

From G.I.Williamson: **The Shorter Catechism Vol 1** Presbyterian & Reformed Publ Co., 1970

KINDS OF RELIGION

TRUE	MIXED	FALSE
<u>T</u> Total Depravity - Man is evil in every part - Can do nothing to save himself	- Man is partly evil - Can do something to help save himself	- Man is good - Can do everything to save himself
<u>U</u> Unconditional Election - All men deserve no mercy - God has chosen some	- All men deserve some mercy - God chooses those who choose Him	- All men deserve much mercy - Every man chooses his own destiny
<u>L</u> Limited Atonement - Christ died to make salvation certain for some	- Christ died to make salvation possible for all men	- Christ died to set an example
<u>I</u> Irresistible Grace - Holy Spirit given to some - He enables them to repent, believe	- Holy Spirit given to all - He helps the ones willing to convert	- Holy Spirit not needed - Men can change themselves
<u>P</u> Perseverance of the Saints - God keeps His elect from falling - They will never fall	- God helps all who cooperate - They may, or may not, fall	- Men must keep themselves - They can keep themselves

From Loraine Boettner: **The Reformed Faith, Presbyterian & Reformed Publ Co 1983**

There are in reality only 2 types of religious thought. There is the religion of **faith** and the religion of **works**. In the early part of the 5th century these 2 types of religious thought came into direct conflict in a very clear contrast embodied in two 5th century theologians: Augustine and Pelagius. Augustine pointed men to God as the source of all true spiritual wisdom and strength, while Pelagius threw men back on themselves and said they were able in their own strength to do all that God commanded, otherwise God would not command it. The Arminianism of the 16th Century represents a compromise between these 2 systems. While it ap-

proaches the religion of faith, it does contain serious elements of error. The basic principle of Calvinism is the sovereignty of God. God appoints the course of nature and directs the course of history down to the minutest details. God's decrees are eternal, unchangeable, holy, wise, and sovereign. God is the Creator and Ruler of the world and is the ultimate source of all power found in the world. **Nothing can come to pass apart from God's sovereign will.** Otherwise He would not be truly God. **God permits**, not unwillingly but **willingly, all that comes to pass – including even the sinful actions and ultimate destiny of men.** And this must be, in some sense, in accordance with what He has eternally purposed

and decreed. Just in proportion as this is denied, God is excluded from the government of the world and we have only **a finite God. The Arminians believe that God cannot control the human will. The basic principle of the Reformed Faith is the sovereignty of God.** God created this world, He owns it, and He is running it according to His own sovereign good pleasure.

From Duane Edward Spencer: Tulip, Baker Book House:

Scripture teaches that election is based on God's purpose which is not affected by any condition on the part of man, since man's will is not free, but bound by Satan, sin, and death.

The 5 points or doctrinal positions were formulated by the Synod of Dort in reply to the "Remonstrance," a protest presented to the State of Holland by the disciples of the Dutch seminary professor Jacob Hermann (whose Latin surname was Arminius (1560 – 1609) **(Calvin's dates are 1509-1564)**. Although raised in the Reformed tradition, Arminius had serious doubts about the sovereign grace of God, for his natural reason was sympathetic to the teachings of Pelagius and Erasmus concerning the free will of man.

The great Synod of Dort was convened by the States-General in 1618 for the specific purpose of examining the 5 points of Arminianism in the light of Scripture. 84 theologians and 18 secular commissioners were assembled for 154 sessions from Nov 1618 until May 1619. After thorough examination of the doctrines of Arminius comparing his teachings with those of the Bible the Synod determined that his views were heretical. The members of the Synod did not stop there, however, but carefully formulated a 5 point rebuttal from the Scriptures, which later became known as the 5 points of Calvinism.

History shows that neither Arminianism nor Calvinism is new. A 5th century heretic named Pelagius, who denied that human nature was corrupted by sin, had taught that man possessed absolute free will whereby he could either choose or reject God. His historic opponent was the great theologian Augustine, who insisted that the Bible taught that man was dead in trespasses and sins and in bondage to Satan. Augustine showed the Bible taught that man's will was not in the least free.

