

An Interesting Conclusion

While working on responses to the claims of the Calvinist/Reformed that the Scripture supports their doctrine that (for unknown reasons) God picked and choose, in eternity past, who would be saved and who would be condemned without regard to any criteria, I happened to again examine the heading to one section of their "evidence" from Scripture and it struck me as to what was wrong with it. Now, it is very plain that the Calvinist/Reformed adherents engage in a lot of presumption and frame statements and challenges in such a way as to lead one to an inevitable conclusion. In short, they bias any answering by the very way the statement or challenge is framed. However, the framing of statements in this way is not without it's problems, as the following statement demonstrates. Below a brief statement is made that I am certain is meant to say that when "God" determines that someone will believe, they will believe. However, it does not turn out quite that way when seriously examined.

[God is sovereign over unbelief.](#) John 12:37-41; 10:26 Romans 9:18-19; 11:7-8, 25, 32 Matthew 13:11-17; 24:22 Mark 4:10-13 1 Peter 2:8 Proverbs 16:4 Jude 4

Before starting to examine the above statement, there are a couple of brief definitions which are required to be understood:

sovereign ((Definition taken from Dictionary.com))
sov·er·eign [sov-rin, sov-er-in, suhv-] –noun 1. a monarch; a king, queen, or other supreme ruler. 2. a person who has sovereign power or authority. 3. a group or body of persons or a state having sovereign authority. –adjective 5. belonging to or characteristic of a sovereign or sovereignty; royal. 6. having supreme rank, power, or authority. 7. supreme; preeminent; indisputable: a sovereign

right. **unbelief** ((*ibid*)) *un·be·lief* [uhn-bi-leef] –noun the state or quality of not believing; incredulity or skepticism, especially in matters of doctrine or religious faith.

Knowing then the above definitions, we should also perceive that by Biblical standards, the definition for “unbelief” falls a bit short in that it does not address the issue of the truth at all as the following verse demonstrates:

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. (*John 14:6*)

Hence, “unbelief” in the Biblical sense is to not believe the truth, or to believe a lie. After all, if you are not believing the truth, you are believing a lie – there is no middle ground. Thus, in the Calvinist/Reformed view: “God” rules over the non-acceptance of that which is valid and true (the holding to a lie). “God” rules over (is sovereign over) the lie. Since Calvinist/Reformed adherents also believe that “God” is the first cause of everything, it follows that the Calvinist “God” is the first cause of the lie. Hence, the Calvinist/Reformed god is the father of lies. To which the Scripture answers:

Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: **for he is a liar, and the father of it.** (*John 8:44*)

Which means that the Calvinist/Reformed god could not be the LORD God of the Bible, as the LORD God wants EVERYONE to abide in the truth. But, the Calvinist/Reformed god only wants certain people to abide in the truth, and everyone else he holds in unbelief, not allowing them to come to the truth. I John 8:44 above, the Lord Jesus Christ plainly identifies who that god is: the Devil or Satan – the father of lies. The sad fact is, even the “truth” the Devil wants those individuals to

come to, isn't the truth at all, but a cleverly crafted deceit, designed to keep them from ever coming to the actual truth.

Yield To Grace

This addresses the fact that the grace bestowed at salvation is much more than just unmerited favor. Rather, it is also the means by which the believer accomplishes the work the LORD God has called them to. This message is about understanding that, and about letting the grace that is in the believer accomplish the purpose the LORD has set for it.

I pray it is profitable for you.

For those who cannot use the embedded player, wish to use a different player, or want to save the file, the following link is provided:

[Yield to Grace](#)

In Christ,

Paul W. Davis

Refusing the LORD's Blessing

Without realizing it, the LORD's children frequently refuse His blessings. Unfortunately, the complaint of those same children is frequently to the effect the LORD does not bless like they think He ought. This message addresses how it is that we refuse the blessings the LORD does desire to bestow upon His children. May it be profitable for you.

In Christ,

Paul W. Davis

For those who want to download the file or the podcast does not work, the following link to the mp3 file.

