ was insufficient, thereby, forcing you to save yourself. The idea of insufficient atonement is a blasphemy against Christ and God's salvation plan. To say that the sinless Christ can't save you but your sinful works can, is the height of evil arrogance.

Hebrews 10:12-14

But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; {13} From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. {14} For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. (Hebrews 10:12-14)

In these verses we read that the atonement of Christ perfected those who are sanctified. The term sanctified is another synonym for salvation. In Scripture, we only read of God sanctifying the believer. The Greek word which underlies "sanctified" is the same word for "holy." Never does God refer to an unbeliever as holy. The word "perfected" means to "make perfect, complete." This is what the Lord Jesus Christ did for the believer. We are now completed in Christ. The one sacrifice has perfected the believer forever. That eternal sanctification and completeness begins at the moment a person becomes saved and continues right into eternity. If a person could lose their salvation, that would mean they would lose their holiness but this verse teaches that the perfecting is forever and not a temporary, intermittent time period.

1 Peter 1:4

To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, (1 Peter 1:4)

In this verse we read that a place is reserved for the believer in Heaven. The word "reserved" carries with it the meaning of "preserved." Now if a believer could lose their salvation, why would God promise His children that there is a place reserved for them in Heaven? If salvation was in the hands of man, then God would be in Heaven waiting to see if a person makes it. He would not be able to promise that a place is reserved for anyone if they can lose their salvation for any reason. This verse is an assurance that since the Lord Jesus Christ atoned for the sins of His people, they are assured a place in Heaven.

1 Peter 1:5

Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:5)

This verse teaches us that the believer is not on their own exercising their spiritual abilities. We learn that God "keeps" His children through His power. The word "kept" carries with it the meaning

of “guarded” and is in the present tense. So here we have God guarding His children through His power. What power on earth is capable of superseding the power of God? I know of none. Sin can never be stronger than the power of God!

Now What about those verses which seem to indicate we can lose our salvation?

It seems that some Christians really like the idea of losing their salvation, so they have taken some verses and built an entire doctrine around them as their “proof texts” that they can lose their salvation. We are going to look at four sets of verses which are the main apologetic for the loss of salvation theory.

Hebrews 6:4-6

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, {5} And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, {6} If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. (Hebrews 6:4-6)

The three verses seem to be the leading proof texts for those who believe a person can lose their salvation. For us to gain a better understanding of these verses, I am going to break these three verses down into parts and we will look at each section individually to see if these verses are actually speaking of salvation or of something else.

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened

The word “impossible” carries with it the meaning of “powerless, weak, or impossible” as it is translated “impossible” in other verses such as Matthew 19:26. The word “enlightened” simply means “give light to or bring to light.” When we look at this sentence instantly two things come to mind:

When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? {26} But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. (Matthew 19:25-26)

The first term deals with the subject of salvation. In the Hebrews verse we see that it is impossible for a person to come to Christ on their own. Man in his unsaved state is powerless or weak to initiate such a salvation. This is the underlying meaning as we will see it unfold in the next few sections. Salvation is impossible with man but with God salvation is possible.

The second term deals with a person being enlightened. When the gospel is preached, the truths of it are brought to light by someone who is saved. The truths of Scripture are always hidden to the unbeliever. So unsaved man sits in church or listens to the radio in his car and hears the gospel proclaimed. The unsaved man now hears with his ears which means he is being enlightened to the truths such as hell, heaven, or whatever the subject matter may be. The teacher or preacher is enlightening his hearers but he is not saving his hearers.

and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost

This section of Scripture deals with the dissemination of the true Gospel. Let us look at two words in this section: “Tasted” carries with it the meaning of “eat, enjoy or experience.” “Partakers” carries with it the meaning of “sharing or participating.”

The first term deals with the “religious affection” an unsaved person might feel when they are in a spiritual setting. They are enjoying or experiencing the spiritual atmosphere. Many unbelievers sit in churches every Sunday and hear the gospel, they may even take communion, and that may give them a good feeling as they experience the heavenly peace and learn of Christ who is the Heavenly Gift of the Father.

The second term deals with sharing or participating in the Holy Spirit. This term does not mean “indwelling.” The sharing or participating in the Holy Spirit may be those unbelievers who are involved with believers on some type of project in their church. It may be clothing the homeless or volunteering time to help in another capacity. The unbeliever can partake in spiritual works without being regenerate. They can partake in the fruits of the Spirit.

