

Selective Salvation

Predestination

Election



An easy to understand study of *election* and *predestination* that is intriguing, insightful, and refreshing. Let this comprehensive study help you unravel this complex and confusing subject.

By Michael Bronson

Don't Assume I'm Correct

Although I have spent many years researching this subject, you should not automatically assume I am correct. Check it out for yourself. Verify that what I am telling you is true. Truth can withstand any investigation. You can use my material as a reference to assist your study, but you must study the subject yourself. The Bible must always be your final authority.

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SELECTIVE SALVATION

Quick Overview

To obtain a quick overview of this subject, look at chapter 2
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Part 1

What is Selective Salvation?

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What is Selective Salvation?



Heaven and Hell (Dieric Bouts's 1450)

Chapter: 14.01

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In summary, selective salvation is the belief God has chosen to send certain people to Heaven and the remainder to Hell. This selection (which was made long before the universe was created) was *not* based on any qualities of the person being selected. It was not based on the person's heart or their future love for God. It was not based on God's foreknowledge of who will eventually choose to accept Him as their Savior. It was not based on their future humility and repentance. This selection was purely random and arbitrary. The people selected to go to Hell (such as Hitler) could just as easily have been selected to go to Heaven.

Nobody has a say in the matter. The person selected to go to Hell literally has no hope. Although he may desire to go to Heaven and is seeking deliverance, he has no chance of salvation. Even the person selected to go to Heaven has no say in the matter, he is forced to "love" God. This belief system is called Calvinism, Reformed Theology, Election, Predestination, or Selective Salvation.

The first major promoter of this doctrine was

Augustine (354-430 AD). This doctrine faded out shortly after his death and reemerged during the Reformation. Although the popularity of this doctrine decreased significantly after the Reformation, there are still certain denominations that make this doctrine a central part of their theology. The Reformed Church, Christian Reformed Church, and the Presbyterian Church openly endorse this doctrine. They usually refer to it as "Reformed Theology." It is *quietly* held by other denominations, and they usually call it "Calvinism" or "Hyper-Calvinism."

Does the Bible teach this belief system? I don't believe it does, but you need to search the Bible yourself and come to your own conclusion. Although you can use these 64 chapters to help you in your studies, make sure you use the Bible as your final authority. Don't assume that what I'm saying is correct.

It has taken me several years to write this section on selective salvation. I didn't write it to "set people straight." Rather, I wrote it because of my

concern for the lost. If this doctrine is true, then everyone who is supposed to go to Heaven will make it to Heaven. If, however, this doctrine is false, then there are billions of people needlessly going to Hell. Think about it; if you really believed everyone who is supposed to go to Heaven will make it there, would you give and live sacrificially to help reach the world for Christ?

For ease of understanding, I have divided this section on selective salvation into five parts. These divisions allow you to focus on the areas in which you have the most questions. The five parts are:

Part 1: What is Selective Salvation?

Part 2: What Does the Bible say about Selective Salvation?

Part 3: Problems with Selective Salvation

Part 4: “Choice” –The Achilles’ Heel of Selective Salvation

Part 5: Difficult Questions Answered

Summary of Why Selective Salvation Can't be True



Chapter: 14.02

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There are many reasons why I don't believe the doctrine of selective salvation is Biblical. To help you obtain a quick overall understanding of the problems with this doctrine, I have created this summary for you. Once you have gone through the list, you can read the remaining 60 plus chapters or you can go to the specific chapter that has captured your interest.

As you read through the list, you will find some of the problems with this doctrine are simple and obvious. Other problems, however, are more complex and the Biblical contradictions are less obvious. Although many Christians don't do it, we need to think through each doctrine to its obvious conclusion. It is important to see the hidden implications of each doctrine and then see how they affect other doctrines.

As we study the doctrine of selective salvation, we will find that its implications contradict a large number of other doctrines. Hopefully, this section will help you think about some things you have never considered before. Listed below are some of the contradictions I have found with selective salvation.

It is inconsistent with the Bible

- There are over a hundred verses that say salvation is offered to everyone. For example, 1 John 2:2 says, "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world."
- The Bible says God desires the salvation of those who are perishing. For example, 2 Peter 3:9 says, "He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."
- The Bible says people are going to Hell against God's will. For example, 1 Corinthians 15:34 says, "For there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame."
- The Bible says people are perishing because no one has brought them the message. Hosea 4:6 says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."
- Selective Salvationists say God "hates" all of the non-elect. Yet, when the rich young ruler turned his back on Jesus, the Bible said Jesus "loved" him.
- Selective Salvationists say before God created the universe, He selected certain people to go to Heaven and the rest go to Hell. Yet, the Bible says Hell was created for the fallen angels, not us (Matthew 25:41).
- Selective Salvationists say the core of this doctrine is the sovereignty of God and His complete control over everything. He dictates every action that takes place. They say God would not be in complete control if man had a choice in his destiny. There are three problems with this view:
 - There are hundred of verses in the Bible that clearly show God changing His mind

and altering His plans because of our actions or inactions.

- There are many evil and sinful things going on in the world. Do we really want to say God forcibly made people commit these heinous acts?
- We cannot be held accountable for our sins if we have no say or choice in any of our actions. It would be unjust to send a person to Hell for something he did not choose to do.
- Selective Salvationists say God preplanned people's lives (forced them to become Christians and perform great services for Him). If this were true, you would think He would have planned lives that would consistently glorify Him. Instead, we find many of His leaders (Saul, David, Samson, Solomon, etc) made some major blunders and had their years of service cut short.
- There are dozens of verses where God commands the world to seek Him. If some are incapable of seeking God, why did He make that command? For example, Hebrews 11:6 says, "He rewards those who earnestly seek him."
- God said to the whole Nation of Israel, "Seek me and live" (Amos 5:4). God was offering his plan of salvation to the whole Nation of Israel. Yet the Bible clearly says not all of the Israelites became believers. This means many of the people God wanted to go to Heaven ended up going to Hell.
- The Bible says we can resist God. For example, Matthew 23:37 says, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing." This means some people were resisting God's call to salvation. It also means some

people went to Hell against His desire.

- There are dozens of verses where God commands the world to repent. If some people are incapable of repenting, why did He make that command? For example, Acts 17:30 says, "He [God] commands all people everywhere to repent."
- There are dozens of verses that talk about how we can be easily led astray from God and salvation. This shows our eternal destinies have not been pre-planned.
- The Bible says our surroundings can greatly influence our eternal destiny. For example, Matthew 19:24 says, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to go to Heaven"
- Why did Jesus have to suffer such a terrible spiritual damnation? If there is no choice in our spiritual destiny, then our spiritual "test" (and subsequent failures) could easily have been bypassed. There was no need for us to be lost and ultimately redeemed. There was no need for Jesus to suffer such a brutal, humiliating, and despicable punishment.

It is inconsistent with observable facts

- If selective salvation were true, you would expect an even distribution of Christians all over the world. In contrast to this, we find areas with very high concentrations of Christians and other areas with very low concentrations of Christians.
- If selective salvation were true, exposure to the gospel should not have any impact on how many people become Christians in a given area. Yet, areas with a strong gospel witness have a high number of believers and areas with little or no gospel witness have few or no new Christians.

- If selective salvation were true, parental influence should not increase or decrease a child's chance of becoming a Christian. However, we find children raised in Christian homes are much more likely to become Christians than children who are raised in atheistic homes. In fact, children who are raised by strong, mature Christians are much more likely to become Christians than children raised by weak and spiritually immature Christians.
- The Bible has over a hundred verses that clearly say salvation is offered to "everyone," "whosoever," and the whole "world." Yet, Selective Salvationists say salvation is only offered to the select few. To get around these verses, Selective Salvationists say these verses are only talking about the elect. In other words, verses that say "... salvation is offered to everyone" should actually be read as "... salvation is offered to everyone *of the elect.*" To force this type of interpretation on hundreds of verses, Selective Salvationists have violated multiple basic rules of Biblical interpretation.
- In addition to the above problem, there are many verses where this type of forced conclusion still would not work. For example, 1 John 2:2 says, "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world." Using their rules of interpretation, this verse should read: "He is the atoning sacrifice for the elect's sins, and not only for the elect's sins, but also for the *sins of the elect.*"
- Selective Salvationists say God has chosen certain people over other people. Yet, the Bible says God does not pick one person over another. For example, Acts 10:34 says, "God is no respecter of persons."
- Let's say, for the sake of argument, salvation is open to everyone in the world. What would God say differently in the Bible (from what He has already said) that would show salvation is open to everyone in the world? The Bible

already has over 100 verses saying salvation is offered to everyone.

- God "sought a man after His own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). If selective salvation is true God already knows the mindset of each person (He's the one who preprogrammed each person's life). If He already knows each person's mindset, why was He searching for people with a particular mindset?
- David was "a man after God's own heart" (Acts 13:22). If God created the elect's heart and mindset, wouldn't all of the elect be people after God's own heart?
- Joshua said, "Choose you this day who you shall serve. As for me and my house we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). If God already chose our destiny for us, why was it so important for Joshua to make this admonition?

Problems caused by this doctrine

- If people are predestined for salvation, parental influence will not increase a child's chance of becoming a Christian. If this is true, Christian parents should have the same number of Christian children as atheistic parents. This of course is not true.
- Selective Salvationists counter the above problem by saying children of the elect are also elect. This approach creates many new problems. For example:
 - Since Adam and Eve were part of the elect, all of their descendants (which means everyone) should also be part of the elect. This, of course, is not true.
 - Since Noah was part of the elect, all of his family and their descendants (which means everyone) should also be part of the elect. This, of course, is not true.

- ❑ Since Abraham was part of the elect, his son Ishmael was also one of the elect. This would mean all of his descendants (the Arab nations) are also part of the elect. This, of course, is not true.
- ❑ Since Isaac was part of the elect, his *twin* sons (Jacob and Esau) were also part of the elect. Yet, Selective Salvationists say God hated Esau and condemned him to Hell. If children of the elect are also elect, Esau should be one of the elect.
- ❑ If children of the elect are also part of the elect, then 100% of the children from Christian parents would be Christians. We don't, however, find this.

It is inconsistent with the nature of God

The Bible provides us with a general description of God's nature. It describes Him as a loving, compassionate, fair, and righteous being. The doctrine of selective salvation totally contradicts this description. A basic premise of selective salvation is God chose to love or hate certain people purely on an arbitrary basis. This contradicts the nature of God outlined in the Bible. For example:

- You would expect a loving God would love all of His creation.
- You would not expect to find a loving God arbitrarily choosing to hate people (and condemning them to Hell before they were even created) simply because "He can."
- "Hate" is a strong emotion. It is an emotion developed in response to an offense. To passionately hate someone who has not yet existed does not even make sense.
- A person who is "sovereign" over another being will treat the other being in a manner consistent with his own nature. A dog owner,

for example, is basically "sovereign" over his dog. Yet, a good owner would never mistreat his dog. Likewise, a sovereign God who is loving and compassionate would never mistreat His creation simply because "He can." Arbitrarily condemning a person to Hell before he is even created (with no choice, say, or recourse) is not the actions of a loving and compassionate God. A good person (sovereign or not) would never mistreat his subjects.

Selective salvation completely contradicts the issue of choice

A central theme of the doctrine of selective salvation is God can't be sovereign if we have a freewill to make choices. They say giving us the ability to make choices would be the same as us telling God Almighty what to do. They said God can't be God if He is not in full control of everything.

The issue of choice is the Achilles' heel of selective salvation. The doctrine falls apart when the issue of choice is closely examined. There are many aspects of "choice" that contradict the doctrine of selective salvation. Following are some examples:

- There are hundreds of verses that say we have the ability to make choices. Either the Bible is lying or we have the ability to make choices.
- Love is an emotion that is earned. You can't force someone to love you. In order for us to truly have the ability to love God, we need to have the ability to reject Him. You can't love if you don't have the ability to hate.
- We would not be able to ask God to alter events if everything is already set in stone. There are dozens of verses that say our prayers will prompt God to respond. Even the great spiritual leaders of the Bible understood the power of prayer. There are hundreds of verses

showing this.

- Our actions should never provoke an *emotional* response from God if He has preprogrammed all of our decisions and actions. This would be as illogical as me turning on a light switch and becoming angry when the light turns on. It is obvious from the Bible we can provoke a response from God.
 - There are dozens of verses showing our obedience can produce a positive response from God.
 - There are hundreds of verses showing God can be provoked to anger or jealousy by our sins.
- The Bible says God holds some of our choices in high esteem. The only way our choices could have value to God is if our choices were made from a free heart. Choices that are forced on us would hold no intrinsic value to God. Following are some examples:
 - The life of Job demonstrates that even Satan understands we have the freedom to make choices. Satan knows we often choose to curse God when we are faced with great adversity. It brought great pleasure and glory to God when Job remained faithful in the midst of his great suffering. There would not have been any exceptional glory or victory for God if Job was *forced* to remain faithful. None of our decisions would have any value if our actions are forced on us. If selective salvation is true, a person's decision to return a penny that doesn't belong to him would bring as much glory, honor, and pleasure to God as a poor person's decision to return \$100 million that doesn't belong to him.
 - There are many places in the Bible that say God places high value on obedience. Why should God be so pleased with obedience if

all of our actions are forced on us?

- As we saw in the above paragraphs, God is pleased when we make good choices. If these "small" choices bring pleasure to God, think about how much pleasure it would bring God when we would make a good choice on the most important decision (salvation)?
- The parables of the lost items (lost sheep, lost coin, and the lost son –Luke 15:3-32) are another example why selective salvation can't be true. These parables show there is great joy when a lost item is recovered. The Bible says this is especially true when a lost sinner is saved.

You would expect this type of reaction from God with open salvation, but you would not expect it with selective salvation. In fact, with selective salvation, there is no cause for celebration when a person gets saved. There are no lost souls who are salvaged. There are no people rescued from the gates of Hell. All of the people who get "saved" were actually saved long before the world was created. These parables don't make sense if selective salvation is true. It would be like a person pretending to lose a coin and then throwing a large party when he "finds" it.

- There is an accountability problem if all of our decisions and actions are forced on us. Following are some examples:
 - If all of our actions are forced on us, we can't be held accountable for our actions. We can't be punished for sins we were forced to commit.
 - The fact there are varying amounts of rewards in Heaven demonstrates we do have control over our choices.
 - The fact there are varying degrees of punishment in Hell shows we do have

control over our choices.

Confusing issues explained

- *Election* deals with the selection for *service*, not salvation. In fact, it couldn't be talking about salvation. Jesus and the angels were part of the "elect," but they didn't need to be saved. The Nation of Israel was part of the elect, but not all of them were saved.
- *Predestination* simply means something has been predetermined to take place in the future. Although most Christians think of it in connection with the Bible, this concept is also found in the secular world. For example, anyone who becomes a policeman is predestined (predetermined) to have certain attributes (such as the authority to arrest people). Even Aldous Huxley uses the concept in his book *Brave New World*. As you can see, the word predestination does not need to have some mystical or divine implication.

Just as man can predetermine certain things to take place in the future, so can God. As we will see in the upcoming chapters, God has predetermined that the people who become Christians will obtain certain attributes (such as being conformed to the image of His Son). Nowhere in the Bible does it say God has predetermined to arbitrarily send some people to Heaven and the remainder to Hell.

- The verse "Esau I hated" is often used to support the doctrine of selective salvation. Yet, if you look at the life of Esau, there is no evidence God hated or deplored him. It is possible the word "hate" was used as a contrast. There are several places in the Bible that uses the word "hate" when it doesn't really mean hate. For example, we are told to hate our parents and ourselves if we want to follow God. If you look at the chapter dealing with this issue, it appears that the statement probably

means, "I have chosen to *use* Jacob (to be the forefather of the Messiah) and not Esau."

- The verses talking about God hardening Pharaoh's heart is also used to support selective salvation. God, however, did not harden Pharaoh's heart toward salvation. Rather, He hardened Pharaoh's heart toward Moses' requests. God only hardened Pharaoh's heart in the direction he had already chosen for himself. If Pharaoh's heart had not already hardened against the Lord, there is an indication from the Bible God would have waited for another Pharaoh.
- Selective Salvationists often point to the Nation of Israel as proof God has chosen certain people for salvation. The nation of Israel was chosen for service, not salvation. In fact, they couldn't have been chosen for salvation because a large number of them were obviously never saved.
- Selective Salvationists also use the verses that says, "I have chosen you" to support selective salvation. It is true God has chosen us (the whole world) to be saved. God's choice of redemption applies only to the human race; it does not apply to the fallen angelic race.
- Romans 9:21 says God is the potter and we are the clay. Selective Salvationists often use this verse as proof God has chosen certain people for salvation. This verse is talking about service, not salvation. There are several places in the Old Testament that use the illustration of the potter and clay. These verses refer to Israel as being the clay. Since only a portion of the Israelites were believers, these verses could not be referring to salvation. These verses are talking about God using the Nation of Israel to accomplish a task.

The Chosen Few



Chapter: 14.03

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Gary moves quietly toward his desired destination. He has been planning this encounter for months and is excited that it is about to take place. As he exits the stairway onto the third floor, he puts his hand inside his jacket pocket and grips his 10 mm Glock.

Walking toward room 328, Gary takes a deep breath. He walks in and places his black leather bag on a table. Questioning looks turn to terror as Gary pulls the gun from his pocket. In a firm calm voice, Gary instructs everyone to go to the far end of the room and lie face down on the floor. The people are puzzled. Although a gunman with unknown intent is holding them hostage, he seems calm, polite, and cheerful.

Pulling several rolls of duct tape out of his bag, he instructs three girls to bind the ankles and wrists of the hostages. Upon completion of their task, the girls too are bound. Looking around, Gary counts 57 people. “Good,” he says half audibly. “That’s a good number.”



Starting with the first person on the floor, he counts until he gets to the tenth person. Walking over to the person, Gary points the gun and fires. Pulling a *10 of Hearts* from his pocket, he places it on the chest of his victim. Counting nine people over, Gary identifies his next victim. Gary calmly walks over and shoots his next victim. He places a *9 of hearts* on this victim. This continues until Gary shoots his tenth victim. Carefully, he places the *Ace of Hearts* on his final victim. In a calm, but strange voice, Gary said, “Good. My job is complete.” Putting the gun to his own head, he shoots himself. The *King of Hearts* falls from his hand.



An investigation of this incident revealed a psychologically unstable man. Gary had been in and out of mental institutions and had been prescribed a variety of drugs. Although he had shown no tendency for violence, some of his psychiatrists were not surprised by his actions. He had an unusual mindset.

A search of Gary's house produced some answers, but also created more questions. It appears Gary did not know any of his victims. In fact, his selection of victims was purely random. It was not based on revenge, anger, or any past dealings with these people. There was no qualifying prerequisite apart from the fact that he needed ten people.

According to his journal, Gary apparently became obsessed with his nobility and his "Kingdom." He considered himself a King and his Kingdom had ten rulers. These ten princes and princesses would help him rule over a vast dominion. His shooting spree was actually the "calling" of these rulers to join him in his new Kingdom. He had been planning this calling for several months and had predetermined that ten people would come with him. The cards he placed on their chests were the mark of their calling.

Part of his obsession was that the selection had to

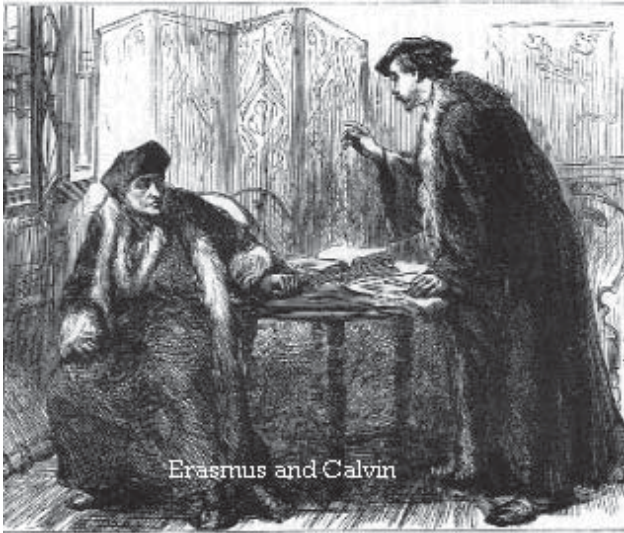
be completely random. It could not be made based on any personal qualities. He, therefore, selected an office that he knew would have a large number of people in it.

The concept of *random selection* is not a new or novel idea. In fact, there are groups within Christianity that believe salvation itself is based purely on a random selection. This theology is sometimes referred to as "selective salvation." According to this theology, God had predetermined who will spend eternity with him and who won't. The selection of who goes to Heaven has nothing to do with a person's attitude toward God. The condition of their heart, their humility, and their future repentance were not factors in God's selection. It is totally a random process.

The main difference between God's selection and Gary's is that God has a right to do this; Gary did not. A sovereign God, one who is almighty and supreme, can do whatever He wants. He has the right to arbitrarily select who is going to Heaven and who is going to Hell. A sovereign creator can do whatever He wants to do with His own creation. Although a sovereign God has a right to select who will live with Him in eternity, the question we need to ask is, "Did He actually do that?" We need to ask if this would be consistent with what we know about God from the Bible. Would this be consistent with a person who is loving, compassionate, and fair?

The only way we can accurately answer this question is to look at the Bible. The purpose of this section (*Selective Salvation*) is to take a comprehensive look at the Bible and see what it says about the subject. As you will see in the following chapters, it is important to gain a proper understanding of this complex and confusing theology. Literally, the destiny of billions of people depends on it.

Summary of Calvinism and Arminianism



Chapter: 14.04

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Selective salvation, as mentioned in the previous chapters, is the belief God has chosen certain people to go to Heaven and Hell. This choice, which was made long before the universe was even created, has nothing to do with the person's longing for God or the attitude of his heart. It has nothing to do with the person's humility, repentance, or his search for righteousness. It has nothing to do with God's foreknowledge of who will become Christians in the future.

This doctrinal system is often referred to as "Calvinism," "Predestination," or "Election." The "opposite" of Calvinism is often called Arminianism. As you will soon see, Calvinism and Arminianism are not actually opposite of each other. They do,

however, oppose each other on some issues and this has led some to assume that if you are not a Calvinist, you must be an Arminianist (or somewhere in-between.) This is not necessarily true. In order to explain what I mean, it is important to provide you with some information on Calvinism and Arminianism.

Calvinism and Arminianism are, of course, very complex subjects and involve more issues than just selective salvation. Although I will focus most of my attention on selective salvation, I will cover some of their other central themes. Calvinism, named after John Calvin (1509 - 1564), focuses on the *sovereignty of God*. Arminianism, named after the Dutch college professor James (Jacob) Arminius (1560-1609) focuses on the *free will of man*. Although these men were strong promoters of their respective doctrines, these theological positions did not originate with them. Similar teachings have been traced back 1600 years ago to the "Eastern Fathers" (free will) and to Augustine (sovereignty of God).



John Calvin

A main premise of Calvinism is God's sovereignty and His complete control over everything. This means nothing happens in the world that is outside of God's control. Another premise of Calvinism is God, in His sovereignty, has arbitrarily decided who will go to Heaven and Hell. God pre-determined

(predestined) the eternal state of each person. Those who were chosen (elected) to go to Heaven are called the elect, and those who were chosen to go to Hell are called reprobates. (Source: *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* p. 186-188.)

According to this theology, Christ did not die for everyone. He only died to pay for the sins of the elect. Since the person has no say in his eternal state, there is nothing he can do to gain or lose his salvation. As a result, the person has “eternal security.” Although I personally believe in “eternal security,” I do not believe it has anything to do with selective salvation. Please refer to the Chapter “*Mama Wouldn’t Let Go*” –(*Eternal Security*) for more information.

Some Selective Salvationists (not all), have brought this doctrine to an unusual conclusion. They have concluded that personal acceptance of Jesus is not necessary to go to Heaven. They feel that if God chose a person to go to Heaven, he will go to Heaven (regardless of his personal acceptance of Jesus). Following are some quotes concerning this:

- “The gospel is not a means of regeneration. The Gospel is for the man who already has life.” (Garrett, *Irresistible Grace*, p. 1)
- “For us to say that one must hear the gospel in order to be saved for heaven, it would severely limit the Holy One of Israel.” (Ellis, *The Christian Baptist*, April 1993, p. 3., p. 3)
- “I do not want anyone to think I am selling the gospel short. It has its place in God’s scheme of things.” (Keith Ellis, “*Does God Perform His Will?*” *The Christian Baptist*, April 1993, p. 11)
- “The gospel makes disciples, but it does not make children of God.” (Best, *Regeneration*, p. 109)
- “God has an elect people and Christ died for them, and they all will be born again and will live in Heaven, all due to His sovereign grace.