[Refusing the LORD's Blessing](#)

Changing Our Thinking

The following audio is Sunday night's (12/27/2009) message about the spiritual war we are involved in and where is it primarily fought. The message focuses on an area that is frequently ignored in this war, and is crucial to fighting it effectively. I pray you find it profitable.

If you wish to download the audio or listen to it with a different player, use this link: [Changing Our Thinking](#).

In Christ,

Paul W. Davis

Say What?

I couldn't believe it. I read it and could not believe it. Surely they cannot believe this. Nonetheless, apparently they do.

What is it I could not believe? The following statement from the [Seventh Day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs](#) page:

8. Great Controversy:

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe.
(<http://www.adventist.org/beliefs/fundamental/index.html>)

Let's think about this for just a moment. . . .

What is really stated in Item 8 quoted above? If we reword it slightly to make it more readable, but with the exact same meaning, it states this:

All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan with regard to the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe.

Now, that is not much change, and “regarding” and “with regard to” mean exactly the same thing. Now, think about the reworded statement for just a moment then answer the following question:

Is there any question in the Scripture regarding the character and nature of the LORD God?

His righteousness?

His Law?

His sovereignty over all things, whithersoever they are?

It strikes me that the statement, as written and published by the Seventh Day Adventist Church, is blasphemous as it impugns the very character and nature of the LORD. Yes, there is an implicit question raised in the statement because it states the “great controversy” regards or is with regard to, the character of God.

Now, the Scripture is VERY plain – there is NO, ABSOLUTELY NO QUESTION about the character of the LORD God. Moreover, the conflict between Satan and Christ isn’t about that anyway. Do not the following passages suffice?

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. (Jonah 4:1-2)

And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving

iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. (Exodus 34:5-7)

But the LORD shall endure for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment. And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness. The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee. (Psalm 9:7-10)

Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD. (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it. (Isaiah 46:9-11)

I could go on, but it would be passage after passage of Scripture that plainly state the very same things the passages above state. Hence, I cannot believe the statement of the Seventh Day Adventists – it is incredibly WRONG. If they believe the Scripture at all, I fail to understand how they could make such a statement.

One last thing, the conflict between Satan and Christ is not about the character of God. Rather, it is about the redemption of man. How can we know this? Very simple:

And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. (*Genesis 3:14-15*)

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. (*Hebrews 2:14-16*)

To be succinct, victory for Satan would be the prevention of salvation of man, and the proof that death is stronger than life. However, the Lord Jesus Christ hath already won the war, even before the world ever began:

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (*Revelation 13:8*)

Hence, there is no “great controversy” or even any controversy at all – the salvation provided to man is a sure thing. The defeat of Satan was and is a sure thing. These are such sure and certain things that the Lamb was “slain from the foundation of the world.”

What must I know to be saved?

This post arises out of a study that I am doing, and is tied to one of John Locke's books, which is *The Reasonableness of Christianity*. In this book much argument is made of what one must know to be saved or born-again, and become a Christian. At the time I read the book (which was quite some years ago), I had not really considered what one MUST know to be saved. However, as time has passed and I have studied the Scripture, there are some things that everyone MUST know before one can have even the hope of salvation. The following questions are not concerned with the attributes one must have to be saved, (i.e. faith, and repentance), rather they are focused on KNOWLEDGE, or what one must KNOW with surety to be saved.

With the foregoing in mind, here are the questions:

1. *Who is Christ?*
2. *Who is God?*
3. *Who is man? (Who am I?)*
4. *What is righteousness, and why am I not righteous?*
5. *Why is God righteous? (What does mean to be righteous?)*
6. *What is sin, and why am I a sinner?*
7. *What can I do about my sin?*
8. *What has (will) the LORD done (do) about my sin?*
9. *What does it mean when the Scripture says I must "believe?"*
10. *How can I know for certain that all the Scripture tells me is true?*
11. *What am I really believing or trusting?*

The questions leave considerable room for exploration of the Scripture and explanation of the answers. However, they are well worth answering, and by the time you are done, you will know all that is NECESSARY to know to be born again in Christ Jesus and have eternal life.

Now if you wish to argue about the questions, please take the time to answer them first BEFORE raising objection. Also, please use the King James Version of the Bible to do your study. Otherwise, you will get some very skewed and incomplete answers.

