

Making Your Calling and Election Sure

The Sovereignty of God

- Can a Christian really lose their salvation?
- What about the teaching of eternity Security or Once Saved Always Saved?

Calvinism

I want to briefly introduce some theological beliefs that were first promoted by John Calvin (1509-1564), one of the leaders of the Protestant reformation. I believe that his teachings have cast a shadow on present day Christian theology and could be at the root of a number of misunderstandings that need to be clarified concerning the Sovereignty of God.

- Let's first look at a fundamental principle in Calvinism called "Unconditional Election"
 - o God's foreknowledge allows Him to know what choices every person will make
 - o In reality God had actually decided what choices everyone would make in advance
 - o Human Free Will is only an illusion; God decides our destiny and not us

God had decided that certain people would live a Christian Life and be saved- supporting the concept of eternal security of the believer, also known as once saved always saved. He had also decided that the rest would sin and be eternally condemned. If you were predestined to be condemned there was nothing you could do about it. God's will is Sovereign.

- God's salvation was a gift of Grace bestowed on the fortunate ones whom He chose
- Christ died, not to save everyone, but only to save a chosen, predestined "elect"
- Calvinism is embraced by a number of Protestant denominations, but is deeply flawed
 - o **Fatalism:** What's the point of evangelizing; no one has a choice in the matter
 - o **Tribalism:** Groups/Nationalities see themselves as the "Chosen Few"
 - o **Passive:** God is sovereign so it's all up to God for everything and to do everything

Arminianism

Arminianism was started by Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). He was born slightly before John Calvin died and was actually taught by Calvin's son-in-law. He was a Calvinist until one day when forced to defend his beliefs, found that his opponent could more ably defend his views against Calvinism. This caused Arminius to reject his Calvinistic background and "sought to modify Calvinism so that God might not be considered the author of sin, nor man an automation in the hands of God."

- The Arminian point of view recognizes that God, knowing all things
- That He 'Foreknew' every human choice, but does not make those choices for them
- Scripture is clear, God has bestowed upon human beings the free right to choose
 - o **Genesis 2:9; Deuteronomy 30:19; Joel 3:14; 1 Timothy 2:1-4**

God did not create us as robots, so our free will becomes the variable or condition of whether or not we receive the promises of God in our life- not because God changes the rules.

- I heard a minister once say, "Well with God. Sometimes it's yes and other times it's no"
- The Calvinist must be really confused to never fully know God's will for his/her life
- All the Promises of God are always "Yes and Amen"- **2 Cor. 1:15-22**
- Faith begins where the will of God is known; God's Word is God's will- **1 Jn. 5:14-15**
- So is God in control of everything that goes on in the earth?
 - o Sadly many in the Church world are confused over this very question!

Some think, Well, God's got everything under control, He is sovereign, so whatever happens does so for a reason- so don't question or resist it. But that may or may not be so, according to how you mean it. If you mean that God is ruling the earth right now – no, He isn't! He's going to rule it again directly in the Millennium and beyond, but He's not right now.

- In **Genesis 1:26**, God made us in His image to rule over this earthly creation- **Ps. 8:3-9**
- Ps 115:16, "*The highest heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth he has given to man*"
- Satan usurped Adam's authority by getting Adam to obey him instead of God- **Ro. 6:16**
- The devil became the "god" of this world instead of Adam- deceived- **2Cor. 4:4;1Jn. 5:19**

Luke 4:5-8, "The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, 'I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours.' Jesus answered, 'It is written: Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

There was an interesting article by a well-known newspaper columnist. He said, in effect, "I don't claim to be a Christian, but I'm not an atheist or an agnostic. The atheist says there is no God. I believe there is one. The agnostic says there may be a God; he doesn't know. I believe there is. "I don't believe everything just happened into being," he continued. "I believe some Supreme Being created everything. But what hinders me from being a Christian is what I hear preachers saying. I'm confused because they say God is running everything. And if He is, He sure has things in a mess." The man alluded to wars, children being killed, poverty, disease, & sickness, saying, "I believe that there is a Supreme Being somewhere and that everything He made was beautiful and good. I just can't believe those bad things are the work of God."

The Unpardonable Sin

The Bible references two unpardonable sins that cannot be forgiven. The first one applies to the unbeliever who has never known Jesus and the other to Christians. This subject really has to be explained thoroughly, lest the enemy take advantage of people not understanding.

Luke 12:8-10, “I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God. And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.”

Unbeliever

It was in reference to the Pharisees who attributed the work of Jesus of casting out devils to the power of Satan. In other words, they were accusing Jesus of being possessed with Satan. They had sinned against the Holy Spirit which is an eternal sin as Jesus pointed out.

