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# THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

**Matthew 13:12**  
**Lesson #3**  
**God's Role in our Response**  
**10/13/2019**

"How shall we picture the kingdom of God,  
or by what parable shall we present it?"

*Mark 4:30*



## Does God manipulate the soils or predestine our response to the Word?

Divine  
Sovereignty

⚡

Human  
Freedom

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*Matthew 13*

"12 For **whoever has, to him shall more be given**, and he shall have an abundance; but whoever does not have, **even what he has shall be taken away from him.**"

- Who is doing the "**giving**" and "**taking away**"?

*2 Thessalonians 2*

"10 . . . for those who perish, because **they did not receive the love of the truth** so as to be saved. 11 And for this reason **God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false**, 12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness."

- To what extent does God "**influence**" human responses? (Is it pressure or full control?)
- Does God's choice **respond** to human choice or vice versa?

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View #1 **MONERGISM**  
(the work of one)

**Salvation is the work of God alone apart from any human contribution.**

**Regeneration > Faith**

- ✓ Principle Scripture used to support this belief - **Jn. 6,10, Rom.9, Eph.1, 2.**
- ✓ **GOD'S GRACE & GLORY** demand that He control the whole process from beginning to end.

"If one single molecule in the universe is outside God's sovereign control, nothing can be assured."

R.C. Sproul

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View #2 **SYNERGISM**  
(cooperative work)

**Salvation is the work of God together with the faith acceptance by man.**

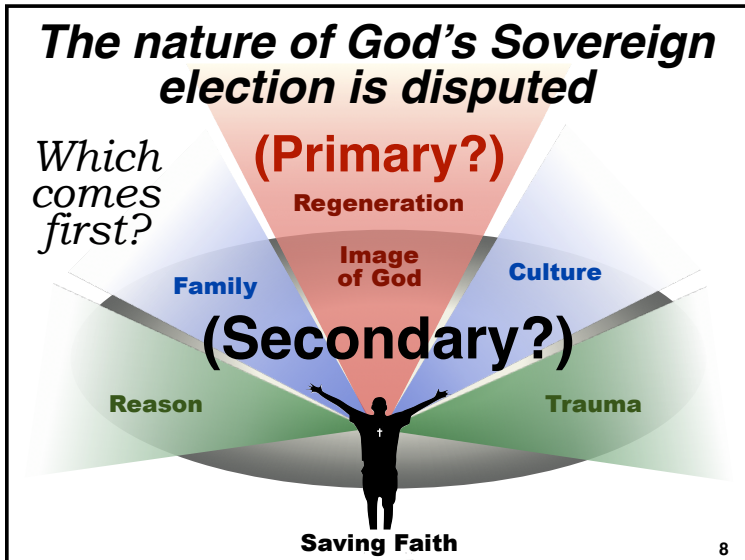
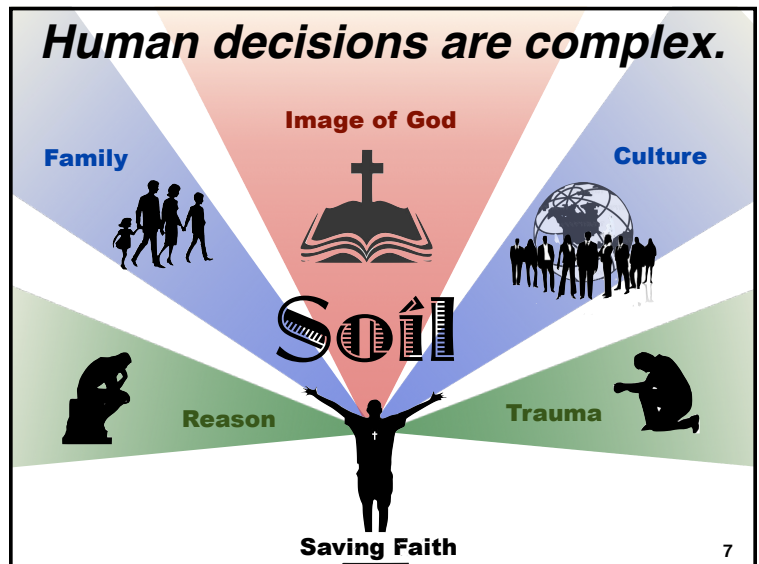
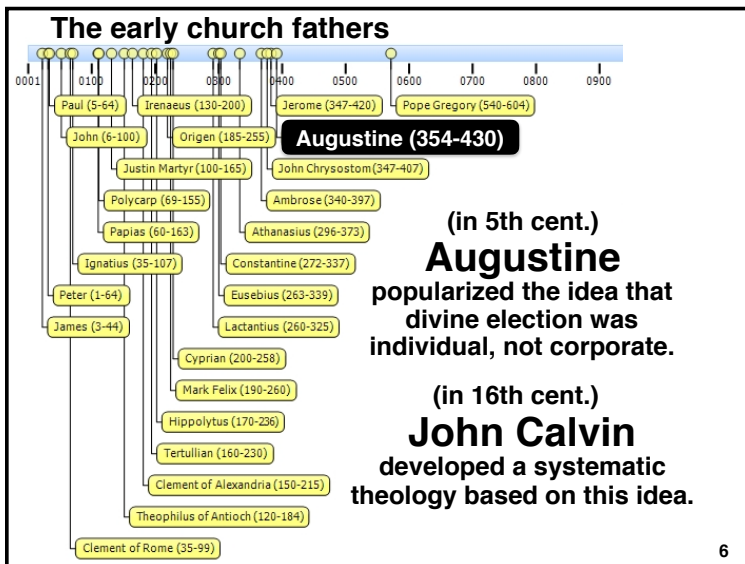
**Faith > Regeneration**

