

VI. Concerning the Freeness of Salvation

- ❖ We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

Introductory Terms

1. CALVINISM- the doctrines and teachings of John Calvin or his followers, emphasizing predestination, the sovereignty of God, the supreme authority of the Scriptures, and the irresistibility of grace.
2. ARMINIANISM- Of or relating to the theology of Jacobus Arminius and his followers, who rejected the Calvinist doctrines of predestination and election and who believed that human free will is compatible with God's sovereignty.
3. PREDESTINATION- To predetermine, decide beforehand; To foreordain, to limit in advance- (Thayer's & Strong's Concordance)
4. ELECTION- Picked out, or chosen by God; favorite (Thayer's & Strong's Concordance).
5. FOREKNOWLEDGE- A forethought, prearranged; foreknowledge (Thayer's & Strong's Concordance).
6. GRACE- Undeserved, unmerited favor.

The Debate: The Overview...

- ❖ By simply reading this article of our declaration of faith, one is left with the question, 'Why would this be in our declaration?' Remember where our current articles first originated! During the reformation era, or the 16th century AD, the Catholic Church suffered schisms and divisions resulting in Protestantism. Protestants are loosely defined as those denominations not associated with Catholicism. The Catholic Church, since its foundation in the 3rd and 4th centuries AD, slowly developed heresies such as the sale of indulgences, transubstantiation, Mariolatry, papal authority, and infant baptism, just to name a few! To further vindicate these heretical actions, the 'Holy Mother Church' embraced the spirit of inquisition by persecuting millions of Christians that would not embrace their fallacies and conform to the doctrines of the Catholic Church! Thus, certain men arose within the church in an attempt to 'reform' the basis of belief that had long been maintained by tradition. One of those men was John Calvin. Calvin, along with other reformers, could not escape the tradition that had been inculcated into their minds by Catholic theology. So, in order to maintain individuality and separateness from Protestant and Catholic groups, certain confessions were made to signify the differences in doctrine. Thus, became our 6th article of faith, 'The Freeness of Salvation.'

Voices of History

- ❖ Let us take an in depth look at religious history building up to the reformation era. Why? Because by studying this history, we may obtain a solid understanding of the fundamental beliefs of John Calvin, and decide how we truly feel about this doctrine that separates so many!

1. The Great Apostasy.

'Let it be remembered that...(doctrinal, heretical changes)...were not made in a day, nor even within a year. They came about slowly and never within all the churches. Some of the churches vigorously repudiated them. So much so that in A.D. 251, the loyal churches declared non-fellowship for those churches, which accepted and practiced these errors. And thus came about the first real, official separation among the churches...'

Trail of Blood, J. M Carroll, Pg 13-14

'By the beginning of the year A.D. 313, Christianity has won a mighty victory over paganism. A new emperor has come to the throne of the Roman Empire. He evidently recognized something of the mysterious power of this religion that continued to grow in spite of persecution. History says that the new emperor who was none other than Constantine had a wonderful realistic vision. He saw in the skies a fiery red cross and on that cross written in fiery letters these words: 'By this thou shalt conquer.' He interpreted it to mean that he should become a Christian. And that by giving up paganism and that by attaching the spiritual power of the Christian religion onto the temporal power of the Roman Empire the world could be easily conquered. Thus the Christian religion would in fact become a whole world religion, and the Roman Empire a whole world empire...' Trail of Blood, J.M. Carroll, Pg 16.

2. Some Christian churches, NEVER associated with Catholicism or her ecumenical counsels.

'Furthermore, millions of biblical Christians resisted Rome for fifteen hundred years before Luther or Calvin. Albigenses, Waldenses, Bogomils, Paulicians, Baptists, and those who simply called themselves Christians or brethren traced their doctrines back to the apostles and never obeyed the popes. Derisively called Anabaptists for centuries, they rejected a state church (which Calvinists and Lutherans retained), recognized the Bible as their only authority, and were persecuted and martyred by the Roman Catholic Church.'