- **Please Read: Mark 3:20-30**
- Unbeliever blaspheming the Holy Spirit- **Mt. 12:22-32; Lk. 12:10**
- The Pharisees were highly educated religious leaders who knew Jesus was the Messiah
- Jesus was a threat to them losing their job- **John 11:45-53**
- Jesus became the new High Priest over this New Covenant He was ushering in
- It was out of envy that they conspired to murder Jesus- **Mt. 27:15-26**
- They renounced their Messiah and betrayed Him- **John 19:13-22**
- Many were ignorant, but others willfully rejected their Messiah- **Acts 3:13-15**

Christian

The second unpardonable sin is in reference to believers, only Christians can commit this sin, but only a certain kind of Christian who qualifies; fortunately the Scriptures are very clear.

- Once saved always saved is a Calvinistic concept based on the Sovereignty of God
- Creates a false sense of security that Christians can sin all they want- God's grace

As a matter of fact in **1 John 5:16-17**, it talks about a sin a Christian can commit that leads to death- the unpardonable sin. The Bible tells us not to even pray for them because they are beyond hope and help- they are eternally lost. However, in regards to other sins a Christian commits, we are told to pray for them and God would give him/her life.

James 5:19-20, “My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.”

- Why would Scripture place a warning on remaining true to the faith until the end
 - o **Ro. 11:22; Php. 2:12-13; Col. 1:22-23; Heb. 3:14; 2 Jn. 8; Rev. 2:26**
 - o If there wasn't a real risk for Christians to lose what they have in Jesus
- **Please Read: Hebrews 10:26-31**
- Heb. 10:29, *"treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him"*

Until we leave this earth, our free will which brought us salvation can also cast it aside- **Matthew 12:37**. Just as an unbeliever can change and be born again, but if he/she dies in their sins their spiritual condition becomes permanent- **John 8:24**.

1 Corinthians 15:2, "By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain."

- **Please Read: Hebrews 6:4-9**
- Qualifications a Christian must meet to be in danger of unpardonable sin- **Heb. 6:4-12**
 - o *Once been enlightened*: once as a sinner convicted by the Spirit- **John 16:8**
 - o *Who have tasted in the heavenly gift*: received Jesus and New Birth- **John 4:10**
 - o *Who have shared in the Holy Spirit*: Baptized with the Holy Spirit- **Acts 1:8**
 - o *Who have tasted the goodness of the Word of God*: spiritually mature- **Heb. 5:14**
 - o *Who have tasted the powers of the coming age*: gifts of the Spirit- **1 Cor. 12:7-11**
- A Christian must meet all 5 qualifications; so this is not talking about baby Christians!

False Teachers

Matthew 18:7-8

"Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come!"

- According to the Scriptures, there is a special place in hell for false teachers
- **Please Read: 2 Peter Chapter 2; 1 Timothy 4:1-5**
- This chapter is clearly addressing people who once were Christians but turned away
- There is an eternal penalty for those who peddle a false Gospel- **Gal. 1:6-9**

These former Christians who had fallen away were teachers and prophets gone bad; which denotes spiritual maturity in line with the qualifications of **Hebrews 6:4-12**. These despicable individuals were still hanging around other Christians pulling them down and enticing them to fall way from Christ; stumbling blocks- **Luke 17:1-3; 1 Corinthians 2:32**.

1 Timothy 4:16, "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."

The Wages of Sin is Death

- This universal law applies to Saints and Sinners alike- **Ro. 6:23**
- What is so deceptive about sin is that often times sin is not immediately judged
- So folks will interpret that as meaning, it must not be so bad or got away with it
 - o No, it means that God is withholding judgment to allow for repentance- **Rev. 2:21**

2 Peter 3:9

He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

“Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay.”

James 1:13-15

When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

- The awfulness of sin is seen in the suffering of Jesus Christ as our sin substitute
- The practice of sin is like a ticking time-bomb; only a matter of time before it explodes
 - o Pr. 6:27, *“Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned?”*
- Sin has a price, to miss out and fall short- look how being body ruled (Carnal) cost Esau

Hebrews 12:16-17, “See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears.”