And have tasted the good word of God

The word “tasted” is the same word used in verse 4. Here we have a setting where the word of God is preached and those under its hearing are benefiting from it. The unbeliever may feel good while hearing the truth being expounded. They will not understand everything that is being taught, but they are tasting or enjoying the teaching in that spiritual setting. The word “word” actually carries with it the meaning of “a thing spoken.”

and the powers of the world to come

When a person sits in church or gathers with saved people, they are, in essence, experiencing a little bit of heaven. The true believers, on the last day, will be taken directly to heaven. The congregation that the unbeliever is sitting in, represents the entire body of believers worldwide. So they are experiencing the heavenly body of Christ on Earth that will someday live gloriously in Heaven.

If they shall fall away

This phrase could be translated “and having fallen away.” It is an Aorist tense which means the action happened in the past and continues for an undetermined amount of time. This word is used once in the New Testament and it carries with it the meaning of willful and deliberate. The word “parapipto” also means to “commit apostasy.” These people are falling away not because they have fallen into sin, but because they are still conscious sinners. How many unbelievers go to church on Sunday morning, and continue in their sins right after they leave church? All of them, because if they have not been regenerated by God, then they are still fallen away or unsaved.

to renew them again unto repentance

The term “renew” carries with it the meaning of “restoring to a former condition.” This is the only time this word is used in the New Testament. The group in view here are unbelievers. The term “repentance” is only used in connection with those who are saved. Repentance is something that is done as a result of salvation and not prior to salvation. Here we are reading that it is impossible to renew them to repentance. Even those who believe the Arminian error believe a person can get their salvation back. Those who proclaim the Doctrines of Grace believe you cannot even lose your salvation. So what we have in view is that those who are in conscious sin cannot come into salvation by themselves through repentance, unless God saves them first. Until then, when the unbeliever is under the hearing of the gospel and that proclamation is finished, they are then returned from experiencing spiritual things to their former condition which is sin. The difference is when they were in church, they were religious sinners. Outside of the hearing of the gospel, they are just plain unregenerate sinners. One other thing, if they are not God’s elect, then they can never come into salvation.

seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

Here is the unbeliever's only respect for Jesus. If they could crucify Him again and put Him to open shame again, they would. The unbeliever does not show any reverence or respect for the Lord Jesus instead they show contempt. When they sit in church and hear the hymns being sung or the organ being played, they experience a spiritual euphoria. When the preacher begins to expound the Scriptures and teaches that Christ wants total commitment even unto death, that is when unbelief draws the line. When Jesus is taught that he loves everyone that doctrine is palatable to the unbeliever. When Jesus is being taught that He does not love everyone, and everyone outside of salvation is going to hell, then that is where unbelief draws the line. This closing section seals the fact that these three verses are not dealing with those who have lost their salvation, but for those who are still living in an unregenerate state.

There is one more verse which must be added to this which teaches us plainly that this section deals only with unbelievers. Let us look at verse 9:

But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. (Hebrews 6:9)

The writer to the Hebrews is making it clear that he was addressing the unbelievers in the previous section as he states in verse 9, that "we are persuaded better things of you." He is showing the distinction between the two groups. The group in verse 9 is associated with the things that accompany salvation and the group in verses 4-6 are associated with the things that accompany "religious unbelief."

As we looked at these passages, there was absolutely no intimation that salvation was in view. The Holy Spirit was not indwelling these people but the people were partaking. This was an action on their part, not God's, which means that salvation could not happen to this group unless God initiated it. The group in view was definitely one of unbelieving apostates. The language of those verses do not indicate in the least, that anyone in view was ever previously saved.

Hebrews 10:26-27

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, {27} But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. (Hebrews 10:26-27)

These verses are not teaching a loss of salvation. These verses are teaching that after a person hears the Gospel, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way to Heaven. If a person rejects this method of salvation, there is no other way for them to get to Heaven. We see this happening all around us. Cults and Eastern religions have their own ways of reaching Heaven. None of them acknowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only way and because of this rejection, there is no sacrifice for their sins, no atonement, which means they will be judged on the last day and will have to pay for their own sins with an eternity in hell. Verse 26 speaks of receiving "the knowledge of the truth" and not actual salvation. Remember in the previous set of verses, we read that the sinners who are not elect will also hear the gospel. They are receiving the knowledge of the truth but are rejecting it because they are dead in their sins and a dead man cannot regenerate himself nor understand spiritual truth.