- ✓ Scripture used to support this belief - **the universal treatment of "free choice" as necessary for love, ethics, and judgment.**
- ✓ **RELATIONSHIPS** demand that choices be free and not programed.

"It is the Godfather, not God the Father, who makes you an offer you can't refuse."

Peter Kreeft

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View #1 **MONERGISM**  
Salvation is the work of God alone  
apart from any human contribution.

Concerns	Implications
✓ <b>INTERPRETATION</b> - Is this system based on the best readings of Scripture?	✓ <b>Worship</b> - God is not responsible for evil.
✓ <b>DOGMATISM</b> - Is this system too certain about too many things?	✓ <b>Prayer</b> - Prayer really matters.
✓ <b>IRRATIONALISM</b> - Does this system make a mockery of too many other basic truths?	✓ <b>Relationship</b> are real and dynamic.
	✓ <b>Dignity</b> - All humans bear God's image and are to be respected.

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**Practical implications #1**

**The rational for "Worship"**

Can God be worshipped as **loving, consistent, and just** while controlling every detail of life including **evil and sin**?

*1 John 4:8*  
"The one who does not love does not know God, for **God is love.**"

Can God temporarily **lay aside** some of His attributes out of respect for other attributes and still be God?

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**Practical implications #2**

**The "Image of God" in the lives of all humans**

To what degree does God's image in every human constitute the responsibility / ability to commune with God?

*Romans 1*  
"21 For even though **they knew God**, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but **they became futile in their speculations**, and their foolish heart was darkened." . . . 24 **Therefore God gave them over . . .**"

This affects the way we **view all humans.**

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### Practical implications #3

#### Authentic “Relationships”

Do authentic relationships not demand some form of mutual freedom to love, serve, and respect one another?

*John 15:9*

“Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; **abide in My love.**”

- Prayer (**petitions**) makes a difference.
- God is **worthy of worship** as great and good.
- We are **free sons** not **manipulated slaves**.

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### Practical implications #4

#### The universal nature of “Faith”

Do all human beings have the ability to place their faith in anything including Christ?

Is faith in Christ as one’s Savior a meritorious contribution to salvation?

*Hebrews 6:1*

“Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again **a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,**”

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### God’s choice of Israel was:

#### not conditional

It was not based on human merit.

This is a support for monergism.

#### not individual

It was corporate (national).

This is consistent with synergism.



**NOTE: Jesus is God’s elect and we are united with him by our choice to believe.**

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#### Texts that are questioned - Ephesians 1

*Ephesians 1:4, 11*

“just as He chose us **in him** before the foundation of the world,”

“**In him** also we have obtained an **inheritance**, having been **predestined** according to His purpose”



*Luke 9:35*

“This is My Son, My **chosen** one;”

*Galatians 3:16*

“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.**”

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#### Texts that are questioned - Ephesians 2:8-9

*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) does not match “faith” (feminine) making it more likely that the whole of salvation is in view.

The “gift of God” refers to salvation not faith as in **Rom.6:23** “but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

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#### Texts that are questioned - John 6

*John 6*

“<sup>37</sup>all that **the Father gives Me** shall come to Me,” <sup>44-45</sup> “No one can come to Me, **unless the Father who sent Me draws him,**” <sup>65</sup> “no one can come to Me, **unless it has been granted him from the Father.**”



✓ **Context** - Jesus was speaking to a mixed Jewish audience - (1.) those who were spiritual Israel (a believing “remnant”) and (2.) those who were physical Israel (trusting in their blood line).

✓ He indicates that the “remnant” will recognize and receive him when they hear him.