Many of them will have never heard the gospel.” (Garrett, *Two Salvations*, p. 3)

- “Salvation is NOT dependent upon the gospel of faith. Indeed, it could not be so, for millions of children of God have never heard the gospel preached. Only a very small percentage of humans heard the gospel before they died. Consequently, they did not and could not have had gospel faith.” (Tolley, *The Christian Baptist*, April 1996, p. 4)
- “The Confession, in this section, intends to teach that there are some unevangelized men who are ‘regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit’ without ‘the ministry of the written word’ ... the regenerated heathen has not yet had Christ presented to him.” (Shedds, *Calvinism*, p. 60)
- “It is not improbable, but some individuals in these unenlightened countries might belong to the secret election of grace, and the habit of faith might be wrought in these.” (Zanchius, *The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination*, p. 104)
- “We do not deny that God can save some even of the adult heathen people if He chooses to do so ... we must admit the possibility that by an extraordinary method some few of His elect may be gathered from the unevangelized portion.” (Boetnner, *Predestination*, pp. 119 – 120)
- “Primitive Baptists believe that the scriptures teach that sinners are regenerated, or born again, independent of, or without the gospel as a means.” (Garrett, *The Purpose of the Gospel*, p. 1)

Arminianism is very different from Calvinism. The Arminians put a strong emphasis on the “free will of man,” and they believe man controls most aspects of his own life. Man’s freewill to choose his own destiny is central to this belief system. Arminians do not believe God has forced certain people to go to Heaven and Hell. Arminians believe people can choose (out of their own freewill) to accept or reject God’s forgiveness. They also believe a

person who is already saved can choose to reject God. As a result, a person can lose his salvation. While some Arminians believe a person's salvation can only be lost because of major unrepentant sins, others believe a person's salvation can be lost several times a day.



James Arminius

Arminians also believe Christ's death on the cross did not *pay* for our sins. They say "Christ *suffered* for us rather than 'paid' the penalty sinners 'owe.'" They feel if Christ *paid* for our sins, then everyone would go to Heaven.

Arminians teach that, "Christ suffered for everyone so that the Father could forgive the ones who repent and believe; his death is such that all will see that forgiveness is costly and will strive to cease from anarchy in the world God governs." (Source: *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p 79-81) This view is called the *Governmental Theory of the Atonement*. Arminians say Christ was not *punished* on the cross; instead He *suffered* on the cross. They say there can "only be punishment or forgiveness, not both."

This position, of course, raises many concerns. It is saying the death of Christ on the cross was not necessary to save us. It is saying that the Sacrificial

Lamb didn't need to shed His blood to cleanse us from our sins. It is saying that God could have simply forgiven us without having to satisfy His righteous and holy nature. I find all of these issues very troubling.

Let's go back to Calvinism and the doctrine of selective salvation. Is God wrong for sending some people to Hell? Of course He isn't; we are all sinners and deserve Hell. Is God just and righteous in allowing sinners to enter Heaven? Yes, the atonement of Jesus on the cross did satisfy God's righteous nature. Christ paid the penalty we owed for our sins. Would God be just if He arbitrarily chose who could go to Heaven?

Obviously, a sovereign God can do whatever He wants. Yet, God will act in a manner that is consistent with His nature. He will not violate His own rules of fair play. He will not violate His codes of righteousness and justice. The premise of selective salvation completely contradicts everything we know about God from the Bible.

It is important to understand that according to Calvinism, God's choice of the elect has nothing to do with His foreknowledge of those that would eventually become Christians. It does not have anything to do with God's foreknowledge of who will eventually be repentant, sorrowful of sins, or desirous of God. The condition of a person's heart has nothing to do with God's selection. God could have just as easily chosen to save the very people He is sending to Hell. These facts are clearly laid out by the founding fathers of Calvinism.

According to Calvinism, no one has a repentant spirit, a sorrow for sins, and a desire to seek God. Man in his fallen state is completely reprobate and has no desire for God. They believe the only reason a person would seek God (and thus become a Christian) is because God put these desires in his heart. They believe the unsaved person is *incapable* of having these attributes. These desires can only come from God, and they only come to the elect.

Selective Salvationists say the targeted person has no choice in the matter. The targeted person does not get saved because *he* is sorrowful for his sins or loves God, but because God forces these feelings on him. This is called “irresistible grace.”

According to Calvinism, once God puts these attributes into the person’s heart, the person has an irresistible desire to want God. This irresistible desire forces him to *choose* to become a Christian. Therefore, this person is considered to have a “choice.” This is why Calvinists can say the doctrine of selective salvation is not inconsistent with the rest of the Bible that talks about choice. It is important to understand that this person *cannot* choose to reject God. His only “choice” is to accept God. It is impossible for anyone who is part of the elect to reject God and go to Hell.

The information in this section has been obtained from a large variety of sources. A summary of these doctrines, however, can be found in most theological dictionaries. Your church library should have these resources. The *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Walter Elwell, *Baker Publishing*) is a good resource.

The following chapter (*Are You a Calvinist, Arminian, or in-between?*) provides more information about Calvinism and Arminianism. It talks about some of the confusion many people have concerning the two views.

Are You a Calvinist, Arminian, or in-between?



Chapter: 14.05

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In the previous chapter we looked at some of the differences between Calvinism and Arminianism. We saw that both of these positions have some extreme doctrines in which most Christians are uncomfortable. This chapter will cover this problem even further.

Although there are some Christians who adhere fully to Calvinism or Arminianism, most don't. Most Christians have a hard time accepting all of the doctrines associated with either of these two views. If you were to ask them if they were a Calvinist or an Arminian, they would say that they are neither, but are somewhere in-between. Unfortunately, I don't think most Christians realize what they are implying when they say this.

If you were to ask me, "What are you, a Communist or a Nazi?" I would, of course, tell you I am neither. I would also tell you I am not somewhere in-between. There are many other political positions besides the ones found between communism and Nazism.

Likewise, I am not a Calvinist, Arminian, or *anywhere in-between*. My theological stance is quite

different. There are other theological positions apart from what lays between Calvinism and Arminianism. I think if most Christians were to carefully examine the beliefs of both of these positions, they would conclude they are not somewhere in-between. (Please do not misquote me. I am not comparing communism and Nazism with these two theological beliefs. I only mentioned them to illustrate a point.)

If you refer to my *Doctrinal Statement*, you will find it is consistent with most evangelical Christians. I firmly believe Jesus' death on the cross paid the full penalty for our sins. Salvation does not come from doing good works, but from personally accepting what Jesus has done for us on the cross.

Like many "Calvinists," I believe in eternal security and the sovereignty of God. However, I believe that God (out of His sovereignty) created us with a complete freewill. This freewill gives us the true ability to accept or reject God. This choice is not a *preprogrammed* choice, but rather it is a choice made from a truly free heart.

Many people call themselves Calvinists simply because they know they are not Arminians. They figure if they are not Arminians they must be Calvinists. Many Calvinists reinforce this belief in some of their writings. Following are some of their comments:

- "It must be evident that there are just two theories which can be maintained by evangelical Christians upon this important subject; that all men who have made any study of it, and who have reached any settled conclusions regarding it, must be either Calvinists or Arminians. There is no other position which a 'Christian' can take." (Boettner, *Predestination*, p. 333)
- "... only these two general schemes of Christian doctrine are logically possible ... in the future, as the past, all evangelical believers will belong either to one dogmatic division or the other" (W. Shedd, *Calvinism: Pure and Mixed*, 1986, p. 149)

Once it has been established there are only two positions, people are shown that only one position is correct. The Arminian position is shown to be completely unscriptural. At this point people would rather call themselves Calvinists than the erroneous Arminians. Listed below are some comments by Selective Salvationists contrasting the two views:

- “Calvinism is the eternal truth. Arminianism has always been an inveterate lie.” (R. Harbach, *Calvinism the Truth*, 1984, p. 3)
- “It is clear that Arminianism is anti-Scriptural, but that Calvinism is completely true to the Bible.” (G. Clark, *Prediestinatin*, 1987, p. 144)
- “The Biblical truths of Calvinism are never so clear as against the erroneous ideas of the Arminian.” (Palmer, p. 26)
- “Arminianism thought is ... the ancient pagan learning that had just been rediscovered in the Renaissance.” (McGregor Wright, *No Place for Sovereignty*, 1996, p. 90)
- “... [Arminianism is] the last and greatest monster of the man of sin, the elixir of Anti-Christianity.” (Leighton, *An Antidote Against Arminianism*, 1982, p. 2)
- “These doctrines are a perversion of the Truth of God and the way of salvation. They have no scriptural foundation.” (W. MacLean, *Arminianism: Another Gospel*, 1976, p. 5)
- “Arminianism is the plague of the church and the scourge of sound doctrine.” (Herman Hanko, *God’s Everlasting Covenant of Grace*, 1988, p. 16)
- “We believe that what has been known in Church history as Calvinism is the purest and most consistent embodiment of the religion of Faith, while that which has been known as Arminianism has been diluted to a dangerous degree by the religion of works.” (Boettner,

Reformed Faith, p. 1)

- “[Arminianism] appears as the gospel, but in reality is ‘another gospel.’” (MacLean, *Arminianism: Another Gospel*, p. 5)
- “Arminianism is that rejected error which has become the most insidiously devised heresy ever to lay claim to Biblical support.” (Harbach, *Calvinism the Truth*, p. 3)

If you look at the doctrinal statements of strong Reformed churches and colleges, you will find most of them list certain documents in their doctrinal statements. The four most common documents are: *Canons of Dort* (1618), *Belgic Confession* (1561), *Westminster Confession* (1646-48), and *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563). Most of these were written about 400 years ago and were written to clarify their doctrinal stance.

The doctrine of selective salvation became popular about 400 years ago during the Reformation. Since this new doctrine was confusing to many people back then, many “errors” and “heresies” started to arise. The documents referenced above were written to address these heresies. Links to these documents can be found at the end of this chapter if you are interested in reading them.

Of all of these documents, the *Cannons of Dort* deals with selective salvation the most. I strongly recommend you read the first few pages of the *Cannons of Dort*; this will give you a very solid understanding of the teachings of Calvinism. (Throughout this section I will reference various parts of the Canons of Dort. For your convenience, I have listed the referenced items separately in the following chapter.)

For ease of viewing, I have each of these documents listed on my website. Click on the name below to view the documents:

Canons of Dort	biblehelp.org/dort.htm
Belgic Confession	biblehelp.org/belgic.htm
Westminster Confession	biblehelp.org/west.htm
Heidelberg Catechism	biblehelp.org/heidel.htm

Highlights from the Canons of Dort



Chapter: 14.06

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This chapter is a quick reference of the items I referenced in this section. To view all 22 pages of the Canons of Dort, go to the appendix.

CHAPTER 1: Divine Election and Predestination

Article 7: Before the foundation of the world . . . [God] chose in Christ to salvation a definite number of particular people out of the entire human race. . . . Those chosen were neither better nor more deserving than the others.

Article 8: This election is not of many kinds; it is one and the same election for all who were to be saved in the Old and the New Testament.

Article 9: Election is not based on foreseen faith. This same election took place, not on the basis of foreseen faith, of the obedience of faith, of holiness, or of any other good quality and disposition, as though it were based on a prerequisite cause or

condition in the person to be chosen.

Article 10: But the cause of this undeserved election . . . does not involve his choosing certain human qualities or actions from among all those possible as a condition of salvation.

Article 11: . . . neither can his chosen ones be cast off, nor their number reduced.

Article 12: The Assurance of Election. . . . Such assurance comes not by inquisitive searching into the hidden and deep things of God, but by noticing within themselves, with spiritual joy and holy delight, the unmistakable fruits of election pointed out in God's Word— such as a true faith in Christ, a childlike fear of God, a godly sorrow for their sins, a hunger and thirst for righteousness, and so on.

Article 16: Those who do not yet actively experience within themselves a living faith in Christ or an assured confidence of heart, peace of conscience, . . . such people ought not to be alarmed at the mention of reprobation, nor to count themselves among the reprobate; rather they ought to continue diligently in the use of the means, to desire fervently a time of more abundant grace, and to wait for it in reverence and humility.

On the other hand, those who seriously desire to turn to God, to be pleasing to him alone, and to be delivered from the body of death, but are not yet able to make such progress along the way of godliness and faith as they would like—such people ought much less to stand in fear of the teaching concerning reprobation, since our merciful God has promised that he will not snuff out a smoldering wick and that he will not break a bruised reed.

Article 17: The Salvation of the Infants of Believers. . . . children of believers are holy, not by nature but by virtue of the gracious covenant in which they together with their parents are included, godly parents ought not to doubt the election and salvation of their children whom God calls out of this life in infancy.

Error I: [The synod rejects those] who teach that the will of God is to save those who would believe.

Error V: [The synod rejects those] who teach that the incomplete and non-peremptory election of particular persons to salvation occurred on the basis of a foreseen faith, repentance, holiness, and godliness . . . [The synod rejects] that faith, the obedience of faith, holiness, godliness, and perseverance are prerequisite in those who are to be chosen in the complete election, and which are foreseen as achieved in them.

Error VI: [The synod rejects those] who teach that not every election to salvation is unchangeable, but that some of the chosen can perish and do in fact perish eternally, with no decision of God to prevent it.

The TULIP



Chapter: 14.07

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In a previous chapter (*What is Selective Salvation?*) I described the doctrine of selective salvation. Anyone who is familiar with Calvinism is also familiar with the term TULIP. Although TULIP was not intended to be a central document (or icon) of selective salvation, it has become just that.

The term TULIP is actually an acronym of the five points of selective salvation. The TULIP provides a person a quick understanding of the core beliefs of this doctrine. Listed below are the five parts of the TULIP.

T	Total Depravity
U	Unconditional Election
L	Limited Atonement
I	Irresistible Grace
P	Perseverance of the saints

Total Depravity

When man fell, sin permeated his entire being. This fall was so complete that man had no desire for God and righteousness. Man is so totally enslaved by sin that he can only choose evil; he cannot choose good. He is incapable of choosing God and His salvation. Man is totally blind and deaf to the gospel. Apart from a supernatural intervention from God, the gospel message absolutely has no effect on a person. Total depravity is also called total inability.

Unconditional Election

God has chosen some people to go to Heaven and other people to go to Hell. This choice is not based on any qualities of the person being elected. This selection is not based on God's foreknowledge of who will "get saved" in the future.

Limited Atonement

God limited His atonement to only those who are elect. When Jesus died on the cross, He did not die for the sins of the whole world; He only died for those He wanted to go to Heaven.

Irresistible Grace

The grace that God extends to the elect cannot be refused. God puts into the hearts of the elect an irresistible desire to turn to Him and accept His salvation. This desire is so overpowering that no one can refuse it.

Perseverance of the Saints

Since God has determined who will get saved and they cannot resist His call, they are unconditionally and eternally secure in that election. Therefore, those who have been chosen to be saved will always stay saved. They cannot resist or lose their salvation.

Although many people attribute the TULIP to John

Calvin, he wasn't the one who developed it. About a year after James Arminius died, his followers became concerned about some of the "harsh" doctrines coming from the Churches in Holland. So, on January 14, 1610, they presented their five main concerns to the States-General. This document was first known as the *Remonstrance* (protest) and later on became known as the *Five Articles of Faith*. The ideas in this document were not new, of course; they had been around for over a thousand years. The *Five Articles of Faith*, however, did consolidate these ideas into a format that was concise and understandable.

The Synod examined the articles and rejected them. They didn't, however, feel that a mere rejection was sufficient. As a result, they wrote a document (first known as the *Counter-Remonstrance*) that countered each of the five points. The five chapters they wrote embodied the Calvinistic position and later became known as the "Five Points of Calvinism." Later, the word TULIP was coined to quickly identify the Five Points of Calvinism.



The official and final response to the Arminian's *Five Articles of Faith* came from the Synod of Dordrecht (1618). The first month was spent on other issues, but the last 180 days were spent addressing the *Five Articles of Faith*. The Synod wrote what became known as the Canons of Dordrecht, later shortened to Canons of Dort.

(Source: *Schaff, Vol 3*, pp. 581-596.) Listed below is a more detailed description of the Five Points of Calvinism (TULIP).

Total Depravity

When man fell, sin permeated every part of his personality. This includes his thinking, emotions, and will. Total depravity does not mean he is necessarily intensely sinful, it only means that sin has encompassed his entire being.

The unregenerate (unsaved) man is dead in his sins. Without the power of the Holy Spirit, the natural man is blind and deaf to the message of the gospel. Man will never seek God on his own; he will never have a desire for God or righteousness. This is why Total Depravity has also been called "Total Inability." Since man is totally incapable of seeking God, he will never find salvation through Jesus Christ on his own. The only time a person seeks this salvation is when God inserts a "desire for God" in his heart.

Unconditional Election

Unconditional Election is the doctrine that states God has chosen who will get saved and who will be damned for eternity. This selection is not based upon the condition of the person's heart or any of his merits. A person's humility, love of God, and desire for righteousness are not part of this selection. This selection is also not based on God looking into the future and seeing who "will accept" the offer of the gospel. God has elected some for glory and others for damnation. This election is based solely upon the counsel of His own will. His selection of the elect was done long before the universe was ever created.

Limited Atonement (Particular Redemption)

God limited His atonement to only those who are the elect. When Jesus died on the cross, He did not die for the sins of the whole world, He died for only those He wanted to go to Heaven. Christ died to atone for the sins of specific sinners. "It is

obvious,” (the Calvinists say), “that God did not atone for all men, because not all men are saved.”

Irresistible Grace

The grace that God offers to the elect cannot be refused. God puts into the hearts of the elect an irresistible desire to turn to Him and accept His salvation. This implanted desire is so overpowering that it cannot be resisted or refused. This irresistible desire insures that everyone who has been elected will go to Heaven. None of the elect will ever go to Hell. The Calvinist says “What a comfort it is to know that the gospel of Christ will penetrate our hard, sinful hearts and wondrously save us through the gracious inward call of the Holy Spirit!” The Calvinist will also say, “This doctrine is a great comfort to the Christian who is witnessing; he knows that he will always be successful. When he is witnessing to a person, he has the assurance that if God wants that person to be saved, he will be saved.”

Perseverance of the Saints

Since God has determined who will get saved and they cannot resist His call, they are unconditionally and eternally secure in that election. Therefore, those who have been chosen to be saved will always stay saved. They cannot resist or lose their salvation. There are no exceptions to the rule. As a result, the Christian has “eternal security.” Since there was nothing a person could do to get saved in the first place, there is nothing he can do to lose his salvation.

Calvinism Versus Hyper-Calvinism



Chapter: 14.08

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In a previous Chapter (*Summary of Calvinism and Arminianism*), we looked at the difference between Calvinism and Arminianism. Over the years, the word “Calvinist” had developed a large number of meanings. This has created a great deal of confusion and problems.

A Calvinist, 400 years ago, was someone who adhered to the teachings of John Calvin. A central theme these people *dearly* embraced back then was the doctrine of selective salvation. This was the original definition of Calvinism and it still holds true today.

As a general rule, a group’s name usually belongs to the group that has historically held the title. This is

especially true when the original belief is still being held by a large group of people. The present day “Calvinist” still holds to the core beliefs of the historical Calvinist.

Today, we have two basic groups who call themselves “Calvinists.” The first group of people are those who still hold to the core teachings of John Calvin, especially selective salvation. The second group of people are those who strongly oppose Arminianism. They believe a person can’t work their way to Heaven and can’t lose their salvation (common teaching of Arminianism). Since Calvinism is often viewed as being the “opposite” of Arminianism, they think they must be Calvinists. This belief is reinforced by the teachings of some of the true Calvinists. Following are some of their statements:

- “It must be evident that there are just two theories which can be maintained by evangelical Christians upon this important subject; that all men who have made any study of it, and who have reached any settled conclusions regarding it, must be either Calvinists or Armenians. There is no other position which a ‘Christian’ can take.” (Boettner, *Predestination*, p. 333)
- “... only these two general schemes of Christian doctrine are logically possible ... in the future, as the past, all evangelical believers will belong either to one dogmatic division or the other” (W. Shedd, *Calvinism: Pure and Mixed*, 1986, p. 149)

As you can see, an “either-or” picture is being painted. Either you are an Armenian who is “not following the Bible” or you’re a doctrinally sound Calvinist. (Look at the Chapters *Are You a Calvinist, Armenian, or in-between?* and *This is not an Attack* for more information about the “either-or” polarization.) As a result, many people call themselves Calvinists, even though they are not true Calvinists.

The people in the second group do not believe in selective salvation. They believe salvation is open

to all people. Interestingly, this second group of people has developed a new word for the true Calvinists: Hyper-Calvinists. They make it sound like the true Calvinists have added something extra to their doctrine that makes them “hyper” or extreme. In reality, those in the first group of people are the ones who have remained faithful to the original tenants of Calvinism.

Are the people in the second group actually Calvinists? No, of course not. They can, of course, call themselves Calvinists, if they want. A person has the right to call himself whatever he wants. If a person wants to call himself a Calvinist, even though he doesn’t adhere to the main doctrine of Calvinism, he can do it. It’s like a person who believes in God calling himself an “atheist.” He has the right to do that, but it would cause a great deal of confusion.

It doesn’t really matter to me what people call themselves. I am, however, concerned about the problems this confusion produces. In the chapter *Why is this Issue Important*, I talk about these problems. I point out unless a person is truly convinced God wants everyone to be saved, he will not sacrifice to reach unsaved people with the gospel. Selective Salvationists counter this argument by saying “Calvinists” have had, and still have, the largest missionary outreach of all Protestant groups. Therefore, they say, the doctrine of Selective Salvation actually increases missionary efforts, not diminishes it.

Selective Salvationists do have missionaries, but its size is not very large. The reason Selective Salvationists say they have the largest missionary outreach is because they include all of the other churches who *mistakenly* call themselves “Calvinists.” If you do not include all of these churches, the number of missionaries teaching selective salvation is greatly reduced.

I want to point out again (as I did in the chapter *This is not an Attack*) I am not trying to criticize or attack a person who is a true Calvinist. I think it is important, however, to clear up this misunderstanding.

ing. I believe the doctrine of selective salvation produces complacency and I think people are going to Hell because of it. I firmly believe the fates of billions of people are affected by this doctrine.

Interesting Side Note about Name Changing



The framers of the U.S. Constitution never envisioned a two-party political system. In fact, they didn’t even want a party system at all. Having just been freed from the tyranny of Europe, party affiliation was considered “sinister” and “contemptible.” George Washington’s farewell speech warned people against creating a party system.

America’s founding politicians didn’t have allegiances to a specific party or “political machine.” Originally, the framers of the Constitution envisioned an ideal situation where leaders would “take sides” in a debate simply because of the issue at hand. Once they finished debating the issue, the politicians would fall back into non-alignment while waiting for the next issue.

Human nature, being what it is, has caused personality clashes, which have resulted in people siding with their friends and against their enemies. After a while these alliances (based on friendship) became more important than the issues themselves. It didn’t take long for dominant personalities to polarize and divide the politicians into factions.

*Jefferson**Hamilton*

The rivalry between Jefferson and Hamilton sowed the seeds for the creation of a party system. These two men strongly opposed each other on how strong the Central government should be. People starting calling those who wanted a strong central government “Federalist” and those who opposed them were called “Anti-Federalist.” In 1796 the Anti-Federalists grouped together and adopted the name “Democratic Republicans.” Later they changed it to “Republicans.” Then, during the Andrew Jackson Presidency, it was renamed “Democratic.”

As you can see, this type of name changing is fertile ground for confusion and misunderstandings.

The “Privilege” of Being One of the Elect



Chapter: 14.09

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The movie *We Were Soldiers* is a true story based on the life of Lt. Col. Hal Moore. It’s about the first major battle for the Americans in Vietnam (1965). The battle in the La Drang Valley (affectionately referred to as the *Valley of Death*) was brutal and fierce, often involving hand to hand



combat. About 400 American soldiers were trapped in the valley and had to fight night and day to stay alive. After three days of fighting, the Americans were able to overpower the Vietcong. When it was all said and done, 80 Americans and over 1,800 Vietcong had been killed.