Debating Calvinism, Dave Hunt/James White, Pg 22

'Let it be definitely remembered that when Constantine made his call for the council, there were very many of the Christians (Baptists) and of the

churches, which declined to respond. They wanted no marriage with the state, and no centralized religious government, and no higher ecclesiastical government of any kind, than the INDIVIDUAL church. THESE CHRISTIANS (BAPTISTS) NOR THE CHURCHES EVER AT THAT TIME OR LATER, ENTERED THE HIERARCHY OF THE CATHOLIC DENOMINATION...'

Trail of Blood, J.M. Carroll, Pg 16

'Decisively rejecting Zwingli's leadership, the group...held simplified communion-services of a commemorative character and behaved as a gathered church or autonomous sect.'

Reformation and Society, A.G. Dickens Pg 126

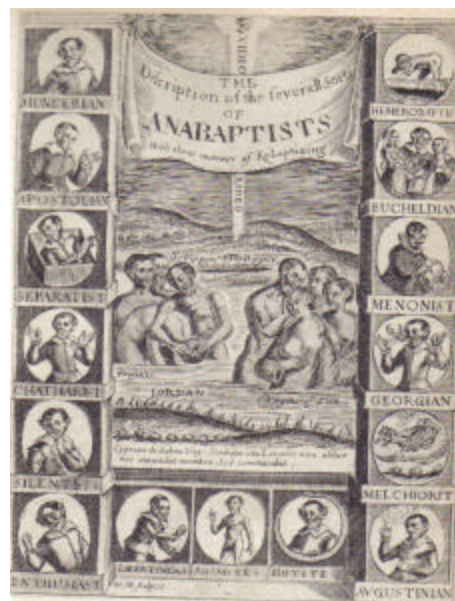


Figure 1 Title page of Daniel Featley's Description of 1645, known as 'The Dippers Dipt.' The Persecution of Anabaptists came with humiliation, as well as blood

'Anabaptists are of the "congregational" type, where each local church is autonomous... there is no Pope!' www.religion-cults.com, unknown

'They called the pope antichrist, opposed the [mandatory] payment of tithes [unto the Catholic Church], abolished the distinctions in the priesthood, denied the authority of councils, rejected all the ceremonies of baptism except simple ablution, and laying stress on the truth, that in infancy there can be no actual conversion to the Christian faith, they therefore baptized anew all those who left the Romish Church wishing to embrace their doctrines. In a word, they rejected everything which they did not find enjoined in the gospel and the sacred Scriptures.' (De Potter, Vol. VI., p. 405).

3. These Anabaptists were persecuted, not only by the Catholic Church, but the REFORMERS, as well!

'Accordingly, both the Catholic and Protestant estates agreed to suppress the Anabaptists at the Diets of Speyer, in 1529, and Augsburg, in 1530.'
The Reformation Era, Harold J. Grimm, Pg 268

'During all the seventeenth century, persecutions for Waldenses, Anabaptists, and Baptists...continued to be desperately severe in England by the Church of England, as John Bunyan and many others could testify; in Germany by the Lutherans, in Scotland by the Church of Scotland (Presbyterian); in Italy, in France, and in every other place where the papacy was in power by the Catholics. There is now no peace anywhere for those who are not in agreement with the same churches, or some one of them.'
Trail of Blood, J.M. Carroll, Pg 39

*'The Objections of John Huss [Anabaptist] against the Decree of the Doctors:
False it is that they say the Pope and his cardinals to be the true and manifest successors of Peter and of the apostles...Not the Pope, but Christ only is the head; and not the cardinals, but all Christ's faithful people, be the body...If the Pope be a reprobate, it is plain that he is no head, no nor member even, of the Holy Church of God, but of the devil and his synagogue...Then was the fire kindled, and John Huss began to sing with a loud voice: 'Jesus Christ! The Son of the living God! Have mercy upon me! And when he began to say the same the third time, the wind drove the flame so upon his face, that it choked him...When all the wood was consumed, the upper part of the body was left hanging in the chain, which they threw down stake and all, and making a new fire, burned it, the head being first cut in small gobbets...The heart, which was found amongst the bowels, being beaten with staves and clubs...was pricked with a sharp stick...and roasted.'*