So when we look at these two verses we are not dealing with the loss of applied salvation because that cannot happen. Salvation is not mere knowledge but a transformation of the sinner to Saint.

Nowhere in the Bible do we ever read of a Saint becoming a sinner, it is always the opposite. We go from rags to riches, never riches to rags. This is the inheritance of the Saints.

Hebrews 10:38-39

Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. {39} But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. (Hebrews 10:38-39)

In these verses, we come across a principle for living the Christian life which we find back in the Old Testament. *Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith. (Habakkuk 2:4)* The term “just” is another synonym for the redeemed or the Christian. The Habakkuk passage teaches us that we live by the faith of Christ. It is His faith that we live by. This is how the Christian can have faith because it is drawn from Christ’s faith.

Next the writer speaks of “drawing back.” This term carries with it the meaning of “withdraw or turn back.” When we looked at some of the verses which teach that we are hidden with God in Christ and that we are safe and secure in Christ plus we saw that sin does not have the power to overtake Grace, then this would give substantiation to the fact that the Christian cannot walk out of salvation because it is not their power holding them in a state of salvation but the power of God is keeping them.

Notice in verse 39, we have a similar situation as we did in Hebrews 6. The writer is making a clear distinction that he is speaking to two different groups of people. Verse 39 makes it clear that “we,” which is speaking of the Christians, are not of the groups which turns back to perdition. We are those who believe unto salvation. The dichotomy is clear. There are two groups of people in view in these verses: The unbelievers and the believers. That is how these verses are to be understood. Anything beyond this is neglecting the truth.

Galatians 5:4

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. (Galatians 5:4)

This is a contrast verse concerning the Law versus Grace. In this particular verse we are seeing that if a person seeks to be justified by the Law, then they are fallen from Grace. The term “fallen” carries with it the meaning of “fall off or from, drop away.” A person cannot be justified by the Law. If a person tries to work their way to heaven by keeping the Law, then the sacrifice of Christ is of no effect because the person is attempting their own atonement. This person has become estranged from Grace because they are attempting to keep the Law. This verse also has nothing to do with loss of salvation. It basically deals with a person attempting to become saved by avoiding the Grace of the Cross and embracing the letter of the Law.

Final Thoughts

We have come a long way and we have gleaned from many Scriptures which both sides of the argument use, that a truly saved person cannot lose their salvation. The Bible must be the only authority on such a subject. Those who teach that a person can lose their salvation have not done their homework in the Bible but have adopted an emotional approach to Scripture. This will only lead to disastrous hermeneutics resulting in wrong teachings. We also saw in the two sets of verses that there were always two groups of people being addressed - the believers and unbelievers. This always seems to be neglected when these verses are broached.

Whenever anyone proclaims the false belief that one can lose their salvation, they are in essence, removing the Sovereign God from His throne and replacing Him with sovereign man. If man has the ability to lose and re-gain his salvation, then that makes man the initiator of salvation and God the receptor, since He has to wait around for the person to return on their own power. Isn't it wonderful that that belief is pure fantasy as we have found that God has promised that He will not lose one of His children. If you proclaim He can, then you are accusing God of being a liar. That is a position I do not want to be in.

Here is a replay as I close. I have been to funerals of those who followed the Arminian belief of loss of salvation. I think it is interesting to note, that not one of them went to hell according to the preacher. Could it be that the Arminians really believe in eternal security? Loss of salvation theory offers no one hope, just as if a person dies in unbelief, but the eternal security of God does offer hope, because the Bible says that God has reserved us a place in Heaven. Loss of salvation theory is normally adopted by those who are young and healthy but when their body starts failing, they begin to cling to the reserved home in Heaven.

There is one bad consequence, among many, in the Arminian loss of salvation theory. If a person adapts to it when they are young, they will spend their whole life losing and regaining their salvation. They will never grow in the Lord and it will hinder their usefulness for the Kingdom of God. Those who believe in the biblical doctrine of eternal security are secure in the fact that they are saved and are resting in Calvary. They can build upon their salvation and be useful for the Kingdom of God. Those who believe they can lose their salvation with every sin, will lose it 50 times a day and how can you build on an intermittent salvation? You can't! This doctrine of loss of salvation is a stain on the character of God and should be refuted by every redeemed child of God because it has no biblical basis as we have discovered.

