

***The Biblical, Predestined,  
Sovereign Plan  
of Salvation***

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Published in the United States in 1995  
Mission Boulevard Baptist Church  
2006 Mission Boulevard  
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72703

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Scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Briney, Patrick R.  
The Biblical, Predestined, Sovereign Plan of Salvation

1. Predestination 2. Calvinism 3. Salvation I. Title

Printed in the United State of America

*“And that from a child thou hast known  
the holy scriptures, which are able to  
make thee wise unto salvation through  
faith which is in Christ Jesus.”*

*-Second Timothy 3:15*

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## ***Forward***

**L**iving in a nation that has a multiplicity of religious denominations, many of which are implants from other countries, the thought comes to mind: what can be done to impact this present society with the Gospel? After reading Dr. Patrick Briney's manuscript, *The Biblical, Predestined, Sovereign Plan of Salvation*, my first impression was this: if my son was living, I would say, son, pull up a chair, turn you cap bill around, and read this book. It might just open your eyes to something you have not seen before.

Dr. Briney in his humble, yet straightforward way, presents his views on the doctrine of Soteriology, which are neither argumentative, nor offensive, but a challenge to stimulate one's thinking. Knowing that the very heart of salvation is the Gospel, we should be able to answer the following questions: What is salvation, how may I get it, how long does it last, and who is it for?

It is from this point of view that I recommend a careful study of this book. I personally have found its contents very stimulating.

Evangelist Charles E. Ashcraft

## *Preface*

**T**his book examines the biblical position of predestination and God's sovereign plan of salvation. Doctrinal problems of Calvinism are discussed, not the people who believe in Calvinism. My prayer is that the thoughts presented in this book will stimulate discussion and reexamination of theological errors in soteriological doctrine. Some introductory remarks may appear derisive, but I assure you that no maliciousness is intended. I invite questions and critiques. I am confident that the position espoused in this book is biblically sound and consistent with Scripture. I do not appeal to men, history, traditions, or other arguments that add nothing to determining the correctness of doctrine. My only mention of these arguments is for the purpose of exposing the insignificance of such issues when determining biblical correctness of doctrine. Ridicule and personal attacks are avoided because they add nothing to the substance of the arguments. I hope you are stimulated to study the precious Word of God with regard to salvation either for the first time or as a review. I am confident that you will find the espoused position herein in harmony with Scripture, even if you disagree with it.

Dr. Patrick Briney

## ***Introduction***

**T**he Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation. Its message is simple but profound and life changing.<sup>1</sup> It is the only message that can save the souls of men.<sup>2</sup> It is the only message that delivers men from the eternal fires and torments of hell. Therefore, there is no message that needs to be better understood and defended for correctness than the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Satan does everything in his power to corrupt, confuse, and prevent the clear communication of the Gospel. This one message delivers men from his insidious clutches. It is no surprise, then, that Satan both encourages and benefits from variations of the one and only true Gospel message.<sup>3</sup> What better way to confuse people and keep them ignorant of the saving power of God than to substitute the biblical Gospel message with a counterfeit?

The gospel of calvinistic theology is one variation of the simple Gospel. Its message contains truths but is fraught with incorrect premises and false conclusions. There are several variations of this doctrine, but at the heart of its message is that God arbitrarily and unconditionally predestines some to be saved. Dr. Berkhof in his *Systematic Theology* refers to this as absolute predestination.<sup>4</sup> In addition, some Calvinists adhere to the doctrine of double predestination, which includes the idea that God predestines some to be damned and others to be saved.

Many Baptists who adhere to the tenets of Calvinistic doctrine do not want to be associated with John Calvin. But as Dr. Berkhof points out, “predestination does not form an important subject of discussion in history until the time of Augustine,” and Calvin is the man best known for this doctrine. Therefore, it is appropriate to use the terms *Calvinistic theology* or *Calvinism* to refer to any doctrine which contains the element of teaching that God unconditionally predestines some to be saved. This is the fundamental premise of all Calvinistic teachings.

Surprising as it may be to Calvinists and others, finding fault with Calvinistic theology is not a case for salvation based on works and the merit of man such as Arminian doctrines. This is absolutely false, and, if possible, perhaps more dangerous to preventing souls from being saved than Calvinism. This needs to be stated because most Calvinists insist that there are only two doctrinal camps one can be associated with: Calvinism or Arminianism. While this claim may be tactically effective in gaining adherents to Calvinism, by reason of rejecting Arminianism, it actually contributes to obscuring the biblical Gospel.

How can there be more than two camps of doctrine on this issue? Calvinists say that salvation is an act of God. This is true. There is no question of the meaning of Ephesians 2:8–9 which says, “*for by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*” Salvation is an act of God. But a common premise in Calvinistic doctrine, which is false, is that God unconditionally predestines some to be saved without involving freewill choice by man.

Arminian adherents contend that salvation involves the freewill of man. This is correct. The exhortation of men to choose God is exemplified in Joshua 24:15 which says, “*And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.*” Man must make a choice. But Arminian doctrine teaches that man’s salvation also depends on his good works. This is wrong.

Calvinism and Arminianism doctrines contain truths, but both are corrupted with false concepts. When one considers the possible combinations of true and false premises concerning the Gospel of Christ, he realizes that attempts to narrow conflicting doctrines of the Gospel into two camps are ill-conceived and superficial.

There is no dispute that God predestined the plan of salvation and how it would be done. But an unfortunate consequence of the two-camp mentality is that the term predestination is most often associated with a Calvinistic meaning. In Calvinistic terms, predestination means that God arbitrarily and unconditionally determined in eternity past who would be saved and who would not be saved. This is false and rests on misinterpreted verses and an abundance of man-made arguments. The Bible teaches that God predestined the PLAN of salvation, not WHO would be saved. The Bible teaches predestination. However, Calvinistic predestination (a mixture of truth and falsehoods) is not biblical predestination.

A close examination of Calvinistic arguments reveals a plethora of faulty definitions, premises, and conclusions; a profuse citation of history, tradition, and religious notables; arguments designed to intimidate or disarm critics; and appeasements for the mind troubled by the awkward and contradictory positions of Calvinistic theology. While most of the Calvinistic apologetics do not add substance to the correctness of their position, they are effective in winning arguments and converts. In effect, many critics as well as converts are essentially silenced but not satisfied.

Often, proponents of a flawed theology suffering from contradictory or hard to swallow conclusions will try to strengthen the sell of their doctrine by resorting to sophisticated arguments and self-authoritative definitions; arguments of intimidation rather than substance; and an appeal to antiquity, tradition, and who's who among the proponents of the faulty theology. However, the final authority for doctrinal correctness is the Bible, not man's intellect or status. Correct doctrine is God's doctrine, and it will stand the test of scriptural examination.<sup>5</sup>

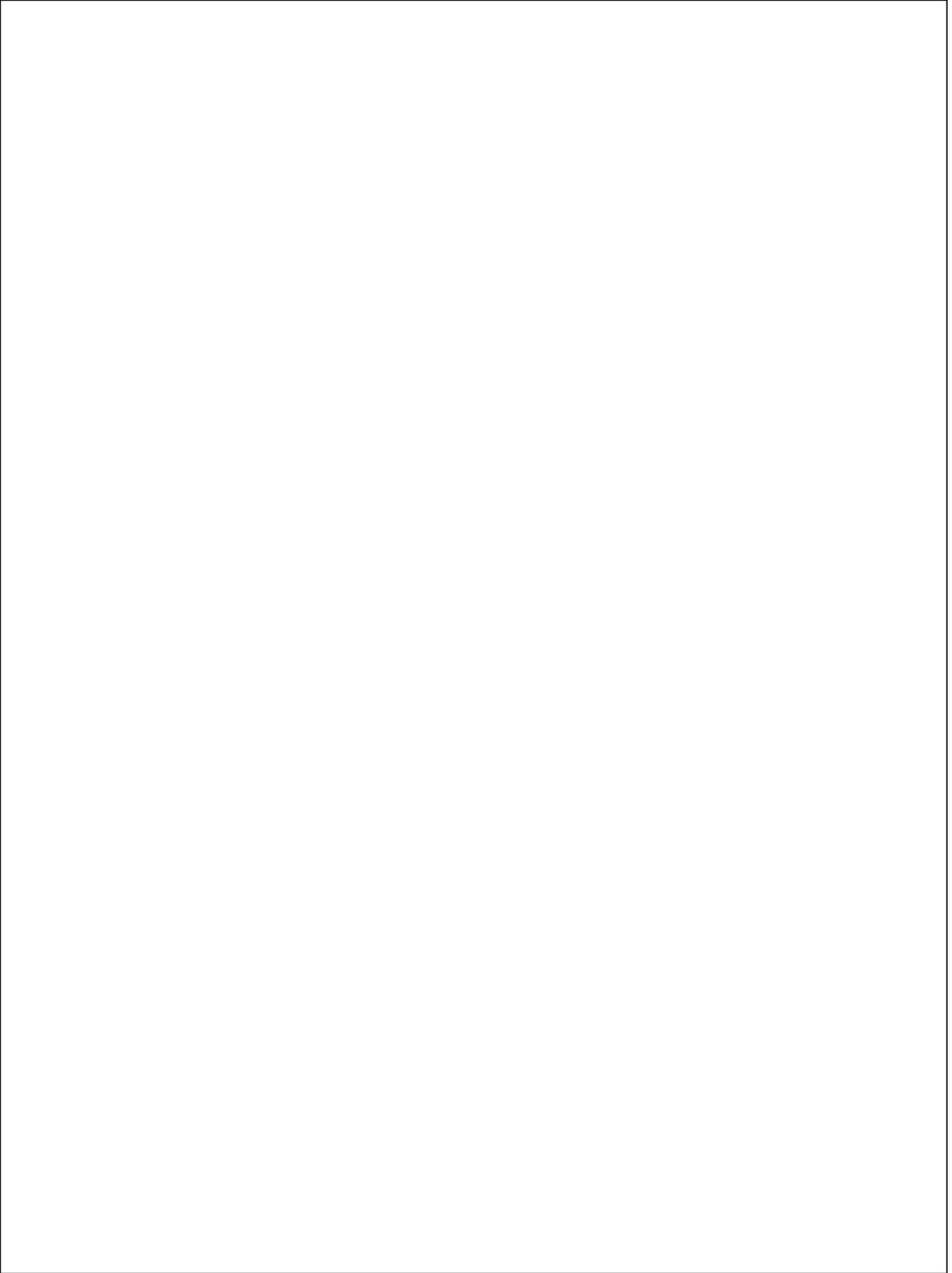
It is my purpose to deal with arguments pertaining to the correct teaching of salvation not with the hollow persuasion tactics often resorted to by Calvinists.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, brief comment is appropriate to explain why these tactical arguments are insignificant to establishing biblical correctness.

Pointing out flaws and contradictions in Calvinistic theology is viewed as tantamount with accusing God of being flawed and contradictory. Subsequently many are intimidated into accepting Calvinistic theology, contradictions and all. Others are disarmed into unquestioning silence. However, challenging the Calvinistic position is not challenging God. Equating Calvinism with God's thoughts is the height of arrogance on the part of Calvinists. It is so plagued with contradictions and awkward explanations that it is, minimally, a gross misrepresentation of the mind of God.

Insisting that Calvinists produce a doctrine that harmonizes with the Scriptures is viewed as an arrogant and unreasonable request because a harmonious doctrine would require having the mind of God or at least being able to know it. No one can know the mind of God, and His ways are beyond understanding.<sup>7</sup> Appealing to the unknowable mind of God is also useful to appease the mind troubled with the contradictions and awkward explanations of Calvinism. Apparently, many people are comforted by the thought that their doctrine does not have to make sense as long as God is responsible for it. This reasoning is objectionable and dangerous. It stops the pursuit of reasonable explanations and accuses God of not wanting to reveal satisfying explanations. Further, it encourages people to avoid questioning a flawed doctrine and to ignore better explanations. As long as a doctrine is flawed with contradictions and awkward explanations, it must be viewed with suspicion and subject to continual critiquing. This does not mean that a doctrine must be thoroughly explained or understood to be correct. But, if a doctrine lacks harmony with Scripture, it should not be embraced with unquestioning satisfaction. God wants to bless us with knowledge and understanding; and in the case of salvation, I believe there is an explanation that not only satisfies the mind and soul; but, more importantly, harmonizes with the final authority on the subject—God's Word.

Proposing alternative explanations to Calvinism that harmonize better with the Scriptures solicits a Calvinistic response of referring to the great and notable spiritual giants that do not hold to nor have held to such opinions. This is not surprising because one of the criteria to be in the Calvinist parade of spiritual giants is espousing the Calvinistic doctrine. In addition, Calvinists resort to using seemingly endless historical references and citations of traditional doctrine as though these argue for the biblical correctness of their position. They have confused Bible authority with human authority.<sup>8</sup> If antiquity and tradition are to be considered arguments of substance for biblical correctness, then Babylonianism has a better case for being correct. In fact, most if not all theologies have their traditions, histories, and notables. Obviously, these arguments are not arguments of substance for biblical correctness. We should spend our time and energies rightly dividing the word of truth, not citing a who's who list.

There is an impressive volume of books on Calvinistic theology and a noteworthy display of intellectual accomplishment among its adherents, but, very few of the arguments add substance to the biblical correctness of Calvinism. Of course, the benefits of using these nonsubstantial arguments are obvious. They are effective in winning converts and debates. But, a true Bible student should be more interested in aligning with the correct explanation of doctrine that harmonizes with Scripture rather than a who's who list, traditions, antiquity, intellectual arguments, etc. Arguments for the correctness of a doctrine should be evaluated on their conformity to the Bible. Any doctrine in conflict with the Bible is wrong.



## ***Definitions of Key Words***

**D**octrines that do not harmonize with the Scriptures often result from faulty definitions and reasoning of Bible verses. The contradictions and awkward theology generated by Calvinistic theology are easily exposed by determining the biblical definition of key words. Calvinists add false meaning to definitions of words such as *election, predestination, calling, choosing, ordaining, believing* and *repenting*. Further, proof texts offered to support their doctrine usually consist of an incorrectly defined key word or thought. What seems to be an obvious proof text to a Calvinist is only so because of their erroneous definition of words. In the following pages, key words used by Calvinists will be examined. Judge for yourself whether the Calvinistic definitions conform to biblical usage.

### ***Election***

Calvinists define *election* or *elect* to mean a predetermined, unconditional selection of people for salvation. In other words, God chooses who will be saved and thereby elects them.

Use of this definition for *election*, whenever one reads a verse, automatically imposes a Calvinistic interpretation. The correct approach to understanding a verse is to determine the biblical definition of the words by allowing the Bible to tell us their meaning rather than by imposing our meaning into the words.

The words *elect* and *election* are used twenty-seven times in the Bible. Lexicon definitions suggest nothing more than to *select*. The words do not imply or suggest any meaning of unconditional, predetermined selection for salvation. In order to discover if election is unconditional or conditional, we need to examine the verses containing the words *elect* and *election*.

Of the twenty-seven verses, only seven are worthy of comment. Nonetheless, all the verses are listed so that you can see for yourself, that the verses cited as proof texts for the Calvinistic position on election are void of ascribing the additional meaning that election is unconditional. All that can be said of most verses cited in support of unconditional election is that they not indicate that election is conditional. This brings up an important point. Recognizing what is not said in a verse is just as important as recognizing what is said. The absence of indicating conditions for election in a given verse does not imply that election is unconditional. The following verses that have commentary following them are asterisked.

Verses referring to Jesus being elected.

Isaiah 42:1 “*Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.*”

First Peter 2:6 “*Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.*”

Verses referring to angels being elected.

\* First Timothy 5:21 “*I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.*” There is no indication that these angels were elected unconditionally or conditionally.

Verses referring to the nation of Israel being elected.

\* Isaiah 45:4 *“For Jacob my servant’s sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.”* There is no indication that Israel was elected unconditionally.

Isaiah 65:9 *“And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains: and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.”*

Isaiah 65:22 *“They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.”*

Verses referring to Jacob being elected.

\* Romans 9:11 *“For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth....”* There are three things to note about this passage: (1) election is not by works, (2) election is associated with the purpose of God and His calling, and (3) election is for their inheritance not their salvation. Reference to God selecting Jacob over Esau illustrates how separated and mutually exclusive the systems of grace and works are from each other. Jacob was elected, but there is no indication that God’s election was unconditional or without criteria (excepting works).<sup>9</sup> Are there non-work conditions for salvation in the system of grace? Yes there are.<sup>10</sup>

Verses referring to saints being elected.

\* Matthew 24:22 *“And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.”* There is no indication that the elect are selected unconditionally.

Matthew 24:24 *“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”*

Matthew 24:31 *“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.”*

\* Mark 13:20 *“And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect’s sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.”* This verse tells us that the elect are chosen, but there is no mention that the election and choosing are unconditional.

Mark 13:22 *“For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.”*

Mark 13:27 *“And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.”*

Luke 18:7 *“And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?”*

\* Romans 8:33 *“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.”* There is no mention that God justifies unconditionally.

\* Romans 11:5 *“Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.”* There is no mention that election by grace is unconditional, only that it does not involve works. Is it possible that God uses criteria to elect by grace? Yes it is.<sup>11</sup>

Romans 11:7 *“What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.”*

Romans 11:28 *“As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes.”*

Colossians 3:12 *“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering....”*

First Thessalonians 1:4 *“Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.”*

Second Timothy 2:10 *“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”*

\* Titus 1:1 *“Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness....”* There is no indication from this verse that election is unconditional. However, election is associated with faith and acknowledgment of the truth.

\* First Peter 1:2 *“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.”* Three thoughts about election are gleaned from this passage: (1) election is based on the foreknowledge of God, (2) election occurs because of sanctification, and (3) there is no indication that election or sanctification are unconditional.

First Peter 5:13 *“The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.”*

\* Second Peter 1:10 *“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall....”* There is no indication that election is unconditional. However, it is interesting to consider how and why one needs to make his election sure.<sup>12</sup>

Second John 1 *“The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth....”*

Second John 13 *“The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.”*

#### Conclusion on the word *election*

Two of the twenty-seven preceding verses suggest possible criteria for election. The majority of the preceding verses tell us who are elected or something about the elect but nothing about the criteria used to elect them. First Peter 1:2 tells us that election is according to the foreknowledge of God when sanctification occurs. Other verses indicate that election is associated with faith, acknowledging of the truth, grace, justification by God, and the purpose of God. Two other verses tell us that God’s elect are called and chosen, but there is no indication that such are unconditionally called or chosen. Two other verses tell us that election is not by works.

Not a single aforementioned verse tells us that election is unconditional. We need to look elsewhere to discover whether election is conditional or unconditional.

## Called

*Calling* means to invite. Calvinists add meaning to *calling* saying that God's calling is a declaration that one will be unconditionally saved. It is reasoned that one is called because he is already unconditionally chosen to believe in Christ. The Bible does not support this reasoning and, in fact, shows that God's calling usually does not result in being chosen. Since there are over eight hundred verses with the words *call*, *called*, etc., only a few representative verses relevant to this study are listed for comment. Verses with commentary following them are asterisked.