Foxe's Book of Martyrs, John Foxe, Pg 132

'But persecutions did not then cease. The hated Anabaptists...in spite of all prior persecutions, and in spite of the awful fact that fifty million had already died martyr deaths, still existed in great numbers. It was during this period that along one single European highway, thirty miles distance, stakes were set up every few feet along this highway, the tops of the stakes sharpened, and on the top of each stake was placed a gory head of a martyred Anabaptist...And yet a thing perpetrated, according to reliable history, by a people calling themselves devout followers of the meek and lowly Jesus Christ.'
Trail of Blood, J. M. Carroll, Pg 35

'Many of the Reformers disclaimed them, rejecting them as fundamentally opposed to the ideas of the Reformation.' Grolier Encyclopedia of Knowledge, Volume I, Pg 355, see Anabaptists.

4. The beliefs of the Anabaptists.

'Declaration of Several of the People Called Anabaptists, In and About the City of London:

We being mis-represented to the Nation:

- 1. As such, as are opposite to Magistracy.*
- 2. That we would destroy the Publick Ministry of the Nation, who differ from us in some things about Religion.*
- 3. That we do countenance the people called Quakers, in their irregular practise.*
- 4. That we endeavour a Toleration of miscarriages in things Ecclesiastical and Civil, under pretence of Liberty of Conscience,*
- 5. That we design to murder and destroy those who differ from us in matters of Religion, thereby endeavouring to make us odious to some people fearing God, And also to incense the rude Multitude against us, to provoke them (if possible) to destroy us.*

To the first: Though we cannot answer in justification of every individual person that is of our Profession in matters of Religion, yet we can say this, and prove it to all the world, that it hath been our profession, and is our practise, to be obedient to Magistracy in all things Civil, and willing to live peaceably, under whatever Government is, and shall be established in this Nation: for we do believe, and declare, Magistracy to be an ordinance of God, and ought to be obeyed in all lawful things.

To the second: As for the public Ministers of the Nation, who differ from us in the matter of Baptizing Infants, and some things in Church-Government; We are so far from endeavouring to destroy them, that we judge, they ought to have the Liberty of their Consciences therein; and that it is our duty to stand by them, and preserve them (so much as in us lies) from all injury and violence.

To the third: Concerning the people called Quakers, it is well known to all, (that are not wilfully ignorant) there are none more opposite to their irregular practices then we are: nor are there any, that they have exprest more

Contradiction to, (in matters of Religion) then against us; though their provocations therein, hath not put us (in the least) on a desire of depriving them their just Liberty, while they live morally honest, and peaceable in the Nation.

To the forth: Whereas we are further charged with endeavouring an universal Toleration of all miscarriages, both in things Religious and Civil, under pretense of Liberty of Conscience; it is in both respects notoriously false. And we do before the Lord, that shall judge both quick and dead, yea, before Angels and men, declare our utter detestation of such a Toleration; for in matters Civil, we desire there may not be the least Toleration of miscarriage in any, much less in our selves.

Nor do we desire, in matters of Religion, that Popery should be tolerated, the blood of many thousands of the people of God, having been barbarously shed, by the Professors thereof; or any persons tolerated, that worship a false god; nor any that speak contemptuously and reproachfully of our Lord Jesus Christ; nor any that deny the holy Scriptures, contained in the books of the Old and New Testaments, to be the Word of God: And yet, we are not against tolerating of Episcopacy, Presbytery, or any stinted form, provided they do compel any others to a compliance therewith, or a conformity thereunto: for whatever Composers of any form of worship, may possibly erre; it is derogating from God, and his holy Word, and injurious to men, to compel any to practice thereof.

To the last: For as much as we are charged, with designs, to murder or to destroy those that differ from us in matters of Religion; We do not only abhor and detest it, as a cursed practice; but we hope, have approved our selves, both in this City and in this Nation, to the contrary; notwithstanding the great provocation of some, who have endeavoured our ruine: for all we desire, is just liberty to men, as men; that every man may be preserved in his own just rights, and the Christians may be preserved as Christians, though of different Apprehensions in some things of Religion; in the prosecution whereof, our lives shall be dear unto us, when we are thereunto lawfully called. The designs of our Adversaries in these Calumnies, are, to mis-represent us to some people fearing God, and also, to incense the rude Multitude against us, purposely to provoke them (if possible) to destroy us.