During the Protestant Reformation the issue was sharpened. Erasmus, the theologian of the Church of Rome, issued a "Diatribes" in which he protested sovereign grace and argued for man's free will to make a decision for Christ. This was countered by the great Protestant Reformer Martin Luther in his thesis on the Bondage of the Human Will.

Arminianism is a refinement of Pelagianism and was later popularized by the Wesley brothers.

From Steele & Thomas: The 5 Points of Calvinism, Pres & Reformed Publ Co:

The doctrines of Arminius seem to have been held by many of the fathers of the 3rd and 4th centuries, having been diffused in the church through the corrupting influence of pagan philosophy. Pelagius denied that human nature had been corrupted by sin. For him the only ill effects which the race had suffered from Adam's sin was the bad example he had set for mankind. His leading principle was that man's will is absolutely free. Hence every one has the power within himself to believe the gospel as well as to perfectly keep the law of God.

To the leading Protestant theologians of the Reformation the crucial question was not simply whether God justifies believers without works of law. It was the broader question, whether sinners are wholly helpless in their sin, and whether God is to be thought of as saving them by free, unconditional, invincible grace, not only justifying them for Christ's sake when they come to faith, but also raising them from the death of sin by His quickening Spirit in order to bring them to faith. The crucial issue is whether God is the author, not merely of justification, but also of faith; whether Christianity is a religion of utter reliance on God for salvation and all things necessary to it, or of self reliance and self effort.

The issues involved in this historic controversy are grave, for they vitally

affect the Christian's concept of God, sin, and salvation. The difference between them is not primarily one of emphasis but of content. Arminianism proclaims a God Who enables man to save himself. Calvinism proclaims a God Who saves in the 3 great acts of the Holy Trinity for the recovering of lost mankind – election by the Father, redemption by the Son, calling and renewing by the Holy Spirit – as directed towards the same persons, and as securing their salvation infallibly.

The one point that Calvinism is concerned to establish is that sinners do not save themselves in **any** sense at all, but that salvation, first and last, whole and entire, past, present and future, is from the Lord alone.

From David Steele and Curtis Thomas: The 5 Points of Calvinism, Presbyterian & Reformed Publ. Co 1963

THE "FIVE POINTS" OF CALVINISM	THE "FIVE POINTS" OF ARMINIANISM
<p>1. <u>Total Depravity or Inability:</u> Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the gospel. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; his heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt. <u>His will is not free, it is in bondage to his evil nature,</u> therefore, he will not - indeed he cannot - choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. Consequently, <u>it takes much more than the Spirit's assistance to bring a sinner to Christ - it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is not something man contributes to salvation but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation</u> - it is</p>	<p>1. <u>Free-Will or Human Ability:</u> Although human nature was seriously affected by the fall, man has not been left in a state of total spiritual helplessness. God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but He does not interfere with man's freedom. Each sinner possesses a free will, and his eternal destiny depends on how he uses it. Man's freedom consists of his ability to choose good over evil in spiritual matters; his will is not enslaved to his sinful nature. The sinner has the power to either cooperate with God's Spirit and be regenerated or resist God's grace and perish. The lost sinner needs the Spirit's assistance, but he does not have to be regenerated by the Spirit</p>