\* Matthew 22:14 "*For many are called, but few are chosen.*" This verse shows that being called by God does not guarantee being chosen. Moreover, most who are called are not chosen. Obviously, being chosen is conditional not unconditional. Thus, we are led to conclude that, although all saints are called, all those who are called are not saints.

### Calling of a lost man

\* Isaiah 45:4 "*For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me.*" Cyrus, the Syrian, did not know the Lord, and in this verse he was not called to salvation but to decree that Israel would rebuild the temple.<sup>13</sup> Not surprisingly, this shows that the word *called* does not always apply to salvation.

### Called by the Gospel

\* Second Thessalonians 2:14 "*Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Being called by use of the Gospel suggests that without an understanding of the Gospel one cannot be saved. Therefore, understanding the Gospel is a necessary condition for salvation. The idea of conditional salvation is consistent with other verses such as Romans 10:13–17.<sup>14</sup>

### Calling according to God's purpose

\* Romans 8:28 "*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.*" This verse suggests that God's calling is conditionally fulfilled in the lives of those who love Him.

\* Second Timothy 1:9 "*Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began....*" There is no mention that God's calling, by His own purpose and grace, leads to one's inevitable salvation. God's purpose and grace involve men's ability to choose to believe and repent. These are not works.<sup>15</sup> Also, this calling was before the foundation of the world, which is consistent with election being based on foreknowledge.<sup>16</sup>

\* Romans 9:11 "*For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth....*" There is no mention that God's calling leads to inevitable, unconditional salvation. However, it does tell us that works are not a part of God's criteria for calling. This is consistent with our examination of verses on *election*. Is it possible that God uses criteria other than works to choose who will be saved? Yes it is.<sup>17</sup>

\* Mark 3:13 "*And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him.*" There is no mention that God's calling leads to inevitable, unconditional salvation; and

there is no reason to assume that the phrase “calleth unto him whom he would” means that He arbitrarily called without criteria.

Called to...

- \* Eternal life. First Timothy 6:12 *“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”* There is no mention that God’s calling leads to inevitable, unconditional salvation.
- \* Eternal glory. First Peter 5:10 *“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.”* There is no mention that God’s calling leads to inevitable, unconditional salvation.
- \* Glory and virtue. Second Peter 1:3 *“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue....”* There is no mention that God’s calling leads to inevitable, unconditional salvation.
- \* His kingdom and glory. First Thessalonians 2:12 *“That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.”* There is no mention that God’s calling leads to inevitable, unconditional salvation.
- \* Hope. Ephesians 1:18 *“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....”* There is no mention that God’s calling leads to inevitable, unconditional salvation.
- \* Eternal life. Hebrews 9:15 *“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.”* There is no mention that God’s calling leads to inevitable, unconditional salvation. However, it is interesting to think about the word *might*, which suggests that being called does not mean that one will be saved.<sup>18</sup>

Examples of some who are called

- \* John 10:3 *“To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.”* Jesus’ sheep are those who have been saved. There is no mention that God’s calling leads to inevitable, unconditional salvation.
- \* Galatians 5:8 *“This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.”* There is no mention that God’s calling leads to inevitable, unconditional salvation.<sup>19</sup>
- \* First Thessalonians 5:24 *“Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.”* God calls us to salvation and will do it. But, there is no mention that God’s calling leads to inevitable, unconditional salvation. There are many examples in the Bible which show us that God’s calling was not fulfilled in people’s lives.<sup>20</sup>
- \* Jude 1 *“Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called....”* Being called is associated with sanctification and preservation, but, there is no mention that God’s calling leads to inevitable, unconditional salvation.

Called and predestined

- \* Romans 8:30 *“Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”* There is no mention that God’s calling leads to inevitable, unconditional salvation, predestination, or justification. On the other hand, this verse tells us that those who are predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son are called.<sup>21</sup> As mentioned earlier, being called does not mean that one is saved, predestined to be conformed to His Son’s image, justified, or glorified. However, being saved, with all of its associated events, does mean that one has been called.<sup>22</sup>

### Conclusion on the word *called*

Of the eleven verses cited, not one indicates that the calling of God leads to inevitable, unconditional salvation. Two of the verses show that the calling of God to salvation is conditional. Second Thessalonians 2:14 tells us that one must understand the Gospel, and Matthew 22:14 shows that while many are called, only a few are chosen. Defining the word *called* to include the meaning that God has already chosen imposes a Calvinistic bias. These verses are erroneously used as proof texts to show that God's calling leads to inevitable, unconditional salvation, and use of them demonstrates how bias prevents one's objectivity to discern what a verse does or does not say.

### **Chosen**

Calvinists refer to verses, where the words *chosen* and *choose* are used, attempting to show that God unconditionally chooses some to be saved. But an objective examination of these verses shows that there is no indication that God unconditionally chooses to save souls. Calvinists read a bias into the meaning of such verses because of their definition of the word *chosen*. The Bible does not support such a definition. The following verses cited were selected based on their use in Calvinistic literature or their relevance to the topic.

#### Examples of those conditionally chosen

- \* Because He is God. Isaiah 49:7 *“Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.”* There is no mention of being unconditionally chosen. However, it is obvious that only God could fulfill this role and responsibility. Therefore, in this context, being God is an essential criteria to being called.
- \* Because of love. Psalm 78:67–68 *“Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved. And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established for ever.”* Though the reason for loving Judah is not stated, this verse implicitly states that the tribe of Judah was chosen on the condition of God's love for them.
- \* Because of love. Deuteronomy 4:37 *“And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt....”* Here is an obvious condition for choosing the descendants of Israel—love for their fathers. We see that because of God's love, He responded to their need and delivered them from bondage.
- \* Because of keeping commandments. First Kings 11:34 *“Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes....”* God promised that Solomon would reign as king because David obeyed His laws. This does not involve David's or Solomon's salvation, but it does show us that God uses conditions to choose.
- \* Because of mercy. Isaiah 14:1 *“For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.”* This has nothing to do with their salvation. Nonetheless, having mercy on Jacob does not suggest that God chose him unconditionally.<sup>23</sup> Choosing Jacob over Esau is a typology depicting the sovereignty of God. The passage demonstrates that God's criteria by grace, not works, is the way of salvation and that God is sovereign in determining how salvation is accomplished. There is no indication that anyone is unconditionally chosen for salvation.

### Verses implying conditions for being chosen

- \* Through sanctification and belief. Second Thessalonians 2:13 *“But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth....”* There is no mention that being chosen is unconditional, but it does tell us that we are chosen from the beginning.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, being chosen is associated with sanctification and belief. It could be argued that sanctification and belief are conditions for being chosen unto salvation. Sanctification and believing are the means whereby we are chosen. There is no indication that God sanctifies us or causes us to believe prior to choosing us.<sup>25</sup>
- \* Few chosen. Matthew 20:16 *“So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.”* This verse tells us that being called does not ensure that one will be chosen. It is reasonable to conclude, then, that being chosen is conditional.<sup>26</sup>
- \* Few chosen. Matthew 22:14 *“For many are called, but few are chosen”* The idea is that not all called are saved. On the other hand, it can be said that all the saved are called. It is apparent from this verse that being chosen is conditional.
- \* The poor. James 2:5 *“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?”* God has chosen the poor of this world but not to the exclusion of the rich nor to the inclusion of all of the poor. James’ emphasis on the poor, understood in context, addresses the problem of favoring the well-to-do over the poorer brethren. Only the poor who are rich in faith are chosen, and being an heir to the kingdom is conditional upon loving God.
- \* The foolish things. First Corinthians 1:27 *“But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty....”* This verse tells us the purpose of choosing the foolish and weak things of the world. However, there is no mention that choosing these foolish things is unconditional or exclusive. For example, there were noble kings (e.g., Solomon) and wealthy men (e.g., Job) chosen by God. Further, since there are things and people who qualify as being foolish but are not Christian, we must conclude that there are conditions for choosing the foolish things, otherwise all things that are foolish and weak in the eyes of the world would be chosen by God. The important point of this verse is that God uses criteria to choose.

### Chosen to...

- \* Know God. Isaiah 43:10 *“Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.”* There is only one God, and Israel was chosen by Him to be His witness in the world. This required that they know and believe Him.<sup>27</sup> There is no indication that Israel was chosen unconditionally by God.
- \* Be holy and without blame. Ephesians 1:4 *“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love....”* Christians are chosen before the foundation of the world, but there is no mention that God chose them unconditionally.
- \* Be a soldier. Second Timothy 2:4 *“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”* There is no mention of being unconditionally chosen.

### Israel chosen

- \* Isaiah 43:20 *“The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.”* This calling is for

national witness not salvation. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that God chose Israel, and they rejected Him.<sup>28</sup>

#### Examples of chosen saints

- \* Jacob. Isaiah 41:8 “*But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.*” There is no mention that Jacob was unconditionally chosen.
- \* David. Psalm 78:70 “*He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds....*” There is no suggestion that David was unconditionally chosen.
- \* Twelve disciples. Luke 6:13 “*And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles....*” There is no mention of being unconditionally chosen. However, we know that Jesus spent all night in prayer before choosing His disciples. Did He or the Father base their choice of disciples on unrevealed criteria?
- \* Paul. Acts 9:15 “*But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel....*” There is no mention of Paul being unconditionally chosen.
- \* Paul. Acts 22:14 “*And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.*” There is no mention of being unconditionally chosen. However, it does tell us the purpose for choosing Paul.
- \* Disciples. John 15:16 “*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*” This verse tells us that Jesus chooses His disciples, but it does not indicate that His choice is unconditional.<sup>29</sup>
- \* Chosen out of the world. John 15:19 “*If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*” There is no indication that being chosen out of the world is unconditional.
- \* Our inheritance. Psalm 47:4 “*He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved.*” Though our inheritance is chosen, there is no mention that it is unconditionally given to us.

#### Conclusion on the word *chosen*

Of the twenty-two verses cited above, not one indicates that God unconditionally chooses people for salvation. To the contrary, though salvation is without works, some of the verses suggest that being chosen for salvation is conditional. For example, Second Thessalonians 2:13 strongly implies that salvation is conditioned upon sanctification and belief. Also, Matthew 20:16 and 22:14 tell us that many are called but few are chosen, suggesting that there is a condition that must be met after being called but before being chosen. James 2:5 tells us that the poor who are rich in faith are chosen, implying that the poor without faith are not chosen for that reason. One is led to conclude that non-work conditions are a part of the salvation plan.

Other verses indicate that being chosen by God for purposes other than salvation is based on works. For example, Isaiah 43:20 in context shows that Israel was God’s chosen people, but they were subsequently cursed because they failed to call upon Him.<sup>30</sup> This shows us that the word *chosen* does not include an inherent meaning of being unconditional.

## ***Predestination***

Calvinists add to the meaning of *predestination* the idea that God unconditionally predetermines who will be saved. There are only four verses and not once is the idea of one's salvation suggested to be unconditionally predestined.

- \* Romans 8:29 “*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*” There is no mention that God unconditionally predestines anyone to be saved. It does tell us that foreknowledge is a part of determining who will be conformed to the image of His Son. God saw who would accept His calling to salvation.<sup>31</sup>
- \* Romans 8:30 “*Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*” This verse and verse twenty-nine show God's role in the series of events which lead to salvation.<sup>32</sup> This series of divine activities indicates that there is an order of events that begin with foreknowledge.<sup>33</sup> A similar order of events can be described for the damned.<sup>34</sup> There is no suggestion that being predestined, called, justified or glorified is unconditional. As we have observed in verses on *calling*, being called does not mean one is predestined, justified or glorified, but being predestined, justified or glorified means one is called.
- \* Ephesians 1:11 “*In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will....*” There is no mention that predestination or the “counsel of his own will” involve an unconditional action on God's part. One would have to impose a biased meaning to derive that conclusion.
- \* Ephesians 1:5 “*Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will....*” Although the word salvation is not used, clearly the reference to adoption is exclusively for the saved. Notice, that there is no mention that the adoption is unconditionally predestined, only that we are predestined “according to the good pleasure of his will.” God's will is that man be given a choice to accept or reject His call to salvation. There is no indication that God is pleased by unconditionally determining who will go to heaven and who will go to hell.

### Conclusion on the word *predestination*

Predestination refers to things that God determined in eternity past to occur in the future. He predestined the plan of salvation, the events, and the consequences. However, He did not predestine who would accept or reject His Son. Predestinating who would conform to Christ's image was based on foreknowledge of who would believe in Christ. There is no indication from these four verses that predestination is unconditional.

## ***Foreknowledge***

Many Calvinists argue that God has foreknowledge of all events because He predestines ahead of time what will happen. But verses containing the word *foreknowledge* will not support this premise.

### Verses including *foreknowledge*

- \* Acts 2:23 “*Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain....*” Jesus' delivery to the wicked was based on God's foreknowledge that the wicked would kill Jesus. God, not man, was in control and delivered Jesus to His death at the hands of man.

- \* Romans 8:29 *“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”* Predestination was based on foreknowledge.<sup>35</sup> There is no implication that an unconditional action on the part of God was determined. To the contrary, this verse tells us that He predestined all those He foreknew to be saved. Since God foreknew everyone, but not all are saved, we are led to conclude that God chose to predestinate some to be saved based on what He knew of their responses to His calling. Thus, being predestined to be saved is conditional.
- \* Romans 11:2 *“God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel....”* There is no indication that God’s foreknowledge of Israel was based on an unconditional predetermination of what they would do.
- \* First Peter 1:2 *“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.”* This verse indicates that election is based on foreknowledge.

#### Conclusion on the word *foreknowledge*

Some Calvinists are so troubled by the word *foreknowledge* and its threat to Calvinistic doctrine that they attempt to redefine it to mean *foreordained*.<sup>36</sup> Honest scholarship will not support this. None of the four verses examined indicate that foreknowledge is based on an unconditional, predetermined plan of God. To the contrary, Romans 8:29 and First Peter 1:2 suggest that being predestined to be saved is conditional.

#### ***Foreordained***

Calvinists have been known to equate the words *foreknowledge* and *foreordained* since the Greek word *proginosko* has been translated with both meanings.<sup>37</sup> But *proginosko* is used five times in the Bible, and it is translated *foreordained* only once. In other verses, it is translated *knew*, *foreknow*, *foreknew*, and *know*. Linguistically, the Greek meaning will not justify the Calvinistic claim that *proginosko* is best translated *foreordained* in all cases.

- \* First Peter 1:20 *“Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you....”* J.H. Thayer writes that the meaning of this passage is, *“foreknown by God, although not yet ‘made manifest’ to men.”*<sup>38</sup> The context of First Peter 1:20 bears out this understanding by comparing knowledge of Jesus before the foundation of the world with His manifestation in the last times. Following are the four other verses where the word *proginosko* occurs. The meaning is clearly understood as knowing something.
- Acts 26:5 *“Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.”*
- Romans 8:29 *“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.”*
- Romans 11:2 *“God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying....”*
- Second Peter 3:17 *“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.”*

### Conclusion on the word *foreordained*

The word *foreordained* has nothing to do with the unconditional saving of souls. The Greek word *proginosko* has the meaning of knowing beforehand. Four of the five times that the word is translated, it refers to knowing something beforehand. Reference to the manifestation of Jesus in the last times (First Peter 1:20) is pointing out that He has been known since before the foundation of the world. This verse and the word *proginosko* add nothing to support the doctrine of Calvinism.

### **Ordained**

The meaning of this word is to *make it so, set, declare, and prescribe*. Calvinists add to its meaning the idea that God unconditionally declares or plans things to be so. However, the Bible will not support such a definition. The following verses cited are representative of the forty-one verses having the word *ordained* in them.

#### Ordained to...

- \* Life. Romans 7:10 “*And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.*” This verse refers to the purpose of the commandment and does not suggest that the word *ordained* implies that salvation is unconditionally determined by God. This verse gives insight into the meaning of *ordained*: to declare what is desired, not how it will necessarily be. The law was ordained to life, but it did not accomplish that.
- \* Live of the Gospel. First Corinthians 9:14 “*Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.*” This verse does not refer to salvation nor imply that being ordained is unconditionally determined by God. Interestingly, experience shows that preachers have not always lived of the Gospel in spite of the fact that God ordained it to be so.<sup>39</sup> Thus, ordaining something is an indication of what is desired not how it will necessarily be.
- \* Walk in good works. Ephesians 2:10 “*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*” God declared what is right and good, and everyone in Christ should live accordingly. If we live in Christ, then we should also walk in Christ.<sup>40</sup> This is how God ordained it to be. However, many do not always walk in good works. Some notable men of God who stumbled include King David, King Saul, and King Solomon. Thus, what has been ordained, simply refers to what is desired, not how it will necessarily be.
- \* Eternal life . Acts 13:48 “*And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*” There is no indication that people are unconditionally ordained to eternal life. The significance of this verse is that God saved Gentiles too. The context shows how the Jews rejected Paul, Barnabus, and the Gospel. But the Gentiles received them. Even more astounding is that all those ordained to eternal life believed.<sup>41</sup> This tells us that all of the Gentiles that heard the Word accepted Christ, whereas, the Jews rejected Him.
- \* Go and bring fruit. John 15:16 “*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*” There is no mention that being ordained to bear fruit is unconditional. To the contrary, there are saints mentioned in the Bible who failed more than they succeeded. Thus, this verse tells us that God desires and declares that we should go and bear fruit, not that it will necessarily happen.
- \* For judgment. Habakkuk 1:12 “*Art thou not from everlasting, O LORD my God, mine Holy One? we shall not die. O LORD, thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast*

*established them for correction.*” There is no mention that ordaining some to judgment or correction is unconditional.

- \* Condemnation. Jude 4 “*For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*” There is no mention that ordaining some to condemnation is unconditional.<sup>42</sup>

#### God ordained

Moon and the stars. Psalm 8:3 “*When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained....*”

A place for my people. First Chronicles 17:9 “*Also I will ordain a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, and they shall dwell in their place, and shall be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any more, as at the beginning....*”

- \* Peace. Isaiah 26:12 “*LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.*” Isaiah is crediting God with the works and accomplishments done in Israel. All Christians should do likewise. However, this verse does not indicate that God performed an unconditional work through Israel. On the contrary, the peace ordained for Israel was conditional upon Israel yielding to God.

- \* Twelve disciples. Mark 3:14 “*And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach....*” There is no indication that the twelve were unconditionally ordained to be disciples.

Powers that be. Romans 13:1 “*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.*”

Hidden wisdom. First Corinthians 2:7 “*But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory....*”

#### Ordained by men

- \* Elders . Acts 14:23 “*And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.*” This verse shows that the word *ordained* is not limited to divine decree. Among men, it is obvious that ordaining someone declares what is approved, not what will necessarily continue to be.

#### Conclusion on the word *ordained*

Use of the word *ordained* in the Bible does not imply that something will necessarily be, nor that God unconditionally ordains souls to eternal life. Rather it indicates what is desired.

