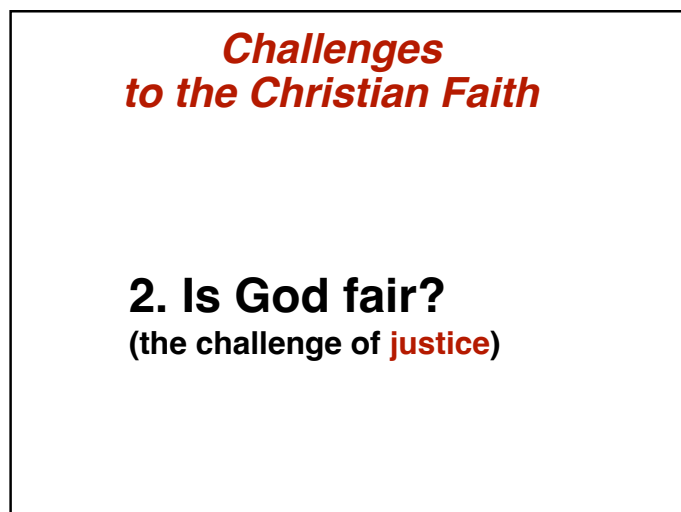




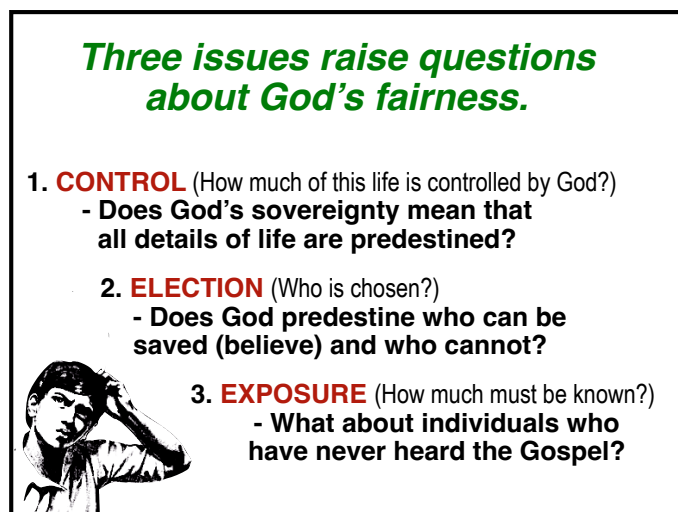
1



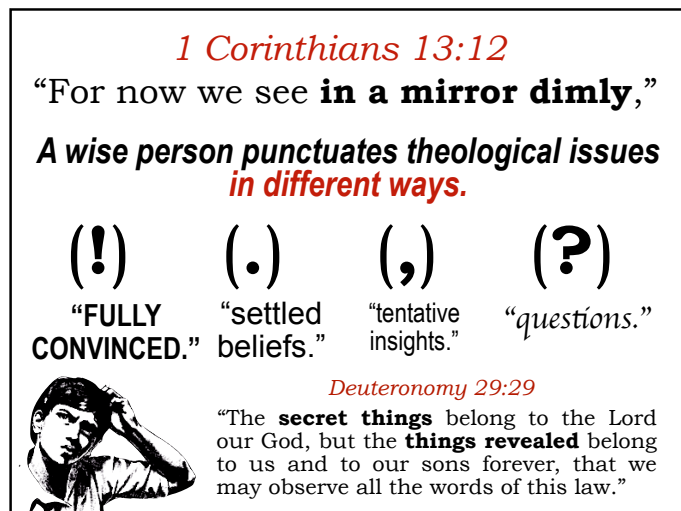
2



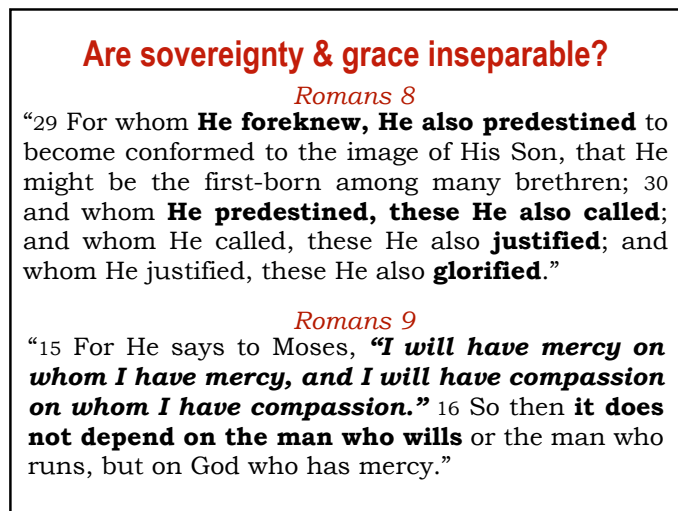
3



4



5



6

Some Christians believe that God's sovereignty is absolute.

"If there is one single molecule in this universe running around loose, totally free of God's sovereignty, then we have no guarantee that a single promise of God will ever be fulfilled."



This view of (absolute) "divine sovereignty" raises questions that suggest a different view should be considered.

R.C. Sproul

7

If God sovereignly preordains all behavior including human volition -

- 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?

8

Is the God we worship too small?

"The idea of God was nothing more than a symbolic representation of the collective values of the society that worships itself through him, she, or it."

"Genesis tells us that God created man in His image. History suggests that man has been trying to return the favor."

Emile Durkheim
(sociologist)



Jehovah is not like a super human Greco-Roman god.

9

Consideration #1

Is God's will / plan synced with our CHOICES?

If I were to play a one-on-one basketball game with L.J. he would not have to control everything I did in order to get his way.



An infinitely skilled and powerful God can get His way by working with and around whatever I choose to do.

Lebron James

10

Consideration #2

Is God's will / plan synced with His CREATIVE WISDOM?

Whose Line is it Anyway?



An infinitely creative God can make all things work together to fulfill His purpose, without micromanaging.

11

Consideration #3

Is God's will / plan synced with His FOREKNOWLEDGE?

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



If God's knowledge is infinite He knows how we will respond.

12

If God is infinitely knowledgeable, wise, creative, and powerful we should not be surprised that He could work all things together (including our free choices, etc.) for His purposes?

Psalm 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."

13

But how are we to explain texts that seem to "clearly" indicate that God chooses some to believe and not others.