We hope, hereby, it will appear to them that fear God, that we are no such persons, as our Adversaries have represented us, And for their incensing the rude Multitude against us, it is no more, than some others did to our Master; and it is not for the Disciples, to expect better usage then their Lord: and we do not find, the rude Multitude ever joyned with him, nor do we expect, they should favour us: it is enough to us, we have his Promise, that if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.

This we think meet to Declare, to undeceive those, who through the unchristian actions and expressions of some persons, have been, and are, prejudiced against us.' www.reformedreader.org, unknown

'There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof.' Westminster Confessions of Faith, XXV, 6, pg 85

'Faith was for...[the Anabaptists]...not assent to a creed but spiritual experience, for God saves man solely by implanting the Word in his heart. Those who argue over religious matters and persecute others do not...have the true faith. The true church, therefore, never persecutes. On the contrary, it is a suffering, persecuted church, which, on the positive side, demonstrates Christian love by being meek, gentle, and lowly.' The Reformation Era, Harold Grimm, Pg 272.

Knowledge is Power! Historical Summary:

- ❖ As, We have moderately touched on church history, we may note a few things:
 1. The Catholic Church is not the true Church of Jesus Christ.
 2. God's truth has ALWAYS prevailed: II John 1:2, Ps 146:6
 3. Baptists are historically not protestant.
 4. Confessions were formed to defend the Faith.

- ❖ Why all the Church history? Now, we turn our focus on the teachings of John Calvin. Though he is NOT THE CREATOR of the belief system bearing his name, he popularized it and preached it. Now, many scholars hold to this doctrine, such as (but not limited to) John Gill, Matthew Henry, John Bunyan, Charles Spurgeon, George Whitefield, R. C. Sproul, and John MacAuthor Jr.

John Calvin (July 10, 1509- May 27, 1564) Background:

- ❖ The son of a French attorney, John Calvin, or Jean Chauvin, was sent to the University of Paris to study law and graduated in 1532, at age 23, with a Doctor of Law degree from Orleans.
- ❖ In 1539, He married Idelette de Bure, a widowed mother who was ironically previously married to an Anabaptist!
- ❖ Being trained a lawyer, Calvin was taught to treat all texts (not just scripture) in their context, giving much scrutiny and enforcing a biased, humanistic interpretation.
- ❖ Calvin is the accredited founder of the Presbyterian Church. John Knox, one of Calvin's disciples, established a Presbyterian Church in Scotland and 32 years later Presbyterianism became the state-church of Scotland.

- ❖ NOTE*- The Presbyterian, Episcopal or Church of England, Lutheran, and Catholic churches were all state churches punishing those deemed heretical. Thus, Baptists have never made any unholy union with Church and State, for there can be no religious liberty where state churches are established.
- ❖ Calvin was pastor in Geneva and Strasbourg where he wrote many commentaries and books the most famous being his 'Institutes of the Christian Religion,' which underwent numerous revisions before it's publication in 1536.

Jacobus Arminius (Oct 10, 1560-Oct 19, 1609) Background:

- ❖ Born and raised in Oudewater, Utrecht, Arminius began study of theology after his mother's death in 1575 at the University of Leiden.
- ❖ While there he studied under Johann Kolmann who was staunchly against Calvinist doctrine, thus influencing him.
- ❖ Ordained in 1588, he began his pastorate in Amsterdam.
- ❖ John Wesley, often considered the Father of Methodism, adhered to the doctrines of Arminius and today many Methodists retain that doctrine.