### ***Conclusion on Key Words and Verses***

Failure to produce verses that define *election, calling, chosen, predestination, foreordained, and ordained* as being unconditional, calls into question the Calvinists’ self-serving definitions of these words. A comprehensive examination of the Scriptures reveals that there is no justification for thinking that God unconditionally saves or condemns people. Proof texts used by Calvinists are, in fact, not proofs for their doctrine, but rather evidence of their bias and erroneous definitions of words. It is evident that Calvinistic doctrine fails to provide biblical evidence for its claims.

## ***Faulty Premises***

Premises, assumptions and conclusions of any doctrine must be examined in light of the Scriptures to determine their biblical correctness. Those interested in seeking truth, rather than vanity, welcome biblical scrutiny of their positions. Honest and objective examination of doctrine and the Scriptures leads one to correct insights. Calvinistic teachings fall short of biblical support, but more importantly many of its tenets contradict explicit teachings of the Bible.

Several faulty premises of Calvinism have already been dealt with. In summary, these include:

1. Antiquity, tradition, and notables cited as substantial evidence for the biblical correctness of Calvinistic doctrine.
2. Calvinism and Arminianism are the only two explanations of God's plan of salvation.
3. Our inability to know the mind of God prevents satisfactory explanation of doctrine, therefore, Calvinism should be accepted in spite of its awkward explanations and contradictions.
4. Words such as *election, called, chosen, predestination, foreknowledge, ordained, and foreordained* include an inherent meaning of unconditional selection and imposition of God's will on man for salvation or condemnation.
5. The idea that God "doeth according to his will" means that His plan of salvation excludes the will of man.

### ***Irresistible Grace***

Calvinists claim that God's irresistible grace involves unconditionally saving a few souls and condemning the rest.<sup>43</sup> They reason that since God's will cannot be resisted, then all that God desires must be done regardless of the will and desires of His creation. Further, it is reasoned that if a finite creature such as man could resist God's will, then man, not God, would be sovereign. Most Calvinists accept at least two distinctions in the meaning of the word *will*. Berkhof refers to these as "the decretive and the preceptive will of God."<sup>44</sup> The former will happen and "the latter is the rule of life which God has laid down for His moral creatures..."<sup>45</sup> It is the preceptive will of God that is disobeyed. The fault in Calvinism is not whether God's will is irresistible, but rather, whether God includes the will of man in determining his salvation. Because the Scriptures show many examples of men rejecting God's counsel and exhortations, one is led to conclude that God's will is to allow man the choice to accept or reject Him. The Calvinists' irresistible grace doctrine is wrong. Verses with commentary are asterisked.

Calvinists say that God's will does not allow one to resist God's plan for his life, but the Bible says...

\* Acts 7:51 "*Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.*" Because the Holy Ghost is the third being of the Godhead and He can be resisted, we must conclude that God's will is to allow people to resist His calling.<sup>46</sup>

\* Romans 13:2 "*Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*" If it is possible to resist God's ordinances, it must be God's will to allow it.

Men can refuse God's calling and reproof.

Proverbs 1:23–25 *“Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof....”*

Jeremiah 5:3 *“O LORD, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.”*

Jeremiah 7:13 *“And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not....”*

Jeremiah 11:10 *“They are turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, which refused to hear my words; and they went after other gods to serve them: the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant which I made with their fathers.”*

Ezekiel 5:6 *“And she hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations, and my statutes more than the countries that are round about her: for they have refused my judgments and my statutes, they have not walked in them.”*

Zechariah 7:11 *“But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.”*

Men reject God's word and commandment.

Second Chronicles 24:18–19 *“And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass. Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.”*

Psalms 81:11 *“But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.”*

Jeremiah 6:16 *“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.”*

Jeremiah 32:35 *“And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.”*

Jeremiah 35:15 *“I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me.”*

\* Zechariah 7:8–12 *“And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother: And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart. But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.”* God sent prophets to win the hearts and acceptance of the people, but they rejected God's Word and plan for their lives. Obviously, they could do this because God's will allowed them to choose.

\* John 5:40 *“And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”* It is man's God-given right to refuse God's gift of eternal life.

Romans 10:21 *“But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.”*

God's desire for souls is not always fulfilled.

- \* Ezekiel 33:11 *"Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked...."* The fact that the wicked die both physically and spiritually shows us that God's pleasure and plan for these souls is not fulfilled.<sup>47</sup>
- \* Ezekiel 18:31–32 *"Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye."*<sup>48</sup> Did any of these die in their sins? Yes, but not because it pleased God. It was not His desire or plan for their lives. The wicked die because God's will allows them to refuse and resist God's plan for their lives.

Men choose to disobey God and reject His calling.

- \* Matthew 23:37 *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"*<sup>49</sup> Obviously, God's will was to allow Israel the choice to reject His purpose for them.<sup>50</sup>
  - \* Matthew 11:20 *"Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not...."* Pleading with people to repent and rebuking them for failing to repent is evidence that God expects men to make their own choices. The failure to repent shows us that it is God's will to allow men to reject His desired plan for their lives.
- Isaiah 65:12 *"Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not."*
- \* Isaiah 66:4 *"I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not."* The ability to do evil and those things that God is displeased with shows that, it is God's will to allow men the freewill to choose to do as they please.
- Proverbs 1:29 *"For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD...."*

God exhorts and pleads with men to follow Him.

- \* Proverbs 3:31 *"Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways."* The fact that God encourages people to make the right choice indicates that God's will allows man the freedom to choose. Further, He holds them accountable for the choices they make, and then He executes His predestined response accordingly.
- Deuteronomy 30:19 *"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live...."*
- Joshua 24:15 *"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*

The inability to resist God does not mean acceptance of God.

- \* Acts 6:10–11 *"And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God."* Calvinists teach that the inability to resist God's calling results in the inevitable acceptance of God's Word. They are wrong. This passage shows that wicked men were unable to resist God, His men, and His message, but they did not accept them. It must have been God's will to allow them the choice to reject Him.

\* Luke 21:15–16 *“For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.”* Though Christ’s adversaries cannot resist or gainsay God’s Word, they can still reject it. *“Not able to resist”* means they cannot give a better answer or find fault with the messengers. God’s adversaries must resort to false accusations against God’s witnesses. Jesus was treated in such a matter. Though His words could not be resisted, His adversaries, nonetheless, opposed Him.

Satan interferes with and resists the work of God.

Second Corinthians 4:4 *“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.”*

\*Mark 4:15 *“And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.”* Satan’s evil work to interfere with God’s purpose in the world can only occur because it is God’s will to allow it.

Even the righteous are capable of disobeying God.

\* Revelation 3:3 *“Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”* The significance of this passage is that the saved, who have God’s imputed righteousness, are being warned about failing to repent. These saints are being warned because they have already resisted and strayed from the commandments of God. If the saints can resist God, how much more then can the lost?

Revelation 2:5 *“Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”*

Revelation 2:16 *“Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.”*

Conclusion on irresistible grace

God does as He pleases and no one can resist His will. Because God would never choose that the wicked die or that men reject His ordinances, then it must be men who choose these things; and it must be God’s will to allow men the choice to accept or reject that which is desirable to Him.

The previous verses demonstrate that God’s desires and ordinances can be and are resisted by both the lost and the saved. Obviously, the Bible considers God to be sovereign even though man can resist His ordinances. To be scripturally sound, doctrine on salvation must include the idea that God’s will allows man the choice to accept or reject His calling. Calvinistic doctrine is wrong and must be rejected in favor of Scripture.

### ***Total Depravity***

Calvinists contend that an unrighteous nature makes it impossible for man to choose to do good. They argue that due to natural man’s unrighteous nature, he can only choose to do evil. For the natural man, there is no choice to be made between good and evil, because there is no ability to choose good. His unrighteous nature will not accommodate such a choice. It is reasoned, therefore, that one cannot choose God (a good choice) until God chooses him and changes his nature (from unrighteousness to

righteousness). Thus, the depraved, unrighteous nature of man is at the heart of the Calvinists' anti-freewill and unconditional salvation arguments.

Select Scriptures would appear to support the idea that natural man cannot choose to do good.<sup>51</sup> However, other verses indicate that natural man does choose to do good. Faulty doctrine will create a contradiction with the Scriptures, whereas a sound doctrine will harmonize with all the Scriptures not just select portions. Calvinists, once again, present a doctrine that does not conform to all the Scriptures. One must examine the Bible thoughtfully to discover why "none doeth good" and yet are able to choose to conform to the good described in the law.<sup>52</sup> The correct answer to this question will harmonize all of the Scriptures.

Romans 3:10 says that no one does good. Does this mean that (1) natural men can choose to do only evil, (2) the good that natural men choose to do is evil because they are immorally or selfishly motivated, or (3) the good that natural men choose to do is not good because the good done has no merit with God? The first explanation suggests that natural men can only choose to do that which the Bible says is sin and evil, and they cannot do anything good that the Bible says is good. This explanation is obviously incorrect as the following verses indicate.

Calvinists claim that the lost can choose to do only evil.<sup>53</sup> But the Bible says,

- \* Matthew 7:11 *"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"* Jesus affirms that evil men can do good by giving good things to their children.
- \* Matthew 23:15 *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than ourselves."* According to the law of God, witnessing and making converts is good. Obviously one does not have to be saved or righteous to witness and make proselytes.<sup>54</sup>
- \* Matthew 23:14 *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation."* Prayer is considered an act of righteousness. The lost can and do choose to do this good thing.
- \* Luke 5:33 *"And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?"* Fasting is a good thing approved by God. The lost (which includes many of the Pharisees) choose to do this.
- \* Matthew 19:19–20 *"Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?"* One does not have to be righteous to do good things such as being kind and respectful to others. Some of the nicest, morally good people in the world are non-Christians.
- \* Psalm 119:30 *"I have chosen the way of truth: thy judgments have I laid before me."* This verse shows a man, not God, choosing the way of truth for himself. He does not say that God chose the way of truth for him.

Calvinists say that the lost (unrighteous) cannot believe.<sup>55</sup> But the Bible says,

- \* James 2:23 *"And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."* Abraham was imputed with righteousness after he believed. Thus, he must have believed while still being unrighteous.
- \* Romans 4:21–22 *"And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness."* Abraham was imputed with righteousness because he was persuaded. He was not persuaded because he was first imputed with righteousness.
- \* Romans 4:23–24 *"Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, IF we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the*

*dead....*” Emphasis is added to show the conditional statement. Being imputed with righteousness requires that one first believe. Abraham was imputed with righteousness after he believed.

- \* Acts 10:43 *“To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.”* Remission of sins occurs after believing. This means that the choice and act of believing occurs while still being a sinner.
- \* Romans 4:5 *“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”* God justifies the ungodly because they believe before they are made righteous and godly.

Calvinists say that sinners cannot repent, only the righteous can. But Jesus says,

- \* Matthew 9:13 *“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.”* This verse shows that sinners, not the righteous, are called to repent. Calvinists argue that one must be made righteous before they repent. Their teaching contradicts Jesus’ message.
- \* Luke 15:7 *“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”* Repentance must occur while one is still a sinner, not after one is made righteous and perfect in Christ.
- \* Acts 3:19 *“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord....”* One’s sins are not blotted out until he repents. Thus, he must repent as an unforgiven sinner, not as one imputed with sinless righteousness.

Calvinists say that the lost cannot choose God, but the Bible says,

- \* Proverbs 1:23–25 *“Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof....”* The exhortation of God to the lost is futile and absurd unless lost men have the choice to accept or reject the call of God.<sup>56</sup> Obviously, God wants the lost to accept Him.
- \* Jeremiah 7:13 *“And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not....”* God’s calling suggests no less than an expectation for natural man to choose God.
- \* 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.”* The promise of eternal life is given after one accepts God’s invitation. It is absurd to think that God would call to those He already *willed* to come.
- \* Jeremiah 35:15 *“I have sent also unto you all my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them, saying, Return ye now every man from his evil way, and amend your doings, and go not after other gods to serve them, and ye shall dwell in the land which I have given to you and to your fathers: but ye have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened unto me.”* God sent prophets to these unrighteous people to challenge them to repent and turn to God. He expected them to make a choice and held them accountable for that choice.

The verses above show that the unrighteous do, indeed, choose to do good works as described in the law. Further, they are capable of believing and repenting prior to being made righteous and godly. So then, the statement that “none doeth good” does not mean that natural men choose to do only evil deeds.

The second explanation for why no one does good is that the good that is done is improperly motivated. All appearance of conforming to anything good described in the law is done with immoral, selfish, and evil intentions. This is really no different than the idea that man can only choose to do evil deeds. But, rather than saying that the behavior is always evil, some claim that the motivation is always

evil for both good and evil deeds done. The natural man is never motivated by good intentions. He is motivated only with evil intentions. But, this explanation and conclusion fails the test of Scripture when one considers that the unrighteous must believe and repent before they are made righteous. Second Corinthians 7:10 says that repentance by evil motivation leads to death not life.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, the unrighteous must be able to repent with a morally acceptable motivation. Further, there are countless examples of lost souls in society who demonstrate sacrificial and selfless motivation, including parents toward their children and soldiers in the heat of battle.<sup>58</sup>

#### Depravity from a biblical perspective

The lost can and do choose to do many of the same good things that the saved do including baptism, praying, tithing, being kind, etc. To the chagrin of the saints, there are lost souls who behave more righteous than the saved. There is no question that the unrighteous can choose to do good, think good thoughts, and even have good intentions. A correct understanding of the Bible, that harmonizes all of the Scriptures, leads one to conclude that having an unrighteous nature makes man inherently sinful, but not to the exclusion of choosing to do good.

However, the good that natural men choose to do is not accepted as good. How is it that natural man can do the same good things the righteous do, but the good he does is not considered good?<sup>59</sup> Why does God consider a good deed done by a saint good, whereas the same deed done by the lost is considered not good?<sup>60</sup> Is tithing evil when a lost man tithes? Is prayer evil when a lost man prays? Is kindness evil when a lost man is kind?

Man's goodness or wickedness is determined by his nature, not by what he does. This is because one's moral behavior, thoughts, and motivation are governed by one's nature. It follows, then, that a righteous man by nature will think and behave righteously, and an unrighteousness man will think and behave unrighteously. However, as we have seen, this view is incomplete because the unrighteous can also think and do the same things that the righteous do. Therefore, one is led to conclude that none do good because God sees no merit in their goodness.

When God judges man, He looks into the heart.<sup>61</sup> He is looking at the nature of man not the outward behavior, not the thoughts, and not the motivation. Regardless of the choices natural men make, good or evil, God will only see them and all that they do as unrighteous, not because their behavior, thoughts, or motivation are evil, but because their nature is unrighteous. Any good done (behavior, thoughts, motivation) by natural men is considered by God as having no merit of goodness because He sees their unrighteous nature. Thus, it is possible for the lost to serve in churches as model Christians, even as deacons and pastors, but still be judged as workers of iniquity.<sup>62</sup> When the rich man asked Jesus about being good enough to go to heaven, Jesus replied: *"Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God."* He continued by emphasizing good things one should do saying: *"But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."*<sup>63</sup> Jesus made a distinction between doing good works and being good. He acknowledged the goodness of the works as described in the law, but He also pointed out that only God was good. Jesus was indicating that one could never do good enough to go to heaven; rather, he needed to be good by nature. God acknowledges the righteous things the lost do, but declares that all their efforts are for nought. Consider the following verses.

\*Isaiah 64:6 *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."* Our righteousnesses are the good deeds described in the law. They are unacceptable to God because He looks into the heart rather than at the behavior, thoughts, and motivation. It is the nature of man that determines whether he is truly righteous or not.

\*Ezekiel 33:13 *"When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his*

*iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.*” This verse provides the answer of why the lost do no good. God points out that one will live in righteousness, that is, do good one hundred percent of the time without sin. But, there is only one righteous nature in creation that cannot sin—God’s.<sup>64</sup> Those trying to conform outwardly to the ways of righteousness will discover that all their efforts to be good are inadequate. One sin will erase all the good that has been done. Why is this so? Because one sin of any kind is evidence that one has an unrighteous nature.<sup>65</sup> Since God judges a man by looking into his heart (nature), all the righteousnesses of the lost are judged unacceptable. None doeth good because none have a righteous nature.<sup>66</sup>

The only good deeds acceptable to God are produced by a righteous nature. A righteous nature prevents one from choosing to sin, therefore, the righteous can do only good.<sup>67</sup> If man’s nature allows him to commit sin, ALL the good that has been done is without merit—has no redeeming value—hence, is not good. “None doeth good” because regardless of the good natural man chooses to do, his good deeds are part of a package that includes sin, which is evidence that he has an unrighteous nature that will continue to choose sin. This is unacceptable to God. This is not good enough. As long as sin is part of one’s life, ultimately determined by his nature, he will never be good enough to enter heaven. To do good by God’s standards requires that one be good in nature, which in turn will produce one hundred percent goodness without sin.<sup>68</sup> In other words, unless a person is sinless, which is determined by his nature, none of his choices are judged as being good. It is all or nothing with God.<sup>69</sup>

Therefore, man is depraved because man has a nature that desires and allows him to sin and to do evil. Nonetheless, this nature does not prevent him from choosing to do good. However, regardless of all the good produced by the unrighteous nature, the sin it produces will bring certain death. Hence, “none doeth good” because none have a righteous nature to produce a lifestyle without sin.

At issue is how good does one have to be to go to heaven? Revelation 21:27 tells us there is no sin in heaven, which means that one must be sinless. One hundred percent righteousness without sin is

required.<sup>70</sup> Only those having the righteous nature of God can achieve this.<sup>71</sup> Thus, salvation requires being made the righteousness of God.<sup>72</sup> But this requires that one be as good as God, and no one could claim or achieve such perfection on his own. It is no wonder then that, “*there is none that doeth good no not one.*”<sup>73</sup>

God’s standard for entering heaven makes it impossible for man to acquire or achieve salvation in his own power (works). No one has a righteous nature that will prevent him from sinning. Everyone is born with an unrighteous nature passed on to them from the previous generation ever since the time of Adam.<sup>74</sup> Consequently, any *good* works done by man are of no consequence with God. Further, no amount of goodness done can correct and erase the guilt of sins already committed.<sup>75</sup>

As long as one has an unrighteous nature that allows him to desire and to choose sin, there is no hope of eternal life.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, no amount of good deeds will change his nature. Consequently, all of his righteousnesses as a natural man are as filthy rags in the eyes of God.<sup>77</sup> None do good because all are unrighteous by nature, and all good deeds done are of no merit to God.