As far HOW the questions are to be answered, here is a hint:

When we ask "Who is God?" we do not speak of defining His ability, but rather examining His CHARACTER and NATURE.

May you find it profitable.

In Christ,

Bro. Paul

The Nature of Christ in the Believer

The following is the June 21st message from the Morning Service. It addresses the nature of Christ in the believer and how we often ignore what that really means.

For those who cannot use the embedded player, want to use a different player, or simply download the file, please use the link below.

[The Nature of Christ in the Believer](#)

In Christ,

Paul W. Davis

Ephesians 1:3-12, William Tyndale's New Testament

The following is extracted from William Tyndale's 1534 New Testament ((Modern Spelling Edition, edited by David Daniell, Yale University Press, 1989, ISBN 0-300-04419-4, pg. 282))

It is posted so that rabid Calvinists can read it and get bent trying to warp it into "*unconditional, sovereign election.*" I am not worried as the language will stand. Though the language and grammar are very plain that the predestination pertains to what the born-again believer will be AFTER they are saved, those holding Calvinist/Reformed doctrine are always intellectually dishonest enough to throw out the rules of English grammar and sentence structure, and contort the passage into saying "*predestined to salvation.*"

How do I know? I have dealt with several Calvinists, with the last "conversation" abruptly ending after about 6 months. During this time I found him to be more dishonest and unstable than most who hold Calvinist doctrine (he is a "*charismatic Calvinist*" (Extreme emotionalism plus hateful doctrine – what a combination!)), but right along the same lines as the rest of them. He used the same intellectually disingenuous arguments, and pulled the same shenanigans they all pull. He acted utterly superior, condescending, arrogant, bullying, and lied through his teeth, contradicting himself several times.

When called on it, he changed subjects, bullied, and brought up questions that had nothing to do with the current discussion, and tried to seize control of the discussion. In short, typical Calvinist/Reformed behavior.

If you have been so abused by a Calvinist, you could drop a comment. I will gladly post it. The wickedness of Calvinist doctrine and the behavior it engenders needs to be seriously exposed.

With that, I leave you to the most excellent William Tyndale, the father of modern English and originator of the lineage of Bibles which culminated in the King James Version of the Holy Scriptures.

Ephesians, Chapter One:

Blessed be God the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which hath blessed us with all manner of spiritual blessing in heavenly things by Christ, according as he had chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world was laid, that we should be saints, and without blame before him, through love. And ordained us before through Jesus Christ to be heirs unto himself, according to the pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace wherewith he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

By whom we have redemption through his blood even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace, which grace he shed on us abundantly in all wisdom, and perceivance. And hath opened unto us the mystery of his will according to his pleasure, and purposed the same in himself to have it declared when the time were full come, that all things, both the things which are in heaven, and also the things which are in earth, should be gathered together, even in Christ: that is to say, in him in whom we are made heirs, and were thereto predestinate according to the purpose of him which worketh all things after the purpose of his own will:

that we which before believed in Christ should be unto the praise of his glory.

Unwanted Answers – Part 2

NOTE: In dealing with Calvinist/Reformed doctrine, there are some questions the proponents of that theology like to throw at people to silence them as the Calvinist believes there is no legitimate answer to the question. However, as I, and many others have found out, the Calvinist doesn't actually want a valid answer, and will either try to shut down any proper response, or belittle the answer given. The following questions and attendant answers are a continuation of such examples:

3)If Christ paid for this sin of unbelief as all others, then why must this sin stop anyone from entering heaven more than any other sins (murder, adultery, homosexuality, etc.)?

How obvious does this have to be? Since the requirement for salvation is "Believe the gospel" it is obvious that the sin of unbelief would be, and is, the greatest hindrance to salvation. The very nature of our sin is that it is engaged in periodically, except for the sin of unbelief. Though one is a murderer, or an adulterer, or even a sodomite, one is those things because one once thought of engaging in, or actually

carried it through and engaged in the behavior at one time, and thus they carry that label. A murderer is not continually murdering people, or even continually thinking about murdering people. This is not so with the sin of unbelief. Before anyone and everyone who is saved comes to Christ and believes the gospel, they are in unbelief, and they remain in unbelief unless and until they actually believe the gospel. Thus, the only time they are not in unbelief is when they decide to trust Christ for their salvation. The apostle Paul made this plain:

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. (*1 Timothy 1:12-13*)

Thus, if one continues in unbelief, then it is patently obvious they can never be saved.