After the battle was over, Lt. Col. Moore said, “I’ll never forgive myself.” Surprised, a person nearby asked him why. Struggling to maintain his composure, he said, “That my men [pause] that my men died and I didn’t.”



Lt. Col. Moore’s survival was a bittersweet victory. Yes, he was grateful he survived and was able to return to his family. Yet, he was haunted by the fact many of those around him did not share the same fate. It broke his heart many of his men were not as fortunate as he was. He realized his survival and

their demise was only an issue of chance.

Lt. Col. Moore's response is similar to the response of survivors of other great tragedies. For example, many firefighters who survived the World Trade Center attack feel guilty they survived while many of their brothers didn't. It bothers them that "chance" favored them and not the others.

One of the things that surprised me in my study of selective salvation was the comments made by Selective Salvationists. A common theme I heard was "I feel privileged and honored to be one of the elect." They say the reason they witness is because of the "privilege of finding the other elect and telling them the good news." They look forward to telling the other elect of their "good fortune."

To be honest, I am troubled by these comments. Let's say, for the sake of argument, selective salvation is true. I would, of course, be very grateful to have been chosen to go to Heaven. I would want no other destiny. Yet, it would be a very bittersweet situation. I would have tremendous sorrow for those selected to go to Hell. It would break my heart to know some will not make it to Heaven. I would not feel "privileged" to be one of the elect.

I'm not trying to be disrespectful or unappreciative. I would genuinely appreciate going to Heaven. Yet, I would have great difficulty rejoicing in my good fortune. My selection would be bittersweet.

How Long Has Selective Salvation been Popular?



Chapter: 14.10

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Some Selective Salvationists will try to tell you selective salvation has been a central theme of Christianity since the Apostle Paul. In reality, though, selective salvation did not have a dominant role in Christianity until 400 years ago (during the Reformation period). It is true this doctrine can be traced back to Augustine (354-430 AD), but its impact was extremely limited. Listed below are various comments about how selective salvation gained immense popularity during the Reformation.

- “Just ask yourself what would have become of Europe and America if in the 16th Century the star of Calvinism had not suddenly arisen on the horizon of Western Europe.” (Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, p. 39)

- “From the time of Augustine until the time of the Reformation very little emphasis was placed on the doctrine of Predestination.” (Boettner, *Predestination*, p. 367)
- “Most of them [Calvinists] readily admit that ‘the doctrine of Predestination received such little attention’ before Augustine.” (Good, *Calvinists*, p. 49)
- “These questions were seldom agitated from the time of St. Paul to that of Augustine.” (Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. 2, 236)
- “Custance explains that ‘gradually Augustinian theology was emasculated by Roman Catholic theologians.’ (Custance, *The Sovereignty of Grace* p. 37)
- “The fact is, the limited view was not popularly held until the formation of the Cannons of the Synod of Dort (1619) and the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647).” (*The Death Christ Died*, Robert Lightner, p14.)

Why did Selective Salvation gain Popularity?



One of the Royal families in Europe

Chapter: 14.11

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Why did the doctrine of selective salvation gain so much appeal 400 years ago? There are two basic reasons. First, the Reformation brought about great doctrinal instability. There was no official church

doctrine for the Reformers, and this void was fertile ground for a variety of new doctrines. Second, the culture of Europe 400 years ago (the elite societies with their inherent superiority) greatly influenced the formation of the Reformers' new doctrines.

The Reformation brought about a large number of changes in Christendom. For the first time in over a millennium, the Christians were not told what to believe. They had the liberty to decide for themselves what they felt was true. Added to this, the Bible was now in the language of the average person (up to this point only church leaders had access to the Bible). The Reformers were now able to study the scriptures themselves and draw their own conclusions. Although we take this privilege for granted, it was something very new back then. Many Christians were not equipped for studying the Bible themselves. They were not aware of the extreme importance of studying scripture in its *context*.

At this point, there were a large number of Christians creating a brand new doctrinal stance from scratch. Although it would be nice to say that secular culture pressure does not influence Christian culture, it does. Travel around the world and you will see that a church culture varies greatly, depending on the surrounding culture. The same problem was prevalent 400 years ago. When the Reformers were creating their doctrinal stance, the social culture of the 1500s was fertile ground for the doctrine of selective salvation. The feeling of *inherent superiority* was a basic part of their culture and it rubbed off on the Christian culture.

Europe, of course, had its royal families who were in a special class all of their own. There was a tremendous feeling of *inherent superiority* amongst these people and they were quite vocal about it. Although we take equality (all men being created equal) for granted, the concept was very foreign to them. The existence of privileged classes was just an accepted fact of life. The superiors lived in excessive abundance while the inferiors lived in deplorable and deadly conditions.



It wasn't only the "Royals" who felt superior. There were other elite groups, such as the Knights with their chivalry and the "gentlemen." These gentlemen are different from our present day gentlemen. We usually think of a gentleman as someone who opens the door for a lady, etc. Yet, back then, a gentleman was a person who was part of a special class. There were a couple of unique things about these gentlemen. First, they were governed by a strict code of honor and giving their word "as a gentleman" was very binding. Second, a gentleman would never stoop to do the manual labor of a "commoner." This is one reason why some of the early colonies in the New World failed so miserably.

The culture of inherent superiority was fertile ground for the doctrine of the selective salvation. Since people were used to the idea of *God* making special classes here on Earth, the teaching that He would make a special class for salvation didn't raise red flags with many people. It actually fit in quite well with the scheme of things. Since the people promoting this doctrine felt they were part of the elect (thus they weren't the ones going to Hell), the idea of selective salvation didn't seem to be too unfair.

The popularity selective salvation gained during this era is still felt today. Many Christians say, "I can't understand how selective salvation ties in with the rest of the Bible, but since many credible denominations and popular preachers teach it, there must be some truth to it."



A Gentleman and a Lady

They feel the thrust of the Bible centers on God's love for the whole world and His desire to bring it back to Himself. It talks about His burden for *all* of the lost and His desire for their redemption. They feel that the concept of selective salvation contradicts the main thrust of the Bible.

I believe if a person were to be cut off from cultural influences and would study the Bible totally in its own context, he would not conclude it teaches selective salvation. I believe if *inherent* superiority (Royals, etc.) was not so fundamentally a part of the culture 400 years ago, the new teaching of selective salvation back then would have raised multiple red flags and would have faded away. As a

result, I don't think selective salvation would be influencing today's Christian culture.

I feel if the doctrine of selective salvation was not so prevalent in today's Christian culture, most Christians would question its validity much more carefully. Unfortunately, many Christians feel that since many great Christian leaders teach selective salvation, there must be more to this doctrine than what meets the eye. Therefore, even though they don't understand it, they feel there must be some truth to it. Even though it appears to contradict the rest of the Bible they feel it must be one of those "hidden mysteries." I am not saying no one would believe in selective salvation apart from cultural pressures, I'm just saying it would be far less popular.

In the following chapter (*Are All Men Created Equal?*) we will cover the issue of inherent superiority further. It will contrast our current "equal" society with the society of Europe 400 years ago.

Are All Men Created Equal?



Chapter: 14.12

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In the previous chapter (*Why did Selective Salvation gain Popularity?*) we saw how certain groups felt they were inherently superior. The feeling of inherent superiority was not limited to the Reformation period. That feeling is still present in many parts of the world. The majority of our current world conflicts are a result of one group thinking they are better than another. Although some wars are the result of greedy land grabs, a large number are driven more by ethnic pride and anger. This is the reason why brutal ethnic cleansing is so common in many of these conflicts. The feeling of superiority is incredible amongst these ethnic groups. Many of these groups actually believe they are *inherently* better than those around them. They actually believe they were created superior to the other groups.

Although it is easy for us to condemn the Nazis for believing they were the “master race,” many other countries have taught doctrines similar to this over the centuries. A close look at their writings will reveal a doctrine of superiority. The amazing thing is a person doesn’t need to have remarkable intelligence, extraordinary skills, or have incredible wealth in order to feel superior. Even people we

think should have nothing to brag about often feel superior. There are some tribes living in the jungles who actually call themselves “*The people*.” Surprisingly, when some of these tribes were first told that God Almighty loved them, they responded, “Of course He does, we are *The people*.”



The smugness of believing the world revolves around us has led to many atrocities. Scientists were burned at the stake simply because they dared to say the universe did not revolve around our planet. Obviously, these burnings were also politically motivated, but it does show how *egocentric* our thinking can become.

It is difficult for those of us who were born in a “melting pot” country (a country where numerous cultures are blended together) to comprehend how deep the feelings of ethnic superiority can run. Usually, the only types of classes we deal with in America are the ones based on income and education (upper class, middle class, etc.). These classes are not based on *inherent* superiority. In the U.S., breeding and pedigree are not nearly as important as they are in other countries. This is why a peanut farmer can become the President of the United States and a poor boy from Texas can grow up and become a multi-billionaire.

Even our “enlightened” society with its revolutionary philosophy of equality (“all men are created equal”) had a hard time actually treating *everyone* as equal. Blacks gained the right to vote in 1867, women gained the right to vote in 1920, and Indians (the ones who originally owned this land) were prohibited from voting in some states as late as 1954. In fact, the abstract to my property (dated Oct. 4,

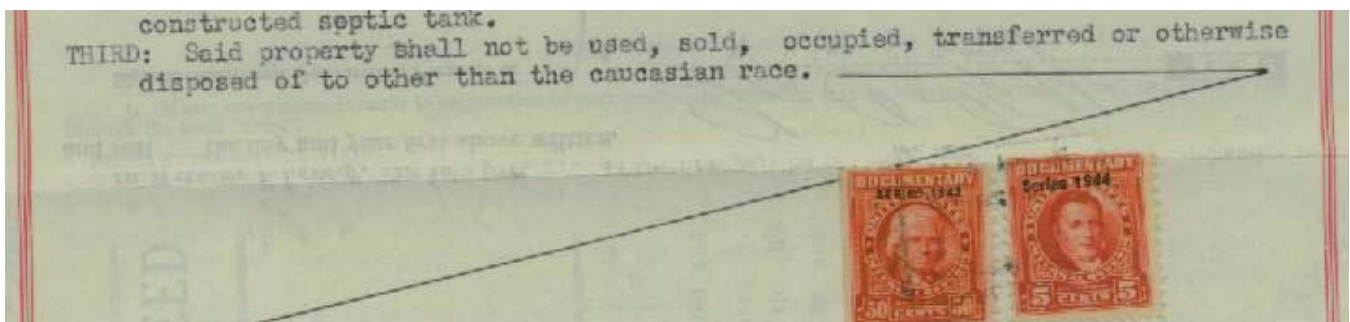
1944) strictly prohibited the property being sold to anyone, but whites. (The document below says, "Said property shall not be used, sold, occupied, transferred or otherwise disposed of to other than the Caucasian race.")

Unknown to most Americans, many white males were even denied the right to vote. After the American Revolution, some of our founding fathers tried prohibiting everyone, except the aristocrats, from voting and holding positions of leadership. In fact, some of the states actually passed such laws and many white men were prohibited from voting. If our country with all of its concern for equality, blatantly treated "inferiors" so terribly, imagine how bad it must have been in Europe 400 years ago.

In India, the social class system (caste) is taken to an extreme. There, the caste system is etched in stone. One does not move from one caste to another. The welfare system and relief efforts we have in the United States are almost nonexistent over there. In fact, helping a person in poverty is considered doing him a serious disservice. They believe a person is in poverty (or a lower caste) because he is paying for the sins of his past lives (reincarnation). If you were to help relieve him of his suffering, you would force him to be born in poverty again, or even worse, as an animal. As a result, there is a smugness and pride in being born in the special superior class.



I believe all men and women are created equal. I do not believe God has created a special class of salvation available only to a select few. I believe God is no respecter of persons and is offering His love and salvation to all mankind.



A copy of the abstract to my property saying, "Said property shall not be used, sold, occupied, transferred or otherwise disposed of to other than the Caucasian race."

Interesting Facts about Slavery and “Equality”



Chapter: 14.13

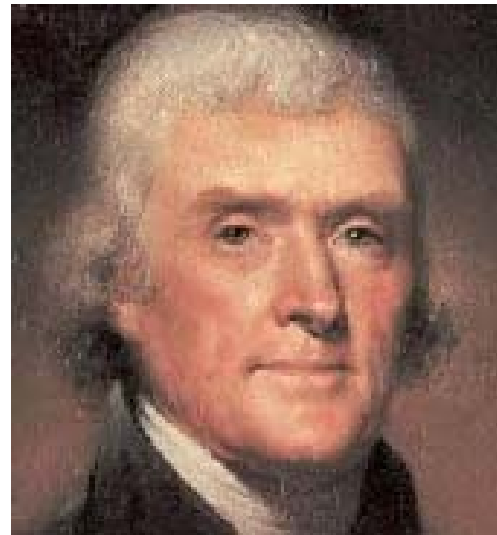
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Most people are not aware that Thomas Jefferson’s original draft of the *Declaration of Independence* said King George was personally responsible for the African slave trade in America. Part of his declaration said:

“He [King George] has waged cruel war against human nature itself. Violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of distant people who have never offended him. Capturing and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the appropriation of infidel powers is the warfare of the Christian King of Great Britain.

“Determined to keep open a market where men should be bought and sold, he has prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or restraining this despicable commerce. Determined to keep open a market where men should be bought or sold.”

The delegates of South Carolina and Georgia were not happy about these comments about slavery. They lobbied hard to get these statements removed. As a result of their insistence, this section was deleted.



Thomas Jefferson

Thomas Jefferson was considered to be the most “enlightened” of our Founding Fathers. He was one of the strongest advocates of the equality doctrine. Yet, even this enlightened man had problems viewing all men as equal. Thomas Jefferson himself kept and sold slaves. (Source: *Don’t Know Much About the Civil War*, by Kenneth Davis)



Dred Scott

Another example of America treating people as being inherently inferior is the infamous Dred Scott decision. The Dred Scott decision was the landmark case that upheld American slavery.



Chief Justice Roger Taney

Chief Justice Roger Taney said that the Constitution protects people (slaveholders) from being deprived of life, liberty, or “property.” Slaves, according to Taney, were property like cows and goats. The highest court in our nation said that blacks were nothing more than property. Once again, I would like to say that if our enlightened free country has had this much trouble with inherent superiority, think about how bad Europe was 400 years ago.

***Interesting Side Note about
Enslaving your Children***



Slaves were viewed as the “property” of the slaveholder so it was easy for slaveholders to rationalize inappropriate treatment of the slaves. Slaveholders could beat, starve, and even kill their slaves. They even rationalized their inappropriate sexual encounters with their slaves.

Normally, a man is considered to be an unfaithful adulterer if he is having sex with someone other than his wife. Yet, many slaveholders did not view having sex with slaves as adultery. Slaves were just property. There is no unfaithfulness involved because the slaves are not really human.

The wives of the slaveholders, of course, usually saw it differently. This unfaithfulness usually made them extremely angry. As a result, children produced by these extramarital encounters were usually severely mistreated by the wife.

To hide parental partiality, these slaveholders would usually have to quietly sit back and watch their own children beaten and tortured. There would even be occasions where a slaveholder’s son would ruthlessly beat his half-brother simply because his skin was a few shades darker. (In some situations, some of these tortured children didn’t even look black.)

To avoid future problems with their wives (and to protect their illegitimate children), slaveholders would often sell their children. This cruel twist of events exposed the deep hypocrisy of the slave practice. A father was forced to sell his own flesh and blood simply because he was not willing to admit blacks were humans with the same liberties and rights as whites.

Open Salvation



Chapter: 14.14

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I have found most Christians do not believe in selective salvation. They believe the gift of salvation (through Jesus Christ) is open to everyone. People who believe salvation is open to everyone are “Open Salvationists.” I have found most open Salvationists fall into one of three groups:

- Those who are unaware of the controversy.
- Those who have thoroughly studied this issue (the minority).
- Those who have heard a fair amount about election and predestination, but find it very confusing (the majority). They can’t figure out how it ties with the rest of the Bible, so they assume it must be one of those unsolvable “mysteries of the Bible.”

It is this third group I want to talk about. Most Open Salvationists have made the Bible their final authority. Even if it teaches something they don’t like or understand, they accept it. So, when they run across the verses that talk about predestination and election, they feel obligated to “accept it.” Of course, they don’t really know what they are

accepting because it so confusing to them. As a result, they end up locking it away into the little vault in their mind. Seldom, if ever, do they bring up the subject of predestination or election.



These people strongly believe salvation is open to everyone. Yet, if you were to specifically ask them about predestination and election, some would say there has to be some truth to it because it is in the Bible. If you were to ask them how they are able to reconcile predestination with open salvation, they usually cannot provide a solid answer. They usually say they do not believe God would *arbitrarily* select certain people to go to Heaven or Hell. They would say this selection must have something to do with God’s foreknowledge of who is going to get saved in the future. In other words, they try to rationalize this confusing doctrine into something they find plausible. If you ask them to provide scripture to substantiate this interpretation, they can’t.

The purpose of this section is to look at this confusing subject and try to help you make sense out of it. The issue of selective salvation is very complex and covers several subjects. In order to unravel this complex issue, we will study each of the components separately.

This is not an Attack



Chapter: 14.15

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The audience erupts into chaos as the speaker tries to answer the question. Several dozen people jump to their feet, yelling and pointing their fingers. The speaker tries in vain to bring the meeting to order. People stand face to face yelling at the top of their voices.

A couple people jump onto the platform and begin yelling their concerns to the audience. Another person pushes himself behind the podium and tries to grab the microphone. On the floor, a woman starts hitting the person next to her with her purse.

Although this unfortunate show of disharmony is typical of many political debates, I'm saddened to say that it was a "Town Meeting" at a church. This church split, like many church splits, was a result of a fight over doctrinal issues. The doctrine being debated was the Second Coming of Christ. Some were saying Jesus will come back at the beginning of the Tribulation period (pre-tribulation) and others were saying He will come back in the middle of the Tribulation (mid-tribulation). The congregation had been arguing over this issue for several months and the Town Meeting was a public exhibition of what had been taking place in private.

Fights over doctrine have ruined numerous friendships and destroyed many churches. Although I feel it is important to be doctrinally sound, I also feel we need to be careful in how we discuss doctrinal issues with others. Therefore, I usually don't go out of my way to cover highly controversial subjects just for the sake of discussing it.

The doctrine of selective salvation is a very controversial and divisive subject. It is not uncommon for Christians to become highly emotional trying to defend or refute it. I have no intention of engaging in this emotional debate. I did not write this section to try to convince others "I am right" or to "win others over to my side." I've written this chapter because of my concern for the lost. The fate of billions of souls is directly affected by this doctrine. If it is true that salvation is being offered to all people, not just a select few, this section needs to be written.

If you are a Calvinist, please do not feel I am criticizing or attacking you. There are many great Christians who are Calvinists. Please understand my intent for writing this chapter.

I have read a large number of books on this subject, and one thing that stands out is the love and devotion many Christians have toward this doctrine. In fact, many Christians place this doctrine right next to the doctrine of salvation. Listed below are some of the comments about this doctrine.

- "Calvinism is religion at the height of its conception. Calvinism is evangelicalism in its purest and only stable expression." (Warfield, *Calvin*, p. 497)
- "The central thought of Calvinism is, therefore, the great thought of God" (Henry Meeter, *The Basic Ideas of Calvinism*, p. 17)
- "Calvinistic theology is the greatest subject that has ever exercised the mind of man." (Boettner, *Predestination*, p. 335)
- "Calvinism thus emerges to our sight as nothing more or less than the hope of the world."

(Warfield, *Calvin*, p. 507)

- “It has been correctly said that Calvinism is pure biblical Christianity in its clearest and purest expression.” (Leonard Coppes, *Are Five Points Enough? The Ten Points of Calvinism*, p. xi)

As you can see, this doctrine is held in very high esteem in certain circles. This is the reason that any negative analysis is viewed as an attack against the doctrine they cherish. Sometimes they come to the defense of this doctrine with the same devotion as a mother bear protecting her cub. Many Selective Salvationists feel that this doctrine is the gospel itself. Listed below are some comments they have made concerning this:

- “Calvinism is the Gospel and to teach Calvinism is in fact to preach the Gospel.” (Custance, *Sovereignty of Grace*, p. 302)
- “Calvinism is the Gospel. Its outstanding doctrines are simply the truths that make up the Gospel.” (Engelsma, *Defense of Calvinism*, p. 4)
- “Calvinism is the Gospel, and nothing else.” (Spurgeon, *Spurgeon’s Sovereign Grace Sermons*, 1990, p. 2)
- “There is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified unless you preach what now-a-days is called Calvinism.” (Spurgeon, *Sovereign Grace Sermons*, p.129)

They feel that the doctrine of selective salvation is the clearest and most prominent theme of the Bible. Listed below are some comments they have made concerning this:

- “The Bible not only teaches the doctrine, but makes it prominent –so prominent that you can only get rid of Election by getting rid of the Bible.” (Bishop, *The Doctrines of Grace*, p. 167)

- “The doctrine of election is a cardinal teaching of the Scriptures.” (Chafer, *Theology*, vol. 1, p. 246)
- “The story of the Bible is the story of unconditional election.” (Seaton, *The Five Points of Calvinism* p. 12)
- “Beloved, if the Bible teaches anything at all, it teaches that God predestined us unto salvation before the foundation of the World. The Bible teaches election from Genesis to Revelation. Throughout the ages, God has always worked on the basis of election.” (Halff, *The Baptist Examiner*, Dec. 23, 1989, p. 6)

Selective Salvationists continue on by insisting that the most prominent people within Christianity believe in this doctrine. Listed below are some comments they have made concerning this:

- “It was God Himself that originated the five statements of grace.” (Everman, *The Baptist Examiner*, Dec. 1, 1995, p. 4)
- “Christ taught the doctrines which have come to be known as the five points of Calvinism.” (Ducan, *The five Points of Calvinism*, p. 10)
- “... this teaching was held by the apostles.” (Davis, *The Berea Baptist Banner*, Feb. 5, 1995, p. 30)
- The apostle Paul was Calvinistic. (McFetridge, *Calvinism in History*, p, 14)
- “Christ and His apostles” were Calvinistic. (Cockrell, *Introduction to Tom Ross*, p. v)
- “Christians of the New Testament times were strong believers in the greatness and sovereignty of God and consequently in the doctrines of election and predestination.” (Mason, *What is to be, Will be*, p. 151)
- “Among the past and present advocates of this doctrine are to be found some of the world’s

greatest and wisest men.” (Boettner, *Predestination*, p. 1)

- “There can be little question that Calvinism . . . has been professed in the modern world by the most intelligent, moral, industrious, and freest of mankind.” (Willis, quoted in Kuyper’s, *For Whom did Christ Die?*, p. 15)
- “There is no other system of religion in the world which has such a glorious array of martyrs to the faith.” (McFetridge, *Calvinism in History*, p. 81)
- “The great theologians and scholars” were and are Calvinist (Singer, *John Calvin: His Roots and Fruits*, p. 28)

Building upon this, many Selective Salvationists feel this doctrine is the *only* scriptural system. Listed below are some comments concerning this:

- “It is questionable whether a dogmatic theology which is not Calvinistic is truly Christian.” (Arthus Custance, *The Sovereignty of Grace*, 1979, p. 302)
- “We believe the Calvinistic system to be the only one set forth in the Scriptures and vindicated by reason.” (Boettner, *Predestination*, p. 352)
- “Calvinism is the only system which is true to the Word of God.” (Talbot and Crampton, *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism and Arminianism*, p. 78)
- “... Calvinism is the purest and most consistent embodiment of the religion of Faith.” (Boettner, *Reformed Faith*, p. 1)
- “The bottom line is if you deny election, you deny salvation by grace. To reject election is to reject salvation by grace and promote salvation by works.” (Morton, *The Berea Baptist Banner*, Jan. 5, 1995, p. 19)

- “Those who declare that salvation is entirely by the grace of God, and yet deny the doctrine of election, hold an inconsistent position.” (Boettner, *Predestination*, p. 95)
- “We reject the doctrine of election because we really believe that we can ultimately save ourselves by our own doings.” (Rose, *The Five Disputed Points of Calvinism*, p. 20)
- “If predestination and election are not so, what else? The answer is then we don’t know how everything is going to turn out in the end! Maybe Satan will defeat God and finally win out!” (Mason, *What is to be; will be*, pp. 39-40)

Based on all this, many Selective Salvationists feel that any deviation from this doctrine is bad and sinful. Listed below are some comments concerning this:

- “... any compromise of Calvinism is a step towards humanism.” (Talbot and Crampton, *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism and Arminianism*, p. 3)
- “There is no consistent stopping place between Calvinism and atheism” (L. Boettner, *The Reformed Faith*, 1983, p. 2)
- “... the future of Christianity is bound up with that system of theology historically called Calvinism.” (Boettner, *The Reformed Faith*)

Considering how precious this doctrine is to some people, you can see why some are offended or even outraged when it is criticized. You can see why an opponent of this doctrine is considered heretical and apostate. As a side note: Apart from believing this doctrine is the only scriptural system, they also believe it has had a profound social impact on this world. Listed below are some comments concerning this:

- “The Calvinistic countries became the countries where the capitalistic system developed.”