“As grace is first from God, so it is continually from him, as much as light is all day long from the sun, as well as at first dawn or at sun-rising.”

-Jonathan Edwards

Verses from the Free Will Bible

As a Bible teacher for over 30 years, I was always under the belief that when one teaches the Bible they teach what the Bible says and not what we want it to say. I am very perplexed over many Bible teachers that teach the sovereignty of God, yet in the next breath they bring it right back to man being in control of their salvation. So I decided to investigate the reason for their instant departure. It is not always appeasing the hearers so they continue with their prideful giving but it has to do with the Bible they use. Many of these teachings we have looked at before but it never hurts to re-strengthen our beliefs. Now I am going to take ten verses from the Free Will Bible Version (FWBV) and see what the free will proponents are actually seeing versus what the real Bible states. This is important because if you are seeing something different than what the Bible states, then it follows that you will teach from that same perspective.

Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:5)

Who are kept by the power of man through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:5, FWBV)

In 1 Peter 1:5, we read that the believer is kept by the power of God and for those who believe in eternal security this verse is a great comfort because God's power is infinite and therefore keeps the believer throughout their entire life never having to worry that anything could actually cause a loss of salvation. In the FWBV we read that the believer is kept by the power of man and we know that man is very fickle, this means that he has the ability to lose his salvation based upon the sinful nature of man. He has nothing to hold him except himself.

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. (John 6:37)

All that the Father giveth me may come to me; and him that cometh to me I may cast out. (John 6:37, FWBV)

In John 6:37 we read that all those believers that God gives to the Lord Jesus Christ will come to Him. The Greek word for "shall come" is in the Future Tense. This means that all that the Father will give Jesus "will come" to Him. In other words, those that the Father has named before the foundation of the world will come to the Lord Jesus for salvation. The Greek text is very clear that it is not a choice. In the FWBV we read that all those that the Father gives Jesus "may" come to Him and this is based upon the belief that a person has the ability to say no based upon their free will. So it seems God calls these people but they choose to stay unsaved by their own free will.

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)

No man can come to me, except through his free will: and I will raise him up at the last day. (John 6:44, FWBV)

In John 6:44 we read that no man can come to the Lord Jesus Christ unless the Father draws them

to Him. The word “draw” in the Greek carries with it the meaning of “drag, draw, or force.” The word is in the Active Voice which means God is doing the dragging. The reason that God has to literally drag us to salvation is because man is spiritually dead and has to be raised and then dragged. In the FWBV we read that no one can come to Christ except through their free will. They have to “accept Christ.” I am still looking for that statement in the Scriptures but still cannot find it. The free willers do not take into account the fact that man is spiritually dead and in rebellion to God and that is why they must be dragged. A person must be quickened before they can believe and only God can quicken. *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)* (Ephesians 2:5)

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: {13} Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13)

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: {13} Which were born, not of blood, but of the will of the flesh, and of the will of man. (John 1:12-13, FWBV)

In John 1:12-13, we read a direct statement as to how salvation is produced in a person’s life. Verse 12 teaches us that those that receive Him are given power to become the sons of God and in verse 13 we read that salvation was not by any will of man nor any will of the flesh but it is of God. In the FWBV we find that salvation occurs only by the will of man and the will of the flesh. It is based on the belief that man has the capability of saving himself by accepting Christ according to their own will. You see they believe man has a free will and therefore can direct that will to either accept Christ or not. Better yet a good free willer would avoid verse 13 altogether.

I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. (John 17:9)

I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which accepted me; for they are thine. (John 17:9, FWBV)

In John 17:9, we read this verse in the prayer of Jesus for His disciples and for those who will believe their words. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;* (John 17:20) Many believe that in verse 9 Jesus is only praying for the twelve disciples but verse 20 puts an ax to that false belief. The words “given me” in the Greek are in the Active Voice which means God is doing the action of giving believers to the Lord Jesus Christ. In the FWBV we read that Jesus is praying only for those who accepted Him. If a person has it in their power to accept or reject Christ, then shouldn’t Jesus have been praying to those people to accept Him instead of for them? If Jesus is praying to the Father, then he is asking the Father to open the spiritual eyes of those that have been given to Him and that would mean that God would do the saving and that is not acceptable to the pride based “I can accept Christ” crowd.

Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. (1 Thessalonians 1:4)

Knowing, brethren beloved, your acceptance of God. (1 Thessalonians 1:4, FWBV)

In 1 Thessalonians 1:4 we read that the believers are knowing that that they have been elected by God for salvation. The Greek word for “election” is “ekloge” which means “divine selection or chosen.” In the FWBV we read that the believers are knowing that they have accepted God. It was

done by their free will but shouldn't they already know they have accepted the Lord?

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (Ephesians 1:5)

Having predestinated us unto the acceptance of Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of our will, (Ephesians 1:5, FWBV)

In Ephesians 1:5, we read that the believer has been predestinated unto the adoption of children by Christ according to the good pleasure of His will. Here we see the believer is adopted into the kingdom of God by the pleasure of Christ's will. The word "adoption" in the Greek carries with it the meaning of "placing as a son." We see that a child is placed according to Christ's will. In the FWBV we see that we are predestinated to accept Christ according to the pleasure of our will. It is up to us to place ourselves in the Kingdom of God and once we do, then we are considered predestinated.

I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. (John 13:18)

I speak not of you all: I know who has chosen me: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me because he didn't choose me. (John 13:18, FWBV)

In John 13:18, the Lord Jesus Christ is telling His disciples that he knows who He has chosen. He is saying this in reference to the impending betrayal by Judas. In the FWBV we read that Jesus knows everyone who has chosen Him. He tells the disciples that He knows that only 11 have accepted Him and Judas was not one of them.

So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen. (Matthew 20:16)

So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few accept me. (Matthew 20:16, FWBV)

In Matthew 20:16, we read that many are called but few are chosen. This would have to do with sending forth the Gospel whereby the Elect of God is out in the world and we evangelize the whole world so when the Elect reads the word or hears it preached, those who are chosen to salvation will respond accordingly. In the FWBV we read that the gospel call goes out and many are called but only a few accept the Lord. This is normally done after about 20 minutes of pleading and I am sure you have heard it. Anyone else? Anyone else? Anyone else? Anyone else? Ad nauseam!

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. (Acts 13:48)

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as accepted Him to eternal life believed. (Acts 13:48, FWBV)

In Acts 13:48, we read that the Gentiles heard the Gospel and glorified the word of the Lord and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. The word ordained in the Greek carries with it the meaning of "appointed, set, or determined." The true believer is appointed unto eternal life according to the Scriptures. In the FWBV we read that those who "accepted" Him to eternal life

believed. They believed by resurrecting their own soul and then believing according to their own free will.

Summary

As you can see in these ten verses, what the Bible teaches and what the free willer teaches and believes are totally different. There is no such thing as a Free Will Bible Version but the way that free will Christians interpret these ten verses, you might as well think there is. I have heard preachers teach the Sovereignty of God and in the same breath state that you have to accept Christ for salvation. Then tell me in the free will mindset, how is God sovereign? In free will, He is not but is made to be the beggar while man is made the sovereign having authority over God to accept Him or reject Him. The free willer actually thinks they have the power to reject salvation when we read that salvation is imputed to the believer without any permission. Yet, the free willer thinks they have enough power to force God to ask permission to work in their lives. That is the zenith of pride. It amazes me that the preachers read the same Bible and the same verses and completely twist the meaning to make man the sovereign. I guess it all boils down to keeping the good givers but free will tenets keep the Christians in darkness as to the truth of salvation. When one looks at John 1:12-13 and reads plainly that salvation is by the will of God and not by the will of man or the flesh, then it has to be an intentional twisting of that Scripture to make it say it is of man. In fact I have yet to hear any free will preacher connect verse 13 when they use verse 12 on an invitation. The Bible knows nothing about man having free will. Either you are a servant of righteousness or a servant of sin, there is no in between.

But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. (Romans 6:17)

Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. (Romans 6:18)

The next time your free will Bible teacher teaches these things I have listed, then ask them how they get free will out of passages that straightly teach salvation is in the hands of God and not man? It is time to start questioning these makeup artists when they make up non-existent meanings to the Scriptures! It is the question of knowing the truth versus a lie.

With Men Salvation is Impossible

When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? {26} But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. (Matthew 19:25-26)

And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? {27} And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible. (Mark 10:26-27)

And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? {27} And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. (Luke 18:26-27)

The word “impossible” is found in these three verses: Matthew 19:26; Mark 10:27; Luke 18:27. It is the Greek word “adunatos” which is also translated “impossible” 3 times in the book of Hebrews: 6:4; 6:18; 11:6 It is translated “not possible” in Hebrews 10:4. It is translated “could not do” in Romans 8:3.

