

apptoteach.org

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Ephesians 1:4-6
Lesson #4
God's Elect
10/16/2022

Challenges to the Christian Faith

1. Is God there?
(the challenge of **materialism**)
2. Is God fair?
(the challenge of **justice**)
3. Does God care?
(the challenge of **deism**)

1

Human Freedom






Divine Sovereignty

2

“If one single molecule in the universe is outside God’s sovereign control, nothing can be assured.”



R.C. Sproul

3

Is Saving Faith a gift from God given only to the “elect”?

Is this clear and consistent with Scriptural teaching?

How does this not violate the character of God and the nature of a personal relationship between God and man?

Is this just?

4

Objectives

- ✓ Help us see that controversial texts can often be **read in different ways**.
- ✓ Help us **think and talk about God** in meaningful and Biblical ways.
- ✓ Help us **appreciate and respect sincere people who disagree** with us on secondary issues.
- ✓ Help us see that if we wish to critique others we must be sure we **understand & represent** them fairly.

5

The same image can be seen in different ways.

The same text can be read in different ways.

The big picture will dictate the identity of the details.

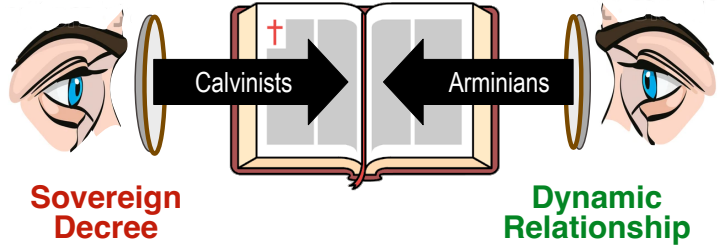


6

A grand narrative (lens) can guide our reading and application of the details.

(control)

(cooperation)



Both read the details of Scripture in light of a bigger & different picture. 7

Ephesians 2:8-9

“we are saved by grace through **faith** and **that** not of yourselves, **it** is the **gift of God** not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

- The Greek “that” (neuter) can not refer to “faith” (feminine).
- The “gift of God” refers to salvation not faith. Rom.6:23 “but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Interpretive paraphrase

“You are saved by the **grace of God**, through faith not works.”

8



Ephesians 1

“4 just as He **chose** us **in Him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love. 5 He **predestined** us to adoption as sons **through Jesus Christ** to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us **in the Beloved**.”

1 Peter 2:4 (Isa.42:1, Lk.9:35)

“a living stone,...rejected by men, but **choice (elect)**...in the sight of God.”

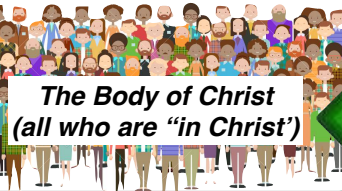
Christ is the “chosen one” and we are also as we place faith in Christ. 9

“1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful **in Christ Jesus**: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places **in Christ**, 4 just as **He chose us in Him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons **through Jesus Christ** to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us **in the Beloved**. 7 **In Him** we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, 8 which He lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight 9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed **in Him** 10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things **in Christ**, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. **In Him** 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 to the end that we who were the first to put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

“He chose us in Him”

The chosen (elect)

Jesus Christ



The Body of Christ (all who are “in Christ”)

Faith



11

The chosen (elect)

1. **Jesus** is the chosen (elected) one.
2. Like Israel, believers are **corporately** elect (as the body of Christ).
Individuals are elect as they are made **one with Christ** through faith.
4. Salvation is focused on **Christ and faith**, not individual election.



Acts 4:27-28

“For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, whom Thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, **to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur.**”

If God’s sovereign will is determined before the human decisions are made,
is doing evil a part of God’s will?

13

If God predestines all things and even our behavior we must ask -

- Are human **ethics** just a charade?
- How can God find fault with anyone without **condemning Himself**?
- In what way are the exhortations & warnings in Scripture **meaningful**?
- Is human free choice an **illusion**?
- In what sense can we speak of a personal **relationship** with God if there is no “free” interaction?

14

This is an important issue because:

- It is the key for our perception of the **nature of God’s action** in this world.
- It defines the nature of our covenant **relationship** with God.
- It authenticates **the image of God** within all humans.
- It aids our **understanding** and application of specific texts.