<p>God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God.</p>	<p>before he can believe, for <u>faith is man's act and precedes the new birth</u>. Faith is the sinner's gift to God; it is man's contribution to salvation.</p>
<p>2. <u>Unconditional Election:</u> God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in His own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response of obedience on their part, such as faith, repentance, etc. On the contrary, <u>God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected. These acts are the result, not the cause of God's choice. Election therefore was not determined by or conditioned upon any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man.</u> Those whom God sovereignly elected He brings through the power of the Spirit to a willing acceptance of Christ. Thus God's choice of the sinner, not the sinner's choice of Christ, is the ultimate cause of salvation.</p>	<p>2. <u>Conditional Election:</u> <u>God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world was based upon His foreseeing that they would respond to His call. He selected only those whom He knew would of themselves freely believe the gospel. Election therefore was determined by or conditioned upon what man would do. The faith which God foresaw and upon which He based His choice was not given to the sinner by God</u> (it was not created by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit) <u>but resulted solely from man's will.</u> It was left entirely up to man as to who would believe and therefore as to who would be elected unto salvation. <u>God chose those whom He knew would, of their own free will, choose Christ. Thus the sinner's choice of Christ, not God's choice of the sinner, is the ultimate cause of salvation.</u></p>
<p>3. <u>Limited Atonement or Particular Redemption:</u> <u>Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them.</u> His death was substitutory endurance of the penalty of sin in the place of certain specified sinners. In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation, including faith which unites them to Him. The gift of faith is infallibly applied by the Spirit to all for whom Christ died, there-</p>	<p>3. <u>Universal Redemption or General Atonement:</u> Christ's redeeming work made it possible for everyone to be saved but did not actually secure the salvation of anyone. <u>Although Christ died for all men and for every man, only those who believe on Him are saved. His death enabled God to pardon sinners on the condition that they believe, but it did not actually put away anyone's sins. Christ's redemption becomes effective only if man chooses to accept it.</u></p>

<p>fore guaranteeing their salvation.</p> <p>4. Irresistible Grace or The Efficacious Call of the Spirit: In addition to the outward general call to salvation which is made to everyone who hears the gospel, the Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. The inward call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected; it always results in conversion. By means of this special call <u>the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners to Christ</u>. He is not limited in His work of applying salvation by man's will, nor is He dependent upon man's cooperation for success. <u>The Spirit graciously causes the elect sinner to cooperate, to believe, to repent, to come freely and willingly to Christ</u>. God's grace, therefore, is invincible; it <u>never fails to result in the salvation of those to whom it is extended</u>.</p>	<p>4. The Holy Spirit Can Be Effectually Resisted: <u>The Spirit</u> calls inwardly all those who are called outwardly by the gospel invitation; He <u>does all that He can to bring every sinner to salvation</u>. <u>But inasmuch as man is free, he can successfully resist the Spirit's call</u>. <u>The Spirit cannot regenerate the sinner until he believes; faith (which is man's contribution) proceeds and makes possible the new birth</u>. Thus, man's free will limits the Spirit in the application of Christ's saving work. <u>The Holy Spirit can only draw to Christ those who allow Him to have His way with them</u>. Until the sinner responds, the Spirit cannot give life. God's grace, therefore, is not invincible; it can be, and often is, resisted and thwarted by man.</p>
<p>5. Perseverance of the Saints: <u>All who are chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God and thus persevere to the end.</u></p>	<p>5. Falling from Grace: <u>Those who believe and are truly saved can lose their salvation by failing to keep up their faith</u>, etc. <u>All Arminians have not been agreed on this point</u>; some have held that believers are eternally secure in Christ - that once a sinner is regenerated, he can never be lost.</p>
<p>According to Calvinism: Salvation is accomplished by the almighty power of the Triune God. <u>The Father chose a people, the Son died for them, the Holy Spirit makes Christ's death effective by bringing the elect to faith and repentance, thereby causing them to willingly obey the gospel. The entire process (election, redemption, regeneration) is the work of God and is by grace alone. Thus God, not</u></p>	<p>According to Arminianism: <u>Salvation is accomplished through the combined efforts of God (who takes the initiative) and man (who must respond) - man's response being the determining factor. God has provided salvation for everyone, but His provision becomes effective only for those who, of their own free will, "choose" to cooperate with Him and accept His offer of grace. At the crucial point, man's</u></p>

