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# God's Will & Man's Will: Predestination, Election, & Free Will

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# God's Will & Man's Will: Predestination, Election, & Free Will

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The study of God's sovereignty in relation to human responsibility is a fragment of a larger topic called Soteriology. This doctrine includes everything the Bible teaches about salvation, which would entail the issues of election, predestination, foreknowledge, and so on. The topic tends to trigger a lot of emotions, often generating more heat than light.

The issue involved here has to do with this question: How would one deal with two biblical concepts that seem to contradict each other? The first concept is divine sovereignty, and the other concept is the freedom of the human will. In the Scriptures, there are several things that fall under the category of antinomies. An antinomy is two things that are both true, but they apparently contradict each other. It is not like a paradox, where one thing might be wrong. Here we have two basic concepts the Bible presents as being true, but they appear to contradict each other.

The most common antinomy, for example, is the Trinity. The Bible teaches God is one; the Bible teaches God is three. Those are two basic truths we simply have to accept by faith as being true. We try to explain it with different charts. The charts help to define the Trinity, the unity of God, but no matter how well we present it, at some point, it is not fully comprehensible. At some point, the illustration tends to fail. If there is an antinomy and one goes too far one way or the other, he ends up with the problem of false teaching. If one goes too far on the Trinitarian side, he ends up believing in tritheism: three different gods altogether. If he goes to the unity extreme, the oneness extreme, he ends up with modalism. Modalism denies that there are three persons in the Godhead. The teaching of modalism is that there is only one God who sometimes appears as the Father, sometimes appears as the Son, and sometimes appears as the Holy Spirit. The "Jesus only" teaching for example has gone to the unity extreme. In that view, Jesus is the Father; Jesus is the Son; He is also the Holy Spirit. If there is an antinomy and

one goes too far one way or the other and does not keep the two things in balance, he will end up with some kind of a false concept.

The same antinomy holds true with what is being discussed in this study: the antinomy between the sovereignty of God and the free will of man, or human responsibility. These will be covered individually. There are a few things to mention about each one. A brief outline of three different ways people try to solve the apparent contradiction will be presented, and then we will seek to find the basic, balanced, biblical view.

One must keep in mind that eventually we always have to accept all antinomies, including this one, by faith, because it is what the Bible teaches. We will not be able to fully harmonize them in our minds. Again, if one goes too far on the side of divine sovereignty, he ends up with a problem; if he goes too far on the human responsibility side, he will have a problem too.

Take, for example, the new theology that is catching on in different circles called "the openness of God." The proponents of this teaching have gone too far to the side of human freedom and human responsibility. The openness of God theology teaches that God is not fully omniscient. While He knows a lot, the one thing He does not know is the different choices people will make. Hence, He is not omniscient. The followers of this theology have gone overboard with human responsibility.

At the same time, if one goes too far with sovereignty, he ends up teaching that there is absolutely no free will. He would teach that people are saved whether they willed it or did not will it. Some of the elect are dragged into the Kingdom kicking and screaming. That has gone over to the sovereignty extreme.

Again, let us look at the two concepts and keep in mind that the Bible teaches both.

Regarding divine sovereignty, the Bible teaches that God is fully in control of this entire universe. He is in control of all events, whether they are physical events, catastrophic events, or human events. God's

sovereignty is emphasized over and over again throughout Scripture. Some of these Scriptures will be examined later in this study.

The Bible tells us that God does not only control what comes into existence, but that most of the control He exercises is over what continues to exist. Ephesians 1:11 is a passage for the sovereignty side: *in whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his will.* Notice the last phrase: *all things after the counsel of his will.* This emphasizes divine sovereignty, that everything that ever happens in the universe somehow is connected with God's sovereignty. Everything that happens in the universe is something He wills and allows to happen, in some way. Divine control is exercised over the universe, over the angelic realm, over the human realm, over the animal realm. It also involves in a very close way, as we will see, the issue of redemption, salvation, and what part we play in it, and what part we do not play in it.