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## Texts that are questioned - Romans 9

*Romans 9:18*

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

*Romans 9:13*

"for though the twins (**Esau and Jacob**) were not yet born, and had not done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose according to His choice might stand, not because of works, but because of Him who calls,"



- ✓ **Context** - Rom.9-11 addresses the question - How are the promises made to Israel still valid given the gentile inclusion in the church? (not individual salvation)
- ✓ Esau and Jacob represent Gentiles and Jews? Mal.1:2-4
- ✓ Pharaoh's heart is hardened to fulfill God's purpose?

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## Dogmatic certainty can claim too much.

- ✓ Synergism is often presented as **uniquely** Biblical, consistent, reasonable, and valid.
- ✓ **All other** understandings are viewed as without merit and **disrespectful of God and harmful to humans**.

*Deuteronomy 29:29*

"**The secret things** belong to the Lord our God, but **the things revealed** belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law."

*1 Corinthians 13:12*

"we see in a mirror **dimly**... now I know **in part**,"

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## A full explanation of God's Grace and our free faith response lies above our spiritual pay-grade.

*Job 5:9*

"Who does great and unsearchable things, wonders without number."

*Job 11:7*

"Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty?"

*Job 15:8*

"Do you hear the secret counsel of God, and limit wisdom to yourself?"



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## Some general rules in dealing with theological difficulties.

- ✓ There are many more wrong answers than right answers.
- ✓ We will always fail to see some things clearly in this life.
- ✓ It is wiser to live with a paradox than to remove it with an erroneous view.
- ✓ Certainty on difficult issues is to be approached with humility, and caution.
- ✓ Respect for the complexity of an issue and those who honestly differ is a gracious virtue.

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## Does Scripture really demand monergism? Does monergism alone respect God's glory and grace?

### Does common sense undermine monergism?

- Why should Paul bother to use persuasion at all? (Acts 17:3-4, 17; 18:4; 19:8-9). In Acts 14:1 the Apostles "spoke in such a manner that a great multitude believed."
- In Scripture, faith is consistently ascribed to man, not God. Lk.7:50 "Your faith has saved you", Matt.9:22 "Your faith has made you well", Matt.9:28-29 "it shall be done to you according to your faith."

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- How can we explain degrees of unbelief being judged more severely?
- How can a just God judge unbelief that He ordained?
- How can demonic activity hinder a direct work of the Spirit? Lk.8:12; 2 Cor.4:4.
- Why should we pray "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" if whatever IS done on earth is God's will.
- Why did Christ marvel at unbelief? Mk.6:6
- Why does God "give the gift of faith" to so many Americans and to so few Libyans, Mongolians, Tibetans, Afghans, Tunisians, Turks, etc?

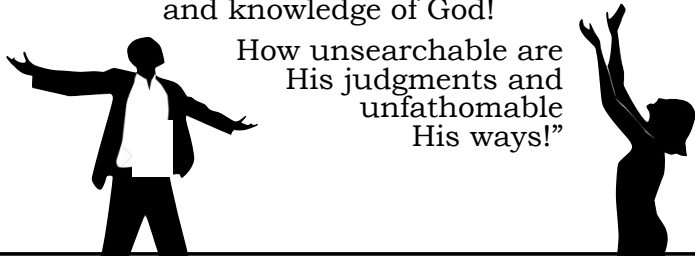
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**God's Grace should inspire  
awe and worship  
not passivity and fatalism  
or pride and fear.**

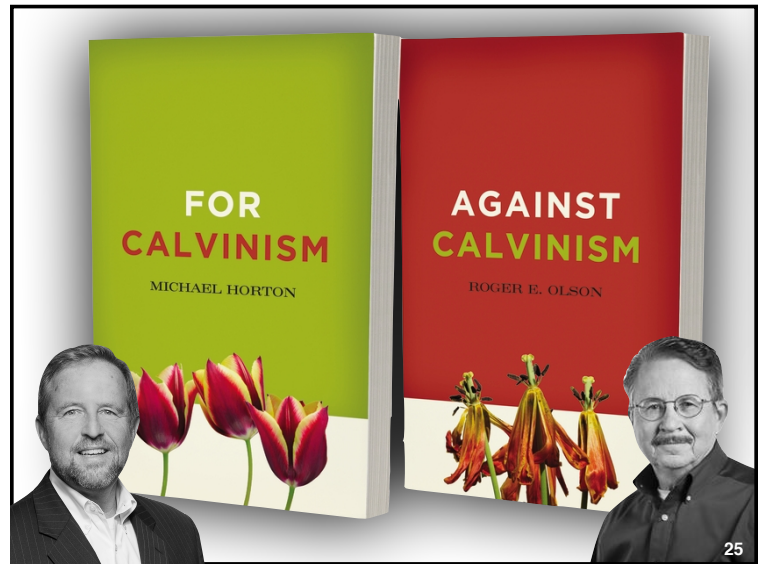
*Romans 11:33*

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

How unsearchable are  
His judgments and  
unfathomable  
His ways!"



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