#### Conclusion on depravity and freewill

Because Scripture shows that the unrighteous can choose to do good, we are led to conclude that being unrighteous does not mean that one cannot choose to do good. Rather, it means that he will choose evil as well as good.<sup>78</sup> Thus, the Bible shows us that natural man has a nature that allows him to freely choose both good and evil. This explains why the unrighteous can believe in Christ and repent of their sins. The nature of unrighteousness will allow for this. However, one must still first hear the Gospel and be convicted by the Holy Spirit.<sup>79</sup>

Calvinists claim that God unconditionally makes some righteous so that they will choose God’s ways. This explanation contradicts many verses in the Bible and creates one of the most awkward points in Calvinism, namely, that God makes the choice for only a few to accept Him and for most to be condemned as sinners.<sup>80</sup> Thus, one would reason that God determines to send a few to heaven and most to hell. Such teaching implies that God does not love everyone which contradicts numerous passages.<sup>81</sup> Further, the Calvinistic teaching of depravity makes ludicrous the pleadings of God with unrighteous men to repent and to choose His ways when they cannot do so. This teaching makes God look like a buffoon: sending prophets and messengers with the purpose of persuading the unpersuadable and then upbraiding them for doing the expected—rejecting Him. Clearly, the Bible’s meaning of depravity is not the same as the Calvinists’.

### ***Unconditional Election to Salvation***

Calvinists argue that in order for God to be sovereign, then He must unconditionally determine who will be saved without giving man a choice. In addition, according to Calvinists, the depraved nature of man prevents him from fulfilling any conditions God requires for salvation. Thus, Calvinists argue that salvation by grace excludes the freewill of man. Furthermore, they argue that any conditions required for salvation must be works. These positions contradict the Bible.

Calvinists and Arminianists are in agreement that *belief*, *repentance*, and *calling* are works. However, the Bible says these conditions for salvation are not works. Regardless of what men say or reason, the Bible, the final authority on the subject, is always right. It is futile for men to insist on defining these conditions as works when the Bible says they are not. The following verses describe the conditions for salvation to show that salvation by grace is, indeed, conditional and exclusive of works. Verses with commentary are asterisked.

Believing is a condition of salvation.

- \* Mark 16:16 *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”*<sup>82</sup> The indication is that, if one does not believe, he will be condemned. Believing is definitely a condition for salvation.
- \* Luke 8:12 *“Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.”* The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to those who believe. Because the sequence of events is: (1) hearing the Gospel, then (2) believing, and then (3) salvation, the Devil seeks to take the Gospel away so one will not believe. This indicates that it is possible for the Devil to interfere with the salvation of a soul by preventing the fulfillment of conditions (hearing and believing) for salvation.
- John 3:15 *“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”*
- John 3:16 *“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 3:18 *“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.”* If one does not believe, then he is condemned. This shows that salvation comes after believing and not before. It is definitely a condition for salvation, which if not fulfilled, there is no salvation.
- Romans 1:16 *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”*
- Romans 10:9 *“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.”*

Salvation comes because of belief.

- \* 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....”* These became sons of God after receiving and believing, not before.
- \* First Corinthians 1:21 *“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”* People are saved because they believe. They do not believe because they are saved.
- \* Ephesians 1:13 *“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise....”* Being sealed with the Holy Spirit is associated with Him being our earnest or proof of purchase. This occurs only after we believe.
- Hebrews 10:39 *“But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”*
- \* Acts 16:30–31 *“And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”* In order to be saved, one must believe first.

Righteousness is the result of believing.

- \* James 2:23 *“And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.”* Abraham was imputed with righteousness because he believed. Thus, he must have believed while still being unrighteous.
- \* Romans 4:21–22 *“And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.”* Abraham was imputed with righteousness because he was persuaded. He was not persuaded because he was first imputed with righteousness.
- \* Romans 4:23–24 *“Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the*

*dead....*” The criteria required before being imputed with righteousness is believing. Abraham was imputed with righteousness because he believed, and this is true for anyone else who believes.

Romans 3:22 *“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference....”*

Romans 4:3 *“For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”*

Romans 4:11 *“And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also....”*

\* Romans 10:10 *“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”* Righteousness is the result of believing.

Remission of sins is granted after believing.

\* Acts 10:43 *“To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.”* Remission of sins occurs after believing and to any sinner that believes.

Believing precedes righteousness and salvation.

\* Psalm 78:22–23 *“Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation: Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven....”* God demonstrated considerable effort to convince these people to believe. This suggests that these unrighteous people, not God, were responsible to believe. If God had preceded His efforts by making them righteous first, they would have eagerly believed. This shows that people must believe prior to God making them righteous and saving them.

\* John 11:15 *“And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.”* Jesus indicates that the incident of Lazarus’ death and subsequent resurrection was for the purpose of convincing the people to believe in Him. This would not be necessary if God made the people righteous. In their righteousness, they would believe without having to be convinced because it is the right thing to do. Jesus talks about believing as something they must do to be saved not as a consequence of being saved.

Believing is not a work.

\* Romans 4:5 *“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”* Notice that God justifies those who believe, not those who work. If belief were a work, as Calvinists claim, then this verse would be nonsense.

\* Galatians 2:16 *“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”* Belief is not a work. This verse separates faith and believing from works and law. Belief is associated with grace and faith, not works.

\* John 6:29 *“Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.”* Belief is the work of God not of man. This does not suggest that God believes for man. Consider the multitude of verses which clearly indicate that man chooses to believe and accept God. Man is exhorted to believe and trust. There is every reason to understand that this passage means that man cannot believe without the help of God.<sup>83</sup> To think otherwise is to contradict other Scriptures. It is neither reasonable nor justified to contradict the Scriptures and say that believing is a work of man.

Repentance is a condition for salvation.

- \* Luke 13:3 *"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."* In other words, if you do not repent you will not be saved. This is a definite condition for salvation.
- \* Matthew 4:17 *"From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* The message to people is that they must repent or they will miss the kingdom of heaven. Further, if repentance is the result of righteousness and salvation, then there would be no need to tell people to repent. They would do it without being told to do so because the righteous always do right.

Sinners must repent before being saved.

- \* Matthew 9:13 *"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."* This verse shows that sinners, not the righteous, are called to repent. However, Calvinists argue that souls must be made righteous before they repent. This teaching contradicts Jesus' message.
- \* Luke 15:7 *"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."* Repentance is for sinners not the righteous. Therefore, repentance must precede righteousness.
- \* Luke 24:47 *"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."* Repentance is associated with the remission of sins. If one is made righteous prior to repentance, then there would be no more sins to remit.
- \* Acts 2:38 *"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."*<sup>84</sup> Repentance is for the remission of sins not vice versa.
- \* Acts 3:19 *"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord...."* One's sins are not blotted out until he repents. Thus, he must repent as an unforgiven sinner, not as one cleansed of sin and imputed with righteousness.
- \* Second Corinthians 7:10 *"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."*<sup>85</sup> Godly sorrow and repentance precede salvation.
- \* Revelation 2:21 *"And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not."* If anyone in the Bible fits the Calvinist's idea of a vessel fit for destruction, Jezebel does. Was she fit for destruction without opportunity to repent or after failing to repent? She was given the opportunity (space) to repent but did not take it. This verse shows that repentance precedes salvation and righteousness, and failure to repent results in condemnation.
- \* Revelation 2:22 *"Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds."* This verse shows us the universal application of repentance to all mankind. Everyone will suffer the fate of Jezebel unless they, as sinners, repent.
- \* Acts 8:22 *"Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."* God's forgiveness of sinful thoughts is conditionally based on repentance. If repentance was based on righteousness and salvation, then repentance would be expressed as evidence of what God has already done for the individual.
- \* Jeremiah 26:3 *"If so be they will hearken, and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent me of the evil, which I purpose to do unto them because of the evil of their doings."* God's judgment of Israel was conditionally determined upon their failure to repent. Had they been made righteous first, they would have repented.
- \* Luke 15:7 *"I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."* Sinners repent, not the righteous and the perfected.

Repentance is not a work.

- \* Luke 13:3 “...*Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*” Because works is not a part of salvation, Christ obviously does not consider repentance a work. Repentance is a surrendering of one’s will to God’s. Those involved in works for salvation exercise their own will.
- \* Galatians 2:16 “*Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*” This tells us that, (1) salvation is not by works, and (2) believing is a nonwork condition for salvation. Therefore, since repentance is obviously a condition for salvation, as is believing, we must conclude that Jesus does not consider repentance a work.

God grants repentance.

- \* Second Timothy 2:25 “*In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth....*” God’s love for all men leads us to conclude that God will give everyone who hears the Gospel an opportunity to repent.<sup>86</sup> This verse is simply telling us that without God, it is impossible to repent.
- \* Hebrews 12:17 “*For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*” Esau sought to regain his inheritance, but there was no way to undo the blessing that was given to Jacob. His birth right was no longer available for him. This passage has nothing to do with God’s grace being irresistible or with Esau’s salvation. However, we should learn the lesson that repentance is impossible without God and that when God convicts us we should not hesitate or postpone repenting of our sins.<sup>87</sup>

Calling on the Lord is a condition of salvation.

- Romans 10:13 “*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*”
- Acts 2:21 “*And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*”
- \* Psalm 55:16 “*As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me.*” Those who call upon God shall be saved. They do not call because they are saved. They are saved because they call.<sup>88</sup>

Acceptance of Christ precedes fellowship with Christ.

- Revelation 3:20 “*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*”

Conclusion on conditions for salvation

Believing, repentance, calling, and acceptance are conditions that God requires to be fulfilled before a person is saved. By biblical definition, these are not works. Works are efforts on the part of man to gain favor from God as a reward for achievement. The conditions that God has ordained for salvation are not works of merit and are not rewarded. They are a part of admitting that one is helpless, without merit, and in need of God’s help. The Calvinists’ assertions—that salvation is unconditional and that belief, repentance, calling and acceptance are works—must be rejected in favor of Scripture.

## ***The Sovereignty of God***

Although the words sovereign and sovereignty are not found in the Bible, there is no question that God is supreme in power and authority. Daniel 4:35 says, “And all the inhabitants of the earth are

reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" This tells us that whatever God desires to be done will be done. God ultimately determines what and how things will be.

Calvinists leap to the conclusion that God's sovereignty necessarily excludes the involvement of man's will and desires. They reason that if one could resist God's desired plan for his life, then he would be sovereign over God. To the Calvinist, this issue is a contest of wills, and the Sovereign will must prevail. But God is not in a will contest with man. He includes in His sovereign plan an opportunity for man to accept or reject His Son.<sup>89</sup>

Bible passages observed in the preceding pages show that one can resist God's desired plan and purpose for his life. In addition, His sovereign, determined plan of salvation includes the conditions of belief, repentance, and freewill choice. Obviously, God does not consider His sovereignty to be compromised by these conditions. Calvinists need to rethink their doctrines from a biblical perspective and reject conclusions that oppose Scripture.

Proposing the idea that resisting God's will makes one sovereign over God has effectively intimidated people from questioning Calvinistic doctrine. People tend to avoid issues and teachings that are represented as being belittling to God. Subsequently, they fail to give adequate thought to doctrine. Consequently, error thrives, and people continue in blindness. One must be careful not to equate the teachings of men with the truths of God's Word. All doctrines should be subjected to examination. This is how truth prevails.<sup>90</sup>

Some Calvinists argue that God's purpose for one's life is irresistible in the long run but that one can resist and disobey Him in the short run. This attempts to resolve doctrinal conflict with the Bible by admitting the fact that people do resist God's calling.<sup>91</sup> However, admitting that man can resist God's will at times contradicts the Calvinistic argument that God's will cannot be resisted because He is sovereign. Any resistance of God's will would make man sovereign over God. When confronted with this contradiction, Calvinists must make a choice between conforming to the Scriptures or adhering to their flawed argument for God's sovereignty.

A major difficulty Calvinists deal with, in the meaning they ascribe to the sovereignty of God, is the conclusion that God condemns men for the very actions that God determined them to do. If God determines all decisions and actions that men engage in, then it follows that God, not man, is responsible for those choices. Thus Calvinistic doctrine implies that God is guilty of sin. The horror of this teaching increases as one realizes that God condemns men for the choices He made for them. But, there is no sin in God! He does not tolerate sin nor condone it to any degree for any reason. Therefore, God would never condone or determine that some should sin or reject Him.<sup>92</sup> The Calvinistic concept of God's sovereignty leads to false conclusions because it is in error.

### ***Limited Atonement***

Limited atonement is the teaching that God does not desire to save everyone. The opportunity for salvation is limited to just a few people.<sup>93</sup> This conclusion is based on the idea that depraved man cannot believe or repent to be saved apart from being made righteous by God. Therefore, God must choose who will be saved and then make them righteous. Also, Calvinists argue that in order for God to be sovereign, He must decide who will be saved and who will not be saved. They argue that man's ability to accept or reject God's salvation would make man sovereign over God. Since everyone is not saved, it follows from Calvinistic reasoning that God does not want to save everyone and chooses to send most to hell.<sup>94</sup>

Limited atonement is one of the most disagreeable tenets of Calvinism, so much so that many Calvinists object to this teaching. The Bible clearly expresses God's love and desire for everyone to be saved. As a result, adherents of limited atonement offer arguments of elaborate human reasoning and awkward explanations of verses that have to be massaged and twisted to conform to their persuasion.

Calvinists claim that Jesus did not die for everyone. They claim that He died only for those whom He elected to be saved and that He does not desire to save everyone. However, the Bible says,

God is not willing that any perish. Second Peter 3:9 *"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."*

God desires all men to be saved. First Timothy 2:4 *"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."*

God loves everyone. John 3:16 *"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."*

Christ is Savior to all men.

\* First Timothy 4:10 *"For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."* Being the Savior of all men indicates that salvation is for all. A lifeguard of a beach is lifeguard for all especially to those who are helped by him. Likewise, Jesus is Savior to everyone, especially to those who believe because they have been saved. He will save all if they will accept His gift of salvation.

God is displeased by the death of the wicked.

\* Ezekiel 33:11 *"Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"* If God did as He pleased, unconditionally, he would save all the wicked. Obviously, God does not limit the provision of atonement because it is His will. Men choose to reject God.

God calls everyone to salvation.

\* Isaiah 45:22 *"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."* God's call is to everyone from one end of the earth to the other.

\* John 7:37 *"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."* The call is to anyone who thirsts. Of course, anyone without Christ is thirsty because He is the water of life.

Christ invites everyone to be saved.

John 3:15 *"That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."*

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

John 12:46 *"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."*

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

Romans 9:33 *"As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offense: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed."*

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

First John 5:1 *"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God...."*

God provides for everyone.

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

First 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.”*<sup>95</sup>

\* Matthew 22:9 *“Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.”*  
The invitation for salvation is for everyone.

Hell was not made for man.

Matthew 25:41 *“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels....”* God knew in eternity past that souls would reject Him and be sent to hell. However, the implication in this verse is that God did not create hell for men and that it was not what He purposed for men. This is consistent with the teaching that God’s desire from the beginning was for all men to be saved if they would believe in Him.

#### Conclusion on Limited Atonement

Teaching that Christ did not die for everyone and does not desire to save everyone is contrary to the Bible. Nonetheless, Calvinists justify their position by arguing that the tenets of, (1) the sovereignty of God, and (2) the depravity of man, require that God chooses who will be saved. Because most are lost, they conclude that God desires only a few to be saved and most to be damned. As shown earlier, these two tenets are false and contrary to Scripture. There is no justification for the Calvinistic teaching of limited atonement.

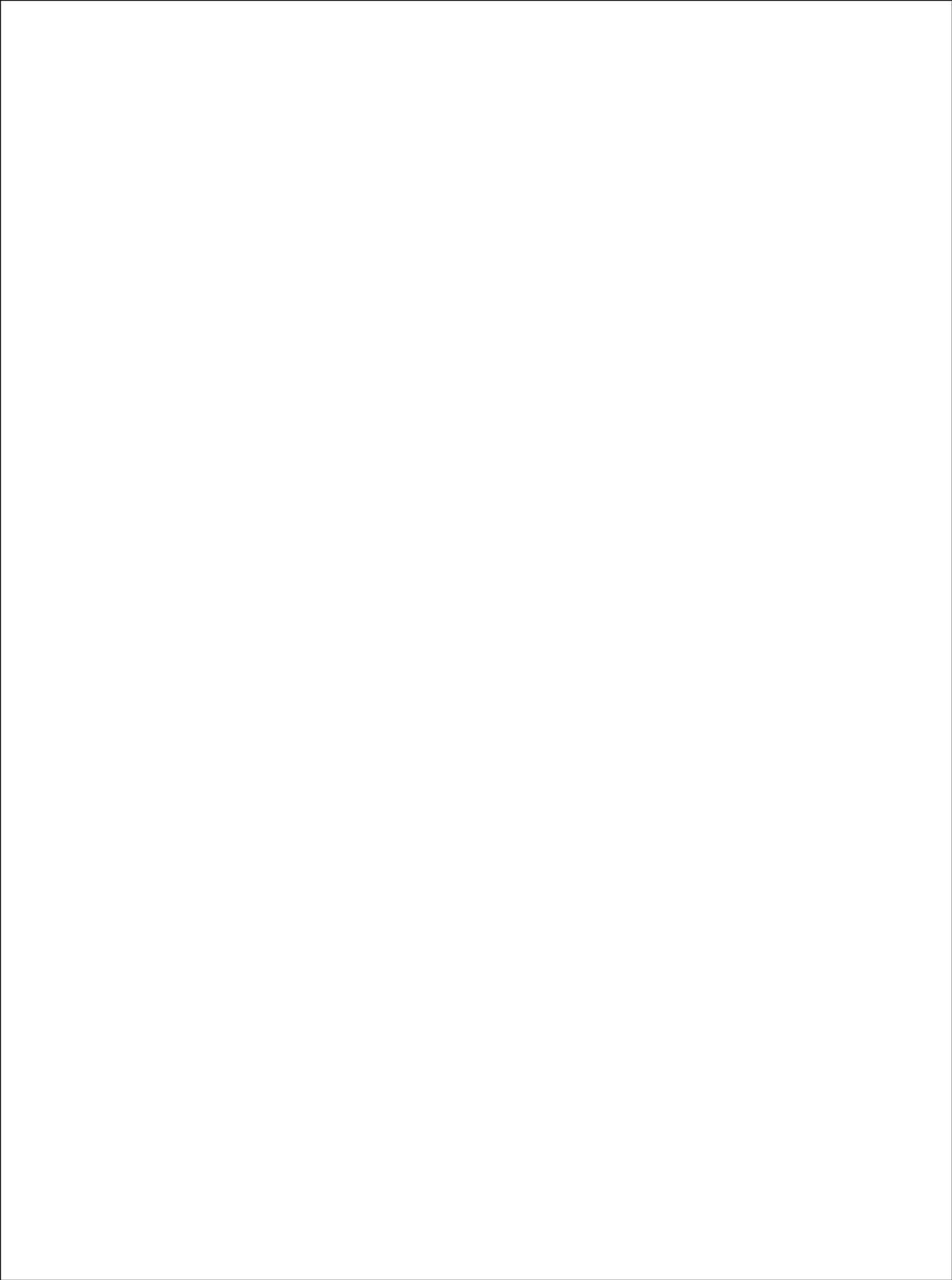
### ***Jeremiah and John the Baptist***

Calvinists refer to Jeremiah and John the Baptist as examples of God unconditionally choosing to save individuals because He had plans for Jeremiah and John before they were born. An examination of the verses referring to these two men fails to support this reasoning.