The Arminian Articles of Remonstrance and the Synod of Dort: Two Views, Five Points, and One Truth:

- ❖ NOTE*- The terms 'Arminianism' and 'Calvinism' mean much more today than they did to Jacobus or John! The views associated with the name are not exactly the same of the person bearing the name! For example, John Calvin believed in Infant baptism, but many of the reformed theology party do not preach Infant Baptism! The followers of both, Arminius and Calvin developed much of this reformed doctrine to a further extent!
- ❖ ***The Articles of Remonstrance*** was an Arminian document declaring the fallacies of Calvinism, and was drawn up to counteract the Calvinist's *Belgic Confession*. Remonstrance means 'an expression of opposition or protest,' thus, in the Netherlands, Arminians became known as the '*Remonstrants*.' In 1610, the debate was raging in the Netherlands over the doctrines of Calvin and Arminius, and which should be politically supported. The Articles of Remonstrance was a plea for state support of these doctrinal views. The five main points are:
 1. Election based on foreseen faith
 2. The universal atonement of Jesus Christ
 3. Man's free will and partial depravity
 4. The resistibility of Grace
 5. Man can fall from grace
- ❖ ***The Synod of Dordrecht*** was the Calvinistic response to the Arminian articles, and was prepared in 1618/1619 (54 years AFTER Calvin's death). The word 'synod' means 'counsel.' It was during this seven-month period that the Netherlands state churches adopted the '*Canon of Dort*,' which is where today's Calvinists draw much of their doctrine! Remember, these synods or counsels carried EXTREME political implications. It meant the literal doom and demise to

some and the exaltation of others! It was in this declaration that Calvinists refuted the Articles of Remonstrance with FIVE POINTS of their own! They are:

1. T- Total Depravity of Man
2. U- Unconditional Election
3. L- Limited Atonement
4. I- Irresistible Grace
5. P- Perseverance of the Saints

TULIP...

- ❖ TULIP, as seen above, is an acronym declaring today's Calvinistic views. Of course, ALL the teachings of Calvin are not here taught, but what we label 'Calvinism' today is mainly wrapped up in TULIP.
- ❖ Who abides by TULIP? Many types of Baptists such as Primitive, Reformed, etc., as well as Presbyterians, Lutherans, and many protestant groups.
- ❖ **LET US TURN TO SCRIPTURE!** '*SOLA SCRIPTURA!*' We will now, turn to the scriptures under the influence of TULIP and her doctrines. Let us stand firm on what we believe...

Total Depravity

- ❖ 'Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation: so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.' Westminster Confessions of Faith, Article IX- Of Free Will, Smaller Catechism, pg 34.

As Missionary Baptists, we agree with this doctrine to a certain extent. We believe in the words of the above confession though it is included in 5-point Calvinism. Let us observe scripture as our ONLY guiding source...

Mankind is Dead in Sin:

Romans 3:10-18- Here this passage obviously teaches us that every man (with exception of Jesus) has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. This thread runs throughout the Bible, showing mankind the universal need of the blood of Christ. Where else may we see this?

1. Jeremiah 13:23
2. Ephesians 2:1-2
3. Colossians 2:13

4. John 6:43-44

‘Now what was the sort of “hole” man had got himself into? He had tried to set up on his own, to behave as if he belonged to himself. In other words, fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement: he is a rebel who must lay down his arms. Laying down your arms, surrendering, saying your sorry, realizing that you have been on the wrong track and getting ready to start life over again from the ground floor-that is the only way out of our “hole.”’ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, pg 38

** See Article III for more information concerning the fall of man!*

Man’s Total Depravity Compared with God’s Total Sovereignty:

- ❖ There are two sides to every fence! While many non-Calvinists exert the facet of God’s unfailing love for his creation, Calvinists usually emphasize God’s kingship and absolute sovereignty over man. As Missionary Baptists, we believe IN BOTH! So, we understand man’s sinful nature and the consequences of that sin (this is ever rarely in dispute), now, let us take a look at God’s sovereignty and God’s love as demonstrated throughout scripture...