<u>man, determines who will be the recipients of the gift of salvation.</u>	<u>will plays a decisive role; thus man, not God, determines who will be recipients of the gift of salvation.</u>
<p>REAFFIRMED BY THE SYNOD OF DORT</p> <p>This system of theology was reaffirmed by the Synod of Dort in 1619 as the doctrine of salvation contained in the Holy Scriptures. The system was at that time formulated into 5 points (in answer to the 5 points submitted by the Arminians) and has ever since been known as the 5 points of Calvinism.</p>	<p>REJECTED BY THE SYNOD OF DORT</p> <p>This was the system of thought contained in the "Remonstrance" (though the 5 points were not originally arranged in this order). It was submitted by the Arminians to the Church of Holland in 1610 for adoption but was rejected by the Synod of Dort in 1619 on the ground that it was unscriptural.</p>

Much of the following was taken from Duane Edward Spencer: **TULIP The Five Points of Calvinism in the Light of Scripture** Baker Book House. Some of the following came from www.cрта.org

Total Depravity (Total Inability)

This is probably the most misunderstood tenet of Calvinism. When Calvinists speak of humans as "totally depraved," they are making an extensive, rather than an intensive statement. **The effect of the Fall on man is that sin has extended to every part of his personality – his thinking, his emotions, and his will. Not necessarily that he is intensely sinful, but that sin has extended to his entire being. The unregenerate (unsaved) man is dead in his sins (Romans 5:12).** Without the power of the Holy Spirit, the natural man is blind and deaf to the message of the gospel (Mark 4:11f). This is why Total Depravity has also been called "Total Inability." The man without a knowledge of God will never come to this knowledge without God's making him alive through Christ (Ephesians 2:1-5).

Total depravity means beyond all self-help. Man is born into this world dead in trespasses and sins and therefore fully loyal to Satan. Man in his natural state is

incapable of doing anything or desiring anything pleasing to God. **Until he is born again by the Spirit of God and given a living human spirit man is the slave of Satan.**

2Cor. 4:4 The god of this age [Satan] has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

2Tim. 2:24-26 And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

1John 5:19 We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

Gen. 6:5 The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

Gen 8:21b . . . every inclination of his [man's] heart is evil from childhood.

Eph. 2:1-3 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.

Jer. 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

Is. 64:6 All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.

Rom. 3:10-11 It is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God."

Unconditional Election

Man's calling or election is not conditioned by something that man does for God. Election is unconditional as far as man's works are concerned. **The Arminian view is that foreknowledge is based on the act of man's will as the condition or cause that moved God to elect man to salvation.** The biblical view is that the foreknowledge of God is based on His decree, plan, purpose which expresses His will and not on some foreseen act of man's will. **God does the choosing, not man.**

God chose those whom He was pleased to bring to a knowledge of Himself, not based on any merit shown by the object of His grace (man) and not based on His looking forward to discover who would "accept" the offer of the gospel. God has elected, based solely on the counsel of His own will, some for glory and others for damnation (Romans 9:15, 21). He has done this act before the foundations of the world (Eph 1:4-8).

This doctrine does not rule out man's responsibility to believe in the redeeming

work of God the Son (John 3:16-18). Scripture presents a tension between God's sovereignty in salvation, and man's responsibility to believe, which it does not try to resolve. Both are true – to deny man's responsibility is to affirm an unbiblical hyper-Calvinism; to deny God's sovereignty is to affirm an unbiblical Arminianism.

The elect are saved to do good works (Ephesians 2:10). Thus, though good works will never bridge the gulf between man and God that was formed in the Fall, good works are a result of God's saving grace. This is what Peter means when he admonishes the Christian reader to make his "calling" and "election" sure (2Peter 1:10). Bearing the fruit of good works is an indication that God has sown seeds of grace in fertile soil.

John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit —fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

Eph. 1:4-8 For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will — to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

Mark 4:11-12 He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, "they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"

Eph 2:1-9 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages He might show the incomparable riches of His grace, expressed in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.