Though all sins are the same with respect to penalty (all warrant death), not all sins have the same effect. Consider this: stealing a pencil is a sin; however, the effect is very limited. Nonetheless, it will still send someone to Hell. On the other hand, thinking about pushing a button that you know will kill millions, and following through with the act, is also a sin, and will send someone to the same Hell as the pencil thief. However, the effect of that sin is far more egregious than simply stealing a pencil.

It is the same when comparing unbelief to every other sin out there. The reason people sin is because they do not fear God, because they do not believe there is a penalty that will be levied against them by God or anyone else. Hence the root cause of all sin, beginning even before the Garden of Eden, is unbelief. The effect of unbelief is far greater than any other sin, and is the root of all sins. The very reason Lucifer fell was because he did not believe that God was truly greater than

he, and that God truly was his Creator. (Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28) Hence, Lucifer disbelieved the truth and believed a lie – which is the very definition of unbelief. Therefore, this sin is plenty sufficient for condemnation.

We must then understand that a single sin is sufficient for condemnation, and it is plain in Scripture that this is the case:

Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. (*Ezekiel 18:4*)

Since both angels and men have souls, and the word “sinneth” means simply “to sin” it is clear that a single sin, committed by anyone, warrants damnation to Hell. We are also expressly told in Scripture that no sin warrants any greater or lesser penalty from God, than any other sin:

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. (*James 2:10-11*)

Hence, the PENALTY for any sin is not different than the penalty for any other sin, but the EFFECT of any particular sin may be greater or lesser than the effect of any other sin, due to the scope of influence of that sin. It is plain that all sin springs from the sin of unbelief, hence the sin of unbelief has a much greater effect upon the individual than all other sins springing from it.

Therefore, continuing in the sin of unbelief, whether it is of unbelief of the existence of God, (which would necessarily include unbelief of the truth of the gospel), or unbelief that salvation is not of works but by grace through faith alone, in Christ alone (which is a particular truth of the gospel) even though they believe in God and that Christ came as Saviour,

and persisting in that unbelief until the day of one's death, is sufficient to consign one to Hell. On the other hand, though one be a murderer, adulterer, sodomite, or thief; if one believes the gospel and departs the sin of unbelief, then one is saved {i.e. the thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43), the woman at the well (John 4:1-41), etc.} though they still be a murderer, thief, etc.

Part of the problem here is that Calvinist doctrine does not sufficiently distinguish between things spiritual and things physical, and certainly does not view sin the way the LORD God does.

4) Furthurmored (sic), if Christ did not die for the sin of unbelief, then one cannot say that He died for all the sins of all men.

Since the Scripture hath before proved that unbelief is a sin, then by Calvinist/Reformed logic, Christ did die for all men.

To be continued . . .

Unwanted Answers – Part 1

NOTE: In dealing with Calvinist/Reformed doctrine, there are some questions the proponents of that theology like to throw at people to silence them as the Calvinist believes there is no legitimate answer to the question. However, as I, and many others have found out, the Calvinist doesn't actually want a valid answer, and will either try to shut down any proper response, or belittle the answer given. The following question and answer is just one such example:

1) Paul if you hold to position 1, that Christ died for all sins of all men, if this is true, then why are not all men freed the punishment of all their sins? Are there not people in Hades or Hell that are being punished for the sin of unbelief, that Jesus died for?

This conclusion/question presupposes a doctrine: that doctrine being the doctrine of Universal Salvation, which is taught nowhere in Scripture. It does not follow that "if Christ died for all men, then all men will be saved." That is a fallacy that attempts to negate the fact men have a choice to make. This "question" leaves no room for man's choice in the matter, as if men cannot choose one way or the other. In this way, the Universalist and the Calvinist walk the very same path of logic and come to radically different conclusions. This ought to scream loud and clear that something is wrong with the logic.