GOD’S COMPLETE SOVEREIGNTY:

1. Psalms 115:3
2. Psalms 135:6
3. Proverbs 16:33
4. Proverbs 19:21
5. Acts 17:26-28
6. Rev 4:11
7. Rev 19:6
8. Isa 40:22/ 45:7
9. Isa 64:8

GOD’S COMPLETE LOVE:

1. Eph 2:4-5
2. John 3:16
3. Romans 5:8
4. 2 Pet 3:9
5. Matt 18:11-14
6. Eze 33:11
7. Psalms 118:1-4
8. I John 4:9-10
9. I John 4:15-16

- ❖ Many Calvinists believe that by God’s sovereignty Man has no free will and God is left to do what he pleases, when he pleases! The extreme in the other direction says that God is a loving God bound by the will of man. So, in light of these two characteristics of God (sovereignty and love) does man have a free will? Can men choose righteousness or wickedness? Does the doctrine of Total Depravity mean that man has absolutely no choice in the matter? While Calvinists claim that man is not a free moral agent, I contend that man’s depravity does not triumph over the universal, physical, spiritual, and commonsensical fact that man has the ability to choose life or death. Observe:

The Harmony of Total Depravity and Free Will

- ❖ The scriptures always present two sides of Salvation: **God’s sufficiency and Man’s responsibility.** Let us observe the plan of salvation in light of these two obvious doctrines.

1. Man is TOTALLY DEPRAVED: (see above)
2. God designed the PREDESTINED plan of salvation: Rev 13:8/ Acts 2:22-23
3. God sent his Son, Jesus, in accordance with this plan to be a propitiation for the sins of the world: I John 2:2/ John 3:16-17
4. EVERY person has an opportunity to be saved: II Pet 3:9/ Romans 1:18-20
5. Man cannot repent or turn to God unless inclined to do so by the Holy Spirit or the effectual calling of God. This happens with the condemnation wrought by sin: James 4:6-10
6. At this time, Man is commanded to repent and exercise as much faith as he may muster to the glory of God: Deut 4:29/ Matt 11:28-30/ Rev 22:17/ Isa 1:18/ Deut 30:19/ Josh 24:15, etc...
7. Whenever Man reaches the point of human spiritual sacrifice and faith enough to meet God's requirements, he then gives man the gift of repentance and faith unto salvation: Acts 11:18/ II Tim 2:25/ Eph 2:8-9
8. At that point, we are given to Christ by the Father and become part of the Elect: John 6:35-40- Key Verse 37??? We are given to Christ by the Father- how? How are we in Christ Jesus? We are adopted. By Whom? The Father! NOT PRESELECTED UNTO ETERNAL LIFE: vrs 40!!!

God's Sovereignty NEVER Trumps Man's Free Will:

- ❖ GOD HATES SIN: Gen 6:6-7 (Why would God repent if it was 'predestined'), Deut 25:16, Prov 6:16-19, Isa 43:24, Rev 2:15
- ❖ YET HE ALLOWED IT TO ENTER THE WORLD: Gen 3:6-7
- ❖ So, Adam had A MORAL, FREE WILL: Gen 2:16-17 (some believe that free will was lost in the fall of man, however this is a very weak argument as it is blatantly denied by everyday life.)
- ❖ So, Man has ALWAYS had a choice: wickedness or righteousness: Isa 1:19-20/ Deut 11:26-28 (The word 'if' seems hypocritical if Israel was predestined to certain sins. Should not the scriptures read, 'when...?') Matt 23:37
- ❖ Therefore, Heaven and Hell await for recompense of the decisions made here on Earth: Rev 21:6-8

Compatiblism:

It is interesting to note that never in scripture does God overpower man by His 'sovereignty' to accomplish 'His will.' Man always has a choice of right and wrong, otherwise Heaven and Hell would be pointless. However, that is not to deny the doctrine of 'compatiblism,' which simply means that God can work good out of what men mean for evil. Observe:

1. Joseph and his brothers: Gen 50:20
2. Assyria takes Israel because of their sin: Isa 10:5-7
3. The death of Christ on the cross

Now, even though the plan of salvation was predestined, the people who physically tortured Christ were not pre-designed for that position: I Cor 2:8. Further, this does not mean that God predestined these other acts to occur, rather he demonstrated his glory **DESPITE MAN'S FREE WILL!**

The Universal Call Unto Repentance and Faith:

❖ It's simple, salvation is free is free to all. Those who come with a willing heart to turn from their sins and have faith in Christ **WILL** be saved. Therefore, we preach the gospel to every creature:

1. Mark 16:15- Preach to every creature
2. Romans 1:16- the gospel is power to **EVERYONE** that believes
3. Luke 2:10- Great joy to all
4. I Tim 2:4-
5. John 1:29- Really? The whole world?
6. Acts 13:48- Uh, oh. 'tasso'- Greek- also used in Matt 28:16, Luke 7:8, Acts 15:2, Acts 22:10, etc- **NEVER MEANS PREDETERMINED**. If that were implied, another Greek word would have been used.
7. John 3:14-17

*This also upsets 'limited atonement.'