(Dakin, *Calvinism*, p. 203)

- “The Protestant ‘work ethic’ was developed from Calvin’s teaching.” (Crampton, *What Calvin Says*, p. 12)
- “Calvinism is the most formidable enemy which socialism and communism face today.” (Singer, *John Calvin: His Roots and Fruits*, p. 48)
- “Calvinism has captured and guaranteed to us our constitutional civil rights.” (Kuyper, *For Whom Did Christ Die?*, p. 40)
- “In England and America the great struggles for civil and religious liberty were nursed in Calvinism, inspired by Calvinism, and carried out largely by men who were Calvinists.” (Boettner, *Predestination*, p. 390)
- Calvinism is responsible for the Revolutionary War and the Constitution. (Singer, *John Calvin: His Roots and Fruits*, pp. 42-43)
- “Our three American universities of greatest historical importance, Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, were originally founded by Calvinists, as strong Calvinist schools.” (Boettner, *Predestination*, p. 397)
- “Calvinism is the most formidable enemy which socialism and communism face today.” (Singer, *John Calvin: His Roots and Fruits*, p. 48)

It is important to understand that a person who speaks out against a popular view is not always an apostate or a troublemaker. Sometimes it is necessary to speak out to bring the truth to light. The life of the British surgeon Joseph Lister (1827-1912) is a good example of this. This will be covered in the following chapter (*Being Misunderstood*).

Being Misunderstood



Surgery in the 1800's

Chapter: 14.

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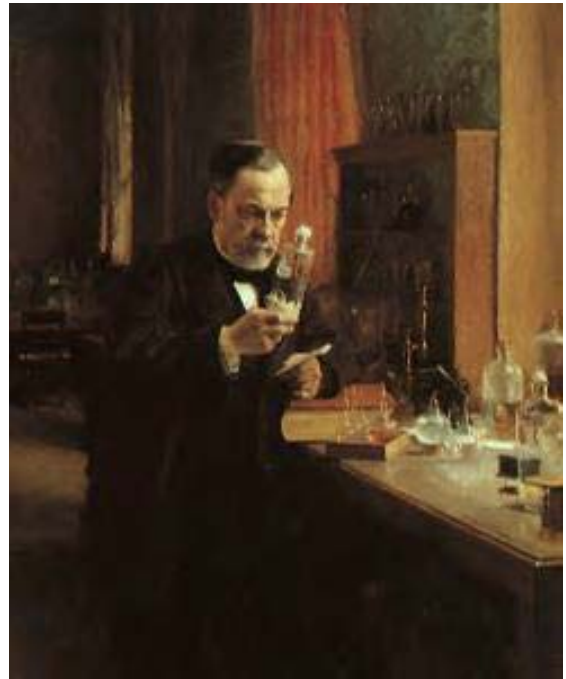
In the previous chapter (*This is not an Attack*) I talked about how a person is not necessarily an apostate or troublemaker simply because he speaks out against a popular view. Sometimes it is necessary to speak out to bring the truth to light. The life of the British surgeon Joseph Lister (1827-1912) is a good example of this.



Joseph Lister

At one time, having surgery done on you was pretty much a death sentence. Funeral arrangements were usually made for those who were scheduled to have surgery. A common report by the surgeons was: "The operation was successful, but the patient died."

In hindsight, it is easy for us to see that using non-sterilized equipment caused post surgery infections. However, back then, the doctors didn't realize their hands and surgical tools were covered with microscopic, disease-causing organisms. They didn't realize they were flooding their patient's body with a deadly army of bacteria and viruses. The doctors were unknowingly killing their patients. This problem, now known as *operative sepsis*, was called *hospital disease*.



Louis Pasteur

Joseph Lister had been studying Louis Pasteur's research on bacteria and its possible connection with infections. From this research, Joseph Lister concluded surgical infections were the result of the introduction of bacteria via the air, hands, etc. In 1865, Joseph Lister developed an antiseptic surgical procedure and had remarkable success with his own surgeries. Our current hospital procedures are based on his antiseptic procedures.

You would think the medical community would have welcomed this helpful information. They didn't. In fact, Joseph Lister was ridiculed, criticized, and harassed. The medical community didn't like having its status quo questioned. The nurses regarded Lister's procedures as eccentric, and they

resented the extra work his obsessions with cleanliness were causing. The doctors were angered at the implication they were responsible for some of the deaths.

Louis Pasteur and Joseph Lister were personal friends and supported each other when the medical community viciously attacked them. Sometimes they felt they were alone in their struggles to bring the truth to light. People were needlessly dying, and it seemed nobody was listening.

The Germans were the first to use antiseptic surgery (during the Franco-Prussian War) and thousands of lives were saved. America and England stubbornly held out. After many years, however, they slowly (and reluctantly) started implementing antiseptic surgery.

History, of course, has shown Joseph Lister was correct. His persistence has saved millions of lives. The death toll of WWI and WWII probably would have been ten times greater had it not been for antiseptic surgery. In fact, had it not been for antiseptic surgery, many of you would not be here today because your forefathers would not have survived the wars.

Joseph Lister was not attacking these doctors; he was only trying to be helpful. He was only trying to prevent needless deaths. I am not comparing myself with Joseph Lister, but my motivation is the same as his. I'm concerned about the fate of an endangered world. I am only addressing this issue because I believe billions of people are needlessly going to Hell. I am only trying to be helpful.

Interesting Side Note about Listerine



Based on Joseph Lister's research, Dr. Joseph Lawrence created an antiseptic mouthwash. In honor of Joseph Lister's contributions, Lawrence named the mouthwash after him (Listerine®). The verdict, however, is still out on whether Joseph Lister actually appreciated this honor.

Why is this Issue Important?



Chapter: 14.17

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In the chapter *How Convinced are You?* (in the section *What About Those Without the Gospel?*), we saw unless a Christian is truly convinced that the people “without the gospel” are going to Hell, he will not *whole heartedly* seek their deliverance. A large number of Christians are uncertain as to what they believe about the “heathen;” they find the whole subject confusing and conflicting. As a result, they find it difficult to whole heartedly endorse aggressive foreign missions projects. Although these Christians are not fully convinced the heathen are destined to Hell, they often attend churches that support dozens of missionaries. In fact, many of these people have personally given to missionary projects themselves. Surprisingly, there are also many missionaries who are uncertain as to what they believe about those who are without the gospel.

You may wonder about this contradiction; why would someone support something in which they don’t believe? It’s important to understand these Christians are not *against* missionary outreaches, they simply are not convinced everyone who is

without the gospel is lost. Unfortunately, this lack of conviction is part of the reason why the world still has not been evangelized after 2000 years.

Selective salvation is another reason why some people are not convinced it is necessary to *whole-heartedly* pursue world evangelism. Selective Salvationists teach that everyone who is supposed to get saved will get saved, with or without our effort. As a result, many Christians feel there isn’t a need to make tremendous sacrifices to reach the lost. They feel it is not necessary for Christians to live in deplorable conditions and endure incredible hardships in order to bring the gospel to remote areas. They feel it is not necessary to endanger their lives by going into areas where religions or governments are hostile to the gospel. They believe if the people in these areas are *chosen* to be God’s children, they will be become Christians without these great sacrifices.

If it is actually true that God has chosen only certain people to be his children, we can rest assured people are not needlessly dying and going to Hell.

Everyone who is supposed to get saved will get saved. Those who are not chosen to be His children have been chosen to be condemned to Hell. There is nothing we can do to help them find the Lord. They have been condemned to Hell from the day they were born. Actually, they have been condemned to Hell long before they were even born and committed their first sin.

Considering the above, you would think the people who hold this belief would not be involved in missionary outreaches. Surprisingly, some of them are. Although they do not promote missions nearly as much as other Christian groups, they still send out missionaries.

Selective Salvationists feel privileged to be part of the “chosen,” and they feel it is an honor to be able to present the gospel to the other chosen few. This is why they claim to have such an aggressive missionary outreach. Believe it or not, Selective Salvationists actually claim to have more missionaries than all other protestant groups. The statistics, however, don’t support this claim. In fact, their missionary outreach is very small. The chapter *Calvinism versus Hyper-Calvinism* explains why their missionary outreach is much smaller than what they claim.

I have asked many people who believe in selective salvation, “Why would a person become a missionary if the chosen are going to get saved anyhow.” The answer I usually receive is something like, “For the joy of leading a person to the Lord.” Unfortunately, if this is the missionary’s motivation, he is in the wrong occupation. Missionary work is slow and difficult, requiring years of groundwork we often take for granted here in the United States. Many missionaries will go years, or even decades, without ever leading a person to the Lord. In fact, some missionaries have never led a person to the Lord while serving on the foreign field. Their toils, of course, were not in vain. Their years of work built a foundation for future missionaries and thousands have eventually become Christians because of their toils. For these missionaries, however, there was no “joy” of leading a person to

the Lord.

As mentioned before, if it is true God has chosen who will be His children, we can rest assured people are not needlessly going to Hell. However, if it is not true, then this belief has left Christians with a false sense of security and billions of people are needlessly going to Hell. I believe people are going to Hell because of this belief, and this is the reason I am addressing it in this book.

Part 2

What Does the Bible say about Selective Salvation?

Part 2 of 5 parts in the Selective Salvation section

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What does the Bible Say?



Chapter: 14.18

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Regardless of our personal feelings on the subject of selective salvation, we are bound to accept whatever the Bible teaches. As a result, our next logical step is to look at the Bible and see what it has to say concerning this subject. A major theme of the Bible is God's love for the *world*. God's love for the world was so great that He gave His son for its redemption. The Bible says *whoever* believes on Jesus will have eternal life. Following are some verses (about 300) that show the gift of salvation is open to everyone.

Although I've created a comprehensive list of verses to help you in your studies, it is still your responsibility to look them up and conduct a careful study. Don't assume I'm accurately interpreting the Bible; check them out for yourself. Next to each verse is a brief summary (or description) of the verse. Although these descriptions are often very close to the actual text, they are usually not direct quotes (only descriptions with " " marks are direct quotes).

Originally, my goal was only to provide you a master list to use in your research. This list had no summary or description to tell you what the verses said. I then decided to include the whole verse in the list. Apart from making the list large and cumbersome, it created another problem. A verse should always be studied in the light of its context.

The surrounding verses should always be included in your studies. Human nature being what it is, I was afraid people would look at the single verse and not study the verse in its context. As I stated earlier, the purpose of the list was to provide you a tool to help you in your research, it was not intended to be a substitute for your research. Therefore, I decided to only include a brief description. The NIV Bible was used when making the descriptions for most of the verses.

Salvation is offered to *ALL* men

- 1 Timothy 4:10 God is the savior of *all* men
 1 Timothy 2:3,4 God wants *all* men to be saved
 1 Timothy 2:6 Jesus gave Himself to be a ransom for *all* men
 1 Timothy 2:1 We are to pray for *all* men
 1 Timothy 2:4 God wants *all* men to be saved
 1 Timothy 2:6 God gave Himself a ransom for *all* men
 2 Cor. 5:15 Jesus died for *all*
 2 Peter 3:9 God does not want *any* to perish, but wants *all* to come to repentance
 Acts 17:30 God commands *all* people everywhere to repent.
 Isaiah 45:22 "Turn to me and be saved, *all* you ends of the earth."
 John 1:12 To *all* who receive Him ... become the children of God.
 John 12:32 When I am lifted up. I will draw *all* men unto myself.
 Luke 2:10 The angels said to the shepherds that the good news was for *all* men
 Matthew 11:28 Come to me, *all* who are weary and burdened
 Romans 8:32 God gave His Son for us *all*
 Romans 3:22 Righteousness comes to *all* who believe
 Rom. 3:23,24 *All* have sinned ... and are justified
 Titus 2:11 Salvation has appeared to *all* men
 Zephaniah 2:3 *All* who seek the Lord ...

Salvation is offered to *WHOEVER* believes

- 1 John 2:23 **Whoever** acknowledges the Son has the Father
- John 10:9 “I am the gate; **whoever** enters through me will be saved.”
- John 11:25 **Whoever** believes in me will never die.
- John 11:26 **Whoever** believes in Jesus will never die
- John 3:15 **Whoever** believes in Him shall not perish
- John 3:16 **Whoever** believes in Him shall have eternal life
- John 3:18 **Whoever** believes in him is not condemned
- John 3:21 **Whoever** lives by the truth ...
- John 3:36 **Whoever** believes in the Son has eternal life
- John 4:13 **Whoever** drinks the water I give will never thirst
- John 4:14 **Whoever** drinks the water will never thirst
- John 5:24 **Whoever** hears my words ... has eternal life
- John 6:37 **Whoever** comes to me I will never drive away
- John 6:53 **Whoever** eats my flesh ... has eternal life
- John 6:54 **Whoever** drinks the blood of Jesus has eternal life
- John 6:56 **Whoever** drinks the blood of Jesus remains in Jesus
- John 6:56 **Whoever** eats my flesh ... remains in me
- John 7:38 **Whoever** believes in Jesus will have streams of living water flow through them
- John 8:12 **Whoever** follows me ... will have the light of life
- Luke 12:8 **Whoever** acknowledges Jesus before men will be acknowledged before the angels

- Luke 9:24 “For **whoever** wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.”
- Mark 16:16 **Whoever** believes ... will be saved.
- Mark 3:35 **Whoever** does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.
- Mark 8:35 “For **whoever** wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.”
- Matthew 10:32 **Whoever** acknowledges Jesus before men will be acknowledged before God
- Matthew 16:25 “**Whoever** loses his life for me will find it.”

Salvation is offered to *ANYONE*

- 1 John 2:1 If **anyone** sins, he has an advocate with the Father.
- Revelation 3:20 If **anyone** hears my voice ... I will come in.
- 1 John 4:15 If **anyone** acknowledges that Jesus is God ... God lives in him
- John 6:51 If **anyone** eats of this bread, he will live forever.
- John 7:37 If **anyone** is thirsty, let him come to me and drink
- John 8:51 If **anyone** keeps my word, he will never see death.
- Romans 10:11 **Anyone** who puts his trust in Him will never be put to shame
- Ezekiel 18:32 “For I take no pleasure in the death of **anyone**, declares the *Sovereign*
- Matthew 22:9 Go to the street corners and invite **anyone** you find (Parable of Kingdom of Heaven.)

Salvation is offered to the *WORLD*

- 1 John 2:1,2 Jesus didn’t die only for our sins, but for the sins of the **whole world**
- 1 John 4:14 Jesus is the Savior of the **world**
- 1 Timothy 1:15 Christ Jesus came into the **world** to save **sinners**

- 2 Cor. 5:14, 19 Christ died for **all** and He wants to bring the **world** to Himself
- 2 Cor. 5:19 God was reconciling the **world** to himself in Christ
- John 1:29 Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the **world**.
- John 16:8 He will convict the **world** of guilt
- John 18:23 Jesus asked God to let the **world** know He sent Jesus and **loved them** as much as He loved Jesus
- John 3:16 For God so loved the **world**.
- John 3:17 God did not send the Son to condemn the **world** ... but to save the **world** through Him.
- John 4:42 Jesus is the Savior of the **world**.
- John 6:51 This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the **world**.
- John 8:12 I am the light of the **world**
- John 9:5 I am the light of the **world**

Salvation is offered to **EVERY** person

- 1 John 5:1 **Everyone** who believes ... is born of God
- Acts 10:43 **Everyone** who believes receives forgiveness
- Acts 2:21 **Everyone** who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved
- Hebrews 2:9 Jesus tasted death for **every man**
- Joel 2:32 "And **everyone** who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."
- John 1:9 The true light that gives light to **every man** ...
- John 3:14,15 **Everyone** who believes in Him will have eternal life.
- John 6:40 God's will is that **everyone** who believes in Him shall have eternal life.
- John 6:45 **Everyone** who listens to the Father ...
- Romans 1:16 Salvation for **everyone** who believes.
- Romans 10:13 **Everyone** who calls upon the Lord will be saved

Miscellaneous verses showing anyone can accept the gospel

- 1 John 1:9 If **we** confess our sins ...
- 1 John 3:23 **Those** who obey His command, live in Him.
- 1 Peter 2:6 The **ones** who trust in Him will never be put to shame.
- 2 Peter 2:1 Even the false prophets were "**bought**" by God
- Ezekiel 34:16 I will seek that which is **lost**
- Isaiah 28:16 The **one** who trusts will never be dismayed
- Isaiah 8:14 The **one** who trusts in Him will never be put to shame.
- John 11:25 **He** who believes in me will live.
- John 6:35 **He** who believes in me will never be hungry or thirsty.
- John 6:47 **He** who believes has everlasting life.
- John 6:58 **He** who feeds on this bread will live forever.
- Luke 19:10 Jesus came to save the **lost**
- Luke 5:32 I have come to call the **sinners** to repentance
- Mark 1:15 Repent and receive the good news (this was spoken to the **general public**)
- Matthew 18:14 God is not willing that **any** of these little ones should be lost
- Rev. 22:17 Let **Him** who hears, come
- Romans 5:6 Christ died for the **ungodly**
- Romans 9:33 The **one** who trust in Him will never be put to shame.

People can reject the gospel

(This shows people have the ability to choose to go to Heaven or Hell.)

- 1 Chron. 28:9 If you **forsake Him**, He will forsake you
- 2 Chron. 15:2 If you **forsake Him**, He will forsake you

Ezekiel 18:23 The wicked should **return** from his ways and live

Ezekiel 18:30 Repent and **turn** from your transgressions

Ezekiel 18:31 **Cast away** your transgressions ... make yourself a new heart

Ezekiel 18:32 The wicked should **return** from his ways and live

Ezekiel 3:19 If the wicked **does not turn** from his wicked ways he will die in his sins

Ezekiel 33:19 If the wicked **turns** from his wickedness ... he shall live

Ezekiel 33:9 If the wicked **does not turn** from his wicked ways he will die in his sins

John 3:18 He that **believeth not** is condemned already

John 3:36 He that **believeth not** shall not see life

John 5:40 ... and you **will not come** to me that you might have life

John 8:24 You will die in your sins because you **do not believe** I am He.

Luke 12:9 He that **denies me** shall be denied

Mark 8:16:16 Whoever does **not believe** will be condemned

Mark 8:35 Whoever will **save his own life** will lose it

Mark 8:38 Whoever is **ashamed of me** ... I will be ashamed

Matthew 16:25 Whoever **saves his own life** will lose it

Great Commission

(We are instructed to preach the gospel to the world.)

Acts 1:8 We are to be God's witnesses to the ends of the **world**.

Luke 24:47 Forgiveness of sins is to be preached to **all nations**

Mark 16:15 We are to go into all the **world** and preach the good news to all creation.

Matthew 28:18 We are to go and make disciples of **all nations**

Verses showing God is displeased that some are not saved

1 Cor. 15:34 Some have not the knowledge of God, this is our shame

1 Timothy 2:4 God wishes that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of truth

2 Peter 3:9 God is not willing that any should perish, but wants everyone to come to repentance

2 Sam 14:14 "But God does not take away life; instead, he devises ways so that a banished person may not remain estranged from him."

Ezekiel 18:23 God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked

Ezekiel 18:32 God takes no pleasure in anyone's death

Ezekiel 33:11 God said, "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked"

Matthew 23:37 Jesus wanted to gather Jerusalem like a chicken gathers her chicks under her wings, but they would not have it.

God is looking for those who seek Him

(Why would He be looking for this if He has already predetermined who will be seeking Him?)

Hebrews 11:6 God is the **rewarder** of those who diligently seek Him

1 Samuel 13:14 The Lord **sought** a man after His own heart

John 4:23 God is **looking** for those who will worship Him in truth

Psalms 14:2 God **looks** down from Heaven to see if there are any who seek Him

Psalms 53:2 God **looks** down from Heaven to see if there are any who seek Him

Verses that show some people are needlessly going to Hell

- Ezekiel 3:16-21 If we don't warn the wicked, they **will die in their sins**
- Ezekiel 33:6-9 If we don't warn the wicked, they **will die in their sins**
- Hosea 4:6 For a lack of knowledge my people **perish**
- Jeremiah 8:20 The harvest is past and we **are not all saved**
- John 4:35 Don't say that there are four months to the harvest. Look the **fields are ripe** for harvest.
- Luke 10:2 The harvest is plentiful, but the **workers are few**
- Luke 12:47-48 Those who did not know God's will **are still punished**
- Matthew 9:37 The harvest is great, but the **workers are few**
- Rom. 1:18-2:1 All sinners are without excuse and **destined to Hell**
- Romans 2:12 Those who sinned without the law **will perish without the law**

Verses that show God is no respecter of persons

- 1 Peter 1:17 Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work **impartially ...**
- 2 Chron. 19:7 For with the LORD our God there is no injustice or **partiality ...**
- Acts 10:34 I now realize how true it is that God does **not show favoritism**
- Col 3:25 ... and there is **no favoritism**
- Deut 10:17 The great God, mighty and awesome, who **shows no partiality ...**
- Ephesians 6:9 and there is **no favoritism** with him
- Galatians 2:6 As for those who seemed to be important—whatever they were **makes no difference** to me; God does not judge by external appearance
- Job 34:19 [God] who shows **no partiality ...**

Romans 2:11 For God does **not show favoritism**

Verses showing that a person's surroundings can impact his reception of the gospel

- 1 Cor. 15:33 Bad company **corrupts** good character
- 1 Peter 3:1,2 The conduct of a wife may **win over** an unbelieving husband
- Matthew 19:24 It is easier for a camel to **go through** the eye of a needle than for a rich man to go to Heaven
- Matthew 23:13 The Pharisees had "**shut up Heaven.**" As a result, not only were they not going to Heaven, but they **were blocking others** from going in too
- Matthew 24:12 Because iniquity abounds, the **hearts of many grow cold**
- Proverbs 18:19 **A person offended** is harder to win than a fortified city
- Proverbs 22:6 **Raise up a child** in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it

Verses showing degrees of punishment in Hell

(Indicating that the severity of a person's punishment is based on the person's choice and actions.)

- 2 Cor. 5:10 Judgment seat of Christ
- Heb. 10:29,30 Punishment will be more severe for those who "trample the Son of God under foot"
- Jude 1:15 Judgment will be executed upon the ungodly for their ungodly deeds
- Luke 12:47,48 Parable of those who were punished because they knew the Lord's will and did not do it. To those who were given much, much is required.
- Luke 20:46,47 False teachers will be punished more severely

Mark 12:40 False teachers will be punished more severely
 Mark 14:21 For the person who betrayed Jesus, it would have been better if he were never born
 Matthew 11:24 In the day of judgment, it will be more tolerable for Sodom than it will be for Capernaum
 Matthew 12:36 We will give account for every idle word in the day of judgment.
 Matthew 23:14 False teachers are warned of punishment
 Rev. 20:11-15 White Throne Judgment
 Rev. 20:12,13 Non-Christians are judged according to their ungodly deeds
 Romans 2:12 Those who have sinned without the law will be judged without the law
 Romans 2:5 A hardened heart stockpiles wrath against the Day of Wrath

Verses showing God wants us to repent

(Why would God instruct the world to repent if they are unable to repent?)