The problem with the logic is that it is assumed that men have no choice in whether they are saved or not. The Universalist claims that men will be saved regardless of whether they want to have anything to do with God or not. The Calvinist claims that only the elect will be saved because God particularly chooses to "regenerate" some and pass others by without criteria, rhyme, or reason.

Both systems of logic ignore Scriptures that are not favorable to their particular theology, and that would indeed set aside both systems as being invalid. The reason for this is that both systems contain inherent contradictions that cannot be overcome. For instance, in the listing of the points of Calvinism that you sent me, (for which you did not cite the source) the following two points are given:

14) Calvinists do believe that men can resist the Holy Spirit. They believe that even the elect can resist the Holy Spirit, and do – but only up to the time when the Spirit regenerates their heart so that resist Him no more.(sic) The non-elect effectively resist Him all their lives.

23) While Calvinists believe that saving grace and repentance are the gifts of God, given only to His elect, they do not believe that God exercises faith for them or repents for them. The elect sinner, enabled by the power of God, actually repents and believes for himself.

However one chooses to dissect this, it is inherently contradictory. One cannot repent and believe for him/herself, and yet have their heart forcibly regenerated so that they resist no more. No matter how this is examined it is either totally contradictory, or one is being made compliant to the will of God by force. You cannot say that one is able to resist, but only up to the point where “the Spirit regenerates their heart so that resist Him no more” and then blithely claim that this is not forced conversion of the will. On its face it is, and it is undeniable.

Of course, to cover that the word “regeneration” is redefined:

19) Calvinists do believe that regeneration precedes faith in Christ. We do not confuse the term regeneration with that of justification or salvation. The Spirit of God regenerates the elect sinner enabling him to forsake the deadness of his sin and willingly embrace Christ and so be justified by faith and

saved for eternity. Regeneration therefore is not synonymous with justification or salvation any more than conviction of sin is synonymous with conversion to Christ.

The problem with article 19 is that “regeneration” is not defined in Scripture the way that article 19 claims it is defined. In Scripture, the word “regeneration” only appears twice. In both instances, the term is clearly defined by the context of usage. Once it is defined as the new heavens and new earth time frame, and once it is defined as expressly salvation:

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (*Matthew 19:28*)

Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (*Titus 3:1-6*)

Very plainly, the reference in Matthew is to the time when there will be the new heaven and new earth, after this heaven and earth are gone, and after the resurrection has occurred. The second reference in Titus is plainly concerning salvation, and describes salvation as “the washing of regeneration, and

renewing of the Holy Ghost” which states nothing about which, or what comes first in the process of salvation. That is left up to other places in Scripture. What the passage does tell us is the following:

For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, . . .
(*Titus 3:3-4*)

Which is to say that every one (even the “elect”) were wicked and evil before they were saved, and that the kindness and love of God is toward man, without qualification or limitation. This can be easily seen as the statement “toward man” appears without any limiting or qualifying language. Thus, by definition it is open-ended in application. Moreover, application cannot be “general” without also being “specific.” By that, I mean that it is pointless to say salvation is generally available to all men, but not specifically available to any particular person, because they were predetermined to be “passed by” without them having any say in the matter.

Thus by the Scripture, the word “regeneration” is salvation and is such a part of salvation that without it, there is no salvation. Moreover, the phrasing is constructed in such a way as to indicate, by the passage in Titus, that regeneration happens after faith, repentance, and belief, and not before those are evidenced. This is directly contrary to what is stated in article 19 quoted above. However, there is further Scriptural evidence as to the error of article 19, which I will address later in my response.