Rom. 8:28-29 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Rom. 9:11-33 Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad —in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by Him who calls —she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” Just as it is written: “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.” What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: “I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” Therefore God has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy, and He hardens whom He wants to harden. One of you will say to me: “Then why does God still blame us? For who resists His will?” But who are you, O man, to talk back to God? “Shall

what is formed say to Him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'" Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for noble purposes and some for common use? What if God, choosing to show His wrath and make His power known, bore with great patience the objects of His wrath – prepared for destruction? What if He did this to make the riches of His glory known to the objects of His mercy, whom He prepared in advance for glory – even us, whom He also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? As He says in Hosea: "I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one," and, "It will happen that in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'sons of the living God.'" Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved. For the Lord will carry out His sentence on earth with speed and finality." It is just as Isaiah said previously: "Unless the Lord Almighty had left us descendants, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah." What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone." As it is written: "See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

2Tim. 1:9 who has saved us and called us to a holy life — not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace. This

grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,

Titus 3:5 He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.

John 6:44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:65-66 He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him." From this time many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him.

1Cor.1:26-29 Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things —and the things that are not —to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before Him.

Limited Atonement (Particular Redemption)

The Bible teaches that God is sovereign, His plan immutable (unchangeable), and His election unconditional. The atonement is limited to those whom God freely willed to make the objects of His grace. Grace means unmerited favor. It is wholly undeserved.

This doctrine is offered in answer to the question, "for whose sins did Christ atone?" The Bible teaches that Christ died for those whom God gave him to save (John 17:9). Christ died, indeed, for many people, but not all (Matthew 26:28). Specifically, Christ died for the invisible Church – the sum total of all those who would ever rightly bear the name "Christian" (Ephesians 5:25; Acts 20:28).

This doctrine often finds many objections, mostly from those who think that Limited Atonement does damage to evangelism. But the Bible teaches that Christ will not lose any that the father has given to Him (John 6:37). Christ's death was not a death of potential atonement for all people. Believing that Jesus' death was a potential, symbolic atonement for anyone who might possibly, in the future, accept him trivializes Christ's act of atonement. Christ died to atone for the specific sins of specific sinners. Christ died to make holy the church. He did not atone for all men, because obviously all men are not saved. Evangelism is actually lifted up in this doctrine, for the evangelist may tell his hearers that Christ died for sinners, and that He will not lose any of those for whom He died, and He will not drive away any who turn to Him (John 6:37).

Matt. 1:21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins."

Eph. 5:25-27 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

John 10:11; 14-16; 24b-28 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. . . I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me – just as the Father knows me and I know the Father —and I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. . . How long

will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered, I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.

Acts 20:28 Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

John 17:9 I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.

Matt. 26:28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

John 6:37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Irresistible Grace

God of His own free will, gives life to whom He chooses. Since the living human spirit which is born of God finds the Living God wholly irresistible, the Lord quickens (makes alive) all whom He chose in Christ before the foundation of the world. It is the gift of the new nature which makes us find Jesus Christ absolutely irresistible.

The result of God's Irresistible Grace is the certain response by the elect to the inward call of the Holy Spirit, when the outward call is given by the evangelist or minister of the Word of God. Christ, himself, teaches that all whom God has elected will come to a knowledge of him (John 6:37). Men come to Christ in salvation when the Father calls them (John 6:44), and the very Spirit of God leads God's beloved to repentance (Romans 8:14). What a comfort it is to know that the gos-

pel of Christ will penetrate our hard, sinful hearts and wondrously save us through the gracious inward call of the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 5:10).

2Tim. 1:9 who has saved us and called us to a holy life —not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,

2Tim. 2:24-26 And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

Eph. 2:1-5 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions —it is by grace you have been saved.

Acts 13:48 When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

Acts 16:14 One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.

John 1:12-13 Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

John 6:44 “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:65 He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him.”

Rom. 8:14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

Rom 9:16 It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy.

Phil 2:12-13 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed – not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence – continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose.

1Pet. 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.

1Peter 5:10-11 And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Perseverance of the Saints

The elect can never be lost because their salvation is by the will of the unchanging omnipotent God. No condition in man determines his being chosen and there is nothing man can do to get himself unsaved once he has been saved by God's grace. (This however must not be construed to mean that anti-nomianism is possible.)