Jeremiah 1:5 *“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.”* There is no mention that God unconditionally ordained and sanctified Jeremiah to be a prophet. Furthermore, we are told that God knew Jeremiah before he was born, thereby being able to ordain his career based on foreknowing what kind of person Jeremiah was. The conclusion that Jeremiah was saved by the same criteria described elsewhere in the Bible (belief and repentance) is the only reasonable position. There is no justification in this verse to suggest that Jeremiah was saved by different criteria.

Luke 1:15 *“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.”* Being filled with the Spirit means to be guided and influenced by the Spirit. It does not mean that John was saved before he was born. In fact, there is no justification for believing that John’s salvation would be based on criteria different than that which is described throughout the Bible. It is dangerous to devise a theology based on the absence of explanation, especially when it contradicts other Scriptures. Scriptural consistency leads us to conclude that John’s calling was based on God’s foreknowledge of his accepting God’s offer of salvation.

Everyone's destiny is ordained and predestined before the foundation of the world.<sup>96</sup> God in eternity past saw the future and the decisions that people would make to accept or reject His Son Jesus Christ. Therefore, reference to Jeremiah or John's being chosen while in the womb is no surprise and does not suggest unconditional election to salvation or condemnation.



## ***Biblical Soteriology***

### ***Eternal Security***

Eternal security refers to the hope of the saints to stay in the presence of the Lord forever—once saved always saved. The Scriptural support for this doctrine is unequivocal.

John 3:15 tells us: “*That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*” The literal meaning of *eternal life* is a never ending relationship with Christ. The biblical definitions of the words *eternal* and *life* allow for no other conclusion. First John 5:12 defines life and death by saying, “*He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*” To have the Son means that one has a relationship with the Son of God. This is the biblical definition of spiritual life. On the other hand, not having the Son means that one is separated from the Son of God. This is the biblical definition of spiritual death. Thus, life and death describe one’s fellowship with Jesus Christ not his possessions or his consciousness. The word *eternal* means everlasting or never ending. Therefore, *eternal life* is a never ending relationship with Jesus Christ. It will never end, terminate, or cease.

Having a relationship is not the same as having an eternal object like a pencil that one can hold on to or release. This is fellowship with Christ that will never end. To be separated would mean that one must die. This is not possible if one has eternal, never ending life. There is no way to be separated from the fellowship of Christ once one has eternal life. Thus, having eternal life means one is eternally secure in Christ.

Eternal security is also based on the fact that if there is no sin, there is no death. Since the wages of sin is death or separation from Christ, God provides a miraculous change in one’s nature to prevent future sins. This guarantees an eternal future in heaven and fellowship with Christ—without sin, without death.

The Bible tells us that when one is saved he is imputed with the righteousness of God.<sup>97</sup> Romans 4:3 explains, “*For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*” And then Romans 4:23–24 tells us that, “*Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead....*” This change in nature takes place in the spirit not in the flesh.<sup>98</sup> This is why Jesus told Nicodemus\_Nicodemus in John 3:6 “*That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*” When one is born again, he is born of the spirit not of the flesh. Thus, one’s spirit is made the righteousness of God. The body, however, is unchanged. Of course, this is obvious because the body of a Christian is continually struggling with sin. However, the spirit of a Christian is righteous and therefore does not sin.<sup>99</sup> This is why Paul described his own spirit in Romans 7:22 saying, “*For I delight in the law of God after the inward man....*” However, he said of his body, “*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*”<sup>100</sup> The saved have two natures: (1) the outward man (the body) has the unrighteous nature acquired from the first Adam via his parents, and (2) the inward man (the spirit) has the righteous nature of God imputed to Him by the second Adam via the second birth.<sup>101</sup> The important application here is that if your spirit cannot sin, then your spirit cannot die.<sup>102</sup> Once saved, you will always be saved and eternally secure in sinless righteousness.

## ***The Gospel of Christ***

The Gospel of Christ is good news for man because It is the power of God unto salvation.<sup>103</sup> Through the work of Jesus Christ, man is delivered from the bondage of sin and the punishment of death. One's eternal destiny is determined by his decision to accept or reject the message of Jesus Christ.

God created man for the purpose of spending eternal fellowship with Christ in the glorious kingdom of heaven. But this fellowship is based on righteousness and sinless perfection. Habbakuk 1:13 says that God is "...of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." God is so pure and righteous that He cannot condone sin, and He will not tolerate it in His presence. God is absolutely holy, and He will allow only perfection and righteousness in His presence. Consequently, heaven is spotless of any and all sin. Revelation 21:27 tells us that "...there shall in no wise enter into it [heaven] any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie...." Second Peter 3:13 says: "Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." The only way to get into heaven is to be as sinless, as righteous, and as perfect as God! Do you know anyone who is as sinless and as pure as God? Of course not. This is an impossible qualification for man to achieve. But this is God's standard for entering heaven. By this standard no matter how good one thinks he is, he can never be good enough to go to heaven.<sup>104</sup> No amount of good works will qualify one to go to heaven. No wonder Ephesians 2:8–9 tells us: "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.*"

The problem is that man is sinful. No one is qualified to go to heaven because "*there is none righteous, no not one.*"<sup>105</sup> Romans 3:23 says, "*for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*" Without exception, every human being is disqualified from going to heaven because of sin. No one deserves to go to heaven, and no one can change himself to be better.<sup>106</sup> If God allowed unrighteous people to enter heaven, He would be condoning sin, and heaven would no longer be sinless. Both God and heaven would be defiled. Admittedly, people can do many good things and live good lives. But, this goodness is superficial and inadequate. By God's standards human works are never good enough. God requires that one be as good as God—sinless, perfectly righteous, and pure. Obviously, there is none good but God.

If the unrighteous do not go to heaven, what happens to them? Romans 6:23 states: "*For the wages of sin is death.*" This death is more than a physical death. The Bible teaches that the punishment for sin and unrighteousness is spiritual death. This is called the second death. Revelation 21:8 describes this death by saying: "*But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.*" Of course, this is a description of hell, and no one likes to think about going there. But the fact is, if one is not qualified to go to heaven, then he will die for his sins in hell. Knowing the qualifications to get into heaven, the undeniable guilt of being a sinner, and the inevitable destiny of hell for the unrighteous, one must conclude that he is helplessly doomed to the fires of hell. Man is desperately helpless. Only a miracle can save him.

Fortunately, God has provided a miracle for us through His Son Jesus Christ. The impossible is made possible with God's help.<sup>107</sup> He does not want us to die, go to hell, and spend eternity separated from Him. He loves us and wants us to experience the joys of eternity with Him in heaven.

Jesus solves two problems that disqualify us from entering heaven. First of all, He offers to take care of the sins we have already committed. Second, He makes sure that our spirit never sins again thereby securing our heavenly destiny.

Romans 5:8 says: "*But God commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.*" What did Jesus do according to this passage? He died. What is the penalty for sin? Death.

Why did Jesus die? Because He accepted the punishment of death for sin. Jesus was not punished for His own sins. He has always been perfect, sinless, and pure. He died to pay for the sins of others—mankind. Several passages present the undeniable love of God for man and His desire to offer salvation for everyone. John 3:16 tells us: *“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.”* Hebrews 2:9 explains: *“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”* First John 2:2 says: *“And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”* Propitiation means that Jesus is the means of satisfying our payment for our sins.

Jesus accepted the punishment of death for sin so that no one else would have to be punished.<sup>108</sup> He does not want to see you or anyone condemned eternally to hell. It is difficult to imagine why anyone would suffer so much for another, but Christ did. It is mercy and grace on His part, motivated by an infinite love. For us, His offer of salvation is an undeserved, miraculous godsend without which we would be doomed.

Jesus solves our second problem of entering heaven with a sinful nature with the miracle of the born again experience. There is no sin in heaven, and sinners cannot go to heaven. We must be made as righteous and sinless as God to go to heaven. Therefore, Christ must change us completely into new people.<sup>109</sup> This takes place spiritually. The inward man or spirit is made righteous. This happens the moment we confess our sins and trust God to save us.<sup>110</sup> The outward man (the physical body) remains the same. Subsequently, when we die physically, our bodies disintegrate back to the elements of the earth, *“dust to dust, ashes to ashes.”*<sup>111</sup> Our physical bodies are carnal, sinful, and unqualified to go to heaven. However, our new, born again spirits go to heaven because they are made righteous, which means they do not sin anymore. Therefore, they are qualified to enter heaven.<sup>112</sup>

Second Corinthians 5:21 explains how righteous we are made saying: *“For he [God] hath made him [Jesus] to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”* This verse tells us that we are actually made the righteousness of God.<sup>113</sup> This makes sense because there is no sin in heaven, which means that in order to go to heaven you have to be as righteous as God. Second Corinthians 5:17 explains: *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”* This new creature is spiritual not physical. When you become a Christian, Christ changes your spirit not your body. When you die, your sinful body stays here, and your righteous spirit goes to heaven.<sup>114</sup>

When you are born again, your spirit is changed and does not sin even though your body remains unchanged and sinful. This is why Paul said in Romans 7:18 *“for I know that in me (that is in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing....”* But in verse twenty-two he said, *“for I delight in the law of God after the inward man.”* The inward man is the spirit. Every Christian delights in the law of God after the inward man because it is righteous, regardless of the desires of his flesh.<sup>115</sup>

Once a person is saved two things happen: first, Jesus’ payment for sins is applied to his sin debt making it possible for forgiveness; second, God makes the believer righteous so that he cannot sin. Once a person is saved his spirit cannot sin.<sup>116</sup> If there is no sin there is no death. This does not mean that Christians are not responsible to obey God.<sup>117</sup> God expects Christians to obey Him not in order to be saved but because they are saved. First Corinthians 3:11–15 describes the judgment of Christians and concludes with a very important statement: *“If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”* A Christian cannot lose his salvation.<sup>118</sup>

God provides the solution to man’s problem of sin and condemnation, but He will not force His solution on man. Romans 10:9 says: *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thine heart that God has raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”* This verse promises salvation. It does not conclude by saying that one MAY be saved, MIGHT be saved, or PROBABLY will be

saved. You WILL be saved, no doubt about it, if you meet the two conditions stated in this verse—confess and believe.<sup>119</sup> The first condition is confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord. This means two things: (1) accepting the fact that Jesus is God, and (2) surrendering your life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Since Jesus is God, He knows what is best for you. If you truly trust Him and believe that He cares for you, you will surrender yourself and your will to His leadership. Turning your life over to Christ is called repentance. You will not fear His plan for your life. You will confidently give yourself to Him. Since no one else can save you, you must confess (call) to Him not to others. Trust Him to be your God and Lord.

The second condition is believing in your heart that God has raised Jesus from the dead. This means that you accept the fact that Jesus paid for your sins in full and, having done so, is now alive. He is not dead. He died and paid for your sins completely while on the cross.<sup>120</sup> Now He lives, and He will give life to you too. Romans 10:9 says that you must believe this in your heart. This means that you must truly, sincerely believe this to be so. You cannot fool God with your words. He will save you only if you really believe these things.

Romans 10:10 explains: *“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”* Believing with your heart emphasizes the importance of truly believing these things as fact. It also reminds us that believing in Christ results in being made righteous. Do you believe that God can, wants to, and will make you righteous (spiritually) so that you can go to heaven? If you do, then confess your trust to God. Men cannot save you. You must tell God that you believe in Him. Salvation is a PERSONAL interaction between you and God.

Romans 10:11 says: *“For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”* This means that if you believe on Jesus Christ (that is, you trust Him to help you and to be your God), then you will be saved. You will not die and then find out that He was playing a trick on you. God keeps His promises. He guarantees that if you believe these things are true and confess it to Him, He will save you. You can be one hundred percent confident that you will go to heaven if you believe in Him and call on Him to save you.

Romans 10:13 assures us that, *“whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”* To call on the Lord means to confess to Him, not to someone else, that you believe in Him. You must believe that His Word and promises are true, no question or doubt about it. God’s promise of salvation is to anyone who believes in Christ. If you die tonight, are you one hundred percent confident that you will go to heaven?

## ***Conviction***

Hearing the Word of God and the plan of salvation results in the Spirit of God convicting the listener.<sup>121</sup> This occurs when faith is given to the hearer.<sup>122</sup> Faith enables the hearer to realize the reality of God’s Word, sin, judgment, Christ, and heaven.<sup>123</sup> Apart from conviction, man would be blinded from ever seeing the truths of God’s Word.<sup>124</sup> Thus, man is dependent on God to draw him to Christ by having the Word of God proclaimed, imparting faith to him, and convicting him by His Spirit.<sup>125</sup>

The experience of conviction involves a realization of personal guilt of sin, the truth of Christ’s message, and the reality of an opportunity to spend eternity with God in heaven. The desire to give one’s life to Christ and to trust Him is evidence that God is drawing him to salvation. Of course, the flesh wants to continue in sin, so the individual under conviction experiences resistance to give his life to Christ. A struggle between the flesh and the Spirit occurs when one is under conviction. He wants to accept Christ but also to reject Him. If he was not under conviction, there would be no desire to accept

Christ and no struggle between the flesh and Spirit.<sup>126</sup> Have you ever experienced conviction? Is the Spirit of God convicting you?

### ***God Draws Men to Himself***

Man needs God's help. It is impossible for man to save himself. Moreover, he does not search out help from God.<sup>127</sup> Following, are several reasons for natural man's helplessness: (1) he lacks spiritual discernment,<sup>128</sup> (2) he is blinded in sin,<sup>129</sup> (3) he is blinded by Satan,<sup>130</sup> and (4) he is dead in sins.<sup>131</sup>

God draws man.

\* John 6:44 "*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.*" This passage shows that man cannot and will not come to God on his own. It does not tell us that God makes man believe in Him, nor does it mean that God unconditionally saves them. When God draws, He is helping man come to a point of choosing to accept or reject the Gospel.

\*Hosea 11:4 "*I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.*" The drawing of God does not mean that He has unconditionally predestined some to be saved. God draws, and man chooses to accept or reject. In this passage, the Israelites were drawn by God, but they rejected Him.<sup>132</sup>

\*John 12:32 "*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*" Jesus says He draws all men to Himself. This is consistent with his infinite nature. Since He is infinite, He loves to an infinite degree. Subsequently, God desires to save every person, and He sends His saints to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world.

The Bible is clear that God must draw man for salvation. Man will not come to God on his own. The fallacy of Calvinistic reasoning is thinking that the only solution to saving depraved man is for God to make the choice for him. But a better conclusion, in light of the Scriptures, is that God enables the depraved man to make that decision.<sup>133</sup>

God sends preachers.

Because man does not seek God, Romans 10:13–17 explains that God seeks man by sending preachers to share the Gospel with him. Paul explained in Romans 1:16 that the Gospel of Christ "*is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*" God wants every Christian to share the Gospel so that everyone in the world will hear His message and be saved.

God gives faith.

Romans 10:17 tells us that faith comes with hearing the Word of God. This is consistent with Romans 12:3 which says, "*...according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*" Without faith, one could not know the reality of the Gospel message. Hebrews 11:1 and 3 explain: "*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.... Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*" Many people erroneously think that faith and belief are the same thing, but they are not.<sup>134</sup> Faith is the evidence of spiritual issues. Believing is accepting the evidence. No amount of believing, no matter how sincere, will make things real. Believing is one's response to what he thinks or knows. Faith, on the other hand, enables one to understand and know the reality of spiritual truths. When

one hears the Gospel, God gives to Him faith. This enables him to understand the reality of the Gospel truths so he can choose to believe in or reject Christ.

God gives repentance.

Second Timothy 2:25–26 tells us that man can be saved “...if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” As seen in numerous passages previously mentioned, man cannot believe, repent, or call upon the Lord by Himself. God must draw him and bring him under conviction before he can choose to accept Christ. Does God desire to give man repentance? Yes. God does not want anyone to perish, and He desires for everyone to repent (surrender their will to serve Him).<sup>135</sup> Therefore, this verse is not suggesting that God denies repentance to some, but rather that without Him there is no repentance.

God draws man to Himself by proclaiming His Gospel through messengers and by imparting faith to the hearers. Without the Gospel and faith, no one would be saved.<sup>136</sup> Thus, “No man can come to [Jesus], except the Father which hath sent [Jesus] draw him...”<sup>137</sup> One must still believe and repent, but these are not considered works. They are one’s admission that he is dependent on God and that there is nothing he can do to save himself.

### ***Summary of Gospel truths***

1. God predestined the plan of salvation.
2. God did not predestine who would be saved or condemned.
3. God desires everyone to be saved.
4. God predestined that man would be given a choice to accept or reject salvation.
5. Man’s nature is sinful.
6. Man desires to sin.
7. Man chooses to do good as well as evil.
8. It only takes one sin to be condemned.
9. God convicts man of sin.
10. God draws all men to Himself.
11. Man cannot pay the price for his sins.
12. Man cannot change his sinful nature.
13. Man cannot earn his salvation.
14. Jesus Christ paid for the sins of the whole world.
15. Jesus Christ forgives those who trust in Him.
16. Believers are born again and made righteous.
17. Believing, repenting, calling, and accepting are not works.

## ***Appendix one. Commentary on Romans Nine***

Chapter nine in the book of Romans is a commonly quoted passage in Calvinistic teachings. It contains phrases that Calvinists use to support their arguments for the irresistible will of God and, subsequently, the idea that God unconditionally determines who will be saved or damned. However, examination of Romans nine, in context, reveals that the phrases often quoted by Calvinists do not mention or suggest that salvation and condemnation are unconditional.

After explaining the tenets of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in chapters one through eight, with a conclusion that salvation is irrevocable and eternally secure, the Apostle Paul begins chapter nine by explaining the relationship between Israel and the Gospel. In chapters nine through eleven, Paul addresses several issues such as: whether the Jews were saved by the same Gospel, whether the Jews were saved by the works of the law and sacrifices, whether the Jews were saved regardless of their wickedness because they were God's chosen people, whether God's rejection of Israel and establishment of His church was a failure of His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The principal theme in Romans nine is that God's promises for Israel are fulfilled in true Israel.<sup>138</sup> Paul states that not all Israel is Israel. But, what determines whether one is in true Israel or not? Paul explains that being in true Israel is not determined by works (conformity to the law), but by God's promise—the same Gospel that Paul explained in previous chapters.

### Verses 1–5. Paul's grief for Israel

Paul says that his love for his kinsmen (the Israelites) is so great that he continually sorrows over them and wishes that he could be condemned for their sake. He then recounts what it means to be an Israelite. They were God's chosen people, meaning they were: blessed with the privilege of being His witness on earth, conducted the affairs of God's covenant and holy rituals, and were the kin of Christ according to the flesh.