John 6:44: "No one can come to Me, **unless the Father who sent Me draws him,**"

"**My sheep hear my voice,** and I know them, and they follow me;" *John 10:27*

Old Testament believers would recognize Jesus as the Christ when they saw him.

Acts 13:48 "all who were **appointed** for eternal life believed"

The Greek word translated as "appointed" has the idea of "ordained or disposed" with no explanation of how or by whom.

14

Eph. 1:4 "just as He chose **us in** (not for or by, but through) **him** before the foundation of the world"

Israel was elect (chosen by God)

"Thus says the Lord, **Israel is My son,**" *Ex. 4:22*

"the Lord your **God has chosen you** (Israel) to be a people for His own possession." *Deut. 7:6*

Jesus, like true Israel, was the focus of election. (Isa. 42:1, 49:7, Lk. 9:35, 23:35, Matt. 12:18, 1Pet. 2:4,6)

"Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to **his seed**. He does not say, "and to seeds," as **referring to many, but rather to one, "and to your seed," that is, Christ.**" *Gal. 3:16, Matt. 2:15*

It is possible that all believers are elect (chosen) not TO believe but BY their faith IN HIM who is the chosen one?

15

Romans 8:30 "and whom **He predestined, these He also called;**"

Romans 9 "16 So then **it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.**"

The context of Rom. 9-11 is the inclusion of Gentiles in the promises made to Israel. Individuals - (Jacob & Esau in vs. 10-18) represent Israel & Gentile (Mal. 1:2-5).

Romans 9:8 "That is, it is **not the children of the flesh** who are children of God, but the **children of the promise** are regarded as descendants."

God's sovereignty can be understood, NOT as micro management, but macro management through the choice of Israel / Jesus by a God who has infinite creativity, knowledge, & power.

16

Reconciliation was completed by Christ's sacrifice without man's faith.

2 Corinthians 5:18-19

"All this is from God, who **reconciled** us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, that God **was reconciling** the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them."

Christ's sacrifice is the basis of salvation.