- Walking after the dictates of the flesh:
 - o Results in no peace or life; robs us of our joy in the Lord- **Ro. 8:5-7**
 - o Does not please God, hostile to Him and leads to death- **Ro. 8:8-14**
 - o Become an enemy of God when loving the world- **Jas. 4:1-10; 1 Jn. 2:15-17**
 - o Practicing sin will shorten our lifespan- **Ps. 55:23; Pr. 10:27; 1 Cor. 10:1-13**
 - o Opens us up to demonic oppression- **1 Cor. 10:14-22; Eph. 4:27**
 - o Cause you to backslide and turn away from God- **1 Tim. 5:14-15; Rev. 3:16**
 - o Costs us the blessings of God, disqualified and forfeit- **1 Cor. 9:27**
- Jonah 2:8, *“Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs.”*
- Bottom line, deliberate, habitually and willful sin just isn’t worth it!
 - o **Pr. 13:15**, *“Good understanding gains favor, but the way of the unfaithful is hard.”*

- The pleasure of sin is for a short time, selfishness does not satisfy- **Heb. 11:25**
- God has the best; author of unimaginable pleasure, do it His way- **Ps. 16:11; 1 Tim. 6:17**
- The law of diminishing return of ill-gotten pleasure- the flesh is never satisfied
- Pr. 27:20, *“Death and Destruction are never satisfied, and neither are the eyes of man.”*
- Those who live to gratify the sinful nature in the body will reap destruction- **Gal. 6:7-9**

Ephesians 4:19, “Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.”

The Deceitfulness of sin – hardens our heart

For Christians who deliberately keep on sinning, their heart can become hard to the point where they would renounce Jesus from their heart. This is why the subject of holiness is so important; we hate sin and do everything we know to avoid it- **1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22**.

Jude 4, “For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.”

- As believers we are sternly warned about the dangers of unrepentant sin in our lives
- Biggest danger for Christians is habitually practicing sin; hardens our heart towards God
- Above all else we are told to guard our heart- **Ps. 24:4; 51:10; 1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:22**
 - o **Pr. 4:23**, *“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”*
- We should never tolerate anything in our lives that draws us away from God

Mark 4:18-19, “Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.”

- Practice of sin hardens, sears, desensitizes and makes our heart calloused
 - o 1 Tim 4:2, *“...whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.”*
- **Please Read: Hebrews 3:7-19** *Disobedience leads to a hard heart – lost out!*
- The deceitfulness of unrepentant sin is that it hardens our hearts over time
- The remedy for a hard heart is godly repentance- **Jer. 23:29; 1 Jn. 1:5-2:6; 2 Cor. 7:8-12**
- When a Christian is in fellowship with God and sins- our heart condemns- **1 Jn. 3:19-22**

2 Timothy 2:19

Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: “The Lord knows those who are his,” and, “Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.”

1 Timothy 1:5, 19

The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith.

Pr. 28:13, “He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”

- **Please Read: Ezekiel 18:19-32; 33:12-20** *Not how we start, but how we finish our race*
- The fear of the Lord (Reverential Awe of God)
- **Job 28:28; Pr. 9:10; 10:27; 14:27; 15:33; 16:6; Isa. 11:2; 33:6; Acts 9:31; Heb. 12:28-29**

Proverbs 16:6-7, “Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the Lord a man avoids evil. When a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.”

Disowning

When a Christian sins, their fellowship (communion) is affected, but not their relationship- still a child of God. However, the real danger is when a Christian's heart becomes hardened by sin, they could get to a point where they reject and disown the Lord from their heart.

- Matthew 11:6, “Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me.”
- Isn't that what the devil is after, to make life so difficult we want to quit- **1 Th. 3:5**
- That's what Paul was tempted to do on many occasions- **2 Cor. 11:16-13**
- Luke 8:13, “...but in the time of testing they fall away.”

Mark 4:17

But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away.

- **Please Read: 2 Tim. 2:8-13; Rev. 2:13**
- No salvation for fallen angels; no excuse because of their high revelation knowledge
- Humans were born into sin, ignorant and afforded a chance to repent and choose God
- What's the difference between Peter vs Judas betraying the Lord? Matter of the heart
 - o **Lk. 22:31-34, 54-62 vs Lk. 22:1-6; Mt.26:6-25; Jn. 13:21-30; Acts 1:25**
- Denouncing Jesus from the heart – these folks don't care nor are they sorry for it
- If a believer's heart is still tender to the things of God, they have not committed this sin
- A Christian who is concerned they might have committed the sin- probably hasn't

Church Discipline

When folks fail to repent and force God's hand to judge them, God in course turns them over to the devil, who is waiting anxiously to have access to them. There are numerous Scriptures concerning the children of Israel, where God gave them over to their enemies due to their persistence in sin and rebellion- they left God with no other choice!