15

A popular explanation

1. As the sovereign Lord, God is the **1st cause** (in control) of everything.
2. Most events have **secondary causes** through which God’s decrees are worked out.
3. **Sinful acts** are attributed to these secondary causes, not to God directly.
4. Some view this as God’s **permissive will**.

But what about Acts 4:27-28

“to do whatever **Thy hand** and **Thy purpose predestined to occur.**”

16

Acts 4:28

“predestined” (the Greek word means “to determine or resolve beforehand”)

This has to do with a fixed plan that is known beforehand and acted out.

It may or may not be based on mitigating human contingencies.

Calvinists
no known mitigating human contingencies.

Example: A game plan based on nothing outside the coach’s style & will.

Arminians
known mitigating human contingencies.

Example: A game plan based on scouting the other team.

17

What is the nature of God's sovereign power?

1. **Is it His control** - predestination of all creation, human actions, etc.?

Does God need to **micromanage** everything in order to accomplish His purposes?

2. **Is it His creativity** - loving knowledge?

Is God's love (working through **knowledge and wisdom**) the principle element in His sovereign power?

18

What impressed Paul was not God's control but the **wisdom and knowledge** that guided His actions.

Romans 11:33

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the **wisdom and knowledge** of God!

How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!"



19

Consideration #1

Is God's loving, sovereign, power **SELF LIMITED IN THIS AGE?**

Did God's gift to all humans include with "**His image**" a measure of real freedom to choose?

Did God's love and respect for people **limit His absolute control** of them?

20

Consideration #2

Is God's loving, sovereign, power a function of His **KNOWLEDGE?**



"I can give my grandson Alex free choices and because I know him, I know what he will choose."

21

Consideration #2

Is God's loving, sovereign, power a function of His **KNOWLEDGE?**

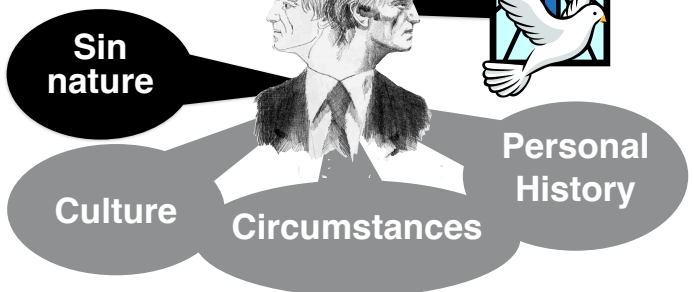
Psalms 139

"¹ O Lord, You have searched me and known me. ² You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thoughts from afar. ³ You scrutinize my path and my lying down, and are intimately acquainted with all my ways...

⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is too high, I cannot attain to it."²²

22

Many factors influence our decisions.



As with the weather, the greater the knowledge the better the foreknowledge.

23

Consideration #3

Is God's loving, sovereign, power a function of His **FOREKNOWLEDGE**?

Romans 8:29-30

"For those whom He **foreknew**,
He also **predestined** . . .
called . . . justified . . . glorified"

Could God's knowledge of us include a foreknowledge of our choices and be used by Him in His providential plan?

24

Consideration #4

Is God's loving, sovereign, power a function of His **CREATIVE WISDOM**?



"God
changed
chaos to
cosmos."

Genesis 1

25

Consideration #4

Is God's loving, sovereign, power a function of His **CREATIVE WISDOM**?

- Joseph
- from slave to deliverer
- Paul
- from thorn to strength
- Jesus
- from Friday to Sunday

26

Consideration #5

Is God's loving, sovereign, power the **WAY OF THE CROSS**?

Disciples' suffering
(Next week)

27

Consider

- ✓ **Is our view of God too small?** When we insist that God's **sovereignty** demands that He "micromanage" the universe - this insults the wisdom, power, and knowledge of God.
- ✓ **Is our view of God's grace too narrow?** When we discard the common grace of God - this insults the gift of **God's image** dignifying every person.
- ✓ **Is our view of relationships too light?** If we deny the **dynamics** of a relationship - we don't have a relationship, we have a machine.

28

Romans 8:28

"And we know that **God causes all things to work together** for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose"

It can't be that difficult for a God who is infinitely wise, powerful, and creative.

Is your God
too small?

29