Now, the fact that salvation is available to all is demonstrated in the following passage from I Timothy:

For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men,

specially of those that believe. These things command and teach. (*I Timothy 4:10-11*)

Unless one does gymnastics with the English language, verse ten gives us two defined groups of individuals here, the first listed is "all men" and is inclusive of everyone, everywhere, at all times. This larger group identified as "all men" necessarily includes the sub-group "specially of those that believe." The second or sub-group of individuals is listed as "those that believe," which is that group some identify as "the elect," but most simply identify as "believers" meaning they have been born again in Christ Jesus. The common umbrella that includes both groups is the statement "the living God, who is the Saviour of" in which the apostle Paul states "because we trust" indicating plainly why "we both labour and suffer reproach." This view is also consistent with the general call to salvation expressed in the Old Testament:

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. (*Isaiah 55:1-7*)

And in Isaiah 45:

Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the LORD? and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. (*Isaiah 45:21-22*)

Not only do we find that the LORD calls every man, but he also works in the lives of everyone to bring them to the point of understanding certain basic truths. This is what Elihu speaks of when he testifies to Job and his three friends about the working of God in the lives of men. Please note there is no implicit reference to the "elect" as defined by Calvinist doctrine. This passage, like the passages in Isaiah, simply include all men.

For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.

He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain: So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat. His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen stick out. Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness: Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth: He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness. He looketh upon

men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.

Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living. (*Job 33:14-30*)

Here now, both Isaiah and Elihu's testimony to Job match the testimony of Psalm 107, the entirety of which is about the working of the LORD God in the lives of all men everywhere to bring down their pride, and humble them to see that they need a Saviour. In Psalm 107, the term "they cried unto the LORD" has the same meaning as the statement in Romans, chapter 10:

For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (*Romans 10:11-13*)

The use of the word "whosoever" and the phrase "all that call" do not carry any limitation, or qualification such as Calvinist/Reformed doctrine places upon them. There is no context in any of the above passages that would give any idea of this call, and subsequent answering of the call by anyone, to be confined to only the "elect" as Calvinism defines the "elect." For that to be there, one must overlay the passages with a doctrine and interpretation that inserts "only the elect" into each and every passage, thus forcing it to fit Calvinist/Reformed doctrine. Plainly, the call is to every person, and every person is capable of responding to the call, and is responsible for their rejection of the call. Their failure to heed the call will keep them in condemnation, and will not allow them any recourse if they die having refused to accede to the call.

What has been done here by Calvinist doctrine is to render

meaningless some very significant passages of Scripture that specifically address how the LORD God chose to deal with man:

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. (*Jeremiah 17:9-10*)

The above passage from Jeremiah tells everyone four very important things that we all need to know:

1. The heart is deceitful above everything else out there. Since the statement is framed "The heart is deceitful above all things . . ." and does not limit application, except by the context of the passage which is dealing with all men, it necessarily applies to all men, even the "elect" as Calvinist/Reformed theology defines the "elect." Hence, all men are on a level playing field, with the law of God equally applicable to all.

2. We cannot know our own hearts. The rhetorical question "who can know it?" presupposes the answer "No one, save the LORD God only." The only conclusion one can then come to is that we are never really certain what we really are unless we are shown what we are. This then leads to the third item:

3. The LORD God searches the hearts of every man, and tries the mind of every person, regardless of where on earth, or time in history. In this, we are confirmed by the verse from Proverbs which states:

The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly. (Proverbs 20:27)

Hence, we can safely determine that the LORD God has a purpose for this, even though in His foreknowledge He already knew what each and every individual would be, how they would think and what they would think. This ought to cause us to consider the why of the next statement.

4. Here the purpose is revealed, but not in its entirety. The LORD tells us "even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." This would have a certain effect upon man, and that effect would be to cause individuals, to a greater or lesser degree, to question who and what they really are. After all, when things seem to blow up in one's face, or life doesn't seem to go "right," it does cause the normal person to question whether they are really right about what they are doing and what they believe.

What then is the rest of the purpose for this? If we return to the passages of Isaiah 45 and 55, Job 33 and Psalm 107, we can see that the LORD God has issued a call to all men, and tries to get men to respond to the call. We find that some men respond not at all, some respond to a greater or lesser degree, but fall short of actually heeding the command to repent and believe the gospel, and a few do obey the command and are actually born again in Christ. Which leads us to the point of Romans, chapter 10:

But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (*Romans 10:16-17*)

In this, we find the rest of what is wrong with the redefining of "regeneration" by Calvinist/Reformed theology: its place in the sequence of events that leads to salvation. Quite plainly in Scripture, faith is not salvation, but is indispensable to salvation. It is the same for repentance. One cannot be saved without repentance, but repentance alone, and even with faith, is not salvation. Salvation is the culmination of the sequence of three events (so to speak). Faith, then repentance, then belief. As the passage from Romans 10 tells us, faith comes only when one hears the word of God in a certain way.