But could it be available to some who have not known him or expressed faith in him?

17

Christ's atonement is limited.

- Not everyone will be saved.
- Only those who believe will be saved.
- But was Christ's work at the Cross limited in its intent or only in its reception?

Calvinists emphasize that the redemption was FINISHED at the Cross.

Faith is a gift from God to "the elect" who were predestined to believe before they were born.

Were the elect saved before they believed?

Arminians emphasize that the redemption was only FURNISHED at the Cross.

Man has freedom to respond to the Gospel by the common grace bestowed on all who bear God's image.

Are we saved by faith?

- What is the nature of "saving faith"?

18

All Evangelicals DO NOT agree
as to how saving faith is recognized or
how God's grace is ultimately received.

Luke 23

"33...they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. 34 But Jesus was saying, **"Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."** And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves."

Acts 10

"34...God is not one to show partiality, 35 but in every nation the man who **fears Him and does what is right**, is welcome to Him."

19

All evangelicals agree that:
Salvation comes to some who
CANNOT place faith in Jesus.

The Saved



The Lost

**Believers in God
as the Redeemer**

Confessional
Christians

Old Testament
saints

**Special
dispensations**

Infants,
mentally
challenged,
etc.

20

"Implicit faith"

(Justin Martyr, John Wesley,
C.S. Lewis, Vatican II)



The Saved



The Lost

**Believers in God
as the Redeemer**

Confessional
Christians

Those with
faith in God
but not
in Christ
specifically

**Special
dispensations**

Those who
would believe
had they
heard the
Gospel

Infants,
mentally
challenged,
etc.

21

Hebrews 11:6

"And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must **believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.**"

**Could it be that we are to
preach the Gospel message
not only to enlighten the mind
but also to expose the heart?**

1 Samuel 16:7

"God sees not as man sees,
for man looks at the outward appearance,
but the Lord looks at the heart."

22



23

**Could God's grace be broader
than what we have thought?**

1. The revelation that we have, clearly indicates that a confession of faith in Christ as Savior, brings a **CLEAR understanding of our hope.**
2. This is the **GOSPEL** we are called to proclaim.

NOTE:

The inclusion of Gentiles in God's plan was **UNCLEAR** to Old Testament Israel, and so was the identity of **JESUS as the CHRIST.**



24

Spiritual people who did not KNOW JESUS?

- **Holy Pagans** - Job, Abimelech (king of Gerar - Gen.20:1-18), Jethro (a priest of Midian - Ex.18:1-12),
- Jews who lived before Jesus was born - **Abraham**.
- The people of **Nineveh** (Jonah).
- **Abel, Enoch, Noah**, being neither Jews nor Christians, pleased God because they sought Him with the faith response which pleases Him (Heb.11:6)
- **Melchizedek** (a mysterious Canaanite priest) Gen.14:17-24, Heb.6:20-7:22.
 - The **Magi** (wise men) Matt.2:1-12
 - **Matthew 10:15; 11:22; 12:41-42** - the Ninevites, the queen of Sheba, the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah.



25

How MIGHT we view the issue of the fairness of God with respect to those who have not heard the Gospel?

The **HEART OF GOD** is toward those with a **HEART FOR GOD**

The unevangelized may be saved if they respond with faith in God based on the revelation they have. *John Wesley*

God views the unevangelized in terms of how they would have responded had they heard the Gospel. *Clark Pinnock*

26

“I have never been able to conjure up (as some great evangelical missionaries have) the appalling vision of the millions who are not only perishing but who will inevitably perish. On the other hand, as I have said, I cannot be a universalist. Between these extremes I cherish the hope that the majority of the human race will be saved.”

John Stott

Essentials: a Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue p327

27

The Lord of Mysteries

Israel knew God's covenant
The mercies of the Lord divine
Not seeing clear God's mystery
Of Gentiles grafted to His vine.



But when the light of God's broad plan
The mystery hid in ages past
Is brought to light at Calvary
A new perspective then is cast.



So when we contemplate the host
Who know not Christ but fear God still
We can't but wonder at the thought
Are other mysteries in His will?

28

A Berean's look at ...

Next week
Rom.8:28

Does God
care?

29