1 Kings 8:47 **Repent**
 2 Chron. 6:37 **Repent**
 2 Peter 3:9 God wants everyone to **repent**
 Acts 8:22 **Repent**
 Acts 13:24 John preached **repentance**
 Acts 17:30 God commands all people everywhere to **repent**
 Acts 2:38 Peter preached **repentance**
 Acts 20:21 They must turn to God in **repentance**
 Acts 26:20 Paul preached **repentance**
 Acts 3:19 **Repent** and **turn** to God
 Acts 8:22 **Repent** of this wickedness
 Ezekiel 14:6 **Repent** and **turn** from all of your abominations
 Ezekiel 18:30 Repent and **turn** from your transgressions
 Ezekiel 18:32 God says, “**Turn** and live”
 Ezekiel 33:11 God begs us to **turn** from our wicked ways
 Hosea 12:6 **Turn** to God
 Hosea 6:1 **Return** unto the Lord

Isaiah 30:15 **Repentance**
 Isaiah 59:20 The Redeemer will come to those who **repent**
 Jeremiah 15:19 If you **repent**, I will restore you
 Jeremiah 3:1 **Return** to me
 Jeremiah 4:1 **Return** to me
 Job 34:33 Why do you refuse to **repent**?
 Job 36:10 God commands people to **repent**
 Joel 2:3 **Turn** unto the Lord
 Luke 13:3 Jesus said that you will perish unless you **repent**
 Luke 13:5 Jesus said that you will perish unless you **repent**
 Luke 15:10 There is rejoicing over one sinner who **repents**
 Luke 24:47 **Repentance** shall be preached among all nations
 Luke 3:3 John the Baptist preached **repentance**
 Luke 5:32 Sinners are called to **repentance**
 Mark 1:15 Jesus said **repent** and live
 Mark 1:4 John the Baptist preached **repentance**
 Mark 6:12 The disciples preached that men should **repent**
 Matthew 3:2 John the Baptist preached **repentance**
 Matthew 4:17 Jesus told people to **repent**
 Rev. 2:16 **Repent**
 Rev. 2:21 I gave her space to **repent** ... she repented not
 Rev. 2:5 **Repent**
 Rev. 3:19 So be earnest and **repent**
 Rev. 3:3 Obey and **repent**
 Zechariah 1:3 **Turn** unto me

Verses showing God wants us to seek Him

(Why would God instruct the world to seek Him if He can't be found?)

1 Chron 16:11 **Seek** His face always
 1 Chron 28:9 If you **seek** Him, He will be found by you
 1 Chron. 2:8,9 If you **seek** Him, He will be found
 2 Chron 19:3 **Set your heart** on seeking the Lord

2 Chron. 15:2 If you *seek* Him, He will be found
 2 Chron. 7:14 *Seek* my face
 Acts 15:17 That the remnant of men *seek* the Lord
 Amos 5:4 *Seek* me and live
 Amos 5:6 *Seek* the Lord and live
 Colossians 3:1 *Seek* those things that are above
 Deut. 4:29 *Seek* the Lord
 Hebrews 11:6 God rewards those who earnestly *seek* Him
 Isaiah 55:6 *Seek* the Lord while He may be found
 Jeremiah 29:13 You will *seek* me and find me when you seek me with all of your heart
 Job 8:5 *Seek* God early
 Lam. 3:25 God is good to those who *seek* Him
 Luke 11:9,10 *Seek* and you will find
 Luke 12:31 *Seek* His kingdom
 Matthew 6:33 *Seek* God's kingdom
 Proverbs 8:17 Those who *seek* Me will find Me
 Psalm 105:4 *Seek* His face always
 Psalm 119:2 Blessed are those who *seek* Him with all their hearts
 Psalm 27:8 God said *seek* my face
 Psalm 69:32 The heart that *seeks* God shall live
 Zephaniah 2:3 *Seek* the Lord

Verses showing that people can be led astray from God and salvation

(This shows that our destiny has not been pre-planned.)

1 Cor. 12:2 The people were led *astray* by mute idols
 1 John 2:26 False teachers were trying to lead the people *astray*
 1 John 3:7 The people were warned about being led *astray*
 1 Kings 11:3 Solomon was led *astray* by multiple wives
 2 Chron. 21:11 Jehoram lead his people *astray*
 2 Chron. 33:9 Manasseh greatly led his people *astray*
 2 Kings 21:9 Manasseh led his people *astray*
 Amos 2:4 The influence of their ancestors led them *astray*

Deut 13:13 Wicked people have led people *astray*
 Deut 17:17 Leaders are warned that multiple wives can lead them *astray*
 Ezekiel 13:10 Bad counsel led God's people *astray*
 Galatians 2:13 The Jews' hypocrisy led Barnabas *astray*
 Hosea 4:12 A spirit of prostitution led them *astray*
 Isaiah 3:12 Bad guides can lead you *astray*
 Isaiah 9:16 People can be *mised* by a bad guide
 Jeremiah 23:13 False prophets have led God's people *astray*
 Jeremiah 23:32 God's people are led *astray* by reckless lies
 Jeremiah 50:6 Bad shepherds have led God's people *astray*
 Micah 3:5 Prophets led the people *astray*
 Prov. 22:24,25 A bad friend may lead you *astray*
 Proverbs 10:17 An undisciplined person can lead others *astray*
 Proverbs 12:26 Bad friendship can lead a person *astray*
 Proverbs 13:20 Companions of a fool are *destroyed*.
 Proverbs 18:24 Wrong companionship can lead to a person's *ruin*
 Proverbs 20:1 Wine can lead a person *astray*
 Proverbs 7:21 Pervasive words can lead a person *astray*
 Rev. 12:9 Satan leads people *astray*

Verses showing Israel was a stiff-neck people *(This shows people can reject God's plan.)*

2 Chronicles 30:8
 2 Chronicles 36:13
 2 Kings 17:14
 Acts 7:51
 Deuteronomy 10:16
 Deuteronomy 31:27
 Deuteronomy 9:6,13
 Exodus 32:9
 Exodus 33:3,5

Exodus 34:9
Jeremiah 17:23
Jeremiah 19:15
Jeremiah 7:26
Nehemiah 9:16,17,29
Proverbs 29:1

Verses showing Israel was a stubborn people

(This shows people can reject God's plan.)

Deuteronomy 2:30
Deuteronomy 21:18,20
Deuteronomy 9:27
Ezekiel 2:4
Hosea 4:16
Isaiah 46:12
Isaiah 48:4
Jeremiah 11:8
Jeremiah 13:10
Jeremiah 16:12
Jeremiah 18:12
Jeremiah 23:17
Jeremiah 3:17
Jeremiah 7:24
Jeremiah 9:14
Judges 2:19
Leviticus 26:19
Mark 16:14
Mark 3:5
Psalm 78:8
Psalm 81:12
Romans 2:5

Why, Then, do some still Believe in Selective Salvation?



Chapter: 14.19

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In the previous chapter we looked at over 300 verses that say salvation is open to everyone. These verses use words like *all*, *everyone*, *whoever*, *world*, etc. If the Bible clearly states the gift of salvation is open to all, why do some Christians believe otherwise? Why do some denominations make selective salvation a major component of their belief system?

When I was first introduced to this doctrine, I couldn't understand how a person couldn't see this contradiction. I couldn't understand how a person could say salvation is offered to "everyone" and still be able to say that salvation is *not* offered to everyone.

I would show them the verses that clearly state God is offering salvation to everyone and they would tell me there is no contradiction. They would say these verses are completely consistent with selective salvation. This totally baffled me. I wondered if they were trying to be deceptive or if they just could not see the contradiction?

Their explanation was quite simple. They believe all of these verses that say "all," "whoever," etc., are only referring to the elect. For example, a verse that says, "Christ died for all" actually is to be viewed as saying "Christ died for all *of the elect*." Another example is 1 John 2:1 that says, "If anyone sins, he has an advocate with the Father." They say this verse should be viewed as, "If anyone *of the elect* sins, he has an advocate with the Father."

I have discovered it didn't matter how many verses I had that said salvation is offered to everyone, they still come back with the same reply. I soon realized an additional 5,000 verses would not make any difference. They would view all of these verses as referring to the elect. In fact, an additional 5,000 verses would only bolster their position. They would say, "See, we have 5,000 verses supporting our position."



To be honest, I was very shocked when I first heard this explanation. It reminded me of President Clinton's infamous impeachment testimony, "It all

depends on what the definition of ‘is’ is.” I believe there are many Selective Salvationists who are not being totally honest about this issue.



Bill Clinton testifying before the Grand Jury

I want to emphasize that this type of deception is not limited to Selective Salvationists. All Christians have the potential to distort the facts to make their position look more favorable. All Christians have the ability to selectively ignore verses that don't align with their theological stance. We all, including myself, must guard against this problem.



Are Selective Salvationists simply ignoring the facts or do some really not see the contradictions?

Although I believe there are many Selective Salvationists who deliberately ignore verses that contradict their beliefs, I have come to the conclusion

there are some who actually don't see a contradiction. The question, of course, is why don't they see the contradiction? Basically, it boils down to a flawed approach to Biblical interpretation. They have started out with the premise, "Since I know selective salvation is true, these verses must be interpreted this way."

This approach to interpretation is incredibly flawed. All data must be interpreted on its own merit. Data should always be interpreted independently of currently held beliefs. New discoveries should be investigated without the pressures of "political correctness."

It was this flawed approach to interpreting data that led to centuries of errors, bondage, and murder. For several thousand years mankind believed the world was flat and at the center of the universe. Even after there was substantial evidence to prove otherwise, these myths hung on. These myths could have been buried centuries earlier except for the fact people used the above flawed approach to interpretation.



If people still believed the world to be flat, this is how our high-tech society might draw it

They would say, "Since we know the earth is flat, the new discoveries should be interpreted as" It didn't matter that there is substantial data to disprove these myths. These leaders knew their views were correct, so any facts contradicting these views were altered until they conformed to their own views.

We should always let the data speak for itself and not put our own slant on it. If the evidence points

us in a different direction, we must follow it. Look at the following chapter (*Interpreting the Bible*) for more information on this subject.

All verses must be looked at individually (in the context of the surrounding verses) and its interpretation must be based on its own merit. It is wrong to look at a verse and say, “Since I know a certain doctrine is true, this conflicting verse must be interpreted this way.” Unfortunately, Selective Salvationists have made this violation. They have taken the stance that since Selective Salvation is true, this is the only logical explanation for these verses.

Even the founding fathers of selective salvation made this mistake. The president of Synod of Dort said, “The scriptures must be interpreted according to the catechisms and confessions.” (Harrison, *Beginnings of Arminianism*, p. 87.) Francois Windel acknowledges of Calvin, “Truth compels us to admit frankly that, despite all his fidelity to the Bible, he seems to have been searching the Scriptures more frequently for text to support a doctrine accepted in advance, than to derive doctrine from the Scriptures.” (Wendel, *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thoughts*, p. 359)

In the following chapter (*Does “All” mean All?*) we will take a closer look at the verses that say salvation is offered to all.

Interpreting the Bible



Chapter: 14.20

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In a previous chapter we saw the problems with not interpreting the Bible correctly. We saw the importance of interpreting data on its own merit. Data should always be interpreted independently of currently held beliefs. It doesn't matter how substantiated or universally accepted a belief may be, new discoveries should always be interpreted independently of pre-conceived ideas.

We saw how this flawed approach has led to many problems. We saw how the *flat-world* belief could easily have been disproved if people interpreted new discoveries independently of currently-held beliefs.

We must be very careful in the way we interpret the Bible. All verses must be looked at individually and in the context of their surrounding verses. We cannot arbitrarily change the meaning of words. If a word has a certain standard meaning, you cannot deviate from the standard meaning unless the surrounding context provides compelling reasons to interpret it differently.

Yes, it is true there are some verses that have a meaning different from what you would get from a

casual reading. For example, Psalms 116:15 says, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Although the verse appears to be talking about physical death, a review of the surrounding verses (12-14,17) shows it is talking about sacrificing; dying to your dreams and ambitions.



An artist's rendition of a person carried to Heaven after death

To help you understand the basic rules of interpreting the Bible, we will look at the process you should go through when studying the subject of selective salvation. This type of study is called a *Topical Study*.

The first thing you should do (after bathing this project in prayer) is make a list of the verses that deal with this subject. You should collect verses from books that both support and oppose this subject. You should also search a concordance (or computerized Bible) for words relating to this subject.

Once a list of verses has been collected, you should sit down and study them individually. Each verse should be interpreted entirely on its own merit and its surrounding context. You should make notes on your master study sheet stating what the verse (and its surrounding context) appears to be saying.

The study of selective salvation will probably take a long time because there are several hundred verses relating to this subject. Once you have interpreted each individual verse in light of its surrounding context, you must interpret it in light of the whole

Bible. On large studies such as this, it might be helpful to also include a quick tally of the number of verses that seem to support and oppose selective salvation.

Once you have obtained an overall view of the main thrust of the Bible, you need to go back to the problem verses (the ones that appear to be “contradictory”). You need to check and see if there are some logical explanations to the contradictions you might have missed.

Once you have reviewed the problem verses, you should read what other people have said about these verses. I realize that some Christians feel we should never look at outside sources for clarification; we should use only the Bible. While I believe we should use only the Bible for the first part of our research, I think it is important to finish the research by studying other people’s thoughts. They may be able to point out some things you have missed.

By this time, most of your research should be done. At this point, you should have all of the information you need to make a final conclusion. Obviously, you will probably never be able to clarify all of the problem verses. Nevertheless, an overriding theme should have emerged. Your doctrinal stance should be based on the strength of the evidence.

Does “All” mean All

ALL

Chapter: 14.21

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As mentioned in a previous chapter, Selective Salvationists have said the verses that say salvation is offered to all don't actually mean salvation is offered to the entire world. To prove their point, they quote Romans 3:23 (“For *all* have sinned ...”). They say since Jesus had never sinned, the word “all” doesn't actually mean all. They say the word “all” can actually be much smaller than 100%.

The above interpretation highlights the importance of looking at the context (surrounding verses) of a verse. The surrounding verses (v. 22,24,25) present Jesus as the solution to the sin problem. Since Jesus is proclaimed to be the solution, it is obvious He is not part of the problem. Therefore, the *reasonable* interpretation is the word “all” means the *entire* world excluding Jesus. The surrounding verses give us the authority to exclude Jesus from the list.

Although I believe the 100 plus verses that say salvation is offered to “all” (etc.) is sufficient proof that open salvation is true, there appears to be a need for more proof. What we need are verses that explicitly say salvation is offered to the *whole world*. Verses like these should settle the question

once and for all because there can be only one type of interpretation for them.

Fortunately, there are verses that say salvation is offered to the whole world. In fact, since there are over a dozen of these verses, you would think this would be the end of the argument. Incredibly, Selective Salvationists still say these verses apply only to the elect.

Unfortunately for the Selective Salvationists, this type of interpretation does not work with many of these verses. Many of these verses don't make sense when you apply this type of interpretation to them. Listed below are a couple of examples.

- John says in 1 John 2:2, “And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” According to Selective Salvationists, this verse should read “And He is the propitiation for the sins of the *elect*, and not only for the elect, but also for the sins of the *elect*.”

This, of course, does not make any sense. Selective Salvationists are now in a bind. Either they have to hold to an interpretation that doesn't make sense or they have to admit that this verse is actually saying that Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. If this is the case, selective salvation cannot be true.

- John 3:16 (“For God so loved the world”) is another example of the problems Selective Salvationists have when reinterpreting the word “world.” They say the word “world” is only referring to the elect. However, this interpretation causes problems in the surrounding verses. In verses 16-19, the word “world” is used five times. Verse 19 says, “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.” Here, the word “world” cannot be referring to only the elect; it has to be referring to the whole world.

Listed below are verses that say Jesus died for the world

1 John 2:1,2 Jesus didn't die only for our sins, but for the sins of the *whole world*

1 John 4:14 Jesus is the Savior of the *world*

1 Timothy 1:15 Christ Jesus came into the *world* to save *sinners*

2 Cor. 5:14, 19 Christ died for *all* and He wants to bring the *world* to Himself

2 Cor. 5:19 God was reconciling the *world* to himself in Christ

John 1:29 Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the *world*.

John 16:8 He will convict the *world* of guilt

John 17:23 Jesus asked God to let the *world* know He sent Jesus and *loved them* as much as He loved Jesus

John 3:16 For God so loved the *world*.

John 3:17 God did not send the Son to condemn the *world* ... but to save the *world* through Him.

John 4:42 Jesus is the Savior of the *world*.

John 6:51 This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the *world*.

John 8:12 I am the light of the *world*

John 9:5 I am the light of the *world*

An interesting side story about the meaning of words



One of my jobs at the prison where I work is to strip search prisoners coming in from off the streets. When a prisoner steps into the room, I tell him he has to take everything off for the strip search. About 40% of the time the prisoner will strip down to his T-shirt and long underwear. After several seconds of my staring at his face, he will say, "What, you want me to take more off?"

I'll respond by saying, "Everything must come off."

He will strip down to his underwear and socks and then stop. Again, I say, "Everything means everything."

He will then take off his socks and say, "Underwear too?"

Again I will say, "Everything means everything."

What was the source of this confusion? Did he not understand what was being asked of him? Was there an understandable reason to interpret my instructions differently from the obvious interpretation? No, of course not. The meaning of my instructions was plain and simple. The prisoner deliberately chose to ignore the obvious intent of my instructions in the hopes I wouldn't make him strip all the way.

I have found most of the confusion over "interpretation" of the Bible doesn't come from a lack of understanding of what's being said. It is usually an issue of the person not wanting to accept the clear message. He deliberately altered the meaning to conform to his doctrinal stance or agenda.

How Could God Make it any Clearer?



Chapter: 14.22

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In previous chapters we looked at the verses that said salvation is offered to the world. The Bible uses words like “all,” “everyone,” and “whoever.” In response, Selective Salvationists say those verses apply only to the elect. For example, a verse that says, “Salvation is offered to all” should actually be viewed as “Salvation is offered to all *of the elect.*” Selective Salvationists justify this type of interpretation by saying since they know selective salvation is true, this is the only way these verses could be interpreted.

Our first priority and obligation, as discussed in previous chapters, is to rightly interpret the Word of God. Defending a system of theology should never be our goal. We also discussed the importance of

interpreting each piece of information based on its own merit, not on our preconceived ideas. As an example of this, we looked at the former beliefs that the world was flat. We saw, although the current discoveries showed the world was round, that the leaders refused to accept it for centuries. These leaders *knew* the world was flat and interpreted all of the new discoveries accordingly.

In my opinion, the Bible clearly states salvation is offered to every person in the world; no one is excluded. I do not believe anyone is pre-selected to go to Heaven or Hell. I believe God wants everyone to go to Heaven.

Let’s say, for the sake of argument, God wants 100% of the world’s population to go to Heaven. How could He make it any clearer than what is already presented in the Bible? What would God have to change to show salvation is open to all people? The Bible already says salvation is offered to everyone. The Bible already says salvation is offered to the world. The Bible already says God does not want anyone to perish. The Bible already says God is greatly troubled because some people are not going to Heaven. What else could the Bible say?

This is powerful proof the doctrine of selective salvation is false. If God wanted to inequitably establish that selective salvation is true, He would have clearly stated, “God died only for the elect.” Instead, Selective Salvationists have to re-interpret hundreds of verses to conform them to their view.

In an earlier chapter I quoted many Selective Salvationists saying the doctrine of selective salvation is next to the gospel in importance. In fact, some of them have said selective salvation *is the gospel* in its purest form. If this is true, the doctrine of selective salvation should have been clearly presented in the Bible.

Our former church (where I had been a member for 33 years) had a long history of teaching open salvation. Our doctrinal statement, which was contained in our Church Constitution, clearly stated

this fact. There was nothing in it that supported selective salvation.

One day the pastor started teaching selective salvation. Multiple sermons were made on this subject. When we approached the Board about how this contradicted the Church Constitution, we were greatly surprised. The pastor said selective salvation was completely consistent with our doctrinal statement. We countered by saying the doctrinal statement clearly says, “all,” “whoever,” and “everyone.” His response was simple, “Those statements refer only to the elect, not the whole world.”

We asked him, “Let’s say, for the sake of argument, our church only believes in open salvation and they want to make a doctrinal statement that clearly reflected this. How would we change our doctrinal statement from what it currently says?” He, of course, couldn’t provide an answer.

It is important to clearly say what you mean. If a person moves into a town and is looking for a church to attend, he would look at the doctrinal statements to see what each of the churches believes. It’s a straightforward process. If he wants a church that teaches selective salvation, he would use this document to direct him.

If a church believes in selective salvation, it would be very easy for them to say, “Certain people have been arbitrarily selected to go to Heaven and the remainder have been selected to go to Hell.” Likewise, if a church believes salvation is offered to the whole world, it would be easy for them to say, “Salvation is offered to everyone.” These doctrines are so different from each other there is no need for any confusion.

The church doctrinal statement should be clear and straightforward. There should be no reason for fancy or creative interpretations. Likewise, the Bible should be this way. I don’t think God ever intended us to be fancy and creative in our interpretation of the Bible. Remember the old adage, “The main things are the plain things and the plain things are the main things.”

Does it all Add Up?



Chapter: 14.23

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I have found people are often careless in their business dealings. Either they are too trusting or too lazy to check out all of the relevant facts in a situation. They don't try to verify that everything adds up. They blindly assume everything being presented to them is correct. Although I have mentioned this several times before, I'm going to mention it again: Never assume what I'm saying in this book is correct. Take the time to check it out for yourself.

There is an old adage, "Let the buyer beware." Everyone has an agenda; some are honorable and others are not. When someone is trying to sell you something, be careful not to blindly accept what they are telling you. Do your homework. You need to ask questions and verify what you have been told. Don't automatically assume what the salesman is showing you is actually what you have been looking for. Seldom will a salesman voluntarily tell you about the problems and deficits of the item you are looking at.

Anyone who has shopped for a cell phone knows how difficult a task this can be. There are dozens of companies, and each company has a wide

variety of plans. Some companies literally have hundreds of plans to choose from.

On top of this confusion, most companies have obscure rules that can cost you hundreds of dollars. It is easy to get hit with large phone bills simply because you incorrectly assumed certain things were covered.

Most companies have brochures explaining each of their plans. If you carefully read the fine print you would find most of the things you need to know. One of the national companies I was looking at had a notable absence of specifics. It was very difficult to determine what was and wasn't covered with each plan. The only way you could find out anything was by asking a salesman. Unfortunately, I kept getting conflicting information from the different salesmen.



Finally, I was able to talk to the manager of the region. When I asked him about the absence of documentation, he was surprised I even cared. He was rather put out that I wanted to know exactly

what the plans covered. When I pressed him on the absence of documentation, he said, “They run so many different promotions, it would be difficult to try to keep them all in print.” He wasn’t impressed when I told him all of the other national companies have been able to do it.

The thing I found most disturbing in my search for a cell phone was the phrase, “I don’t know. I’ve never been asked that before.” Many of my questions that prompted this response were basic questions everyone should have been asking. These were issues that could easily cost people hundreds of dollars. I find it scary so many people are blindly opening up cell phone accounts without knowing the important facts.

As Christians, we should carefully evaluate all of our doctrinal positions. We should make sure everything adds up and fits in with the rest of the Bible. I have found many Christians take the same approach to their doctrinal stance as people do with their cell phone plans. Christians really need to be more careful. They need to verify that everything adds up.

A humorous story



Following is a humorous story that shows the importance of making sure everything adds up. A man was injured at work and put the following narrative on his medical insurance claim:

I was hired to repair a chimney at a five story building. When I was finished with the repairs, I had about 500 pounds of bricks left over. Since I did not want to carry those bricks down by hand, I decided to hoist them down in a bucket.

I attached the bucket to one end of the rope and ran the rope through a pulley. The other end of the rope was attached to a pole near the sidewalk. After I loaded the 500 pounds of bricks into the bucket, I went downstairs to hoist them down. To ensure I had a good grip on the rope, I wrapped it around my hand a couple of times.

In box 4 of this application, you will note that I listed my weight as being 150 pounds. Since the 500 pounds of bricks weighed more than my 150 pounds, I was pulled upwards. As the bucket came down and I flew up, we met at the halfway point. This accounts for my broken arm listed in box 10a. As I reached the top, my hand jammed into the pulley. This accounts for my broken fingers listed in box 10b.

At the same time, the bucket of bricks hit the ground and shattered. Now the bucket weighed only 50 pounds. As noted in box 4, I weighed 150 pounds. As a result, I started to fall. As we got to the halfway point, I met the bucket rising up. This accounts for my broken knee listed in box 10c.