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, (Hebrews 6:4)

That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: (Hebrews 6:18)

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (Romans 8:3)

I was contemplating the word “impossible” a while back. Then the Holy Spirit opened up my understanding wider on these verses. Those who hold to the Free Will belief system claim all you have to do is exercise your faith and believe and you will be saved. If that was the case, Jesus was in error because “then with men it would be possible” but the Bible states in 3 places that “with man it is impossible” but “with God salvation is possible.” This is not just another nail in the myth of free will but is equal to Jael’s Nail which took out Sisera (Judges 4:21).

Then Jesus tells them the reality of salvation in all three verses and the key to being saved. If man was left to himself, he would be unable to become saved. This is because man is spiritually dead and his entire life and understanding is tied to this earth. *Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) (Ephesians 2:5)* The word “dead” in the Greek is the word “nekrous” which means “dead or lifeless.”

The only way that a man can be saved, whether wealthy or poor, is through God who does the saving. If a rich man is one of God’s Elect, even if he is a billionaire, it will not prevent him from becoming saved because God would be doing the saving. The unsaved man has no understanding

of the Gospel and is unable to understand any aspect of it and that is why with man it is impossible because of their deadness. *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)* Only God can quicken or make a person alive by the Gospel and then comes the understanding. He does this by resurrecting the soul of the person He is saving and once that is done, then they can understand, believe, and exercise faith. The spiritually dead man can in no way raise himself up from being spiritually dead. It must be done by God just as He raised Lazarus (John 11) and the Son of the Widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-16) and the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:22-43). God performs salvation first by making the person spiritually alive as it states in Ephesians 2:4-5: *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, {5} Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)* (Ephesians 2:4-5) A spiritually dead man has no ability to quicken himself and that is why Jesus said with man it is "impossible" because only God can raise a person from being spiritually dead to spiritual life and save them. Man does not possess that power.

The Offer of the Gospel

True or False?

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

We have all been in churches where the preacher or evangelist pours out their heart in preaching the Gospel, then at the end of the service, they will make an appeal to those in attendance that the "offer of the Gospel" is open for you, and that you should come and receive Christ and become saved. In many churches, even those that tout the Reformed Doctrines of Grace will claim that the "offer of salvation" is open to all. I have heard it said that the offer is sent forth, but only God's Elect will respond to that call. This is true, for if God qualifies a person to respond to the Gospel for salvation, then they will come.

However, the question really is, "Does God send the offer of salvation to the entire world?" Is this what the Bible teaches concerning evangelism? The answer is a resounding NO! Nowhere in the Bible does God make an offer of salvation to anyone. He doesn't even offer the Gospel to His Elect! The following statement should clear up your understanding of God's call to the Elect in the world:

"The Bible teaches that the Gospel will be "preached" to the entire world but God will only apply it to the Elect."

The Bible never uses the word "offer" or "proffer" in connection with the Gospel. The word that is used in conjunction with it is "preached" or "proclaimed." Salvation through Jesus Christ is to be proclaimed throughout the world, but never is an offer to be made to accept Him or for salvation.

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be **preached** in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. (Matthew 24:14)

Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be **preached** in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her. (Matthew 26:13)

And they went out, and **preached** that men should repent. (Mark 6:12)

And they went forth, and **preached** every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen. (Mark 16:20)

And he **preached** in the synagogues of Galilee. (Luke 4:44)

Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and **preached** Christ unto them. (Acts 8:5)

And straightway he **preached** Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God. (Acts 9:20)

And when they were at Salamis, they **preached** the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister. (Acts 13:5)

And there they **preached** the gospel. (Acts 14:7)

If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was **preached to every creature which is under heaven**; whereof I Paul am made a minister; (Colossians 1:23)

The term “preached” in the New Testament is used sixty times. These ten verses are extremely representative of the entire sixty verses. Two of the words, which are used in the Greek, denote a “proclaiming” or “a bringing of good news.” These words teach us that the Gospel is preached and there is never an offer conjoined to that proclamation. Nowhere in the Scriptures do we ever find the blasphemous idea that God is begging or pleading with sinners to “accept” His Son. If God makes no offer of salvation to the non-Elect, neither should we. That is a very false and misleading method of trying to bring people into the Kingdom. I find it especially appalling by those who claim to attest to the Doctrines of Grace. We are to just preach and proclaim the Good News, and God makes the application to those that He has predestined.