We believe God is in sovereign control over all earthly affairs. If we are believers, we go to bed each night assured that God is in control of things. Everything that is happening, whether we understand it or not, somehow fits within His all-encompassing, pre-ordained plan. We go to sleep knowing that nothing can thwart God's plan and that nothing can happen to us outside His will, because *all things work together for good to them that love God* (Rom. 8:28). We go to bed with that assurance each night if we are mature believers. All this emphasizes God's sovereignty.

On the other side of the coin is human responsibility, where the Bible also just as clearly teaches that people are individually responsible for their moral choices. They are somehow responsible for their eternal destinies. Whether they end up in the Lake of Fire or the New Jerusalem, that is somehow relevant to the choice they make. Throughout the Bible, God calls upon people to make a choice. Joshua declared to the people of Israel, in the closing days of his life, *Choose you this day whom ye will serve* (Josh. 24:15). It is obvious that the Israelites were able to make some kind of a choice and were challenged to make it. Thus we have this same concept of human responsibility. Even when we have statements in the Bible about God hardening the

hearts of certain ones, like the heart of Pharaoh, it also indicates in the same context that somewhere along the line Pharaoh also hardened his own heart.

We believe God holds us morally responsible for the choices we make, and He expects us to make moral decisions. If we are not able to make any moral decision, if we really do not have such a will, it is inconsistent for God to hold us responsible for choosing things that He Himself predestined us to choose. Yet the Bible constantly exhorts us to believe, and in becoming believers, the Bible exhorts us to live godly lives. The Bible holds us responsible for the choices we make, either as unbelievers or as believers. If there is no real free choice of some kind, then how could God justly reward us or punish us for the choices we make?

So these are the two issues we have to deal with; this is the antinomy. Everything that has been said about the sovereignty of God is found in Scripture, but everything that has been said about human responsibility will also be found in Scripture.

That is the dilemma. How can both concepts be true? If we are really able to make moral, meaningful decisions, then somehow, we must be able to act against God's will. But if we can act against God's will, then how can God be said to be sovereign? How can God say that His will is always carried out? If God is in full control, how can man make immoral choices? If we cannot make moral choices, then how can we be held responsible? In other words, how can we be both free and predestined at the same time? The question this dilemma poses is: To what extent does human freedom place limitations on God's sovereignty?

In the history of dealing with the subject, people have come up with three basic solutions. The following is a brief summary of each view.

One solution is that God's predestination is based on His foreknowledge. Since God is omniscient, He knows what choice each individual is going to make. Based upon that foreknowledge, God elected the elect. God looked down the corridors of time, and by His omniscience, He could see who would believe and who would not believe. Because of His omniscience, He has a foreknowledge of those

who will believe, and therefore, He elected the elect based upon that foreknowledge. This view emphasizes human freedom. Humans are totally free to either reject or accept God's choice. Since God is all-knowing, because He is in sovereign control of the whole universe, He knows exactly what choice each individual will make. He knew what that choice was going to be even before He created the universe. On the one hand, God is not bound by time. He controls the whole universe. At the same time, human freedom actually exists. God knows what choices man will make on his own and then incorporates those choices into His plan. That is one solution.

The basic problem with this first solution is that God says a lot more about the meaning of foreknowledge. As we will see, foreknowledge means a lot more than merely knowing in advance. It has a closer relationship to what is foreknown than merely to know in advance. If God's choice were based upon those who would choose Him, it is not really an election that is on the basis of divine grace, but on the basis of human effort, because the picture is that man chose God first, and then God chose man as a result. The elect make a choice and become elect as a result of it. The first choice is made by man and not by God. God has chosen man because man chose God first.

The second suggested way to deal with these two issues is that predestination comes in spite of God's foreknowledge. The first view presented goes to the human responsibility extreme; this view goes to the sovereignty extreme. God works with such an unapproachable sovereignty that He makes His choices in total disregard for human choices. God will determine whom He will save, whether these people believe or do not believe. No human being has anything to say about his own salvation. At some point, God simply grants him that salvation, whether he wants it or not. This view is a total denial of free choice. In fact, those who hold this view actually come out and say there is no such thing as free will. Instead, God simply applies His irresistible grace on the unwilling, forcing them to believe.

Now, one of the problems we can mention briefly with this view is that this totally contradicts the concept of God's love not being coercive. God never forces love on anyone. This view ultimately is what leads to

limited atonement, contradicting what the Bible says, that He died for all, not just for some.