- Being turned over to the enemy- **Ps. 78:61-62; Jud. 2:14-15; Jer. 22:25; 32:4; 1 Cor. 10:6**
- We see in Scripture before a Christian gets to the point of no return- dies prematurely
- **Please Read: 1 Corinthians Chapter 5**
 - o Vs 5 is a divine intervention to prevent a Christian from going to hell
 - o Vs 6 warns that sin in the camp opens the door to the enemy- **Joshua chapter 7**
 - o Good news is that the immoral brother repented- **2 Cor. 2:5-11; 7:8-13**
- **Please Read: 1 Corinthians 11:17-34**
- Christians who are not walking in love need to judge themselves and repent

- There is a time and a place in the Church for judging Christians- **1 Cor. chapter 6**
 - o Not talking about the kind of judging where people slander and criticize
- Even leaders should be rebuked publically for moral failures; warning- **1 Tim. 5:19-20**
- In the Catholic church they have a provision for excommunicating people
- Jesus did instruct us on how to deal with sin in the church- **Mt. 18:15-17**
- When revival is taking place and the Holy Spirit is manifesting, be reverent- **Acts 5:1-14**

1 Timothy 1:19-20

Holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

- **Please Read: Luke 15:11-32** *The parable of the prodigal son*
- The prodigal son left Father's house of his own free will; notice the father let him go
- It was not until he came back to his senses and returned- **Heb. 10:22; Jas. 4:7-10**

Finishing Strong

- **Please Read: Hebrews 6:10-11**
- We are disciples of Jesus; disciplined, consistent and faithful- **Mt. 28:19**
- Aliens and strangers in this world; not of this world- **1 Pet. 2:11; 2 Tim. 2:4; 1 Jn. 2:15-17**
- **Please Read: 2 Peter 1:1-15**
- vs 4-5 *"For this very reason...to escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires"*
- Faith+ Goodness+ Knowledge+ Self-Control+ Perseverance +Godliness + Kindness + Love
- It's not how we start our Christian race, it's how we finish- **Ro. 2:7; 2 Tim. 4:6-8**

2 Peter 1:10 AMP, “Because of this, brethren, be all the more solicitous and eager to make sure (to ratify, to strengthen, to make steadfast) your calling and election; for if you do this, you will never stumble or fall.”

- Believing on Jesus, overcome all that the world throws at us to not believe- **1 Jn. 5:3-5**
- Finishing our race in Christ strong till then end, makes us more than a conqueror
- We are never a failure until we give up- don't ever quit, stop or make a peace treaty
- **Please Read: Hebrews 10:32-39**

1 Cor. 15:58, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

Steadfast- is being firmly in one place, immovable- not subject to change. Firm in belief, determination or adherence to the truth.

- NKJV vs35: Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward
- ASV: Cast not away therefore your boldness, which hath great recompense of reward
- AMP: Do not, therefore, fling away your [fearless] confidence, for it has a glorious and great reward
- CJB: So don't throw away that courage of yours, which carries with it such a great reward
- NIRV: So don't throw away your bold faith. It will bring you rich rewards
- To Persevere means: to go through hard times and come out the other end
- Here is another word akin to perseverance – Steadfastness
- The secret to endurance is inspired by HOPE in our Lord Jesus- **Col. 1:27; 1 Th. 1:3**
- Wait for the fulfillment patiently- **Ro. 8:18-25**; Purify your life – **1 John 3:3**
- Encourage one another in regards to the goal- **1 Th. 4:18; 2 Tim. 4:2; Heb. 3:13; 10:25**
- The good news is for those who are sincerely following the Lord, God will keep them
 - o **1 Cor. 1:8-9; 1 Th. 5:23-24; 1 Tim. 1:5-6**

Seven Letters to the Churches

In Revelation 1:10-11 the Lord Jesus directed John to pass on seven letters to seven churches:

- **Ephesus (Rev. 2 :1-7):** Forsaken first love for God and Gospel, call to repentance
- **Smyrna (Rev. 2:8-11):** Church suffering persecution; remain faithful even until death
- **Pergamum (Rev. 2:12-17):** Tolerating idolatry and false teaching, call to repentance
- **Thyatira (Rev. 2:18-29):** Tolerated false prophetess, idolatry, immorality- repentance
- **Sardis (Rev. 3:1-6):** Church became lethargic, asleep, call to wake up and repent
- **Philadelphia (Rev. 3:7-13):** Remained faithful during persecution, call to endure patiently
- **Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-22):** Church became lukewarm & materialistic, call to repentance
- Rev 2:26, “*To him who overcomes and does my will to the end...*”