It is this certain way that throws people off. The reason for this is they ignore the call of the LORD God in Isaiah,

chapter 1:

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. (*Isaiah 1:18*)

It is manifestly impossible to reason about something if one never hears about it. However, merely hearing it spoken, or reading it without taking it in and considering it, is equally as bad as not hearing it at all. In either case, it is impossible to reason anything about the subject at hand. The LORD God's call here is beyond simply hear my word, but rather, attend to it, consider it, let it sink into your heart, and I will reason with you about it. The context here is to all the wicked in Israel, and those who were contrary to the LORD. Plainly, this call is a call to the wicked for the purpose of effecting their salvation, if they will indeed hear, consider, be reasoned with, turn and believe. This is where the role of faith comes into play.

When the Scripture states that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," it is plainly a promise of God that if one hears the word, takes it in, and considers it, the LORD God will grant the faith necessary to perceive the truth of what He states. We can know that faith is a thing that must be granted, as Hebrews, chapter 11 describes faith as specifically an object, a noun:

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. (*Hebrews 11:1-2*)

"Substance," "evidence," and "it" all are specific to objects or things we describe as nouns. The only thing that would possibly confuse someone is the fact that this object, and the use of this object are both described with exactly the same word – faith. However, this usage is not all that unusual in

language, as we do the very same with the word “truck.” For instance, the statement “I will use my truck to truck it across the country.” is not an uncommon application of the word “truck.” In the first instance “truck” is plainly the object, the noun, and in the second instance “truck” is the verb usage meaning the specific method of movement, or conveyance. Hence, having faith, and the use of the faith that one is granted upon consideration of the word of God, are described by exactly the same word – faith.

Upon this, we should understand that the sequence is:

- 1. Hear and consider the word of God.*
- 2. The LORD God grants faith, the instrument necessary for perceiving the truth of His word.*
- 3. Either accept or reject what faith shows.*

What we then encounter is the necessity of repentance. The Scripture is also plain that it is the LORD God that grants repentance, as we are incapable of repenting on our own. In Acts, we are clearly told that repentance is a gift that the LORD God grants. Please note that repentance is necessary for the regeneration that occurs with salvation, and does not occur after the regeneration that is described as salvation in Titus, chapter 3, verses 1-6:

Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life. (Acts 11:17-18)

As can be plainly seen by the phrase “repentance unto life,” repentance must precede salvation. Without citing all the Scriptures that apply, this should be without question.

Hence, the sequence of events is now:

1. *Hear and consider the word of God.*
2. *The LORD God grants faith, the instrument necessary for perceiving the truth of His word.*
3. *Either accept or reject what faith shows.*
4. *Exercise the repentance granted, having a change of heart and mind about your sin.*
5. *Believe the gospel.*
6. *Be regenerated by the Holy Ghost, which is to be "born again."*

Now where in any of this does any man have anything to boast of, or claim any merit before God?

Yet, the answer of the Calvinist/Reformed theologian is that believing is an act that man can claim as meritorious.

This is directly contrary to Scripture, which teaches that believing is not meritorious, and in fact, is what we are required to do. After all, the command is "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." Moreover, if we have done so, we are told:

Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. (Luke 17:9-10)

There is a principle stated here that transcends all contexts: That is, doing one's duty, as one is commanded, is no cause to say "I have done anything worthy of merit, or boasting, or that is profitable to whose I am." Hence, when one does all they are employed to do, they should not receive any recognition, as they have only done that which they were

supposed to do. So likewise, all men everywhere, at all times are commanded to repent and believe the gospel, if they do so, of what special significance is that? If they do not, then they are in violation of the commandment, because they have not believed and obeyed the commandment, and are set for destruction.

Above all, we must remember what we are told in Ezekiel, chapter 18:

Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. (*Ezekiel 18:4*)

Thus, the burden lies upon man to make the choice, which man is fully capable of doing. Man is capable of believing the truth, especially since the LORD God has provided everything else man needs to see and believe that truth.

To be continued . . .