The middle view is that God's predestination is in accordance with His foreknowledge. It is not based upon foreknowledge; it is not in spite of His foreknowledge; it is in accord with His foreknowledge. This view reflects the very phrase that Peter used in 1 Peter 1:2: *according to the foreknowledge of God*. God's predestination is not based upon His foreknowledge of human freedom, nor is it in spite of human choices. As we shall see, ultimately, predestination and foreknowledge take place at the same point of time; there is no chronological or logical order. They both are one and the same in their outworking.

God foreknows things because He planned out those things. Within that plan, He allows man to make free choices in certain areas. Whether one holds to foreknowledge only or to predestination and foreknowledge, either way, the end product is the same, because once God foreknows something, it has to happen. Otherwise, God would be wrong in what He foreknows.

For example, God foreknew that Judas would betray *Yeshua* (Jesus), which meant eventually Judas would betray *Yeshua*. Yet Judas was not forced to betray the Messiah. Judas chose of his own will to betray Him. God did not compel him; He did not force him to do so. Rather, Judas acted on his own free will and betrayed *Yeshua*. Yet God foreknew that would happen, and once He foreknew it, it was unavoidable. Ultimately, either way, one ends up with the same result.

That is the larger picture; it will become clearer as this study proceeds.

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# CHAPTER TWO: OVERVIEW OF THE FIVE VIEWS

For centuries, believers have struggled with the question of predestination versus the free will of man. To this day, theologians still disagree what the answer might be. Those who emphasize human freedom view it as a reflection of God's self-limiting power. Others look at man's freedom as something that is infallibly guided by Him. Five main views have emerged over the centuries, which we will look at in this chapter.

## I. Arminianism

Arminianism received its name from Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), a professor of Divinity at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands. Arminius had studied theology under Theodore Beza, a Protestant theologian and scholar from France who played a major role in the Reformation. As Calvin's successor, Beza was one of the stronger advocates for the Reformed doctrine of predestination. His student, Jacobus Arminius, on the other hand, influenced in great part by the teachings of Johann Kolmann, retreated from this position. While this led to hefty disputes and theological Calvinist-Arminian clashes even during his lifetime, the theology of Arminianism did not become fully developed until after his death. Over the centuries, though, his doctrine has become the majority view in Protestant churches.

Today, there are different strains of Arminianism. The more classic view of this theology can be compared with semi-Pelagianism, a compromise position between a radical free-will doctrine and the strong predestinarian views of Augustine. People who followed this position in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century were called Remonstrants. The British theologian and founder of the Methodist movement, John Wesley, adopted this form of Arminianism and refined it with a strong evangelical emphasis on the doctrine of justification by faith. Today,

Arminianism is found in the Church of the Nazarene and other Wesleyan groups, as well as the Pentecostal movement, the Assemblies of God, the Church of Christ, the Seventh-day Adventists, and many Baptist groups. Some elements of Arminianism and especially semi-Pelagianism can also be found in Roman Catholicism.

The following are the five points of Arminianism.

- 1. Free Will:** There is first of all free will, meaning that man has full human ability. In this view, the sin of Adam has polluted man, but we do not inherit the guilt of sin. We do not inherit the sin nature, so man has the ability to do good, even to be perfect. In this context, sin consists of acts of the will. Man can conform to God's will on his own, and his will is one of the causes for regeneration.
- 2. Conditional Election Based upon God's Foreknowledge:** Arminianism teaches that God looked down the corridors of time, and in His omniscience, He knew who would believe. Those who would believe were foreknown, and election was based upon His foreknowledge. In this view, human responsibility takes a larger role, a priority, over divine sovereignty.
- 3. Universal Atonement:** Universal atonement means that Messiah died for all and not only for one specific group.
- 4. Resistible Grace:** Resistible grace means that the grace of God can be resisted.
- 5. It is Possible to Fall from Grace:** Arminianists teach that it is possible to fall from grace, which they define as the possibility to lose one's salvation. One loses his salvation by some specific sin or by many sins or by simply ceasing to believe. In this view, election is based upon foreknowledge. It is a sovereign act of God whereby He chose in Messiah *Yeshua* for salvation all those whom He knew in advance would believe. It is still an act of grace, because God grants His salvation on those who do not deserve it, but He chose beforehand those whom He knew would believe.