❖ Here, C.H. Spurgeon contradicts himself on numerous occasions:

'No, says one strong-doctrine man. God never invites all men to himself... Stop, sir... Did you ever read... My oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage. And they that were bidden would not come.... Now if the invitation is... made only to the man who will accept it, how can that parable be true? The fact is the invitation is free.... "Whosoever will, let him come...." As I live saith the Lord- and that is a great oath- "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but had rather that he should turn unto me and live." Now...some of you may say that I was Arminian at the end. I care not. I beg of you to turn unto the Lord with all your hearts.' Spurgeons sermon in Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 26:49-52

A Few More Verses to Consider:

1. Hebrews 2:9
2. John 2:2
3. Titus 2:11
4. Acts 17:30
5. Romans 5:18

Unconditional Election

- ❖ ‘Before the world was made, God’s eternal, immutable purpose, which originated in the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, moved Him to choose (or to elect), in Christ, certain of mankind to everlasting glory. Out of His mere free grace and love, He predestinated these chosen ones to life, although there was nothing in them to cause Him to choose them.’ Baptist Confession of 1689, rewritten in modern English, 3:5.

In our previous subtopic of ‘total depravity,’ we discussed Man’s free will and God’s sovereignty. Having adequately demonstrated both, we move on to the topic of Unconditional Election.

NOTE- Having deterred the staunch doctrines of Hyper-Calvinism and it’s beliefs of total depravity, we now turn to Unconditional Election, perhaps the most debated among ‘TULIP.’ As the doctrine of unconditional election falls, it will be of no need for this congregation to dive into the depths of ‘Limited atonement’ and ‘Irresistible grace.’ Perseverance of the Saints will be studied in depth, when we cover Article XI, which bears the doctrine’s name.

Biblical Election

1. Who are the Elect? Matt 24:31, Col 3:11-12, I Pet 2:6
The word appears throughout the New Testament (Some Old Testament) as referring to the ‘God’s people’ and to Christ as in I Pet 2:6.
2. Are we ‘pre-selected’ by God in Eternity’s Past? John 15:16- ‘Chosen You’ - also translated ‘Elect’- but when? How? Did he mention pre-election?
 - a. ‘Conditional Election in Time’: I Pet 1:2, II Pet 1:9-10
 - b. What of Eph 1:3-7? This is the only place in Scripture that the use of ‘eklegomai’ that ‘might be used’ to promote election in eternity past. Therefore, should that word be interpreted such as is contrary to it’s own nature? Further we read quickly after ‘IN HIM’- ‘The lamb slain before the foundation of the world’- phraseology refers to Christ chosen and us ‘in him.’
 - c. What about verse 4 & 11? Note John Gill: *‘Predestination, taken in a large sense, includes both election and reprobation, and even reaches to all affairs and occurrences in the world; to the persons, lives, and circumstances of men; to all mercies, temporal or spiritual; and to all afflictions, whether in love or in wrath: and indeed providence, or the dispensations of providence, are no other than the execution of divine predestination; but here it is the same with election, and is concerned with*

the same persons, and has regard to a special blessing, the elect are appointed to... ' John Gill (a Calvinist) here denies that these verses imply unconditional, pre-determined election. Rather, he explains how these passages indicate the blessings of adoption!