### Verses 6–13. True Israel

Though Paul admitted that Israel (as a nation) was rejected by God and was replaced by the church to be God's witness in the world, he quickly pointed out that this did not mean that God failed to fulfill his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.<sup>139</sup> Paul explains that God's promises were being fulfilled through true Israel, saying that not all Israel was truly Israel. Israel, as a nation, rejected Christ, defiled the holy things, and worshipped the law more than God. But, there was a remnant of Jews who did not share in these abominations.<sup>140</sup> Paul explains that to be a true Israelite, one must be born of Abraham through the promised seed.<sup>141</sup> In the flesh, this meant through Isaac because Isaac was born by promise of God under conditions that were physically impossible for Abraham and Sarah to accomplish. In addition, one must be born of Jacob (later named Israel) not of Esau. The birthright promise was given to Jacob. Of course, this raises the issue of Esau's legal right to the birthright promise because he was the firstborn. But Paul explains that the promise of God supersedes the works of the law *“that the purpose of God according to election might stand.”*<sup>142</sup> This means that God's election is based on His criteria, rather than on the law, to fulfill His purpose. Election by God's promise is sure because God will not break His promise. Reward based on works will fail because it involves dependence on man's ability and faithfulness (which is as sure to fail as God's promise is sure to never fail). God does not elect arbitrarily as some contend. His criteria for electing is well established throughout the Scriptures, especially in Paul's letters: belief in God and repentance from sins.<sup>143</sup> God's love for Jacob and hate for

Esau was not based on the goodness or evil of their works. It was based on the same criteria applied to everyone.<sup>144</sup> Paul's mention of the promise being before their birth was to emphasize the idea that God's selection of Jacob was based on grace not on works. God already foreknew all there was to know about the lives of about Jacob and Esau (their works, and their faith) in eternity past.

### Children of God

Paul mentions in verse eight that the children of God are the children of promise not of the flesh. The trained Jew knew that to be a child of God and heir to the kingdom of God, it was necessary to be born of Abraham. Sadly, many, if not most, of the Jews were depending on their physical lineage to Abraham for salvation. This is why Jesus confronted the Jews in Matthew 3:9 saying: "*And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.*" Little did they know that they were looking at the very One they needed to be born of in order to become true heirs of God's promises to Abraham. Abraham is the father of all those who are saved, but not by physical lineage only.<sup>145</sup> In Galatians 3:29, Paul explains that, "*if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*" Christ was the true promise seed whom God promised to Abraham.<sup>146</sup> Therefore, everyone born again in Christ is also the seed of Abraham and heir to the promises God made to Abraham. This is why God said to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 "*...in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*" Christ is Savior to all families of the earth. For a Jew to be a true Israelite, Paul explains that it is necessary to be a child of God. This requires being born again in Christ.<sup>147</sup>

Paul contrasts the children of the flesh and the children of God because the physical lineage of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob (sons of promise) is a typology of the spiritual lineage through Christ (the promise seed). Paul elaborates in the book of Galatians on some of the typologies that contrast the promise of God with the works of the law. Unfortunately, many people confuse the typology with the real thing. Many Jews thought they could be saved by the sacrifices of animals. Some thought they were children of God because they were descendants of Abraham. But these things only represented the real Lamb of God and the true family of God. Israel was chosen by God to be His witness of the Gospel by means of law and works. They were not saved because they were His chosen people.

### Verses 14–18. The sovereignty of God

Because God chose to give the birthright promises to Jacob rather than to Esau (who was the first born), Paul deals with the obvious question one might ask: "*Is there unrighteousness with God?*" It would appear that God was unfair to Esau, but Paul points out that God is not unfair or unrighteous, rather He, not man, determines what is right and how things should be done. God chooses men and nations over others because He wants to accomplish His purpose according to His criteria, not because one is more worthy than another according to their works. Thus, God chose Jacob over Esau to be in the lineage of the promised seed to demonstrate that promise supersedes and is better than the law, not because his works were better.

### Verses 19–24. The fairness of God

If God is in control of the rise and fall of men and nations, then the next obvious question Paul deals with is: why does God find fault with those who fulfill His purpose by doing evil? For example, Pharaoh and Egypt were chosen by God to represent Satan and the bondage of sin. But, Paul explains that God is above reproach in choosing how men and nations (righteous or not) will fulfill His purpose. God blesses some and curses others to fulfill His purpose, which is to have all men saved.<sup>148</sup> God blesses and curses men and nations on earth to demonstrate that man needs God. He selected Israel over others to be His chosen people on earth not because they were better than others but because He had mercy on them.<sup>149</sup>

Likewise, He selected Egypt to be the wicked oppressors and recipients of His curses because this was their role in the world, not because they were worse than others. He deemed this to be the best way to fulfill His purpose on earth, and it had nothing to do with their personal salvation. God's decisions on how to accomplish His purpose among men and nations is not based on their accomplishments or merit but by His mercy. So why are all Israelites not true Israelites? It is not because of their works, but rather because of God's promise through His Son Jesus Christ.<sup>150</sup>

Verses 25–29. True Israelites are but a remnant.

Having dealt with issues concerning how one becomes a part of true Israel, Paul cites prophetic statements affirming that only a remnant makes up true Israel. God's obvious purpose for Israel was to be a testimony of what it means to have a relationship with God based on law. This condition was a testimony of failure and judgment, and a typology of the lost under God's law. Thus, God would say of them, as a nation, that they were not His people, even though there were believers among them—true Israel.<sup>151</sup> On the other, Israel was a testimony of success because they demonstrated God's unfailing promise to Abraham: a typology of his seed multiplied as the sand of the sea. Thus, as a nation, they were referred to as God's people, even though most of them were not believers. Paul points out that because of the inevitable increase of unbelievers and subsequent debauchery of the nation (as is true of all nations), God finished His work early. The same process of unbelief and moral decay that took place in Israel is occurring in the world today.<sup>152</sup>

Verses 30–33. Believers made righteous

Paul compares the nation of Israel with the Gentiles to emphasize that everyone must be saved by faith, including the Jews. Israel was God's chosen people. God mercifully elected them over others; but, individually, they still had to be saved just like everyone else and in the same way. Attempts to attain righteousness through the law will always fail—just as Israel's attempts did. However, faith and belief in Jesus Christ results in righteousness.

In light of the Bible's teachings about God's desire that no one should perish<sup>153</sup> and about Christ's suffering for all that all may be saved,<sup>154</sup> it is unreasonable to suggest that God unconditionally chooses who will be saved and damned. The context of Romans nine shows that God works among men and nations to win souls through their testimonies—be it blessings or cursings. The recipients of these blessings and cursings are chosen by God's mercy not according to their works or accomplishments. Further, Paul's detailed explanations, in previous and later chapters, about the Gospel and about how to be saved show us that the purpose and election of God mentioned in chapter nine have nothing to do with God unconditionally determining to save or damn souls.<sup>155</sup> Even though Paul described in detail, in previous chapters leading up to chapter nine, that salvation is by grace through faith and believing in Jesus Christ, it is surprising to realize how some argue that God's purpose, will, and election exclude man's will and choice to accept or reject Christ. It is appropriate that Paul concludes chapter nine by saying: "*whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*"

## ***Appendix two. Salvation by grace, not works***

The topic of works must be addressed because some think that rejecting the doctrine of Calvinism is acceptance of Arminianism (works for salvation). This is not so.

Salvation is impossible without God.<sup>156</sup> Only God can pay for sins. Only God can forgive our sins. Only God can change the unrighteous nature of man to righteousness. Only God can impart spiritual discernment to man. Man can do nothing for himself to gain salvation.

Some think that with God's help they can be good enough to be saved or to maintain their salvation. But there is no truth to this. Romans 11:6 tells us that if salvation is by grace: *"...then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."* In other words, grace and works are mutually exclusive. They cannot be combined. Salvation cannot be by grace and by works. It must be all grace or all works.

Salvation is not of works.

Galatians 2:16 *"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."*

Galatians 3:11 *"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith."*

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

Second Timothy 1:9 *"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began...."*<sup>157</sup>

Salvation is not by law.

\* Galatians 3:11 *"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith."* The law is the standard by which the goodness or sinfulness of works is determined. The law referred to in this verse is the law that God inscribes in the heart of every man<sup>158</sup> and is used as the standard by which every man is condemned.<sup>159</sup>

Salvation is by grace.

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

Acts 15:11 *"But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."*

Titus 3:7 *"That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."*

Romans 3:24 *"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...."*

Salvation is not of "grace and works."

\* Romans 11:6 *"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."* Attempting to combine

works and grace to obtain salvation is futile.<sup>160</sup> The Bible says they are mutually exclusive. Salvation must be either by grace or by works but cannot be by grace and works. Therefore, whenever the Bible says that we are saved by grace, we know that it cannot include works. As explained earlier, believing is not a work.

Salvation is by faith.

Romans 3:27 *“Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.”*

Luke 7:50 *“And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”*

Luke 18:42 *“And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.”*

Romans 5:2 *“By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”*

Romans 5:1 *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ....”*

Romans 4:16 *“Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all....”*

Romans 4:5 *“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”*

Galatians 3:24 *“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”*

Grace, faith, and belief are not a part of works and/or the law.

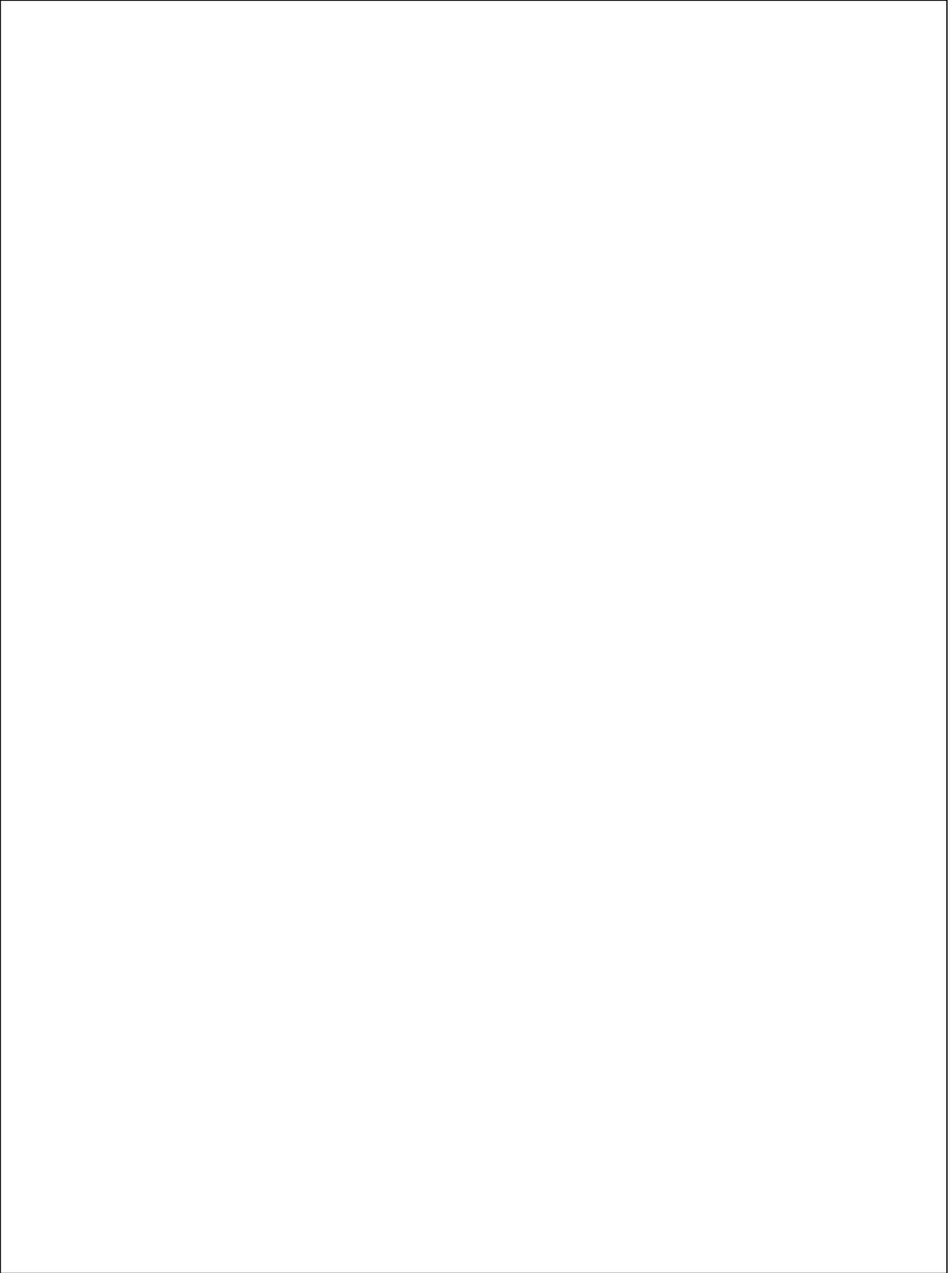
\* Galatians 2:16 *“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”* There are two mutually exclusive systems contrasted in this verse: (1) works and law, and (2) faith and belief. Faith and belief are not works.

\* Romans 4:5 *“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”* Works and believing are contrasted here as producing two different results. Believing justifies the ungodly, and works does not.

Hebrews 11:6 *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”*

Those who rely on works are condemned.

\* Revelation 20:11–15 *“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”* Everyone will be judged from one of two books—the book of works or the book of life.<sup>161</sup> Works will always be inadequate, and everyone judged by their works will end in the fires of hell. Only those saved by grace through faith (believing in Christ and repenting of their sins) will have their names written in the book of life. The only smart choice is to forsake works and depend on Christ for salvation.



## ***Appendix three. Sin and the fall of man***

Adam and Eve are blamed for the sins of all mankind. But the truth is that they were only the first to sin. They are not responsible for our decisions to sin. If they were, then they would be the only ones punished for sins. Paul explains in Romans 5:12, “*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned....*” Sin and subsequently death entered the world by Adam, but all die because all choose to sin. Every individual is personally responsible for his own sins. No one can blame Adam.

How did sin enter the world through Adam? Did God create Adam with sin? Did Satan do something to Adam to make him sinful? God did not create sin. Sin entered the world when Adam chose to disobey the law of God.<sup>162</sup> Paul explains in Romans 5:13: “*For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.*” Further, in Romans 7:8 he says: “*For without the law sin was dead.*” The idea here is that until there is law, there is no accountability for sins. Sin is dead. Subsequently, there is no death. Therefore, sin entered the world via law and disobedience.

Paul cites evidence in Romans 5:14 that a law other than Moses’ law existed since the time of Adam saying, “*Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.*” The wages of sin is death, so if there was death prior to the time of Moses there must have been law.

What law is this that empowers sin to kill us?<sup>163</sup> Paul describes it in Romans 2:12–15 as the law that is written in the hearts of men.<sup>164</sup> Moses’ law was simply a written, partial representation of the law of God that existed long before Moses. Everyone carries this law in their heart and therefore is accountable for the sins they choose to commit.<sup>165</sup> Sin entered the world when the law of God was written into the heart of man.

Genesis three describes the fall of man. In the garden, there was only one law for Adam and Eve to obey: do not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.<sup>166</sup> What was this tree? It represented the law, the knowledge of good and evil. Violating this one law of the garden resulted in a comprehensive knowledge of good and evil (the Law). This is why Satan told Eve that eating the fruit would open their eyes and that they would be like the gods knowing good and evil.<sup>167</sup> God affirmed that, indeed, Adam and Eve’s eyes were opened to know good and evil.<sup>168</sup> This was their downfall. Knowing good and evil meant that they were aware of the God’s moral Law thereby making them accountable for all sins.

Adam’s violation of the one law gives us a vivid typology of James 2:10 which says, “*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*” It only takes one sin to make one guilty of all sins. This is because the ability to commit one sin is evidence that one has an unrighteous nature. Having an unrighteous nature makes one desire all sins. In contrast, a man with a righteous nature does not desire sin and cannot commit sin—not even one sin. This is why Paul explains in First Timothy 1:9 “*Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers....*” The point is that a righteous man has no need of the law because he does it by nature. An unrighteous man needs the law to show him that he is not righteous. One violation of the law (sin) is evidence of that.

Adam and Eve were created with their own nature. They did not have the righteous nature of God. But God did not create them with a sinful nature either. They had an innocent nature with the ability to

choose good or evil according to their freewill. As long as they obeyed the one law that they were aware of, they were in fellowship with God. The day they ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the comprehensive law of God was written in their hearts, they became aware of good and evil (the law), and they died.<sup>169</sup> Subsequently, all of Adam's descendants have been born with the law written in their hearts. Thus, everyone is accountable to the law, and when they choose to sin they die. The wages of sin is death. Sin entered the world by one man (Adam) because of knowledge of the law, and consequently death. All men die because all men have knowledge of good and evil and choose to sin.

## ***Appendix four. Age of accountability***

Many people wonder whether young children and babies go to heaven or hell when they die. The Bible does not give us explicit teaching on the subject, but there is implicit instruction in the Bible from which we can draw a conclusion concerning these young souls. Searching for an answer to this question is a good exercise in biblical study, and a good way to test your theology.

There are three ways to explain the destiny of the immature: (1) they go to hell, (2) they go to heaven in innocence, or (3) they go to heaven in righteousness. The first explanation is supported by Hebrews 9:27 which says, “*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment....*” One could reason that because all are born in sin and are unrighteous, they must be condemned. However, Second Kings 2:23 records King David saying of his deceased, baby son, “*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.*” David was confident of seeing his son again. Since David was going to heaven, then he was expecting his son to be there too. Could David be right? According to the Apostle Paul, there is a time of being spiritually alive without the law.<sup>170</sup> Because the law existed before Paul, we are lead to conclude that “without the law” means a time when he was unaware of the law by virtue of immaturity as a child. However, once he matured to the point of understanding morality, sin revived, and he died. This is called the age of accountability. Knowledge of the law (good and evil) makes one accountable for choosing sin. Prior to the age of knowledge or accountability, one is innocent and alive in Christ, even as Paul described of himself.<sup>171</sup> Where there is no law, there is no sin, and if no sin, then no death.<sup>172</sup> If one is alive in Christ and dies while still immature, it is reasonable to conclude that they continue to be alive in Christ. After all, nothing has changed except for their death. Not surprisingly, King David was correct in expecting to see his son in heaven. However, if the immature go to heaven do they remain immature? What happens to them if they mature and come to a knowledge of good and evil? Will they have to make a decision at some time to choose Christ?

According to Colossians 1:20 all things are reconciled to Jesus, “*...whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*” Because everything in heaven and on earth must be reconciled, it is reasonable to conclude that everyone in heaven must accept Christ. If this is so, then those who die immature must continue to mature in heaven so that they can make that decision. It is reasonable to think that people continue to mature and grow in the infinite knowledge of God. For finite souls, there will be no end to learning about God.

The only hope of eternal life is to choose Christ at some point. There is no hope of eternal security without redemption and the imputing of righteousness to the soul. Because God is the same, and the problem is the same, then the solution must be the same for those in heaven as in earth—believe unto righteousness in Christ. Though the immature may die and go to heaven in innocence, they will need to be born again in order to spend eternity in heaven as mature souls.

Moral accountability occurs when an individual is aware of sin. Since people mature at different rates and ages, there is no particular age at which one becomes morally aware. For some mentally impaired persons, this awareness may never occur during their physical life. Nonetheless, moral awareness in children is often recognized by parents when they observe that the child shows a sense of modesty and real shame for wrongdoing.