Arminianism teaches that God has given sufficient grace to all men to believe. The work of the Holy Spirit is limited by the human will. But even after a person is saved, he could still be lost. What it would take to be lost will vary within this camp. One extreme says one can lose his salvation after almost every sin. Thus, one must be saved and resaved after every sin. In place of being born again, one

is born again and again and again. But most in this group do not go that far. They would say one can lose his salvation not for any sin, but only for certain big sins. But they disagree among themselves what these big sins are, and often their individual backgrounds determine what they feel that sin is. One person wrote me saying he believed that the only sin that would cause a person to lose his salvation is suicide.

There are those in this camp that say no act of sin would cause one to lose his salvation, but if he ceases to believe, then he loses his salvation. God will never take away salvation because of the sin that is committed, but one can walk away from his salvation by ceasing to believe. Thus, while they believe one can lose his salvation, exactly what it takes to lose one's salvation will not be the same with different teachers and different groups.

## II. Calminianism

Calminianism is primarily Arminianism with one key difference: eternal security. Calminianism therefore stands for something like this: We choose our salvation freely, but cannot lose it once we have it. This view is seen among many (but not all) Baptist and independent churches.

As in Arminianism, there are five points in Calminianism.

1. **Free Will:** The Calminian view of free will or human ability is the same as that of Arminianism.
2. **Conditional Election:** The Calminian view of conditional election is the same as that of Arminianism.
3. **Universal Atonement:** The Calminian view of universal atonement is the same as that of Arminianism.
4. **Resistible Grace:** The Calminian view of resistible grace is the same as that of Arminianism.
5. **Eternal Security:** The only difference between Arminianism and Calminianism is this last point. The Calminian view is that one cannot lose his salvation under any circumstance.

### III. Moderate Calvinism

The first two views are mostly found within the Arminian camp; the last three are within the Calvinistic camp. When we distinguish between the three views within Calvinism, we must address the issue of the lapsarian position. The term "lapse" means "fall"; it focuses on the fall of man in Genesis 3. The different lapsarian views depend upon the order of the decrees of God. How Calvinistic one is will determine where the lapse takes place.

The Moderate Calvinistic view holds to sublapsarianism, which consists of five decrees. First, God decreed to create all men. Second came the lapse, the decree to allow the Fall. Third was the decree to provide salvation for all. Fourth was the decree to elect some and bypass the rest. And fifth was the decree to apply salvation to the elect when they believe, and salvation is applied only when they believe. That is why in this view, faith must precede salvation; faith precedes regeneration.

With that background, the five points of Moderate Calvinism would be as follows:

- 1. Total Depravity:** All three groups within Calvinism speak of "total depravity," but they do not always define it the same way. In the case of Moderate Calvinism, total depravity simply emphasizes that sin has touched every part of man.
- 2. Unconditional Election:** "Unconditional" means God did not elect on the basis of foreseen faith. That was not the basis for election. Election was not based upon what God knew people would believe, but He simply elected the elect unconditionally.
- 3. Unlimited Atonement:** This view of Calvinism holds to unlimited atonement. The Bible teaches that *Yeshua* died for all. He provided salvation for all.
- 4. Irresistible Grace:** God's salvation grace is irresistible, and for that reason, the elect will respond to this grace and choose to believe.
- 5. Perseverance of the Saints:** Normally, those who hold to the Moderate Calvinism view prefer the expression "eternal security." The reason why other Calvinists employ the term "perseverance of the

saints” is because they like to work with an acronym based upon the flower called “tulip.” This view was developed in Holland, and the tulip is best known as the Dutch flower. Based upon that, they like to use the word “tulip” as an acronym to represent the five points of their view: “T” represents “total depravity”; “U” stands for “unconditional election”; “L” stands for “limited atonement”, “I” represents “irresistible grace”; and the “P” is the “perseverance of the saints.” According to their view, all saints will persevere to the end and never fall into carnality for any length of time.