Perseverance is a doctrine which states that the saints (those whom God has saved) will remain in God's hand until they are glorified and brought to abide

with Him in heaven. Romans 8:28-39 makes it clear that when a person truly has been regenerated by God, he will remain in God. The work of sanctification which God has brought about in His elect will continue until it reaches its fulfillment in eternal life (Phil. 1:6). Christ assures the elect that He will not lose them and that they will be glorified at the "last day" (John 6:39). The Calvinist stands upon the Word of God and trusts in Christ's promise that He will perfectly fulfill the will of the Father in saving all the elect.

Phil. 1:6 being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Heb. 12:2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith

John 10:28-30 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one.”

John 6:39-40 And this is the will of Him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that He has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Jude 24-25 To Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy — to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

1Pet. 1:3-5 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new

birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade —kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

2Tim. 1:12 That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him for that day.

John 17:11 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name —the name you gave me —so that they may be one as we are one.

2Ths. 2:13-15 But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

1Thess. 5:23-25 May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and He will do it. Brothers, pray for us.

2Tim. 4:18 The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

John 6:47 I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life.

Rom. 8:26-39 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew

he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified. What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all —how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died —more than that, who was raised to life —is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

From Sproul: Essential Truths of the Christian Faith: PREDESTINATION

Few doctrines spark as much controversy or provoke as much consternation as the doctrine of predestination. It is a difficult doctrine that demands to be handled with great care and caution. Yet it is a biblical doctrine and therefore demands to be handled. We dare not ignore it.

Virtually all Christian churches have some doctrine of predestination. This is unavoidable since the

concept is clearly found in Holy Scripture. Those churches however disagree, sometimes strongly, over its meaning. The Methodist view differs from the Lutheran view, which disagrees with the Presbyterian view. Though their views differ, each is trying to come to grips with this difficult matter.

What predestination means, in its most elementary form, is that our final destination, heaven or hell, is decided by God not only before we get there, but before we are even born. It teaches that our ultimate destiny is in the hands of God. Another way of saying it is this: From all eternity, before we even existed, God decided to save some members of the human race and to let the rest of the human race perish. God made a choice—He chose some individuals to be saved into everlasting blessedness in heaven and others He chose to pass over, to allow them to follow the consequences of their sins into eternal torment in hell.

Accepting this definition is common to many churches. To get to the heart of the matter one must ask, how does God choose? The non-Reformed view, held by the vast majority of Christians, is that God makes that choice on the basis of His foreknowledge. God chooses for eternal life those whom He knows will choose Him. This is called the *prescient* view of predestination because it rests on God's foreknowledge of human decisions or acts.

The Reformed view differs in that it sees the ultimate decision for salvation resting with God and not with us. In this view, God's election is sovereign. It does not rest upon the foreseen decisions or responses of human beings. Indeed, it sees those decisions as flowing from the sovereign grace of God.

The Reformed view holds that, left to himself, no fallen person would ever choose God. Fallen people still have a **will** and are **able to choose what they desire**.

But the problem is that we have no desire for God and will not choose Christ unless first regenerated by God. Faith is a gift that comes out of rebirth. Only those who are elect will ever respond to the gospel in faith.

The elect do choose Christ, but only because they were first chosen by God. As in the case of Jacob and Esau, the elect are chosen solely on the basis of the sovereign good pleasure of God and not on the basis of anything they have done or will do. Paul declares:

And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him who calls), it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." . . . So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. (Romans 9:10-12, 16)

A vexing problem with predestination is that God does not choose or elect to save everybody. He reserves the right to have mercy upon whom He will have mercy. Some of fallen humanity receive the grace and mercy of election. The rest God passes over, leaving them in their sin. The nonelect receive justice. The elect receive mercy. No one receives injustice. God is not obligated to be merciful to any or to all alike. It is His decision how merciful He chooses to be. Yet He is never guilty of being unrighteous toward anyone (see Romans 9:14-15).