When I reached the bottom, I landed on the pile of bricks. This accounts for my broken leg and sprained back (listed in box 10d and 10e). At this point, I let go of the rope and the 50 pound bucket fell down and landed on my head. This accounts for my concussion listed in box 10f.

Are People Perishing Despite God's Desire for their Salvation?



Chapter: 14.24

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If the doctrine of selective salvation is true, we have to conclude everyone who is supposed to get saved will get saved. No one is unnecessarily going to Hell. Everyone who God wants to go to Heaven will make it to Heaven.

If all Christians stopped witnessing and supporting missionary efforts, there would not be any decrease in the number of people going to Heaven. Article 11 and "Error VI" (Canons of Dort) says all of the elect will make it to Heaven. None of the elect will go to Hell.

Is this what the Bible teaches, or does the Bible teach people are going to Hell against God's desire? *If the Bible teaches people are going to*

Hell against God's desire, selective salvation cannot be true. It would be a contradiction if God chose a select few to go to Heaven while desiring the salvation of the remainder. Following are some verses that show people are perishing despite God's desire:

Hosea 4:6 For a lack of knowledge, my people perish

Matthew 23:37 Jesus said He longed to gather the Jews to Himself as a hen gathers her chicks, but the Jews were not willing

Luke 13:34 Similar to the verse above

Luke 13:3 "Unless you repent, you too will perish"

Luke 13:5 Similar to the verse above

Ezek. 3:16-19 We are to warn the wicked. If we don't, he will die for his sins, but God will hold us accountable for his blood. If we do warn the wicked and he does not turn, he will die from his sins, but we won't be held accountable.

Ezekiel 33:1-9 Similar to the verse above

Ezekiel 33:5 This verse says if a person heeds a warning, he will be saved. If he doesn't heed the warning, however, he will die in his sin. This person does have a choice.

Luke 10:2 Jesus said the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few

Matthew 9:37 Similar to the verse above

Ezekiel 18:23 "Do I take pleasure in the death of the wicked?" declares the Sovereign Lord. "Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their

ways and live?"

Ezekiel 18:32 "For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, "declares the Sovereign Lord. "Repent and Live!"

Ezekiel 33:11 "As surely as I live," declares the Sovereign Lord, "I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways. Why will you die, O house of Israel?"

Jeremiah 8:20 "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

James 5:20 "Remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins."

1 Cor. 15:34 Some have not the knowledge of God and this is our shame

Matthew 23:13 The Pharisees had "shut up Heaven." Not only were they not going to Heaven themselves, they were blocking others from entering

Matthew 19:24 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to go to Heaven

2 Peter 3:9 God does not want any to perish, but wants all to come to repentance

Matthew 18:14 God is not willing that any of these little ones be lost

John 4:35 Don't say there are four months to the harvest. Look, the fields are ripe for the harvest.

Luke 10:2 The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few

Matthew 9:37 Same as above

Luke 12:47-48 Those who don't know God's will are still punished

Rom. 1:18-2:1 All sinners are without excuse and destined to Hell

Romans 2:12 Those who sinned without the law will perish without the law

In the section *What about Those "Without the Gospel?"* I cover this issue in great detail. (This section is 29 chapters long.) I show how people are needlessly going to Hell. There is substantial evidence proving the number of new Christians in an area is directly related to the number of strong Christians in that area. Areas with a large number of solid Christians have a large number of new believers, and areas with little or no gospel witness have few or no new Christians.

Exposure to the gospel is so important that children from Christian homes are much more likely to become Christians than children from atheistic homes. In fact, children from solid and mature Christian homes are more likely to become Christians than children from weak or inconsistent Christian homes.

Once again, as I said before, if people are going to Hell against God's desire, then the doctrine of selective salvation cannot be true. This issue of exposure needs to be seriously addressed by Selective Salvationists.

Why did Jesus Cry out for Their Forgiveness?



Chapter: 14.25

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In the previous chapter (*Are People Perishing Despite God's Desire for their Salvation?*) we saw several passages in the Bible that said people are needlessly going to Hell. Many of these passages showed God desiring the salvation of people who are going to Hell. The crucifixion of Jesus on the cross provides us another example.

When Jesus was on the cross, He cried out, "Father, forgive them" (Luke 23:34). To the honest observer the meaning of this plea is obvious. Jesus was asking God the Father to forgive all of the people who were involved in His crucifixion.

Either Jesus' plea was answered or it wasn't. If it was answered, then 100% of the stiff-necked mur-

derers became believers. If His plea wasn't answered, then there were people who went to Hell even though Jesus desired their salvation.

If it is true people went to Hell despite the desire of Jesus, selective salvation can't be true. A main theme of selective salvation is God deliberately chose to send certain people to Hell on an arbitrary basis. It would be a contradiction of selective salvation for God to send these people to Hell and still desire their deliverance.

What is “Election” and “Predestination?”



One of the elect angels

Chapter: 14.26

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What is the Bible talking about when it uses the terms “election” and “predestination?” Although some Christians use these terms interchangeably, they are actually two different concepts and I will cover them separately.

In summary, election means a person has been chosen for a special service. Predestination means God has predetermined that those who become Christians will have certain attributes, such as being “conformed to the likeness of His Son.” Neither of these terms (election and predestination) have anything to do with salvation.

When the Bible says a person is “elected,” it means he has been chosen for something special. As you

will soon see, when a person is elected, he is not chosen for salvation, but is chosen to do some special service. The Bible talks about five groups that have been elected to do a specific service. They are:

Nation of Israel	Deut. 7:6,7 Rom. 9:4
Jesus	1 Pet. 2:4,6* ¹ Luke 9:35* ¹ Luke 23:35* ¹
The church	Mt. 24:22,24,31 Mk 13:20,22,27
The 144,000	Rev. 7:4* ² Rev. 17:14* ³
Angels	1 Tim. 5:21

Election is talking about service, not salvation. In fact, it couldn't be talking about salvation because Jesus didn't need to be saved, nor did the angels. Besides, not all of the Israelites were true believers. Therefore, when the nation of Israel was elected, they obviously were not elected (or chosen) for salvation. According to Article 17, (Canons of Dort) God's election is the same in the New Testament as it was in the Old Testament. Therefore, if the election of the Nation of Israel is talking about salvation, all of the present day Jews should be believers. This, of course, is not the case.

Predestination simply means something has been predetermined to take place in the future. Although most Christians think of it in connection with the Bible, this concept is also found in the secular world. For example, anyone who becomes a policeman is predestined to have certain attributes (such as the authority to arrest people). Even Aldous Huxley uses the concept in his book *Brave New World*. As you can see, the word predestination does not need to have some mystical or divine implication.

Just as man can predetermine certain things to take place in the future, so can God. So, what kind of things did God predestine to take place in the future? Did He predetermine to arbitrarily send

people to Heaven and Hell? No. God has predetermined that those who become believers will obtain certain attributes. For example, God has predetermined everyone who becomes a believer will “be conformed to the likeness of his Son” (Romans 8:29, 30) and will be “holy and blameless in His sight” (Ephesians 1:4,5). Predestination talks about what will take place *after* a person becomes a Christian.



The recent terrorist attacks on the United States provide us a good example of this. Many of us assume the U.S. Constitution protects everyone residing in the United States. This is not true; only American citizens are protected by the Constitution. A foreigner living in our country does not have the same legal guarantees we take for granted. This is the reason why interrogation techniques are different for many of the terrorist suspects.

It's kind of like being a Roman citizen 2,000 years ago. A Roman citizen (in the Roman empire) had to be treated differently from everyone else. They enjoyed many legal privileges that made life much easier and safer. This is the reason why people would pay enormous amounts of money in order to purchase their Roman citizenship.



Fortunately, American citizenship is much cheaper. Once a person becomes an American citizen, he is immediately entitled to many privileges including being protected by the Constitution. Therefore, we can say it is predetermined (or predestined) that anyone who becomes an American citizen will be protected by the Constitution. This predestination has nothing to do with their becoming American citizens; it has everything to do with what happens *after* they become citizens. Likewise, predestination in the Bible has nothing to do with a person becoming a Christian; it has everything to do with what happens to a person *after* he becomes a Christian.

I want to be as honest and objective about this issue as much as possible. There are some verses dealing with predestination that could be interpreted

either way. A person could point to these verses and say, “Here is proof God has predetermined certain people to be saved.” Other people, however, can say with just as much authority, “These verses are describing what God has predetermined will happen to *anyone* who becomes a believer.” Since the Bible clearly and overwhelmingly teaches that God is inviting everyone to accept His pardon, I have to conclude these confusing verses do not teach selective salvation.

Footnotes:

*1 The words in these verses were translated “chosen” (NIV), but are the same Greek word as “elect,” (*eklektos*). The Strong’s Concordance number for this word is 1588

*2 Revelation 7:4 uses the word “*sealed*” and many scholars interpret this as chosen or elect.

*3 Some people say the elect mentioned in Revelation 17:14 is referring to all saints, not just the 144,000.

Does a Sovereign God do Whatever He Wants?



Chapter: 14.27

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God Almighty, by the very definition, is sovereign. An almighty God can do whatever He wants. God Almighty answers to no one and does not have to give an account of His actions to anyone.

While it is true a sovereign God *can* do whatever he likes, it is not true that he does everything. A

person's actions are reflective of his nature. A person acts in a way that's consistent with his personality. A loving person will act one way and an unloving person will act the opposite.

To illustrate, let's consider the treatment of a pet dog. For the most part, the owner of a dog is "sovereign" over his dog (this is especially true in undeveloped parts of the world). For the most part, the owner can treat his dog any way he wants and his actions will go unchallenged. Yet, the owner's treatment of his dog will be consistent with his nature. A good owner would never mistreat his dog even though his "sovereignty" gives him this freedom. Contrary to what some people think, sovereignty does not mean a person has the freedom to do whatever he wants. The person's nature dictates the "limits" of his freedom.



God Almighty is also bound by these "limits." God Almighty will never do anything that would contradict His nature. Since God is righteous, just, and fair, He will never do anything that is unrighteous, unjust, or unfair. His actions are motivated by love, compassion, and tenderness.

Yes, it is true God could choose to treat people the same way Saddam Hussein does. He could be mean, abusive, and unjust. However, acting this way would mean He was not righteous, just, or loving.

When you think about it, we are very fortunate God is not like Saddam Hussein. Imagine what eternity

would be like if God was an evil person. It is bad enough thinking about how close Hitler came to ruling the world; think about what it would be like if Satan had sovereign control over everything.



Let's go back to the subject of selective salvation. Would God arbitrarily select certain people to go to Hell with absolutely no chance of redemption or deliverance? Would God arbitrarily sentence a person to eternal punishment even though he had not done anything to deserve Hell? (Remember, the choice of sending a person to Hell was not based on any quality of the person being selected. This death sentence was issued long before the person was born or even committed his first sin.) I believe this would be totally inconsistent with everything we know about God. I believe this completely defies God's just, righteous, and loving nature.

The Sovereignty of God



Chapter: 14.28

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God Almighty, by His very nature, is sovereign. However, we saw in a previous chapter, a sovereign God will not do anything contrary to His nature. We know God's treatment of us will be consistent with His nature.

Although God will not violate His nature, He is still sovereign. He is still God Almighty and Lord of all. How, then, does God's sovereignty tie in with our free will?

As we will soon see, God (out of His sovereignty) has chosen to give us a free will. He has given us the ability to make choices. Does this free will mean God is not sovereign? Does this free will mean God is not in complete control? As you will soon see, God has demonstrated His greatness by giving us a free will while still maintaining complete control.

Mankind has a free will and an ability to choose. We do learn (at least some of us) from our mistakes. Selective Salvationists have taken the extreme position of saying mankind does not even have a free will or a choice; all of our actions have been dictated by God. Of course, this cannot be

true because this would mean God forced us to sin. If we are forced to sin we cannot be held accountable for our sins. God cannot rightfully send us to Hell for something we are forced to do.

God, in His sovereignty, has given us a free will and the ability to make choices. This free will does not take away from His sovereignty nor does it mean He has lost control. The chapter *The Purpose of Choice* examines the concept of choice in greater detail.

God has a master plan and He has determined certain things will take place. These things will take place and no one, including Satan, can alter these events. As a tribute to God's awesome power and control, He can blend our free will into His master plan. God's master plan, however, never involves a person's free will to accept or reject salvation.

Although some of God's plans are set in stone, there are other parts of His plan that can be altered. Following are some examples:

- God was going to destroy Nineveh because of their great sin. Yet, when Nineveh repented, God altered His plan to accommodate this repentance (Jonah 3:10).
- When God was punishing Israel for three days because of King David's sin, He stopped before the three days were complete because He was grieved (2 Sam. 24:15, 16).
- God told Moses He was going to destroy the Nation of Israel because of their sins, but changed His mind at the request of Moses (Ex. 32:9-14).
- God was going to kill Moses because his child was not circumcised, but changed His mind after Zipporah circumcised the child (Ex. 4:24-26).
- Elisha instructed Jehoash (King of Israel) to take some arrows and strike the ground with them. (This was a test to see how God was

going to help him in a future battle.) Elisha was angry the king struck the ground only three times. Elisha said if he had struck the ground five or six times, He would have defeated Aram. God's response was based on the King's actions (2 King 13:14-19).

- God was going to take the Israelites into the Promised Land, but changed His mind because of their sins. He took their children in 40 years later.
- Hell was created for Satan and his fallen angels, but God adjusted it to accommodate humans (Matthew 25:41).
- In the story of the widow and the unjust judge, God was saying He would adjust His plans to accommodate the consistent and persistent prayers of a believer (Luke 18:1-8).
- God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was based on how wicked they had become (Genesis 18:20).
- Abraham pleaded with God to spare Sodom and Gomorrah. God readjusted His plan six times based on Abraham's requests. God said He would not destroy these cities if there were 50 righteous people. He then reduced it to 45, then 40, then 30, then 20, and finally 10 (Genesis 18:23-33).
- God held up destroying the Land of Canaan for 400 years (Genesis 15:13-16).
- God was going to destroy the Nation of Israel in the wilderness because of the golden calf, but changed His mind at the request of Moses (Exodus 32:9).
- God was going to allow only three of the original adults into the Promised Land (Moses, Joshua, and Caleb). However, when Moses sinned at Kadesh (striking the rock to obtain water), God changed His mind and refused to let Moses go in. (Numbers 20:12)



Moses striking the rock to bring forth water

For more examples of God changing His mind, look at the chapter *Can God be Moved by Our Sins and Repentance?* Besides providing more verses showing God changing His mind, it also provides verses showing God can be grieved by our actions, moved by our requests, provoked to anger and jealousy. Our actions do provoke a response from God. Not all of God's plans have been set in stone.

It is obvious from these verses some of God's plans can be altered by our actions. God knows the future and He uses this foreknowledge to blend complicated events together. He can even incorporate our blunders to fulfill His will. I believe God makes accommodations days, weeks, and even years in advance to compensate for our disobediences. For example, God knew Moses would resist the idea of speaking directly to Pharaoh. Therefore, before God even approached Moses, He prompted Aaron to go into the desert to meet Moses (Exodus 4:14).

Of course, there are always consequences when we do not follow God's instructions. God can blend our disobediences into His master plan, but our sins still produce repercussions. Some theologians

suggest Moses' reliance on Aaron caused people to look up to Aaron more than they should have, thus allowing him to assist in their folly of creating the golden calf (Exodus 32:9).



Aaron and the golden calf

Another example of God working in advance to compensate for someone's sin is the story of Esther. God's foreknowledge showed Him Haman would try to destroy the Jews. Therefore, a couple years earlier He allowed a Cinderella story to take place where a commoner (Esther) became the Queen. Esther was put in a position where she was able to intercede on behalf of the Jews. Her uncle, Mordecai, even commented on this by saying, "And who knows, but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14)

When God chose to use Abraham and Sarah, He knew what their failures would be. God knew Abraham would lie, calling his wife his sister. God knew they would doubt His promise of providing them a son, and He knew they would scheme to produce a child through Hagar. Yet God still used them. In fact, God used the problems that arose between Sarah and Hagar as a typology (or illustration) of the "two covenants" (Gal. 4:21-31).



Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar

Even before Jacob was conceived, God knew he would eventually turn his heart toward God. As a result, God chose to make him the father of the 12 tribes of Israel. Jacob, which means deceiver, lived up to his name. He schemed to gain the inheritance and birthright that belonged to the firstborn (Esau).

Sadly, Jacob didn't need to scheme to obtain these things. I believe if Jacob allowed God to do things *His* way, God would have provided Jacob the inheritance and birthright without his schemes and lies. I believe Jacob could have saved himself a great deal of heartache and pain if he was obedient and waited upon God. Of course, God used Jacob despite his sins, but Jacob's earlier years could have been an example of victory instead of an example of behavior to avoid.

Some may reject my observation and say, "If Jacob didn't deceive his father, he would not have run away to the land of Ur of Chaldeans. Therefore, he would not have married Leah and Rachel and, as a result, we would not have the 12 tribes of Israel." Part of this is probably true. However, can we actually say it was God's original desire to have Jacob commit polygamy and marry *both* Leah and Rachel (and their two handmaids)?

Remember, Jacob was tricked into marrying Leah (Genesis 29:22-28) and as a result, Leah never felt loved by Jacob (Genesis 29:31-34). Rachel's

infertility was a result of the rivalry between her and her sister (Genesis 29:31). Multiple “mothers” caused great tension between Joseph and his brothers. Jacob’s unhealthy favoritism toward Joseph was a result of this mess. Many theologians feel the deception of being tricked into marrying Leah was a consequence of Jacob’s life of deception.

I believe if Jacob had waited on the Lord, God would have provided him with a wife who would have borne him 12 sons. Just as Abraham sent a servant to Ur of Chaldeans to find a wife for Isaac (Genesis 24), it is very possible Isaac could have done the same for Jacob. It is also quite possible the woman brought back would have been Rachel.

When God elects (chooses) someone for a service, He is capable of blending in their good and bad decisions. Because of His foreknowledge, God can accomplish His ultimate goals despite our shortcomings. Our choices (resulting from our free will) will either display the benefits of waiting patiently on the Lord or display the consequences of doing things outside of God’s will. The choice is ours. Our lives can either end up victorious like Joseph, Samuel, and John the Baptist, or we can end up wasting most of our lives like King Saul, King Solomon, and Samson.

Some people will say since God chose to use a person to do a righteous deed, He must have also forced him to become a believer. I don’t think this is true. I believe God, through His foreknowledge, knows who will and won’t become believers. Based on this knowledge, I think God chose to use these people for specific tasks. The very fact some of these great leaders failed miserably is proof they were not forced to become believers. If God had forced them to become believers to carry out a certain task, I think God would have forced them to be successful all the way to the end.

These people still had a free will and a choice to follow God’s will or their own. As we can see, many of them made some bad decisions. Yet, God took these bad decisions and incorporated them

into His master plan. Did God force Joseph, Samuel, and John the Baptist to become believers and live very holy lives? No, of course not. They each could have chosen to do things differently, and God would have blended their lives into His master plan. He still would have used them, but their lives would have been powerful examples of what happens when you don’t follow God’s leading.

Yes, God is sovereign and He can do whatever He wants. One of the things He has chosen to do, out of His sovereignty, is to provide us a free will. This free will provides *us* a choice. God does not want anyone to perish, but wants everyone to be saved. There are no “chosen few.” He desires the love of everyone, even those who are currently without the gospel.

Failures of Great Leaders in the Bible



King David

Chapter: 14.29

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There are many people in the Bible who were used mightily of God. King David, Samuel, and John the Baptist are just a few. Selective Salvationists point to these people and say, “See, this is proof selective salvation is true. God had certain missions He wanted to accomplish, and He forced these people to carry out these tasks. Since most of these tasks involved these people being believers, God obviously had to force them to become believers.”

I discussed this issue in a previous chapter (*Sovereignty of God*) so I won't cover it again here. Yet, the lives of these great leaders are proof that selective salvation can't be true. If you study the Bible, you will find very few of these great people led consistent, pristine lives. Some of them made

some very significant blunders.

Following is a list of some of the believers who led consistent and faithful lives:

- Samuel
- Joseph
- Queen Esther
- Job
- John the Baptist
- Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (the three “asbestos children”)
- Daniel



Daniel in the Lions Den

Following is a list of some of the people who were less consistent and obedient

- King David
- King Saul
- King Solomon
- Adam and Eve
- Samson
- Moses
- Abraham
- Aaron
- Eli

- Lot
- Isaac
- Jacob
- Most of the 12 sons of Israel
- Many of the other Kings of Israel



Samson and Delilah

Let's assume for the moment selective salvation is true. All of these people were selected by God to do a great service. They were forced to become believers, and they were forced to do this service. If this were true, you would expect each of these people would have lived consistent, exemplary lives. You would not expect any of them to make any major blunders. This isn't, however, what we find. Many of them took their eyes off God and fell into deep sin. Many of these great leaders ended their lives out of fellowship with God.

God's Foreknowledge



The time machine

Chapter: 14.30

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Foreknowledge is the ability to know what will happen in the future. Apparently, being omniscient (knowing everything) is one of the side benefits of being God Almighty. Obviously, there is no way to explain how God can know the future. All I can say is our concept of time is completely irrelevant in eternity.

God is the Alpha and Omega; the beginning and the end. He is an eternal being who has never had a beginning and will never have an end. These concepts are totally beyond our comprehension. Following are some verses that talk about God's ability to know the future:

Isaiah 46:10 God "declares the ... things that are

not yet done."

Psalm 139:4 "Before a word is on my tongue, you know it completely."

Psalm 139:16 "Your eyes saw my unformed body."

Psalm 139:16 Our days "were written in Your book before one of them came to be."

1 John 3:20 God "knoweth all things."

John 21:17 Peter said, "Lord, you know all things."

Hebrews 4:13 "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

Isaiah 44:7 God is comparing Himself to idols and says, "Let him declare ... what is yet to come –yes, let him foretell what will come."

Isaiah 44:8 In reference to His prophecies, God says, "Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago?"

The extreme doctrines of both selective salvation and Arminianism have produced some unique views on the subject of God's foreknowledge. Selective Salvationists think the reason God knows what will happen in the future is because He *planned* it to happen that way. They do not believe He inherently knows what will happen in the future. They created this belief because it reinforces their doctrine of selective salvation.

This view of foreknowledge, of course, is not true. Just because God knows the outcome of a certain event doesn't mean He necessarily wants that outcome to take place. For example, He knows in advance you are going to commit a certain sin. Does God want you to commit that sin? No, of course not. If you want to say God planned every aspect of the future, you have to say God planned every one of your sins. This, of course, opens up a whole new set of problems.

Arminians, on the other hand, don't believe in God's foreknowledge. They say God's knowledge

of the future is only an educated guess based on human nature. They say since God has an exhaustive knowledge of the past and present, He is able to predict (prognosticate) what will happen in the future. They say God knows what people, particularly large groups of people, will do in any given set of circumstances. This view is also known as *presentism*, *neo-Arminianism*, or *free-will theism*.

Part of the reason Arminians take this unique position on foreknowledge is because it is a knee-jerk reaction to the doctrine of selective salvation. Their thought goes something like this: “God cannot have absolute sovereign control if He doesn’t know the future. Therefore, if He does not control the future, He can’t control who’s getting saved.”

This view on foreknowledge causes some serious problems in regard to the Biblical test of a true prophet. A key test of a true prophet is the accuracy of his predictions. The Bible says 100% of the prophet’s predictions must come true. It says a person is a false prophet if the accuracy of his predictions falls below 100%.

If God does not inherently know the future, there is no way to ensure the prophet’s predictions will be 100%. The prophet runs the risk of being stoned to death every time he makes a prophecy. If God tells a prophet to say, “Thus saith the Lord . . .” the prophet is delivering a promise from God. If the promise is not fulfilled, God becomes a liar. God, of course, cannot be holy and righteous if He is a liar.

The reason I bring up the issue of foreknowledge is because some Christians try to rationalize predestination with God’s foreknowledge. They find it inconceivable God would *arbitrarily* choose to send people to Heaven and Hell. They say His selection process must have something to do with His foreknowledge. They say God made His selection based on His knowledge of who will become repentant and humble in the future.