But Moderate Calvinists not only hold to unlimited atonement (which changes the acronym T-U-L-I-P to T-U-U-I-P); they also prefer the term “eternal security” or “the perseverance of God.” God perseveres for the saints; the saints do not always persevere. This would be the middle ground that the author holds.

#### IV. Strict Calvinism

The Strict Calvinist holds to the lapsarian view that is called infralapsarianism, “infra” meaning “later.” According to this doctrine, the first decree is the decree to create. Second is the decree to permit the Fall. Third is the decree to elect some. Fourth is the decree to bypass the rest. Fifth is the decree to provide salvation only for the elect. And sixth is the decree to apply salvation to the elect.

The key difference between the two forms of Calvinism is that in Moderate (or four-point) Calvinism, God provides salvation for all, but salvation is applied only when the elect believe. In Strict (or five-point) Calvinism, God provides salvation only for the elect, but it goes beyond this. God actually obtained salvation at the cross for the elect, and therefore the elect virtually are saved already. That is where, in this view, regeneration precedes faith. The followers of five-point Calvinism do not put a lot of stress on the necessity to believe for salvation. God at some point simply zaps the elect person with regeneration, and then he believes.

## A. The Five Points

The five points of Strict Calvinism are as follows:

1. **Total Depravity:** Salvation precedes belief because of the way five-point Calvinists define total depravity: They define it as total inability.
2. **Unconditional Election**
3. **Limited Atonement:** The Messiah died only for the elect to secure their salvation.
4. **Irresistible Grace**
5. **Perseverance of the Saints:** Strict Calvinists teach that the saints will persevere to the end. If they do not, they were never saved to begin with. They deny the existence of carnal believers. They believe the elect can fall into sin, but they cannot fall into continuous sin. If somebody falls into continuous sin, it means he was not saved to begin with. That is why those who hold to the four-point view prefer the term "security." The word "security" focuses on God keeping the elect secure, as over against perseverance of the saints. But in Strict Calvinism, the saints have to persevere before they can be sure they are really members of the elect. That is why there is often a lack of assurance: How does one know he has persevered to the end until he has reached the end?

## B. Defense of Limited Atonement

The key distinction between Moderate and Strict Calvinism is point number three: unlimited versus limited atonement. Because we will be dealing with this extensively, defending the unlimited view, we should say a few things about how Strict Calvinists defend limited atonement. At this point, their views will be presented along with an explanation as to why they believe what they believe. Later we will discuss why this is wrong. Let me summarize what they teach on this in seven points.

## 1. “My” or “His”

Strict Calvinists focus on the pronouns “my” and “his.” In Isaiah 53:8 and 11, for example, it says that He died *for the transgression of my people*. Strict Calvinists define the phrase *my people* to be the elect only.

Matthew 1:21 says: He *shall save his people from their sins*. They define the phrase *his people* as being only the elect.

Luke 1:68: He came to redeem *his people*. *His people*, according to their teaching, can only be the elect.

John 10:15 and 29 speak of *his sheep*. *His sheep* can only be the elect.

John 15:13: He came for *his friends*. *His friends* can only be the elect.

In John 17:9, *Yeshua* said: *I pray not for the world*. He does not pray *for the world*; therefore, the world is not something He would provide salvation for.

Acts 20:28: The Church was *purchased with his own blood*. The Church here is the elect only; it is only the elect for whom His blood was provided.

Romans 5:10 says: *We were reconciled*. *We* must be the elect only.

Romans 8:32-35: He delivered His Son up *for us all*. The *us all* means only “all the elect.”

Second Corinthians 5:21: *Our behalf*. It is the *behalf* of the elect.

Galatians 1:4: He died *for our sins*. *Our* means only the elect.

Ephesians 1:7: *Our redemption*. *Our* must be the elect alone.

Ephesians 5:25-27: He died for the Church. The Church is the elect. Strict Calvinists claim He died only for the Church and no one else.

Titus 2:14: He gave *himself for us*, *us* being the world of the elect.

Thus, one major argument five-point Calvinists use focuses on these pronouns. They define phrases like “His people” and “my people” as referring only to the elect. We will see in our subsequent studies that this cannot be true. We will also see that God sometimes uses those terms of unbelievers, who are not members of the elect.