Summary

1. Predestination is a difficult doctrine and must be handled with care.

2. The Bible teaches the doctrine of predestination.
3. Many Christians define predestination in terms of God's foreknowledge.
4. The Reformed view does not consider foreknowledge to be an explanation of biblical predestination.
5. Predestination is based upon God's choice, not the choice of human beings.
6. Unregenerate people have no desire to choose Christ.
7. God does not elect everybody. He reserves the right to have mercy upon whom He pleases.
8. God treats no one unjustly.

Biblical passages for reflection:

Proverbs 16:4; John 13:18; Romans 8:30; Ephesians 1:3-14; 2Thessalonians 2:13-13

PREDESTINATION AND REPROBATION

Every coin has a flip side. There is also a flip side to the doctrine of election. Election refers to only one aspect of the broader question of predestination. The other side of the coin is the question of reprobation. God declared that He loved Jacob but hated Esau. How are we to understand this reference to divine hatred?

Predestination is double. The only way to avoid the doctrine of double predestination is to either affirm that God predestinates everybody to election or that He predestinates no one to either election or reprobation. Since the Bible clearly teaches predestination to election and denies universal salvation, we must conclude that predestination is double. It includes both election and reprobation. Double predestination is unavoidable if we take Scripture seriously. What is crucial, however, is how double predestination is understood.

Some have viewed double predestination as a matter of equal causation, where God is equally responsible for causing the reprobate not to believe as He is for causing the elect to believe. We call this a *positive-positive* view of predestination.

The positive-positive view of predestination teaches that God positively and

actively intervenes in the lives of the elect to work grace in their hearts and bring them to faith. Likewise, in the case of the reprobates, He works evil in the hearts of the reprobate and actively prevents them from coming to faith. This view has often been called "hyper-Calvinism" because it goes beyond the view of Calvin, Luther, and the other Reformers.

The Reformed view of double predestination follows a *positive-negative* schema. In the case of the elect, God intervenes to positively and actively work grace in their souls and bring them to saving faith. He unilaterally regenerates the elect and insures their salvation. In the case of the reprobate He does not work evil in them or prevent them from coming to faith. Rather, He passes over them, leaving them to their own sinful devices. In this view there is no symmetry of divine action. God's activity is asymmetrical between the elect and the reprobate. There is, however, a kind of equal ultimacy. The reprobate, who are passed over by God, are ultimately doomed, and their damnation is as certain and sure as the ultimate salvation of the elect.

The problem is linked to biblical statements such as those regarding God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart. That the Bible says God hardened Pharaoh's heart is beyond dispute. The question remains, how did God harden Pharaoh? Luther argued for a passive rather than an active hardening. That is, God did not create fresh evil in Pharaoh's heart. There was already enough evil present in Pharaoh's heart to incline him to resist the will of God at every turn. All God ever has to do to harden anybody is to remove

His restraining grace from them and give them over to their own evil impulses. This is precisely what God does to the damned in hell. He abandons them to their own wickedness.

In what sense did God “hate” Esau? Two different explanations are offered to solve this problem. The first explains it by defining hate not as a negative passion directed toward Esau but as simply the absence of redemptive love. That God “loved” Jacob simply means that He made Jacob the recipient of His unmerited grace. He gave Jacob a benefit that Jacob did not deserve. Esau did not receive the same benefit and in that sense was hated by God.

The first explanation sounds a bit like special pleading to get God off the hook for hating somebody. The second explanation gives more strength to the word *hate*. It says simply that God did in fact hate Esau. Esau was odious in the sight of God. There was nothing in Esau for God to love. Esau was a vessel fit for destruction and altogether worthy of God’s wrath and holy hatred. Let the reader decide.

Summary

1. Predestination is double; it has two sides to it.
2. Some teach that God is equally responsible for election and reprobation. This is characteristic of hyper-Calvinism.
3. The Reformed view of double predestination reflects a positive-negative schema.
4. God passively, not actively, hardened Pharaoh’s heart.
5. God hated Esau in the sense of failing to give him a blessing of grace or in the sense of abhorring him as a vessel fit for destruction.

Biblical passages for reflection:

Exodus 7:1-5; Proverbs 16:4; Romans 9; Ephesians 1:3-6; Jude 1:4