The message of the Bible is to those who can understand it and be won to the Lord.<sup>173</sup> So it is not surprising that specific instruction about the immature is absent from the Bible. Nonetheless, the

question of what happens to the immature when they die is a useful exercise in applying one's theological tenets.

## ***Appendix five. God's plan of salvation unchanging***

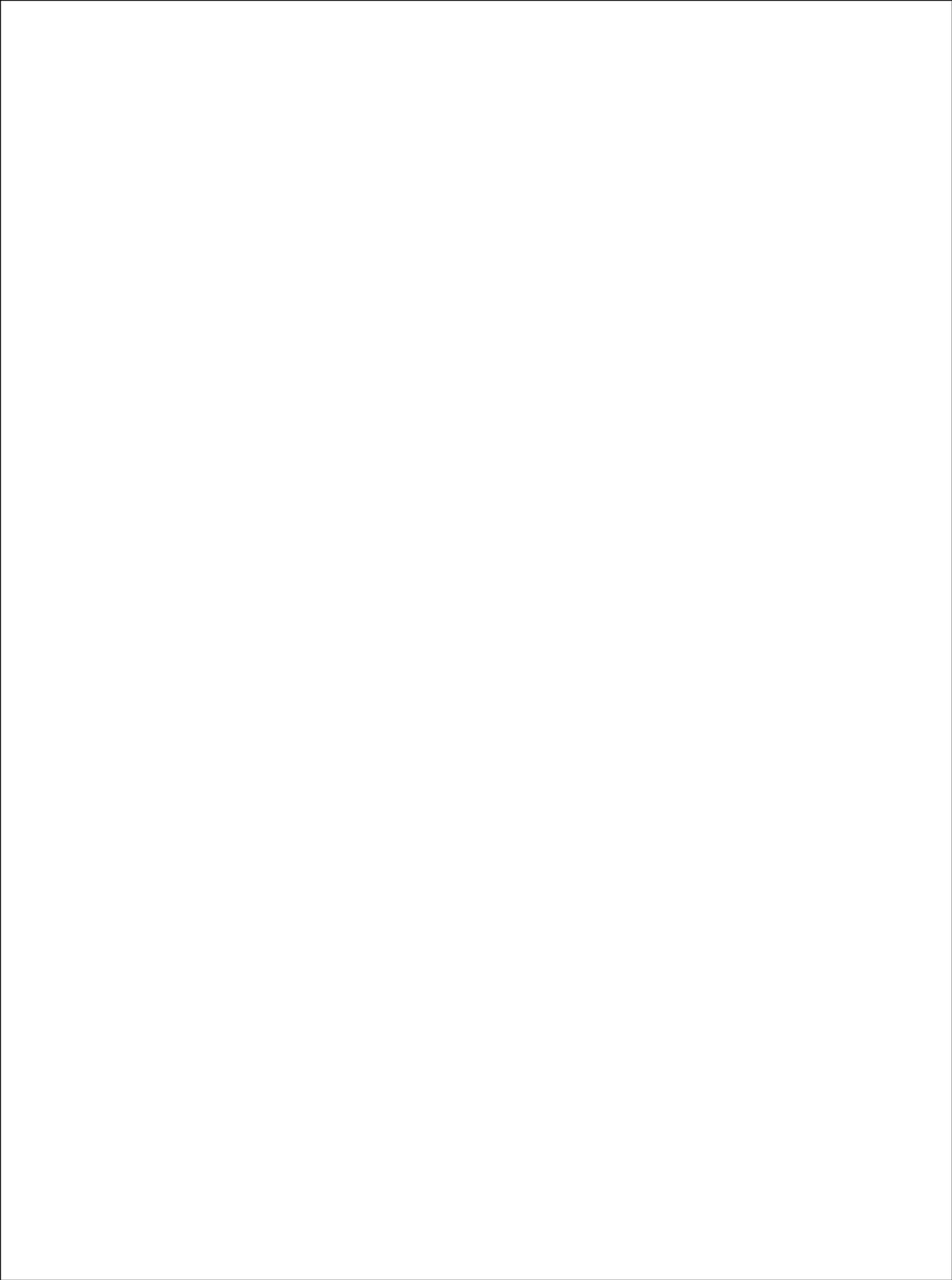
God is the same, and sin is the same. Therefore, God's solution to sin has always been the same. It has never changed or been different. But did God save people prior to Jesus dying on the cross?

- \*Hebrews 4:3 *"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."* Everything that had to be done for salvation was finished before Adam was created.
- \* Hebrews 9:26 *"For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."* Jesus died and suffered only once. Did He do this before the world began or at the cross? It was at the cross.<sup>174</sup> However, for God, all things are present tense, thus, it was as good as done in eternity past. Christ's death on the cross was perfect timing to fulfill the typology of the Gospel in the history of man.<sup>175</sup>
- \*Revelation 13:8 *"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."* For God, the death of Christ was done in eternity past. Thus, all men, since the time of Adam, could be saved because of the real Lamb. The blood of animals were never sufficient to save souls.<sup>176</sup>

The Gospel message has been preached since Adam

- Luke 1:70 *"As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began...."*
- Acts 3:21 *"Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."*
- Titus 1:2 *"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began...."*
- Matthew 13:35 *"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."* The secret or mystery of the Gospel was the revealing of who the Savior would be as a man. There was no question that God was sending His Son, but no one knew when or what His human identity would be.

God's plan of salvation was conceived in eternity past. For God, Jesus was slain for the sins of the world before the world was created. Consequently, this Gospel message has been preached from the time of Adam until now. Animal sacrifices in Israel were a part of their covenant with God as a nation. These sacrifices had nothing to do with the salvation of one's soul. Israelites were looking for the Son of God to come as the Lamb of God to save them. They trusted in the Lamb of God who would come to die for their sins; whereas, people today trust in the Lamb who has already come. In either case, both were and are forgiven of their sins and made new in Christ.



## Appendix six. Questions and answers

For a more comprehensive explanation of questions refer to appropriate topics in this book.

What does it mean to be elected? Election means to be selected. God selects those who believe in His Son for salvation. A search of Bible passages does not indicate that usage of the word *elect* implies unconditional selection.

Does God call or choose people unconditionally for salvation? No. The words *call* and *choose* do not convey such meaning. Jesus' statement in Matthew 22:14 that, "*Many are called, but few are chosen*" indicates God's choosing of souls for salvation is conditional. The call is universal.

What did God predestine? God predestined the plan of how salvation would be accomplished, what he would do for those who accepted Christ, and the destiny of those who reject Christ. He also predestined that people would be given the opportunity to accept or reject Christ of their own freewill.

Does God predestine some to be saved? No. Calvinists refer to Jeremiah and John the Baptist because God chose them while they were in their mothers' womb. But this reasoning overlooks the fact that God chose everyone in eternity past long before they were conceived. God's choice of Jeremiah and John was based on knowing in eternity past that they would accept Christ.

Does God predestine some to be condemned? No. God desires that none should perish. Christ died for the sins of the world because God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

Is salvation conditional? It is conditional on one believing in Christ and repenting of his sins.

Does conditional salvation involve works? No. The Bible says that believing and repenting are not works. Calvinists and Arminianists say that they are works. Who will you believe: the Bible or men?

Is conditional salvation an attempt to combine grace and works? No. Grace and works are mutually exclusive. Salvation is one hundred percent grace. Works of any kind cannot be a part of salvation at any time.

How is faith different from belief? Faith enables one to discern the reality of spiritual truths. Belief is one's acceptance of those truths. Faith and belief are so closely related that the terms are often used interchangeably, and people often confuse them as being one and the same.

Is one saved before or after he believes? The Bible shows us that one must believe before he is saved. Hebrews 10:39 says that we "*...believe to the saving of the soul.*"

Is one made righteous before or after he believes? Afterwards. James 2:23 says, "*...Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness....*"

Can a depraved person believe in Christ? Yes, one is depraved because he has an unrighteous nature. Thus, according to James 2:23, Abraham was depraved at the time he believed.

Can a depraved person do good? Depraved people witness, tithe, show kindness to others, etc. All of these things are considered good according to the law. These deeds do not become evil just because they are done by the lost.

What does it mean that none do good? God judges the heart, not the behavior, thoughts, or motivation. As long as one is unrighteous in nature, all of his good deeds are of no merit with God—hence, no good. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and none do good as long as the heart is desperately wicked.

If God loves the whole world, then why are some not saved? Because they are guilty of sin and have not accepted the promise and forgiveness of Christ.

Why are those who never hear about Christ condemned? People are condemned because of sin.<sup>177</sup> They are saved because of Christ. Understanding this shows the importance of sharing the Gospel.

Is it possible for man to resist God's will? Yes. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but they die anyway. Also, Israel often refused to hear God's exhortations.

Can God be sovereign and allow man to accept or reject His will? Yes. Sovereignty means that God is the ultimate authority and ruler in creation. As such, God determined to allow man the choice to accept or reject His Son.

How can God be sovereign if His will can be resisted? Only because He allows it.

What do the following verses mean?

Matthew 25:34 *"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...."* Having a place prepared for you from the foundation of the world tells us that God had knowledge of your decision to accept Christ in eternity past. This verse does not suggest that God unconditionally determined that you or anyone else would believe in Christ and be saved.

Romans 8:29–30 *"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."* God predestined that certain people would be conformed to the image of His Son Jesus Christ. The criterion He used to select these certain people is stated in John 3:16, "Whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Thus, in eternity past God predestined everyone who would accept the promise of eternal life and believe in Jesus Christ to be conformed to the image of His Son.

Romans 9:18 *"Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."* God sovereignly determined the criteria for deciding whom He would show mercy to and whom He would harden. He hardened Pharaoh because Pharaoh rejected God. This example had nothing to do with Pharaoh's salvation.

Ephesians 1:11 *"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will...."* The counsel of God is that we be predestined to an inheritance in heaven with Christ. Other passages show us that God predestines this to happen based on the condition that we believe in Christ. This verse does not suggest that God's will is to predestine us unconditionally to salvation.

Philippians 2:13 *"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."* God's work and fulfillment of pleasure in us as Christians are conditioned upon our acceptance of His plan for us. Apart from Him, there would be no desire to do right or to seek His blessings.

Hebrews 8:10 *"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people...."* The context of this passage is Paul's comparison of the old and new covenants. The old covenant, conditional on fulfillment of law and works, was inadequate for salvation. The new covenant, conditional on grace and belief, replaced the old because Christ would fulfill it. This passage does not mention unconditionally saving these people.

Hebrews 12:17 *"For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."* The context is a warning that the opportunity to repent is not indefinite. Though this had nothing to do with Esau's salvation, the point is made that one should turn to Christ now rather than regret not doing so later.

Romans 3:10 *"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one...."* This refers to the nature of man rather than the behavior of man. Everyone is born and shapen in iniquity, that is, they are born with an unrighteous nature.

Romans 3:12 *"They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."*<sup>178</sup> None doeth good because none have a righteous nature. God judges

by the heart and not by the deeds, thoughts, or motivation of man. All the good that the unrighteous choose to do have no merit with God because of their unrighteous nature.

Jeremiah 13:23 *“Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.”* It is impossible for man to change his nature. He must be miraculously born again. Thus, there is no escape for the unrighteous from doing evil.

Jeremiah 17:9 *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”* The heart refers to the nature of man, and, clearly, none are righteous.

Jeremiah 4:22 *“For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.”* The Jews believed that they could be righteous by conforming to the law. But no one can do good in God’s eyes apart from having a righteous nature.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Second Corinthians 11:3 “*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*”

<sup>2</sup> Acts 4:12 “*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*”

<sup>3</sup> Galatians 1:6–7 “*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.*”

<sup>4</sup> L. Berkhof, Systematic Theology, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), p. 109.

<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 1:18 “*Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*”

<sup>6</sup> All men are guilty of flimsy arguments, hence, the vital importance and necessity for welcoming peer review and discussion.

<sup>7</sup> This is all the more reason to hold Calvinism suspect of error and to be open to modifying its teachings if not to completely abandoning them.

<sup>8</sup> Galatians 2:6 “*But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man’s person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me....*”

<sup>9</sup> Paul is not arguing for unconditional election. See Romans 9:33 and commentary on Romans none in appendix one below.

<sup>10</sup> See Unconditional Election to Salvation discussion below.

<sup>11</sup> See Unconditional Election to Salvation discussion below.

<sup>12</sup> Christians fall and stumble in their walk with Christ without losing their salvation. However, carnal Christians can forget they are saved. The context of the passage concerns growth and assurance. Second Peter 1:8–9 says, “*For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*” Making our calling and election sure refers to our state of mind rather than our position in Christ. Notice that those who are not diligent to grow and mature in the faith can come to a point of FORGETTING that they are saved. Forgetfulness has nothing to do with losing one’s position of salvation in Christ.

<sup>13</sup> Isaiah 44:28 “*That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.*”

<sup>14</sup> Romans 10:13–17 “*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 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? 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! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*” See Unconditional Election to Salvation discussion below.

<sup>15</sup> Romans 4:5 “*But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*” Notice that God justifies those who believe, not those who work. If belief were a work as Calvinists claim, then this verse would be nonsense. See Unconditional Election to Salvation discussion below.

<sup>16</sup> See Romans 8:29.

<sup>17</sup> See Unconditional Election to Salvation discussion, and commentary on Romans none in appendix one below.

<sup>18</sup> This would be consistent with verses such as Matthew 22:14.

<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, the Galatians were hindered from obeying the truth, which was not God’s desire and plan for them. If God’s plan for one’s life is irresistible, then it should never be hindered – not even for one second. To say that the sin in one’s life is God’s plan is to accuse God of condoning sin.

<sup>20</sup> Examples of unfulfilled callings (excluding salvation) include, king Saul, Israel, the prophet on the roadside, etc. God had a better plan and would have fulfilled their callings if they had been faithful to Him.

<sup>21</sup> The context of this passage tells us what believers are predestined for. Romans 8:29 says, “*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*” There is no suggestion that people are unconditionally predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, only that this event was based on foreknowledge.

<sup>22</sup> See Matthew 22:14 for more explanation on how the saved are called, but not all the called are saved.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus illustrates this principle with the story in Matthew 18:26–27 saying, “*The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.*” The condition for receiving forgiveness was asking for mercy. No amount of works or merit could pay the debt. See commentary on Romans nine in appendix one below.

<sup>24</sup> The beginning refers to a time prior to the foundation of the world. See Luke 1:70, Acts 3:21, and Titus 1:2.

<sup>25</sup> On the contrary, God requires that we believe before He chooses us. See Unconditional Election to Salvation discussion below.

- <sup>26</sup> See Matthew 22:14 commentary above for an explanation on how all the saved are called but not all the called are saved.
- <sup>27</sup> To say that they were chosen to serve as God's witnesses in order to know and believe is wrong. Israel was being rebuked because they did not believe. Isaiah 43:22 says, "*But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.*"
- <sup>28</sup> Isaiah 43:22.
- <sup>29</sup> The idea here is that serving Christ as His disciple is a privilege, not a right. It is only possible to do because He makes it possible.
- <sup>30</sup> See Isaiah 43:20–28.
- <sup>31</sup> God knows us in eternity past. He predestined all those He saw believe in His Son to be conformed to His Son's image.
- <sup>32</sup> Romans 10:13–17 describes another order of events from a human perspective.
- <sup>33</sup> Mention of this order of events affirms that God's plan of salvation remains unchanged. We are assured that predestination to Christ's image does not occur without being called. As we have seen earlier, many are called but few are chosen. This tells us that being chosen is conditional, and it follows that predestination to conform to Christ's image is too.
- <sup>34</sup> The events leading to damnation are similar to those leading to glorification. Consider the following series: And we know that all things work together for evil to them that hate God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of their father the Devil, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also judged: and whom he judged, them he also damned. When one considers that the sequence of events are based on foreknowledge, then it can be said that the destiny of the damned is predestined and that they are also called according to the purpose of God. Just as there is no mention of an unconditional predestination to be saved in Romans 8:29–30, there is no reason to consider that one is unconditionally predestined, called, judged, or damned.
- <sup>35</sup> Some erroneously think that God foreknows everything because He predestined how everything would be.
- <sup>36</sup> J.B. Buffington, *The Baptist Challenge* (May 1992):12. Buffington argued that "Foreknowledge means and refers to determinate counsel."
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>38</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*. Zondervan, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981):538.
- <sup>39</sup> First Corinthians 9:14 "*Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.*"
- <sup>40</sup> Galatians 5:25 "*If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*"
- <sup>41</sup> Because God desires that none should perish (Second Peter 3:9) and that all men should be saved (First Timothy 2:4), then we can conclude that everyone is ordained to eternal life. However, not all believe because (as previous verses show) *ordained* means what is desired, not what will necessarily be. Thus, when Paul preached the Gospel in Antioch, and as many as were ordained believed, it should be understood that ALL the Gentiles believed! The acceptance of the Gospel by the Gentiles was a contrast to the rejection by the Jews. What an initiation of Paul's ministry to the Gentiles! The message was clear that day for any who had doubts: God ordained (desired and declared) that Gentiles, as well as Jews, should be saved.
- <sup>42</sup> According to Romans 6:23 the wages of sin is death. No verse in the Bible suggests that condemnation is for any other reason, or that people are ordained for condemnation simply because God arbitrarily determined it to be so. There is no justification for assuming that God condemns souls for reasons other than for being guilty of sin (*Cf.* Romans 5:12).
- <sup>43</sup> Matthew 7:13–14 "*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*" If God chooses who will be saved, then this verse tells us He is choosing only a few and condemning most.
- <sup>44</sup> L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), p. 77.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>46</sup> Rejecting God's calling and plan for your life is the most foolish thing you can do. God has a perfect plan, but He leaves the decision to accept or reject it up to you.
- <sup>47</sup> God's pleasure and purpose is that none should perish and that all should have eternal life. See Second Peter 3:9 and First Timothy 2:4.
- <sup>48</sup> If God's irresistible will is a reflection of His pleasure, then He would not allow the wicked to die. Obviously, what God desires and what He wills are not always the same. The deaths of the wicked show us that God is not making all the decisions. It must be God's will to allow man to choose that which He is displeased with.
- <sup>49</sup> See, also, Luke 13:34.
- <sup>50</sup> Calvinism's doctrine of irresistible grace is wrong. One must be careful about defining terms and concepts and then imposing them on the Scriptures. Regardless of what men argue and how logical or sophisticated their arguments sound, if their doctrines contradict the Bible, they are wrong. The Bible is the final authority, not man nor a well reasoned argument. Regardless of what one would prefer to believe (or feel good about believing), we must accept the Bible's doctrine.
- <sup>51</sup> For example, Romans 3:12 and Jeremiah 17:9. See "Questions and Answers" in Appendix six for explanation of these verses.

<sup>52</sup> Doing good by the standard described in the law of Moses is only an outward conformity to the law. The real issue of goodness requires conforming to the complete and infinite Law of God with the heart. People are mistaken to think that conforming to the whole law of God means conforming to the Mosaic law. See Romans 2:12–15.