Although this approach to predestination is not

nearly as harsh as the other view, it still lacks scriptural support. There is nothing in the Bible that says God used His foreknowledge to select people for salvation. This approach is just a rationalization used to try to explain away a difficult subject.

The reason these Christians were forced to come up with an alternate view is because they started out with the false assumption that predestination is referring to salvation. If they had realized predestination has nothing to do with salvation, they wouldn’t have needed to try to explain it away.

The Canons of Dort lists several things the Christian leaders felt were heresy. One of these “heresies” was the issue of foreknowledge (God using foreknowledge to make His selection). Article 9 says God’s selection was “not on the basis of *foreseen faith*.” To emphasize the error of this viewpoint, the Canons of Dort addressed it a second time (under “Error V”). Here they say humility, repentance, holiness, and godliness were not the basis of God’s selection.

Part 3

Problems with Selective Salvation

Part 3 of 5 parts in the Selective Salvation section

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How do you Know you are Saved?



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Do you ever have doubts about your salvation? Do you ever see the depth of your sinfulness and wonder if God could really love you? Do you ever have feelings of isolation and wonder if God even cares about your life? All Christians, of course, struggle with these feelings from time to time.

How do you deal with these feelings? Is there any way to know for certain you are going to Heaven? Is there anything tangible you can hold on to that would give you an assurance of salvation?

John writes in 1 John 5:13, "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." The Bible provides us a very clear explanation of what's

necessary to have your sins forgiven. Here you will find verses such as:

Romans 10:13 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

John 1:12 "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Rev. 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

These are promises set forth in the Bible and you can take God at His Word. They can be viewed as a contract written in black and white. Just as a contract is tangible proof something is valid, God's Word is tangible proof of God's promises. If God's Word says you will be saved if you do such and such, you can rest assured you are saved if you fulfilled His requirements.



A basic premise of selective salvation is God randomly chooses certain people to go to Heaven.

This selection was not based on a person “choosing God.” This selection was not based on a person claiming God’s promises for himself.

If the doctrine of selective salvation is true, how does a person know he is part of the elect? How can a person be certain of his salvation? He can’t get confirmation from the Bible. He can’t say, “Based on what is written here in black and white, I know God has forgiven me.” There is no way of knowing for sure (from the Bible) you are one of the chosen. There are no tangible ways of proving you are one of the elect. I can’t see how a person can have a *legitimate* assurance of salvation if he truly believes in selective salvation.

Some Selective Salvationists have said, “I know I’m one of the elect because of the fact I became a Christian.” There are two problems with saying you *must* be one of the elect simply because you became a “Christian.” First, the Bible says not everyone who calls God “Lord” is going to Heaven (Matthew 7:21). Just because you *think* you are a Christian doesn’t necessary mean you actually are a true Christian.

Second, assuming selective salvation is true, where in the Bible does it say God has chosen you simply because you have chosen him? Where in the Bible does it say anything like, “You can know for sure you are one of the elect because of the fact you have accepted Christ as your Savior?” I’m not trying to be rude when I say this, but it seems to me a person is being rather presumptuous to assume he is one of the elect simply because he had decided to be on God’s side. Remember, if selective salvation is true, a person (who is not one of the elect) can be genuinely repentant of his sins and still go to Hell. Therefore, if being repentant does not mean you are one of the elect, I ask you again, how do you *know* you are one of the elect.

Some people may respond to this by saying they know they are God’s child because they feel His presence in their life. They say they can tell God has accepted them because He answers their prayers. Do you realize how many people in cults

and other religions also say these same things? True Christianity does not have the monopoly on these *feelings*. A friend of mine is a Mormon Bishop. He told me he knows Mormonism is true because of all of the miracles God has performed in his life (such as the miraculous healing of his wife from her death bed). Mormonism even uses the “burning of the bosom” as a sign Mormonism is true.

Mormonism, Hinduism, and Satanism all claim to be the true religion. These groups back up their claims by listing supernatural events (miracles, healings, speaking in tongues, etc.) that occur in their religion. I do not believe we can use the feeling of God’s presence in our lives as proof we are His child.

How, therefore, does a person know he is one of the elect? Article 12 (Canons of Dort) tries to answer this with the following statement:

- “The Assurance of Election. . . . Such assurance comes not by inquisitive searching into the hidden and deep things of God, but by noticing within themselves, with spiritual joy and holy delight, the unmistakable fruits of election pointed out in God’s Word— such as a true faith in Christ, a childlike fear of God, a godly sorrow for their sins, a hunger and thirst for righteousness, and so on.”

Once again they are using the same kind of attributes and feelings that cults and other religions use. These feelings mean absolutely nothing. Nowhere in the Bible does it say you will know you are one of the elect because of these feelings.

The doctrine of selective salvation caused serious problems 400 years ago with those thinking about becoming Christians. The fear of not being one of the elect caused a great deal of anxiety. Since attitude of heart, repentance, and sorrow for sins does not influence God’s selection, people were terrified they were not one of the chosen few. To counter this problem, the founding fathers of selective salvation wrote the following:

- “Those who do not yet actively experience

within themselves a living faith in Christ or an assured confidence of heart, peace of conscience, a zeal for childlike obedience, and a glorying in God through Christ, but who nevertheless use the means by which God has promised to work these things in us—such people ought not to be alarmed at the mention of reprobation, nor to count themselves among the reprobate [those who had not been elected]; rather they ought to *continue diligently* in the use of the means, *to desire fervently a time of more abundant grace [election], and to wait for it in reverence and humility.*”

- “On the other hand, those who seriously desire to turn to God, to be pleasing to him alone, and to be delivered from the body of death, but are not yet able to make such progress along the way of godliness and faith as they would like—such people ought much less to stand in fear of the teaching concerning reprobation, since our merciful *God has promised that he will not snuff out a smoldering wick and that he will not break a bruised reed.* However, those who have forgotten God and their Savior Jesus Christ and have abandoned themselves wholly to the cares of the world and the pleasures of the flesh—such people have every reason to stand in fear of this teaching, as long as they do not seriously turn to God.” (Emphasis added)

Basically, they are saying if you *want to be one of the elect*, you should fervently desire election and wait for it in humility and reverence. It also said if you have an attitude of seeking God, God will not snuff out your smoldering wick.

Another thing it says is you should be concerned about God’s wrath if you have worldly and fleshly desires. Yet, when you think about it, these are the same desires of all unsaved people. If selective salvation is true, these are the same desires that the “elect” people have before God intervenes in their lives. Why, therefore, should these worldly desires be a cause for concern?

These teachings are totally contrary to the main premise of selective salvation. The founding fathers just got done saying in their previous paragraphs that the attitude of the person’s heart has nothing to do with God’s selection. Either the attitude of a person is important or it is not important. You can’t have it both ways.

Once again I ask you, if selective salvation is true, how do you know you are one of the elect?

Are we Lying when we're Witnessing?



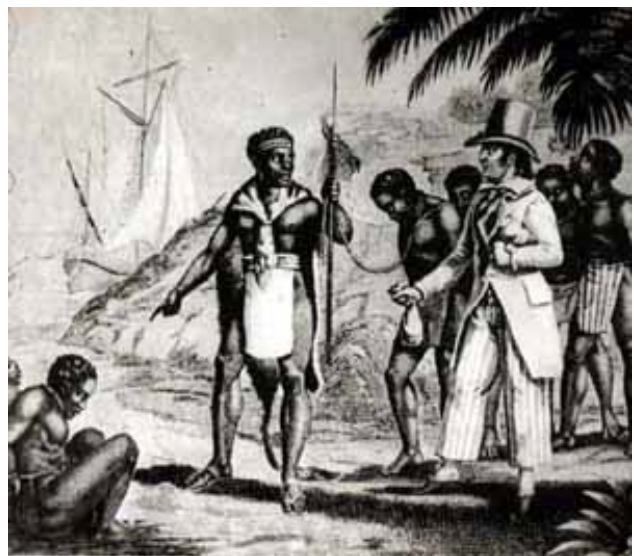
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Taravu dives into the water as he desperately tries to elude his pursuers. He shudders with fear as he thinks of the fate that awaits him if he is captured. His body is weak with exhaustion and his lungs burn with every breath. Taravu reaches the other side of the pond and scrambles through a briar patch. His body is numb and he barely feels the thorns ripping into his flesh.

Ten minutes earlier, while on a hunting trip, he ran into the hunting party of a distant village. Although the two tribes have never been friendly, they have never been enemies. However, all of this had changed recently. The different tribes in the area were now kidnapping their neighbors for a special purpose.

Some men with ivory skin were now buying these prisoners and taking them to a distant land to be used as slaves. The practice of slavery was not new in this region. Whenever one tribe conquered another tribe, they would keep some of the survivors as their own slaves. Yet, now they are being paid handsomely to capture more slaves and sell them to the slave traders. Slave trade was big business in this part of Africa, and it was no longer safe to wander alone too far from your village. Fortunately, Taravu escaped this fate, but millions of natives were not so fortunate.



A tragic thing about the despicable practice of slavery is the fact it was done by a country whose founding principles made no provision for slavery. The Declaration of Independence says, "All men are created equal." It didn't say all white men were created equal, but all men were created equal.

Our country's *practice* was diametrically opposed to its own governing rules. It doesn't matter if some people felt they could justify the morality of slavery; it still contradicted their country's founding doctrines. As hypocritical as this sounds, many Christians do the same thing. A large number of Selective Salvationists practice something completely different from what they believe in theory. This is especially true in the way they witness.

Think about what we tell people when we are witnessing to them. We tell them God loves them and wants them to spend eternity with Him. We tell them Jesus died for their sins and if they accept His pardon, all of their sins will be forgiven. If selective salvation is true, however, you would be *lying* if you give this message to someone who is not one of the chosen. If you truly believe in selective salvation, you are obligated to change the message you use for witnessing. God is not glorified or honored when we deliberately lie while we are witnessing.

Many Selective Salvationists are reluctant to talk about this doctrine when they are witnessing. There are a couple of reasons for this reluctance. First, they are afraid the person they are witnessing to would be turned off and offended by such a harsh doctrine.

Second, they are afraid the person will take a passive attitude toward salvation. For example, they may say, "Well, if I'm one of the elect, I'm going to get saved one way or another. If I'm not one of the elect, it doesn't really matter. Therefore, there's no reason for me to concern myself about it now. In fact, there's nothing wrong with my complacent attitude. If I'm one of the elect, God will implant the correct attitude when the time comes. Besides, any attempt on my part to produce the proper attitude would be totally worthless."

If selective salvation is true, it shouldn't matter if people are "turned off" or decide to procrastinate. Those who are the elect will get saved in God's timetable. An honest presentation of the gospel should not make any difference. Remember, even the best procrastinator can't resist God's calling.

According to Selective Salvationists, the doctrine of selective salvation *is the gospel*. Therefore, if it is the gospel, it needs to be presented right away. There should be no hesitation or avoidance in its presentation. Listed below are some things Selective Salvationists have said about this doctrine. (Refer to the chapter *This is not an Attack* for more information concerning this.)

- "Calvinism is the Gospel and to teach Calvinism is in fact to preach the Gospel." (Custance, *The Sovereignty of Grace*, p. 302)
- "Calvinism is the Gospel. Its outstanding doctrines are simply the truths that make up the Gospel." (Engelsma, *Defense of Calvinism*, p. 4)
- "Calvinism is the Gospel, and nothing else." (Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Sovereign Grace Sermons*, p. 2)
- "There is no such thing as preaching Christ and Him crucified unless you preach what now a-days is called Calvinism." (Spurgeon, *Sovereign Grace Sermons*, p.129)

Not all Selective Salvationists are lying when they witness to others. There are a few of them who realize this doctrine must be included with the salvation message. Listed below are a couple of comments made by Selective Salvationists:

- "True gospel teaching and preaching must include the doctrines of Grace [the word they use to describe selective salvation] if it is to be faithful to its calling." (Good, *Evangelism*, p. 14)
- "Apart from these revealed truths [the doctrine of selective salvation] any 'gospel' that is preached publicly or taught privately must be seriously defective." (Good, *Evangelism*, p. 15)

As you can see, if selective salvation is true, you must include it with the salvation message. To withhold this information is the same as lying. To withhold this information is the same as teaching a false gospel.

Children of the Elect



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In the previous chapter we saw that global statistics do not support the doctrine of selective salvation. This is also true when you look at Christian and non-Christian families. If selective salvation is true, a child in a Christian home should have no more chance of becoming a Christian than a child in an atheist's home. Since only 7% of the world's population is saved, there should be only a 7% chance (1 out of 14) that any child will become a Christian. This means most Christian parents will not have any Christian children. (See the chapter *Parental Influence* in the section *What About Those who are Without the Gospel?* for more information.)

Obviously, this is not true. Children in Christian

families are far more likely to become Christians than the children in a non-Christian family. If you ask most Christian parents about this, they will tell you they believe their Christian example and prayers greatly influence their child's chance of becoming a Christian. In fact, they would be incredibly troubled if they felt their child had only a 7% chance of becoming a Christian.

Apparently this issue caused a great deal of concern to parents 400 years ago because Article 17 (Canons of Dort) says the children of the elect are also elect. I'm not sure where they got this from because there's nothing in the Bible that says this. Besides, even a casual look at this issue will show not *all* children of Christian parents become Christians.

If selective salvation were true, you should find one of two things happening. Either *all* of the children of the elect will become Christians or only a small random proportion of them (7%) will become Christians. We don't, however, find either one of these. Statistics show about 70-80% of the children raised by Christian parents become Christians. This is exactly what you would expect to find with open salvation, not selective salvation.

It appears it is exposure to Christian parents that increases the likelihood of children to become Christians. In fact, Christian parents who are mature and committed to their faith have a much higher percentage of Christian children than immature Christian parents.

As I mentioned in previous chapters, observations do not prove that a doctrine is true or false. They should, however, be consistent with the doctrine. If an observation clearly contradicts a doctrine, a closer look at the doctrine is warranted.

There is another problem with this issue of the children of the elect. Article 8 (Canons of Dort) says God's election is the same in the New Testament as it was in the Old Testament. This means since Adam and Eve were elect, all of their children were elect. This would also mean all of their

descendants (including everyone living today) are part of the elect. Of course, we know this isn't true.



Ishmael

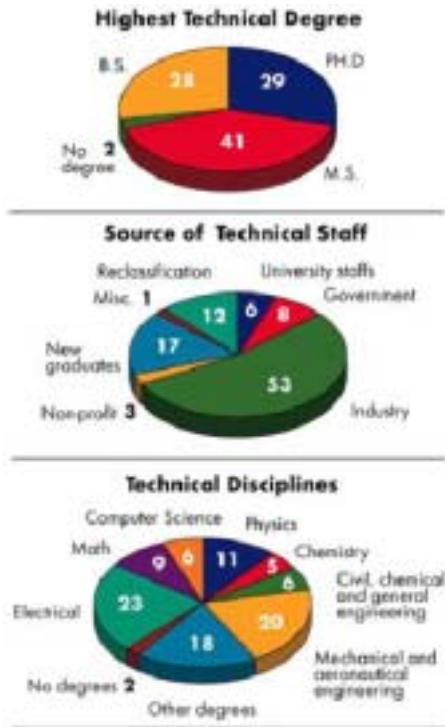
Another problem with this issue (children of the elect) is the destiny of Ishmael. If children of Christian parents are elect, then Ishmael (son of Abraham) should have been part of the elect and so should all of his descendants (the Arab nations).

Another problem with the issue of the children of the elect is the eternal destiny of Esau. Both Esau and Jacob (twins) came from Isaac. If the children of the elect are elect, Esau should also have been one of the elect. Yet, one of the main arguments of the Selective Salvationist's position is the phrase, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" (Romans 9:13). Look at the chapter *Jacob and Esau* for more information on this subject.

If a person believes the Bible teaches selective salvation, they need to make a decision on the eternal destiny of Esau. If they believe Esau is going to Heaven, they have to conclude the phrase "Esau I hated" does not support the doctrine of selective salvation. If, however, they believe Esau is going to Hell, they then have to then conclude the children of Christian parents are not automatically part of the elect. You can't have it both ways.

Finally, if children of the elect are not automatically part of the elect, you have to explain why Christian parents have a higher percentage of Christian children. This phenomenon provides significant reason to seriously doubt the doctrine of selective salvation. It shows that being exposed to strong positive Christian influences increases a person's chance of becoming a Christian (which is consistent with open salvation).

Statistics do not Support Selective Salvation



Chapter: 14.34

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As I mentioned earlier, statistics are not consistent with the doctrine of selective salvation. Instead of being a random mix of believers all around the world, there are vast areas with high concentrations of believers and other areas with very low concentrations of believers.

This is totally inconsistent with what you would expect with selective salvation. This is, however, what you would expect from open salvation. In fact, if open salvation is true, you would expect areas that have a high concentration of strong believers will have a high growth of new believers and areas with few or no believers will have little or no growth of new believers. This is exactly what we find.

For example, there have been some tribes in the heart of Africa that have not had any Christians for thousands of years. Yet, after missionaries have been there for about 10 years, 80% of the population had accepted Christ as their Savior. (Of course, many tribes respond to the gospel slower because of their religious and cultural background.) Although a sovereign God can do whatever He wants, it just seems unlikely He would not have “elected” anyone from a tribe for thousands of years and then “suddenly” elect 80% of them. These statistics are consistent with what you would expect to find with open salvation.

The Bible must always be our final authority. Therefore, these statistics do not disprove selective salvation. Yet, if our observations clearly contradict a doctrinal position, we need to reevaluate the legitimacy of the doctrine.

Why are There so Many Religions?



Chapter: 14.35

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A main premise of selective salvation is man is spiritually dead and has no desire for God. They compare our spiritual death with that of a dead body floating in the water. Even if you throw a life preserver to the dead body, it can't grab hold of it. A spiritually dead person does not have the capacity or willingness to receive salvation. Look at the Chapter *Is Choice Really a Choice Without a Choice?* for more information about this.

If this were true, you would expect to find a world full of sin inhabited by people who have no desire for God. These people would not have any desire to do good and have no desire to stop sinning. These people would have no desire to correct their sin problem.

Yet, this is not what we find. It is true we find a world filled with sin. We don't, however, find a world inhabited by people who have no desire for God. In fact, we find a world full of people who are desperate to resolve their sin problem. We find a world full of people seeking God.

There are over 6,500 religions in the world. These religions have a variety of ways to resolve their sin problem and bring their members back to God. Some of these solutions share common themes (such as live good lives and do good works) while others are quite bizarre and disgusting.

For example, one of the tribes in New Guinea has a funeral ceremony where a relative has to lie on top of the rotting dead body. They also have to eat a

portion of the rotting flesh. This is all done in the hopes of finding atonement for the departed. The extremes they go through show the desperation of these people.

The questions that beg to be asked are:

- Why are there so many religions?
- Why does every culture (even the most isolated cultures) have some type of religious system?
- Why are all of these non-elect people desperately seeking God?

The reason religions are a universal phenomenon is because everyone has been created with a “God-sized vacuum” that only God can fill. People have an inherent desire to have a relationship with God. People understand that our relationship with God has been broken, and they want to reestablish it. People understand they have sinned and they desperately want to find a solution to this problem.

Yes, we are spiritually dead. This death, however, only deals with our ability to have a spiritual relationship with God. It does not mean we have no desire for God. It does not mean we lack any ability to respond to God’s salvation.

Can we Resist God's call to Repentance?



Chapter: 14.36

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A previous chapter (*The TULIP*) details the five main points of selective salvation. The fourth point in the TULIP is "Irresistible Grace." Listed below is their definition of Irresistible Grace.

"The grace that God extends to the elect cannot be refused. God puts into the hearts of the elect an irresistible desire to turn to Him and accept His salvation. This desire is so overpowering that no one can refuse it."

The Bible, however, presents a completely different story. The Bible clearly says we can resist and reject God. It says God is grieved when we reject Him. It says the Nation of Israel (which is part of God's elect) were a stiff-necked and stubborn people (which resulted in many of them resisting God's call to salvation). It also provides numerous examples of God changing His mind when people repented of their sins.

There are over a hundred verses where God pleads with us to repent and seek Him. Why would God make these pleas if *our personal* repentance was irrelevant? Why would God passionately encourage us to come to Him if He was going to force us to come anyhow? Listed below are verses that conflict with the doctrine of Irresistible Grace:

Verses showing people resisting God

- 2 Chron 13:8 People are planning to *resist* the Kingdom of God
- Job 9:4 Job said, "Who has *resisted* Him and come out unscathed?"
- Isaiah 1:20 If you *resist*, you will be devoured by the sword
- Acts 7:51 "You *stiff-necked* people ... you always resist the Holy Spirit

Verses showing God can be grieved by our actions and calamities

(This shows God is grieved when we reject Him)

- 1 Chron. 2:15 God was *grieved* because of their calamity
- 2 Samuel 24:16 God was *grieved* because of the calamity
- Acts 7:51 Holy Spirit can be *resisted*
- Ephesians 4:30 Holy Spirit can be *grieved*
- Ezekiel 6:9 God is *grieved* by their adulterous hearts
- Genesis 6:6 It *grieved* God that He made mankind
- Isaiah 63:10 Their actions *vexed* the Holy Spirit
- Isaiah 63:10 God's people rebelled and *grieved* His Holy Spirit

Jeremiah 42:10 God is *grieved* over disasters
 Psalm 78:40 God's people *grieved* Him

People can reject God

1 Chron. 28:9 If you *forsake Him*, He will forsake you
 2 Chron. 15:2 If you *forsake Him*, He will forsake you
 Ezekiel 18:23 The wicked should *return* from his ways and live
 Ezekiel 18:30 Repent and *turn* from your transgressions
 Ezekiel 18:31 *Cast away* your transgressions ... make yourself a new heart
 Ezekiel 18:32 The wicked should *return* from his ways and live
 Ezekiel 3:19 If the wicked *does not turn* from his wicked ways he will die in his sins
 Ezekiel 33:19 If the wicked *turns* from his wickedness ... he shall live
 Ezekiel 33:9 If the wicked *does not turn* from his wicked ways, he will die in his sins
 John 3:18 He that *believeth not* is condemned already
 John 3:36 He that *believeth not* shall not see life
 John 5:40 ... and you *will not come* to me that you might have life
 Luke 12:9 He that *denies me* shall be denied
 Mark 8:16:16 Whoever does *not believe* will be condemned
 Mark 8:35 Whoever will *save his own life* will lose it
 Mark 8:38 Whoever is *ashamed of me* ... I will be ashamed
 Matthew 16:25 Whoever *saves his own life* will lose it

Verses showing God wants us to repent

(If God is going to force us to become Christians, why does He plead with us to repent?)

1 Kings 8:47 *Repent*
 2 Chron. 6:37 *Repent*
 2 Peter 3:9 God wants everyone to *repent*
 Acts 8:22 *Repent*
 Acts 13:24 John preached *repentance*
 Acts 17:30 God commands all people everywhere to *repent*
 Acts 2:38 Peter preached *repentance*
 Acts 20:21 They must turn to God in *repentance*
 Acts 26:20 Paul preached *repentance*
 Acts 3:19 *Repent* and *turn* to God
 Acts 8:22 *Repent* of this wickedness
 Ezekiel 14:6 *Repent* and *turn* from all of your abominations
 Ezekiel 18:30 Repent and *turn* from your transgressions
 Ezekiel 18:32 God says, "*Turn* and live"
 Ezekiel 33:11 God begs us to *turn* from our wicked ways
 Hosea 12:6 *Turn* to God
 Hosea 6:1 *Return* unto the Lord
 Isaiah 30:15 *Repentance*
 Isaiah 59:20 The Redeemer will come to those who *repent*
 Jeremiah 15:19 If you *repent*, I will restore you
 Jeremiah 3:1 *Return* to me
 Jeremiah 4:1 *Return* to me
 Job 34:33 Why do you refuse to *repent*?
 Job 36:10 God commands people to *repent*
 Joel 2:3 *Turn* unto the Lord
 Luke 13:3 Jesus said that you will perish unless you *repent*
 Luke 13:5 Jesus said that you will perish unless you *repent*
 Luke 15:10 There is rejoicing over one sinner who *repents*
 Luke 24:47 *Repentance* shall be preached among all nations
 Luke 3:3 John the Baptist preached *repentance*
 Luke 5:32 Sinners are called to *repentance*
 Mark 1:15 Jesus said *repent* and live
 Mark 1:4 John the Baptist preached *repentance*
 Mark 6:12 The disciples preached that men should *repent*

Matthew 3:2 John the Baptist preached **repentance**
 Matthew 4:17 Jesus told people to **repent**
 Rev. 2:16 **Repent**
 Rev. 2:21 I gave her space to **repent** ... she repented not
 Rev. 2:5 **Repent**
 Rev. 3:19 So be earnest and **repent**
 Rev. 3:3 Obey and **repent**

Verses showing God wants us to seek Him

(If God is going to force us to become Christians, why is He asking us to seek Him?)