## 2. All for whom Messiah Died also Died in Messiah

The second argument Strict Calvinists use is that all for whom Messiah died also died in Messiah. That is a true statement, but they go on to interpret it to mean that He therefore provides salvation only for the elect.

Romans 6:3-11: We are united with Him, and we died with Him.

Second Corinthians 5:14-15: *One died for all, therefore all died.*

Colossians 3:3: *For ye died, and your life is hid with Messiah in God.*

These three passages do teach that all for whom Messiah died, died in Messiah, but the Strict Calvinist goes on to say that, therefore, they mean He provided atonement in a limited sense—only for the elect.

## 3. The Purpose of the Atonement

The Strict Calvinists' third line of argument has to do with the purpose of the atonement, which was to give people actual possession of eternal life, and actual possession is given only to the elect.

Luke 19:10 states: He came *to save that which was lost*. Since not all men are saved, salvation was provided only for the ones who are saved.

Romans 5:10: Those reconciled shall be saved.

Second Corinthians 5:21: He was *made to be sin* for those who are to become righteous.

Galatians 1:4: He *gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us out of this present evil world*. He gave Himself *for our sins* only, meaning only for those of the elect.

Galatians 3:13: He gave Himself for those redeemed *from the curse of the law*. Therefore, He only gave Himself for the redeemed, and the redeemed have to be the elect alone.

Ephesians 1:7: It is the redeemed for whom His blood was shed. Strict Calvinists would interpret this verse as meaning that He died for no other.

The purpose of the atonement was to provide actual possession of eternal life. If that is really true, then obviously, atonement would be limited.

#### **4. *Yeshua* Laid down His Life only for a Qualified Group**

Strict Calvinists teach that *Yeshua* laid down His life only for a certain qualified group. They claim that He Himself said, and the apostles taught, that He laid down His life not for all humanity, but only for a certain qualified group. To support their argument, they quote Matthew 1:21: *It is he that shall save his people from their sins*. Again, *his people* is defined as being the elect only. That is a good example of what happens when one gets away from the Jewish background of the Gospel of Matthew. As will be shown later, the phrases “my people” and “His people” are used of the people of Israel, whether elect or non-elect.

Strict Calvinists also quote John 10:11-15, where it says that He gave Himself for His *sheep*. His *sheep* are a certain, qualified group, the elect.

We are further told that He died for the Church, and the Church is an elect, qualified group (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25-27).

#### **5. God's Love is Particular**

According to Strict Calvinists, God's love is particular; He does not love everyone with the same kind of love. Romans 1:7 says: *To all that are in Rome, beloved of God*. If Strict Calvinists were more consistent with their logic, they should say that *all that are in Rome, beloved of God*, means He only died for the believers of Rome and no other believers.

Romans 5:8: *But God commends his own love toward us*. His love was only for us, the elect.

Romans 8:32: He *delivered Him up for us all*. *Us*—the elect; it was only for the elect.

Romans 9:13: *Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated*. Jacob was a member of the elect; that is why he was loved. Esau was not part of the elect; therefore, he was hated.

Colossians 3:12: God's elect are *holy and beloved*. Only they are beloved of God.

First Thessalonians 1:4: *knowing, brethren, beloved of God, your election*. Only the elect are loved of God.

Second Thessalonians 2:13: *beloved of the Lord, for that God chose you from the beginning unto salvation*. Only those who have been chosen from the beginning are *beloved of the Lord*. He only loves the believer, not the unbeliever.

First John 4:10: *he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*. Only those who are *us*, the elect, does He love. Thus, God does not love the whole world; He loves only a certain segment of the world.

## **6. If Messiah Died for All and All are not Saved, God's Plan is Frustrated**

If Messiah died for all and all are not saved, then God's plan is frustrated. That is a logical argument. But it is also human deduction and not biblical teaching. It could be God's plan to provide salvation for all. It could be God's plan to only elect some, and so God's plan is not frustrated. But this argument is based upon the premise that the purpose of the atonement is to actually secure salvation for the elect.

## **7. How Do they Respond to Passages that Say Messiah Died for All?**

How do Strict Calvinists respond to verses that state, "God so loved the world"? How do they respond to those passages that say Messiah died for all?