This idea of the “offer of salvation” comes from the belief that spiritually dead people can regenerate themselves by their own free will unto salvation. They will be able to do that when physically dead people can raise themselves back to physical life. And it will never happen! In Scripture, any time dead people were restored back to physical life, it was God doing it. So upon reading these resurrections in Scripture, how can one believe that a spiritually dead person can raise themselves to newness of life? Spiritual resurrection must be done by an outside source, and that source is the Lord Jesus Christ.

And **I give** unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. (John 10:28)

As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that **he should give** eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. (John 17:2)

Notice what these two verses are teaching. They are very straightforward that the Lord Jesus Christ gives Eternal Life to His Children. He does not offer it to the world, but gives it to His Children. Let me reiterate. Salvation is applied to the Elect, but never offered. It is preached to the world, but never offered.

You started off this study with one of those “whosoever” verses. How does this fit in with your “no offer” belief?

First of all, it is not my belief, for my beliefs do not establish truth. The Bible establishes truth! Whenever we have heard the “offer of salvation” given, normally the “whosoever will may come” is attached to it. However, there is a problem in trying to make “whosoever” mean “free offer to all.”

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. **And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.** (Revelation 22:17)

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: {13} Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, **nor of the will of man, but of God.** (John 1:12-13)

Did you see that? The “whosoever will” is not the “will” of the man to accept Christ freely, but only an Elect person responds to the Gospel by the Will of God. Where many make their mistake is believing that “whosoever” means “anytime, by anyone.” That is not the definition of “whosoever.” In Rev 22:17, the word “whosoever” is the Greek word “thelo” which means “a desire” or “to be willing.” Who will desire the things of Salvation?

Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. {40} **And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.** (John 5:39-40)

Notice this verse says that people will not come to Christ, and this is because the unsaved person is spiritually dead and must be regenerated from the outside to the inside, and not the other way around. He is not just speaking of any unbelievers here. The Lord is speaking to those who search the Scriptures! Even the unsaved who search the Scriptures will not come to Christ, never mind the man on the street who doesn't even know the name of one of the Books of the Bible.

I am sought of them that asked not for me; **I am found of them that sought me not:** I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. (Isaiah 65:1)

Notice in Isaiah 65:1, God is saying that He is sought of those who did not seek Him. How could this be? The only way a person can seek the Lord, and we clearly saw this in John 1:13, is through the Will of God. If a person is predestined for salvation, they will hear the Gospel, because it is being applied to them.

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

The word “ordained” may also be understood as “appointed.” So those who are appointed to eternal life will believe the Gospel, because of application to their dead souls. Then when salvation is applied to those dead souls, they are regenerated unto newness of life.

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, **even so we also should walk in newness of life.** (Romans 6:4)

Your physical body stayed the same, but something happened in your soul. Before your appointed time, you were dead to the things of the Lord, but after application, you are now alive unto the things of the Lord. So now how is this group categorized?

Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, **Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.** {12} And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: **and thou shalt be called, Sought out,** A city not forsaken. (Isaiah 62:11-12)

We do not seek the Lord, but God calls us “Sought out.” Is this principle found anywhere else in Scripture?

For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, **I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.** (Ezekiel 34:11)

So we see that the spiritually dead person does not respond to any offer of the Gospel, those who become saved are those whom God has ordained to eternal life, and He applies it to their souls to regenerate them.

Now let us return to the whosoever verses and look at one more word to help us in this study.

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. (1 John 4:15)

The word “whosoever” in this verse is the Greek word “os” (hos), which carries with it the meaning of “who, which, what, or that.” In other words, this word is just saying that “whoever confesses.” It is in no way implying that an unsaved person can become saved whenever they want, based on the whosoevers. For example, if you go into a church, then whosoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God is saved. Then whosoever does not confess that Jesus is the Christ, then they are unsaved. The word “whosoever” just designates individual people and its definition is defined by its usage. Any meaning beyond that is a misuse of the text. The idea of the offer of the Gospel cannot be legitimately based upon these pronouns. I call that “Textual Prostitution,” because any time we skew a passage toward a belief we want to hold, then we are guilty of spiritual adultery. This is how false teachings are born and then multiply. In the following verse, “whosoever” is also speaking of unbelievers.

Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Whosoever** committeth sin is the servant of sin. (John 8:34)

Section Summary

As we have seen, there is no evidence in Scripture that God offers the gift of salvation to anyone. God applies it to those He plans to save. While the Gospel is preached to the whole world, it is only applied to the few. God never begs or pleads with unbelievers to accept His Son, because He already knows who He has planned to save. The only reason we take the Gospel to the ends of the earth is because we do not know who He plans to save, plus we are commanded to go forth. The “whosoever” system is absolutely invalid and has no Scriptural base for its existence. The “offer of salvation” system is absolutely invalid and has no Scriptural base for its existence. The only reason these two systems exist is because of the pride of man and the refusal to remove himself from the throne of salvation. Co-regency in the Christian life is dangerous and also has no Scriptural basis.

Final Thoughts

As we have seen that Calvinism is really not a system of beliefs but was a true biblical response to the 5 points of the teachings of Jacob Arminius. The five points of Calvinism were not published until 1618-19, 54 years after the death of Calvin. We have also seen many times over that man in his unsaved state is spiritually dead and does not have the ability to initiate salvation and we saw this biblically. We have also seen that there are many errors overlaying simple Bible passages for the purpose making man the sovereign and God the beggar. Free will is a myth and does not exist. There is no way for a spiritually dead person to activate faith because dead is dead and we researched those words. Any person can check them out. Calvinism is a biblical teaching not requiring any over justification of verses or over-explanations. It does not superimpose sinful man's teachings on the scriptures causing the twisting of scripture until it fits. Calvinism is nothing more than interpreting the scriptures according to the scriptures. *For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: (Revelation 22:18)* The warning in Revelation 22:18 is not just limited to those who have mutilated the scriptures in the modern versions but it also has to do with adding meaning to scriptures, meanings that are not there but used to make verses fit into a certain belief system. If you have the word "election" it means "election" it does not mean that God looked down the corridors of time and saw who was going to accept him. If you are or were in the military you could appreciate the following. Suppose a four star general says to you, "private, you will be my driver today" but you say I choose not accept that duty. Where do you think you would wind up? In the stockade, that is where you would wind up. The reason there are so many spurious beliefs in Christianity is because of the concept of picking and choosing what a person wants to believe along with taking clear scriptures and muddying the meaning by adding meanings which are not there. This is done in the realm of prophecy where the scriptures are bastardized to make it fit into certain belief systems. In conclusion, never be afraid to interpret the Scriptures by the Scriptures and to take the words at their intended meaning. One of the pet sayings that free willers like to throw around concerning understanding the Bible is: When the plain sense of scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense. Then when they come across a word they don't like such as predestinated or election, which make plain sense, they make all kind of spurious explanations to avoid the real meaning of the words. In other words, they violate their own teachings just like they do the teachings of scripture. I hope this study has helped you understand that Calvinism is a hated teaching simply because it expounds the truth of Scripture and does not add any of man's teachings and desires, so there is nothing to fear in holding on to the plain teachings of scripture. The bottom line is that the whole human race is dead in sin and unless God resurrects a person to salvation, they will die in their sins and face eternal damnation.

“Why is Calvinism so hated?” sets the record straight about what Calvinism is and what it is not. For too long those who profess free will are the ones who gave the erroneous descriptions about Calvinism but now this study is an apologetic for any Christian to understand that Calvinism is not an invented system of beliefs but rather is a biblical response to a very unbiblical system of beliefs known as “Arminiansim” which today would be called “The Free Will Movement.” The reality that Arminians refuse to acknowledge is that all the unsaved in this world are spiritually dead and are totally unable to initiate faith and salvation. They refuse to acknowledge that God is the one who has named those he plans to save even though it is plainly written out in Scripture. They elevate man to a superior position believing that he has the ability to command God to save them or to give God permission to work in their lives. It is the height of arrogance to believe that. This study puts the death knell to those beliefs. Many Christians are taught in their free will churches to hate Calvinism but Calvinism is nothing more than interpreting the Bible according to the Bible. Basically, if a person is against Calvinism, they are against the Bible because Calvinism does not add or twist meanings of scripture.

This study is dedicated to my maternal Grandmother Maria Kovacs Czok (1878-1961) who was a strong Calvinist. She came to the United States legally from Nyiregyhaza, Hungary in 1894 at the age of 16. Her name is displayed on the Wall at Ellis Island.

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