<sup>53</sup> Consider that God's law shows what good deeds are. It is easy to determine if one is doing them or not. Can lost men read their Bible? Can lost men be kind? Can lost men tithe? Can lost men make proselytes? Can lost men tell the truth? Can lost men give good things to their children? Of course they can, and they do. According to God's law, these deeds are good. Because sinners can choose to do these things, we must conclude that sinners can choose to do good.

<sup>54</sup> This explains why Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites. They did the deeds of the righteous, but they were unrighteous themselves.

<sup>55</sup> Calvinists define *belief*, *repentance*, and *calling* as being works of righteousness. Thus, they conclude that salvation cannot involve believing because that would involve a work for salvation. But, this is their definition, not the Bible's. God does not consider these to be works. See Unconditional Election to Salvation discussion below.

<sup>56</sup> One finds humor in a circus clown tying his dog to a pole in the ground and then being demanding and frustrated when the dog cannot do the clown's bidding. There is humor in the ridiculous. Teaching that God expects the lost to respond when they cannot is just as ludicrous as the clown and his dog – but without the humor. Indeed, it is shockingly abominable.

<sup>57</sup> Second Corinthians 7:10 *"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."*

<sup>58</sup> See Matthew 7:11.

<sup>59</sup> Isaiah 64:6 *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."*

<sup>60</sup> Proverbs 15:8 *"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD...."* Sacrifice is good according to the law. But, any good done by the unrighteous is unacceptable to God because He judges the heart, not the behavior.

<sup>61</sup> First Samuel 16:7 *"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."* The unsaved are judged by their heart or nature, which is guilty of choosing to sin. The Christian is judged according to the decisions he makes to yield to the unrighteous heart of the old man or to the righteous heart of the new man. Neither is judged because of their motivation.

<sup>62</sup> Matthew 7:22–23 *"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."*

<sup>63</sup> See Matthew 19:16–22.

<sup>64</sup> This is why Jesus said there is none good but God, and that the only way to get into heaven is by being born again (John 3:1–6).

<sup>65</sup> First Timothy 1:9 *"Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers...."* The righteous do not need the law because their nature will not allow them to do anything unrighteous. The unrighteous need the law to show them that they are not righteous. Violation of any portion of the law is evidence that one has an unrighteous nature that allows and desires to sin. This is why James 2:10 tells us, *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."*

<sup>66</sup> Behavior, thoughts, and motivations do not determine whether one is good or evil. It is the nature of man that determines whether he is good or not. The behavior, thoughts, and motivations are simply evidence of the nature of man. Thus, if one commits sin he has evidence that his nature is unrighteous.

<sup>67</sup> Ironically, the Bible shows that it is the righteous who lose the freewill to choose between good and evil by willingly relinquishing their will to God.

<sup>68</sup> The Christian has two natures. The spirit is righteous and the flesh is unrighteous. The imputed righteousness in the saved is God's righteousness, which means that the inability to choose evil is the same for the spirit of the saved as it is for God. Second Corinthians 5:21 explains, *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* Why is it impossible for God to lie? Because He has a righteous nature. Why is it impossible for the righteous spirit of a saved man to sin? Because he has the imputed nature of God's righteousness. This is why Paul said in Romans 7:22 *"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man...."* The inward man serves God and can do no less. Having a righteous nature prevents one from choosing sin. This, by the way, is the basis for eternal security. If you cannot sin, you cannot die.

<sup>69</sup> James 2:10 *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."* This shows that the ability to commit one sin is evidence that we are sinners and unrighteous by nature. We are guilty of transgressing the whole law because an unrighteous nature allows and produces the desire to commit any and all sins. See also Ezekiel 33:13.

<sup>70</sup> Psalm 119:1–3 *"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the LORD. Blessed are they that keep his testimonies, and that seek him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways."* Heaven is only for those who think and act righteously and are by nature righteous. Sin, of any kind, in one's life is evidence that he is by nature

unrighteous, making him unqualified to enter heaven. Salvation is not by works of righteousness because man's unrighteousness will always allow the desire to sin. God's nature will not allow the desire to sin. Hence, one needs God's nature imputed to him to prevent him from sinning. This happens by being born again of God.

<sup>71</sup> First John 3:9 *"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."* This refers to the inward man or spirit of man that is born again. Being imputed with the righteousness of God (Romans 4:11) makes it impossible to sin in the spirit. The flesh or outward man is unchanged in its nature. Thus, the Christian has two conflicting natures described by Paul in Romans 7:15–22. When a Christian dies, his sinful body stays in the earth, but the righteous spirit and soul go to heaven.

<sup>72</sup> Romans 3:22 *"Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference...."*; Second Corinthians 5:21 *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*

<sup>73</sup> See Romans 3:12.

<sup>74</sup> Psalm 51:5 *"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."*

<sup>75</sup> James 2:10 *"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."*

<sup>76</sup> Even if one was forgiven of sins, this is not enough for eternal life. Eternal security in heaven with God requires sinlessness, hence, the need for both forgiveness of past sins (Romans 3:17) and the imputing of God's righteous nature to prevent future sins (First John 3:9). Sinlessness, of course, is in the inward born again man, not in the outward, unregenerate body. Consequently, it is the spirit, not the body that goes to heaven.

<sup>77</sup> Isaiah 64:6 *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."*

<sup>78</sup> Romans 3:23 *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God...."*

<sup>79</sup> The natural man lacks spiritual discernment and knowledge of the Gospel. Therefore, he must hear the Gospel and be convicted by the Spirit of God before he can choose to believe in Christ and repent of his sins.

<sup>80</sup> Matthew 7:13–14 *"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."*

<sup>81</sup> See John 3:16 *"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."* Second Peter 3:9 *"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."* First Timothy 2:4 *"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."*

<sup>82</sup> This is a favorite verse among those who believe that baptism saves. However, Jesus clarifies that if one does not believe, he shall be damned. There is no such verse in the Bible to indicate this of baptism. Furthermore, baptism is a work of man, whereas, the Bible clearly states that belief is not a work. The message of believing and being baptized is part of the complete message Jesus sent with the disciples to tell others about. Salvation and church participation are both important for the enlarging of the kingdom of God. However, baptism has nothing to do with salvation.

<sup>83</sup> See discussion on conviction below.

<sup>84</sup> This is a favorite verse of those who believe in baptism for salvation. But Peter's answer of "repent and be baptized" is followed by describing the results in respective order. Thus, repentance is for the remission of sins and baptism is for the gift of the Holy Ghost. Peter combines repentance and baptism to answer the general question of what must be done to be a part of the Pentecost experience and the fulfilling of Joel's prophecy. To be a part, one must be saved and then be a part of the new covenant, the church (in contrast to the old covenant, Israel). Compare Peter's answer to this general question with Paul's answer to the specific question of, "...Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" in Acts 16:30. Paul answered saying, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Baptism is not a part of the answer to this question about salvation.

<sup>85</sup> Godly sorrow is contrasted with worldly sorrow to show the difference between a lasting repentance and a short-lived, false repentance. Godly sorrow is the sincere sorrow of having done wrong. Worldly sorrow is a selfish sorrow because of being caught, for which there is no remorse for sin, guilt, or the hurt and harm caused by the sin.

<sup>86</sup> Second Peter 3:9 *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that nay should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*

<sup>87</sup> See discussion on conviction below.

<sup>88</sup> Notwithstanding, man can only call upon God because He calls them first. See John 6:44.

<sup>89</sup> In their attempt to exalt God, Calvinists have actually belittled Him. Their conclusion leads one to reason that God does not have the power or the authority to involve the will of man. By preventing God from ordaining a plan that involves the will of man, the god of Calvinism is placed in a box from which he cannot escape. Further, Calvinism's god is reduced to a whimsical ogre, an image they must constantly explain away, because people wonder how God could arbitrarily be pleased to save only a few souls and damn the rest. The Bible does not portray God as the Calvinists claim. If God is sovereign, He can do anything He wants, including not having to exclude the will of man in His plan.

<sup>90</sup> Isaiah 1:18 *"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD...."*

<sup>91</sup> First Corinthians 3:11–15 shows us that Christians are judged for disobeying God.

<sup>92</sup> God allows sin to exist because His will is to allow man choice, not because He condones sin. All sin at all times is abominable to God, and He will judge it.

<sup>93</sup> Matthew 7:13–14 *“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”*

<sup>94</sup> Of course, this would mean that it pleases God to send most to hell. But, in Ezekiel 33:11 God says, *“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.”*

<sup>95</sup> One Calvinist said that, *“...God does not love everybody.”* Then he claimed that the Bible says, *“that God loved those He chose in Christ Jesus before the world began.”* Some assert that if you do not embrace this teaching, then you embrace the absurd idea that Jesus paid for the sins of those in hell. Of course, this misrepresentation is simply designed to ridicule not to honestly object. The fact is, Jesus died for everyone, but payment for everyone’s sins is not forced on them. Those in hell do not have their sins paid for. If they did, they would be in heaven.

<sup>96</sup> Ephesians 1:4 *“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love...”*

<sup>97</sup> Second Corinthians 5:21 *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”* Philippians 3:9 *“And be found in him, not giving mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith....”*

<sup>98</sup> Romans 8:10 *“And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”*

<sup>99</sup> First John 3:9 *“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”*

<sup>100</sup> See Romans 7:18.

<sup>101</sup> First Corinthians 15:45 & 47 *“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit....The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.”* Romans 5:18 *“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”*

<sup>102</sup> Some think that God will not judge Christians for the sins committed by their body. However, First Corinthians 3:11–15 tells us otherwise: *“If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”* Sinful Christians will still be saved, not condemned. Judgment of Christians is not for their souls because their spirit cannot sin.

<sup>103</sup> Romans 1:16 *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”*

<sup>104</sup> Matthew 19:17 *“And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.”*

<sup>105</sup> See Romans 3:10.

<sup>106</sup> Jeremiah 13:23 *“Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.”*

<sup>107</sup> Matthew 19:25–26 *“When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.”*

<sup>108</sup> Although Jesus died for everyone and offers this payment for sin to everyone, some foolishly insist on paying for their own sins.

<sup>109</sup> Second Corinthians 5:17 *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”*

<sup>110</sup> First Corinthians 1:18 indicates that we do not wait to be saved until the end of our life by saying, *“...but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”* Paul referred to himself and other Christians as individuals who ARE saved. The wording does not suggest they are waiting to be saved or trying to be saved. They are already saved.

<sup>111</sup> See Genesis 3:19.

<sup>112</sup> This is why Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:3, *“...Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”* Furthermore, in John 3:6, Jesus says, *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”* This explains that the flesh is different from the spirit. The flesh has the unrighteous nature acquired from earthly parents. The spirit is born again of God with His nature of righteousness. First Peter 1:23 explains, *“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.”* The flesh remains unchanged in the born again experience.

<sup>113</sup> Romans 3:22 *“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference....”*

<sup>114</sup> Romans 8:10 *“And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.”*

<sup>115</sup> A Christian has two opposing nature struggling for expression and dominance. No wonder Paul said of himself in Romans 7:21 *"I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me."* Nonetheless, Paul said in First Corinthians 9:27 *"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection...."*

<sup>116</sup> First John 3:9 *"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."*

<sup>117</sup> See Hebrews 13:20–21.

<sup>118</sup> For more explanation, see "Eternal Security" above.

<sup>119</sup> See Unconditional Election to Salvation discussion above.

<sup>120</sup> Christ died on the cross in human history for our sins, but for God it was all done before the world was created.

Revelation 13:8 *"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."*

<sup>121</sup> John 16:8–11 *"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."*

<sup>122</sup> Romans 10:17 *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* Romans 12:3 *"...according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."* God gives faith (the spiritual sense to "see" spiritual truths) when one hears the Word of God.

<sup>123</sup> Hebrews 11:1 & 3 *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."* Faith enables one to discern the spiritual truths of the Gospel, thereby, being the substance and evidence of things not discerned physically.

<sup>124</sup> Second Corinthians 4:3–4 *"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 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."* Besides being spiritually undiscerning, natural men are blinded and deceived by Satan.

<sup>125</sup> John 6:44 *"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."*

<sup>126</sup> Conviction comes when one hears the Word of God and is given faith to understand the Gospel message. However, some have the Word stolen from them so they never hear it. See Matthew 13:19.

<sup>127</sup> Romans 3:11 *"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God."*

<sup>128</sup> First Corinthians 2:14 *"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."*

<sup>129</sup> Zephaniah 1:17 *"And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung."*

<sup>130</sup> Second Corinthians 4:4 *"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."*

<sup>131</sup> Ephesians 2:1 *"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins...."*

<sup>132</sup> Hosea 11:5 *"He shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return."*

<sup>133</sup> God enables one to make a choice by sending the Gospel to him, giving him faith to understand it, and convicting him of his sin. God makes the need for Christ very real to the sinner but leaves the choice to accept or reject Christ up to him.

<sup>134</sup> God gives man seeing faith. He does not ask man to accept Christ without evidence or confirmation of the Gospel message. Though faith is not physical evidence, it is, nonetheless, just as real. The world and Satan give blind faith.

<sup>135</sup> Second Peter 3:9 *"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."*

<sup>136</sup> Romans 1:16 *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."* Hebrews 11:6 *"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."*

<sup>137</sup> See John 6:44.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. Romans 9:6 *"Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel...."* See Romans 2:28–29.

<sup>139</sup> Genesis 12:1–4 records the original promise God gave to Abraham. This general promise was repeated several times to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; it was guaranteed by God forever.

<sup>140</sup> Hebrews 3:16 *"For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses."* A search through the Bible reveals numerous passages indicating that God's promises would be fulfilled through the remnant of Israel (e.g., Zephaniah 3:13–16).

<sup>141</sup> Abraham had many sons and daughters other than Ishmael (his first born) and Isaac. See Genesis 25:1–6.

<sup>142</sup> See Romans 9:11.

<sup>143</sup> See Romans 9:33.

<sup>144</sup> See Romans 4:23–24.

<sup>145</sup> Romans 4:11 *“And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe....”*

<sup>146</sup> Galatians 3:16 *“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.”*

<sup>147</sup> Becoming a child of God required believing in Christ. God did not unconditionally choose who would believe or decide who would be saved. Accepting or rejecting Christ is man’s choice (Jew and Gentile). See Romans 9:33.

<sup>148</sup> First Timothy 2:3 *“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”*

<sup>149</sup> Ironically, Israel’s covenant was based on law; therefore, Israel was doomed to failure and judgment. That was their testimony to the world: that failure is inevitable under the law of God. Grace is the only way to approach God for fellowship and blessings.

<sup>150</sup> John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whatsoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

<sup>151</sup> See also Hebrews 3:8–19.

<sup>152</sup> See Matthew 7:13–14. Most people will not be saved.

<sup>153</sup> Second Peter 3:9 *“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.”*

<sup>154</sup> Hebrews 2:9 *“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”*

<sup>155</sup> Romans 9:33 *“As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever BELIEVETH on him shall not be ashamed.”* (Emphasis added). Romans 4:3 *“For what saith the scripture? Abraham BELIEVED God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”* (Emphasis added). Romans 4:24 *“But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, IF WE BELIEVE on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.”* (Emphasis added). Romans 10:9 *“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.”* (Emphasis added). Romans 11:23 *“And they also, IF they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.”* (Emphasis added).

<sup>156</sup> Mark 10:26–27 *“And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.”*

<sup>157</sup> The assumption that God’s “purpose and grace” excludes conditions or involvement of man’s will is a prejudice that is not inherent in the meaning of the words. See earlier explanations on Second Timothy 1:9.

<sup>158</sup> Romans 2:15 *“Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another....”*

<sup>159</sup> Romans 2:12 *“For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law....”*

<sup>160</sup> A commonly cited passage by Arminianists is James 2:14 which says, *“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?”* James is saying that a man who does not have a saving faith will not have works as evidence of salvation. Therefore, it follows that if one does not have works, then one should wonder if he has a saving faith. Read verses 17–24 for context. Take note that Abraham was justified in the eyes of God by faith and in the eyes of men by works. Abraham was not justified before God by works – Romans 4:2 *“For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God.”*

<sup>161</sup> The Book of Life is the one book that records the names of those who are saved by grace, promise, faith, believing, repenting, and calling; not by works. Psalm 69:28 says, *“Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.”* People’s names are blotted out because they are not found to be righteous. How did they get there in the first place? God’s ordained plan and purpose is for everyone to have eternal life. Since salvation is permanent and cannot be terminated, then these people (who are blotted out of the book) were never saved in the first place. Everyone’s names are written in the book from eternity past, but then because of sin, all of our names are blotted out, requiring that our names be written in again after we are saved and imputed with righteousness. The fact that some never have their names rewritten in the Book of Life shows that God’s ordained purpose for them is not realized.

<sup>162</sup> *World* here refers to mankind, not the physical creation. Sin existed in the world before man because Satan preceded him.

<sup>163</sup> Romans 7:11 *“For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.”*

<sup>164</sup> Romans 2:12–14 *“For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another....”*

<sup>165</sup> Romans 1:18 *“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness....”* Romans 1:21 *“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”*

<sup>166</sup> Genesis 2:17 *“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.”*

<sup>167</sup> Genesis 3:5 *“For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”*

<sup>168</sup> Genesis 3:22 *“And the LORD God sai, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever....”*

<sup>169</sup> At the point of committing this sin, their nature was declared to be unrighteous because it was guilty of choosing to sin. It allowed them to violate the one law God held them accountable for. Prior to this time, Adam and Eve were innocent of sinning and considered to be righteous, but their nature was their own righteousness, not God's (Ezekiel 33:13).

<sup>170</sup> Romans 7:9 *“For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.”*

<sup>171</sup> All men are born and shapen in iniquity, because they inherit the nature of Adam that was declared to be unrighteous. However, until one is mature enough to know the law, he remains unaccountable.

<sup>172</sup> Romans 5:13 *“For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.”* Romans 7:8 *“For without the law sin was dead.”*

<sup>173</sup> Second Thessalonians 2:14 *“Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Being called by the Gospel suggests that the listeners be able to understand it.

<sup>174</sup> There can be no doubt that Christ died on the cross two thousand years ago. Luke 22:44 *“And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”* Mark 15:34 *“And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? Which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”*

<sup>175</sup> The order of covenants that God made with Abraham, Israel, and the church, parallel the sequence of events that occur in one's life leading to salvation. Before man was created, God promised and made provision for salvation. Likewise, he made a covenant of promise with Abraham. We live under law until Christ comes into our lives and saves us, whereupon we are made new and live under grace. Likewise, Israel represented what it meant to live under law. When Christ came, He did away with the old covenant of law and established the new covenant of grace with His church. One's relationship to the covenants in Israel or the church had and have nothing to do with one's salvation. The purpose of these covenants is for a testimony of how to be saved.

<sup>176</sup> See Hebrews 10:4.

<sup>177</sup> Romans 1:20 *“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....”*

<sup>178</sup> Cf. Psalm 14:1–4.