Strict Calvinists define the term "world" in a limited sense. When the Bible says, *God so loved the world*, it means the world of the elect alone. They go to passages like Luke 2:1, where the term *world* is used only of the Roman world, and to Romans 11:12, where the word refers to the Gentile world. They point to passages where, in that context, the term "world" has a limited meaning. The trouble with this approach is that in the context of salvation, the term "world" does not have a limited meaning. It is called proving something by an irrelevant context. That is

how Strict Calvinists deal with verses like John 3:16. *God so loved the world* only pertains to the world of the elect.

What about the word “all”? The Strict Calvinist also says “all” can have a limited meaning. When the Bible says “all,” it means “all of the elect,” not “all people.” Here again, they point to passages where in context “all” does have a limited meaning. And it is true that in certain contexts the word “all” - like the word “world” - can have a limited meaning. For example, Romans 5:18 says: *all men to condemnation; all men to justification*. Obviously, in this verse, *all* would be limited because only those that believe are justified.

First Corinthians 6:12 and 1 Corinthians 10:23 both state: *All things are lawful*. Now, obviously all things are not lawful; there are things which are unlawful. Here the word *all* does have a limited meaning.

First Corinthians 15:22 says: *In Adam, all die, so also in Messiah, shall all be made alive*. That, too, has a limited meaning. *In Adam, all die*. That is mostly true. That was not true for Enoch or Elijah. It will not be true for those living at the time of the Rapture. And *in Messiah, shall all be made alive*. Again, for the Strict Calvinist the *all* here would be “all of the believers.”

Ephesians 1:23: *the fullness of him that fills all in all*. Again, contextually, that would be a limited *all*.

These are the seven basic reasons Strict Calvinists give for believing in limited atonement. What five-point Calvinists are saying so far is true. There are passages where the term “all” has a limited meaning; however, the context shows it is limited. But where it deals with the provision for the atonement, the context does not show any limitation. Here, again, we come across what is called the fallacy of irrelevant context.

## V. Hyper-Calvinism

The last view is called Hyper-Calvinism. This is the most extreme of the Calvinistic views. Hyper-Calvinists hold to supralapsarianism. By “supra”

they mean the decree to elect precedes the decree to create. In the first two views, election follows the Fall, but in this view, the election is the most important element, and the order of the decrees is as follows:

First, the decree to elect some to salvation and some to Hell: This view automatically holds to double predestination. People have not only been predestined to go to Heaven, they are predestined to go to Hell. This is the only view that holds to double predestination. Second, the decree to create both elect and non-elect: God already decreed to elect those who would go to Heaven and to elect those who automatically go to Hell. Third, the decree to permit the Fall. Fourth, the decree to provide salvation for the elect. Fifth, the decree to apply salvation for the elect: Like the Strict Calvinist, the Hyper-Calvinist believes that the cross itself applies salvation to the elect, and therefore regeneration precedes faith. And sixth, the decree to condemn the rest to Hell.

The five points of Hyper-Calvinism are as follows:

### **1. Total Depravity**

**2. Unconditional Election:** Again, the uniqueness here is double predestination. We will see that in the Bible, the term "predestination" is only used in reference to believers. Scripturally, it is only used in reference to salvation, never to damnation. There is no biblical text that teaches that some are predestined to Hell, but it is certainly a logical conclusion at which the Hyper-Calvinists have arrived. The Bible is very clear that believers are predestined, but there is no mention of any decree to predestine some to Hell. In fact, the phrase the Bible uses is God simply "passed the others by." He elected some; the rest He passed by. The biblical picture, as we will see, is that because we have inherited the sin nature of Adam, all humanity is already under condemnation and heading for Hell. From the time we were born, we were already heading for Hell. God elected some to salvation; the rest He simply passed by. It is not God's predestination that sends them to Hell; it is their own sin that sends them to Hell.

### **3. Limited Atonement**

### **4. Irresistible Grace**

### **5. Perseverance of the Saints**

## VI. Summary

This introduction has portrayed the bigger issues. The issues involve trying to balance an antinomy in which the Bible teaches that God is sovereign, but at the same time there is human will and human responsibility. The Bible teaches both as true.