Note Clarke's Commentary: (another view)- *Here the word is used to point out God's fixed purpose or predetermination to bestow on the Gentiles the blessing of the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ, which adoption had been before granted to the Jewish people; and without circumcision, or any other Mosaic rite, to admit the Gentiles to all the privileges of his Church and people. And the apostle marks that all this was fore-determined by God, as he had fore-determined the bounds and precincts of the land which he gave them according to the promise made to their fathers; that the Jews had no reason to complain, for God had formed this purpose before he had given the law, or called them out of Egypt; (for it was before the foundation of the world, Eph 1:4); and that, therefore, the conduct of God in calling the Gentiles now - bringing them into his Church, and conferring on them the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, was in pursuance of his original design;*

Predestination

- ❖ We know at least three things are predetermined: The plan of salvation concerning Christ and the cross, our birth, and our death. Rev 13:8, Acts 17:26, Job 7:1
- ❖ But what about salvation? Are certain ones predestined to Heaven, while an unfortunate few are designed for everlasting torment; vessels of dishonor fit for destruction? While no sound, honest, Biblically-based Christian denies the doctrine of predestination, let us rightly understand it. Observe:
 1. Romans 8:29-31- One of the most debated verses in this particular issue. The words 'predestinate or predestinated' as appears in the English language only appear 4 times in the Bible. Twice in Romans 8. Twice in Ephesians 1. Lets look first at Romans 8.
 - a. 'Whom he did FOREKNOW': These words appear first in this holy order! What is foreknowledge? Thayer: proginosko- to know beforehand. It is NOT AN ETERNAL DECREE- So, What did God foreknow if not man's free choices? Does it make sense to say 'God foreknew whom he predetermined?' Would not predetermination simply imply that knowledge? Of course, therefore, in Calvinistic views, this is quit redundant.
 - b. '...He did predestinate...' to what? Salvation? Election? '...TO BE CONFORMED TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON...' Note: this chapter is not talking about salvation. See Verses 1 & 38. Begins with no condemnation and ends with full persuasion! Main Idea of

Chapter found in 8:15-17! Joint heirs with Christ! The predestinated plan of salvation doesn't end at the cross or resurrection; it ends at the glorification of our bodies in heaven! To this, are we predestined! Thus, he finishes the verse with... 'that he might be the first born among many brethren.'

2. The Call to Saint-hood: VRS 30- Rom 1:7/ I Cor 1:2/ Eph 1:18- See also 8:27-28- tied to our text with 'hoti,' translated 'for' or 'because of'- Thus, these verses are not talking about salvation, rather a calling to sainthood (to become sanctified in Christ and grow as Christians). Note: verbs (justified, called, glorified, etc) are all PAST TENSE. Why if this is concerning future events? He was speaking TO THE ROMANS! Is this 'chain of redemption' flawless? See Matt 20:16!

a. If those God calls to come to him by conviction wrought by the Holy Spirit are not in danger of death or hell fire, would that not be dangling the carrot in front of the nose, so to speak?

b. Rom 9:1-7- Why was Paul sorrowful if 'for the honor of the honor of God' they were predestined to Hell? Further, not all of Israel are of Israel. Wasn't Israel a 'chosen nation'?

c. Romans 10:12-13- Same author, a few words later!

3. Ephesians 1:3-18- Verse 4- '*In Him.*' The phrase 'foundation of the world' appears throughout scripture. It always applies to the plan of Salvation (particularly Christ Jesus), or literally from the time of Adam. Never does it imply a people chosen (as Christ was chosen) before the foundation of the world! 1 Pet 1:20, Rev 13:8

a. '...that we should be saved?' NO! sanctified!

b. Verse 5- predestinated unto what? Adoption of children BY JESUS CHRIST (another reference to a plan!). 'according to the Good pleasure of his will. What is God's will? Eze 33:11

c. Verse 11, much the same.

4. A few other verses to consider:

a. Acts 13:48- 'tasso' never implies foreordained.

b. Mal 1:3- see Rom 9:13-15 refers to heathen nations.

Summary:

- ❖ Believe it or not, hardly have we even the skimmed the surface of these deep truths to be understood! Let me disclose that there are varying opinions of the above scriptures held by Missionary Baptists. However there is one Truth and his name is Jesus Christ. Let us not be 'unlearned and unstable' and 'wrest these scriptures to our own destruction!' (II Pet 3:16). What should be noted and understood fully is that salvation is clearly free to all. Scriptures never contradict themselves, despite these difficult passages in review.