1 Chron 16:11 **Seek** His face always
 1 Chron 28:9 If you **seek** Him, He will be found by you
 1 Chron. 2:8,9 If you **seek** Him, He will be found
 2 Chron 19:3 **Set your heart** on seeking the Lord
 2 Chron. 15:2 If you **seek** Him, He will be found
 2 Chron. 7:14 **Seek** my face
 Acts 15:17 That the remnant of men **seek** the Lord
 Amos 5:4 **Seek** me and live
 Amos 5:6 **Seek** the Lord and live
 Colossians 3:1 **Seek** those things that are above
 Deut. 4:29 **Seek** the Lord
 Hebrews 11:6 God rewards those who earnestly **seek** Him
 Isaiah 55:6 **Seek** the Lord while He may be found
 Jeremiah 29:13 You will **seek** me and find me when you seek me with all of your heart
 Job 8:5 **Seek** unto God early
 Lam. 3:25 God is good to those who **seek** Him
 Luke 11:9,10 **Seek** and you will find
 Luke 12:31 **Seek** His kingdom
 Matthew 6:33 **Seek** God's kingdom
 Proverbs 8:17 Those who **seek** me will find me
 Psalm 105:4 **Seek** His face always
 Psalm 119:2 Blessed are those who **seek** Him with all their hearts
 Psalm 27:8 God said **seek** my face
 Psalm 69:32 The heart that **seeks** God shall live

Verses showing God changing His mind

(This shows God does change His mind in response to OUR repentance)

1 Chron. 2:15 God was **grieved** because of their calamity
 1 Chron. 21:15 God **changed** His mind about punishing Israel for David's sin
 1 Kings 21:29 When Ahab humbled himself before God, He **withdrew** His punishment
 1 Sam 13:13,14 God was going to establish Saul's kingdom forever, but **changed** His mind because of Saul's sin.
 1 Samuel 8:19 God **changed** His mind and allowed Israel to have a king
 2 Chron. 7:14 If my people shall humble themselves ... I **will heal** their land
 2 Samuel 12 David sinned by committing adultery and murder. God's punishment for these sins was death. Yet, God **changed** the punishment and allowed David to live.
 2 Samuel 24:16 God **changed** His mind about punishing Israel for David's sin
 Exodus 32:14 God was going to punish the Israelites because of their sins. At the request of Moses, God **changed** His mind.
 Ezekiel 6:9 God is **grieved** by their adulterous hearts
 Genesis 6:6,7 It "repented" and **grieved** the Lord that He made man
 Isaiah 63:10 God's people rebelled and **grieved** His Holy Spirit
 Jeremiah 18:8 If they turn from their evil ways, God will **repent** from what He was going to do
 Jeremiah 26:13 If they obeyed the word of the Lord, He will **change** His mind concerning their punishment
 Jeremiah 26:19 God **changed** His mind about punishment
 Jeremiah 3:12 God told Israel to return from their sins and He will **change** His mind toward them

Jeremiah 42:10 God is *grieved* over disasters
 Job 33:27,28 God will save those who *repent*
 Joel 2:13 Turn unto the Lord and He will
relent on sending calamity
 Joel 2:14 God may *relent*
 Psalm 106:23 God's wrath was *turned* away
 because of Moses' prayers
 Psalm 106:45 God *repented* when He heard the
 cries of the Israelites
 Psalm 107:13 They cried unto the Lord and he
saved them
 Psalm 107:19 They cried unto the Lord and he
saved them
 Psalm 107:28 They cried unto the Lord and He
brought them out of their troubles
 Psalm 78:40 God's people *grieved* Him
 Psalm 90:13 David is asking God to *change* His
 mind (relent)

Verses showing Israel was a stiff-necked people

(This shows many of them *resisting* God's call to salvation.)

2 Chronicles 30:8
 2 Chronicles 36:13
 2 Kings 17:14
 Acts 7:51
 Deuteronomy 10:16
 Deuteronomy 31:27
 Deuteronomy 9:6,13
 Exodus 32:9
 Exodus 33:3,5
 Exodus 34:9
 Jeremiah 17:23
 Jeremiah 19:15
 Jeremiah 7:26
 Nehemiah 9:16,17,29
 Proverbs 29:1

Verses showing Israel was a stubborn people

(This shows many of them *resisting* God's call to salvation.)

Deuteronomy 2:30
 Deuteronomy 21:18,20
 Deuteronomy 9:27
 Ezekiel 2:4
 Hosea 4:16
 Isaiah 46:12
 Isaiah 48:4
 Jeremiah 11:8
 Jeremiah 13:10
 Jeremiah 16:12
 Jeremiah 18:12
 Jeremiah 23:17
 Jeremiah 3:17
 Jeremiah 7:24
 Jeremiah 9:14
 Judges 2:19
 Leviticus 26:19
 Mark 16:14
 Mark 3:5
 Psalm 78:8
 Psalm 81:12
 Romans 2:5

Can We Seek the Lord



Chapter: 14.37

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Amos 5:4 says, “This is what the LORD says to the *house of Israel*: ‘Seek me and live.’” God instructed the whole nation of Israel to seek him. Obviously, God wanted all of the Israelites (not just some) to become believers. We know, however, not all of the Nation of Israel were believers. Therefore, we know that God wants everyone (including those who end up in Hell) to become believers.



Verses showing God wants us to seek Him

(Why would God instruct the world to seek Him if He can't be found?)

- 1 Chron 16:11 *Seek* His face always
 1 Chron 28:9 If you *seek* Him, He will be found by you
 2 Chron 19:3 *Set your heart* on seeking the Lord
 2 Chron. 15:2 If you *seek* Him, He will be found
 2 Chron. 7:14 *Seek* my face
 Acts 15:17 That the remnant of men *seek* the Lord
 Amos 5:4 *Seek* me and live
 Amos 5:6 *Seek* the Lord and live
 Colossians 3:1 *Seek* those things that are above
 Deut. 4:29 *Seek* the Lord
 Hebrews 11:6 God rewards those who earnestly *seek* Him
 Isaiah 55:6 *Seek* the Lord while He may be found
 Jeremiah 29:13 You will *seek* me and find me when you *seek* me with all of your heart
 Job 8:5 *Seek* unto God early
 Lam. 3:25 God is good to those who *seek* Him
 Luke 11:9,10 *Seek* and you will find
 Luke 12:31 *Seek* His kingdom
 Matthew 6:33 *Seek* God's kingdom
 Proverbs 8:17 Those who *seek* me will find me
 Psalm 105:4 *Seek* His face always
 Psalm 119:2 Blessed are those who *seek* Him with all their hearts
 Psalm 27:8 God said, “*Seek* my face.”
 Psalm 69:32 The heart that *seeks* God shall live
 Zephaniah 2:3 *Seek* the Lord

Why Was Hell Created?



Hans Memling's 1485 rendition of Hell

Chapter: 14.38

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A basic premise of selective salvation is God (long before the world was created) selected certain people to go to Heaven and the remainder to Hell. If this is true, Hell was created for these people. This, however, is not what we find in the Bible.

Matthew 25:41 says, "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and His angels." Here we find Hell was created for the fallen angels and not for man. Hell was enlarged to accommodate the fallen human race, but it was not created originally for the human race. It seems to me if selective salvation were true, Hell would have been created for mankind.



A computer generated rendition of the infamous War in Heaven that resulted in some of the angels being cast out of Heaven

Has God Really Selected People at Random to go to Hell?



Chapter: 14.39

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According to selective salvation, God randomly selected people to go to Heaven and Hell. That's not a bad deal if you are one of the people selected to go to Heaven, but it's devastating for the people selected to go to Hell for all eternity.

This latter part is what has caused so much trouble for Selective Salvationists. It has caused so much trouble that many Selective Salvationists now deny it's part of this doctrine. They willingly admit God has arbitrarily predestined certain people to Heaven, but they adamantly deny He has predestined others to Hell. They say the Bible teaches only predestination to Heaven, not predestination to Hell. They say we have no right to read anything more into this doctrine.



They willingly admit these other people are going to Hell. They admit these people have no say in the matter and have no chance of going to Heaven. Yet, they say we have no right saying God predestined them to Hell. They say it is one of those matters for God, and God alone to resolve, and we have no business implying something the Bible does not clearly state.

Selective Salvationists find it awkward to explain how a loving and fair God could condemn a person to never ending misery and punishment when he hasn't even done anything wrong. They find it awkward to explain how a person can be condemned before he was created. This part of the doctrine has become quite an embarrassment to these people.

Despite their protest, the facts are inescapable. If God has predestined some people to Heaven and is sending the rest to Hell with no say in the matter, we have no choice but to conclude He has predestined them to Hell. There is no other way to look at this.

This denial of the obvious reminds me of the selective blindness used in the "Separate but Equal" doctrine. In the late 1900s, Homer Plessy (who was 1/8th black) was arrested for riding in a railroad car reserved for whites. He was charged with violating an 1890 Louisiana law separating railroad cars by race. He fought his arrest all the way up to

the U.S. Supreme Court (*Plessy v Ferguson*). In 1896 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against *Plessy* and established a new era of discrimination. A new legalized form of slavery was created.

Plessy v Ferguson legalized the separation of races in public accommodations. It legitimized the “Separate but Equal” philosophy. Blacks were considered equal, but different. Justice Henry Brown wrote, “We consider the underlining fallacy of the plaintiff’s argument to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority. If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it.” This ruling made it legal to give whites luxurious accommodations (in railroads, bathrooms, etc.) and give blacks significantly inferior accommodations.



Basically, the court was saying if these laws made blacks feel like third class citizens, it was only because the blacks incorrectly perceived it this way. Many people were shocked and outraged with this ruling. If you follow this line of thinking, the blame of any offense lies with the victim, not the aggressor. For example, the only reason a mugging victim would feel victimized is because he chose to incorrectly perceive it this way.

Not all Selective Salvationists take this evasive stance. Some Selective Salvationists come right out and say God, in His sovereignty, chose certain people to go to Heaven and the remainder to Hell.

In fact, they are a little puzzled why these other people are embarrassed by this part of the doctrine. Although I strongly disagree with their doctrine of selective salvation, I respect their honesty in being straightforward about their views.

Why did the Reformation take Place?



Martin Luther nailing his 94 Theses on the church door

Chapter: 14.40

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When we think of the Reformation, we usually think of Martin Luther's profound realization that people cannot work their way to Heaven. After more than a thousand years of existence, the Catholic Church had deviated tremendously from the Bible. In fact, Church tradition and Church doctrine almost completely replaced the Bible. The largest casualty of this deviation was the salvation message. The true message of salvation was almost completely lost.

The Church's plan of salvation had completely disintegrated to the point where the priests were telling people they could get to Heaven with doing good works and donating large amounts of money to the Church. They would say, "As soon as your

money hits the offering plate, the soul of your dead relative will immediately leave Purgatory."

Shortly before the Reformation, a couple of things had happened. First, some "radicals" had translated the Bible into a language that could be read by the common people. Up until then, only the priests had access to the Bible. This allowed people to be able to read the Biblical plan of salvation for themselves.

Second, some of the priests started studying the Bible themselves (which was uncommon at the time). As they studied the Bible, they began to realize the Church was teaching a false plan of salvation. They realized the Church was leading its flock down a path of destruction.

Martin Luther was one of these priests. He had spent most of his life trying to please God with good works, abstaining from pleasurable activities, and doing penances that were painful and life-threatening. He felt he could only please God if he suffered greatly for his sins. Many of his friends thought the punishments he was inflicting upon himself would eventually kill him.

One day the verse Romans 1:17 ("The righteous shall live by faith") made perfect sense. He realized a person is not justified in God's sight by sacrificing or doing good works. Rather, a person can be justified only by having faith in what Jesus had done on the cross. A person is justified by faith, not works. One thing led to another and the Reformation erupted.

The Reformation causes a problem for Selective Salvationists. If selective salvation is true, then people were getting saved all along. If selective salvation is true, the message of salvation couldn't have been corrupted. There was no need to proclaim the forgotten message: "The righteous shall live by faith." If no one was being misled by the false plan of salvation, there was no need for the Reformation.

Part 4

"Choice" -The Achilles' Heel of Selective Salvation

Part 4 of 5 parts in the Selective Salvation section

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Choice –Part 1: The Contradictions of Selective Salvation



Chapter: 14.41

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One of the greatest puzzles of the doctrine of selective salvation is the issue of “choice.” A main premise of selective salvation is God arbitrarily choosing to send certain people to Heaven and the remainder to Hell. These people have no say in the matter, and there is nothing they can do to alter their destiny.

Selective Salvationists say this selection process is proof of God’s sovereignty. In fact, they say God cannot be sovereign or in full control if man has any say in the matter. They say if we have the ability to determine our destiny, it would be the same as us telling God Almighty what to do. “Obviously,” they say, “mortal man cannot dictate God’s actions.” Listed below is a comment concerning this:

- “By making election conditional upon something that man does, even if what he does is simply to repent and believe the gospel, God’s grace is seriously compromised.” (Storms, *Chosen for Life*, p. 55)

The issue of “choice” is the Achilles’ heel of selective salvation. The doctrine falls apart when this issue is closely examined. There are many aspects of “choice” that contradict the doctrine of selective salvation. In order to help you better understand the issue of choice, I have broken it down into multiple chapters.

Choice –Part 2: Can You Force Someone to Love You?



Chapter: 14.42

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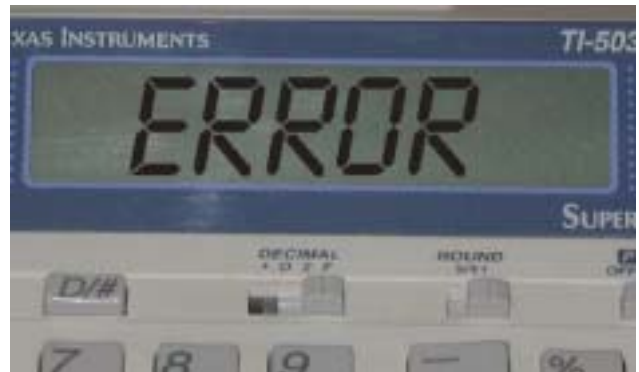
According to selective salvation, God has chosen certain people to go to Heaven. At the “appointed time” God puts an irresistible desire in their hearts to seek God. As a result, they will turn to God and become Christians.

While it is true God can force someone to go to Heaven, it isn’t true He can force someone to love Him. I realize there are some people who will protest and say God can do anything. This is not true; God can’t do “anything.” He can’t do *contradictory commands*. The following questions are examples of contradictory commands:

- Can an all-powerful God create a rock so large He can’t lift it?

- Can an all-knowing God make something so small He doesn’t know about it?
- Can an omnipresent God (a God who is everywhere) throw an object so far it lands in a location where He is not located?

As you can see, the limitations are not with God but with our question. If you incorrectly phrase a question, the question becomes void and worthless. It is just like in math. There are basic mathematical procedures that need to be followed when performing calculations. If you violate these procedures, your equation becomes invalid. For example, you can’t divide a number by zero. If you try it on a calculator, the display will read “ERROR.”



When I was in college, my professor mathematically proved “ $8 = 3$.” He started out with a very long equation and had “ $A = 8$.” After about 30 complicated calculations, “ $A = 3$.” After we sat dumbstruck, he revealed his secret. Half way through the calculations, he divided one of the numbers with zero. This, of course, invalidated the whole equation.

“Forcing someone to love you” is also a contradictory statement. Love is an emotion that is developed and earned. Love is an emotional response that develops in a free heart. You can create a robot that will hold your hand, bring you flowers, and say things like “I love you,” but there would be no love. The robot is only doing what it is forced to do. It is only mimicking actions typically associated

with love. Love can only develop when there is a truly free will.

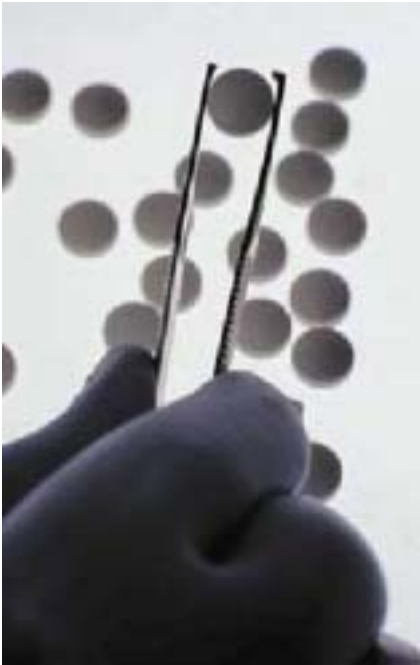


*You can force someone to follow you,
but you can't force them to love you*

God could create a race of robots for selective salvation. He could force some of these robots to go to Heaven and the remainder to Hell. He could force one group to say things like, "I love you" and the remainder to say things like, "There is no God." He could force one group to sing songs of praise and the other group to curse him.

Yet all of this would mean nothing to God. He would know their praises are nothing but hollow words. He would know there is no love. He would know they did not choose him. He would know they have no feelings for him. Their praises would be as worthless as counterfeit money. Look at chapter *Choice –Part 9: What is the Purpose of Choice?* for more information.

Choice –Part 3: Is Choice Really a Choice Without a Choice?



Chapter: 14.43

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A basic premise of selective salvation is God selected people to go to either Heaven or Hell. The selected people have no say in the matter. There is no way a person could alter his eternal destiny.

When a person “chooses” to accept Christ as his Savior, he actually does not make the choice himself. The desire to make this decision is implanted by God. Before God implants this desire, the person literally has no ability to decide spiritual things himself. Listed below are some of the comments by Selective Salvationists that say we have no choice:

- “In fact, the sinner is of himself neither capable nor willing to receive salvation.” (Hoeksema,

Whosoever Will., p. 14)

- “The Bible stresses the total inability of fallen man to respond to the things of God; he is not able to do so. This is what the Calvinist refers to as total depravity.” (Talbot and Crampton, *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism and Arminianism*, p. 20)
- We are confronted with the fact that the natural man is unable to love and serve God, and the sinner, of himself, cannot repent and believe.” (Pink, *Sovereignty*, p. 149)
- “[Man] no longer has the ability to choose good (righteousness).” (Talbot and Crampton, *Calvinism, Hyper-Calvinism and Arminianism*, p. 19)

Selective Salvationists say the reason we are unable to make these decisions is because we are spiritually dead. They say a spiritually dead person is unable to make any type of response. It is like throwing a life preserver to a dead body floating on the water; it can’t even reach over to grab the preserver. Therefore, a spiritually dead person is totally unable to do something as simple as choosing to accept Christ as his Savior. Listed below are some quotes by Selective Salvationists concerning this:

- “A dead man cannot exercise faith in Jesus Christ.” (Clark, *The Biblical Doctrine of Man*, p. 102)
- “A dead man is utterly incapable of willing anything.” (Pink, *Sovereignty*, p. 141)
- “A dead man cannot cooperate with an offer of healing.” (Gerstner, *Predestination*, p. 18)
- “The corpse does not restore life to itself; after life is restored, it becomes a living agent.” (Dabney, *Calvinism*, p. 35)
- “A corpse does not cry out for help.” (Custance, *The Sovereignty of Grace*, p. 18)

Selective Salvationists will use another analogy to show our total inability to accept God's salvation. Basically, they say since a baby does not choose to be born, we cannot choose to be born again. Listed below are some quotes by Selective Salvationists concerning this:

- “The infant does not procreate itself, but must be born of its parents in order to become a living agent.” ((Dabney, *Calvinism*, p. 35)
- “A baby never desires or decides to be born. He never contributes an iota toward his own birth. In the whole process from conception through birth, he is completely passive and totally unable to control his birth.” (Palmer, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, p. 17)
- “We cannot have a birth of ourselves; a babe cannot be born of itself; nothing can have its original from itself, for it would then be before and after itself; it would be and would not be at the same time.” (Ness, *An Antidote Against Arminianism*, p. 88)
- “The new birth is solely the work of God, the Spirit, and man has no part or lot in it. This from the very nature of the case. Birth altogether excludes the idea of any effort or work on the part of the one who is born. Personally, we have no more to do with our spiritual birth than we had with our natural birth.” (Pink, *Sovereignty*, p. 72)
- “What creature has ever successfully resisted his own creation or made any active contribution to his own creation?” (Gunn, *The Doctrines of Grace*, p. 23)
- “Non-being – nothingness – can never produce itself. The very concept of creation necessarily implies total passivity and inability on the part of the object that is to be created. What is true in the physical realm is also true in the spiritual realm: individuals are totally unable to make of themselves new creations in Christ.” (Palmer, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, p. 17)

The Bible contradicts this viewpoint. There are many verses that say we have a choice to accept or reject salvation. A list of the verses can be found in the chapter *What Does the Bible Say?*

How do Selective Salvationists reconcile these verses? How can they say we have no choice and yet be in agreement with the verses that say we have a choice? How can they say we are totally incapable of making any spiritual decisions when we are able to make decisions to commit sin?

“Irresistible Grace” is the central theme of selective salvation. Basically, it means when God chooses (elects) certain people to be saved, they will be saved. He forces them to accept Him. He puts an irresistible desire in their hearts to want God and there is nothing they can do to reject God. They have no say in the matter.

According to Selective Salvationists, once God puts this irresistible desire in a person's heart, he automatically starts to desire God. As a result of this desire, he “chooses” to abandon his sinful ways and turn to God. Since the targeted person (unaware of God's intervention) seems to come to this conclusion on his own, he is said to have a “choice.”

Is this truly a choice? Can it actually be said this person chose God out of a truly free heart? Does a person really have a choice if he is forced to accept or reject God? The dictionary defines “choice” as, “The *voluntary* act of selecting. The *right* and *power* of making a selection.”

Just because someone calls something a choice doesn't mean it is actually a choice. In 1995, Saddam Hussein wanted to show the world He was a great leader and was loved by his people. He wanted to dispel the notion he was a ruthless dictator who was hated and despised by his oppressed subjects. He, therefore, held “free” elections for his office. Saddam Hussein received 99.96% of the votes. (In 2002, Hussein held another election, obtaining similar results.)



Saddam Hussein and his infamous rifle

These elections, of course, raised many eyebrows. No one took these numbers seriously. Just about everyone realized truly free hearts did not cast these votes. They realized these votes did not reflect the true sentiment of the Iraqi people.

To illustrate this, let's consider two different types of elections of the exact same population in Iraq. The first election would be an *open* election and the second would be a secret *closed* election. In the open election, everyone in Iraq has to openly cast their vote on a large chalkboard (in front of everyone). The names of the voters (and their selection) are recorded and given to Saddam Hussein.

The secret election, however, is done in such a way that the individual votes are kept secret. There is no possible way for anyone to find out how a person votes. The voter is able to truly vote his conscience.

If we were to conduct both of these elections on the same day on the exact same population in Iraq, do you think there would be a substantial difference in the final count? Do you think Saddam Hussein would receive 99.96% of the votes in both elec-

tions? Do you think these people would express their true feelings if they knew Saddam Hussein would have a list of all negative votes?

If you think there will be a substantial difference between the two votes, you would have to admit that the Iraqi people were not able to make a truly free choice in the open election. Yes, it is true they did make a "choice" in the open election, but it wasn't a true choice. That choice was a sham and mockery of truth, fairness, and common sense. A true choice comes only when a person has the freedom to choose opposing views.

Likewise, when Selective Salvationists talk about choice, they are not talking about a true choice. The "choice" they are talking about is a mockery of truth, fairness, and common sense. I do not believe a God of integrity would ever perpetuate such a deception.

A person does not have a choice in salvation unless he has the realistic opportunity to accept or reject salvation. I see only two options for a person who believes in selective salvation. The first option is to admit those who are the elect have no choice or free will to accept or reject God. If a person believes in this option, he has to explain why a large number of verses say we have a free choice to accept or reject God.

The second option is to admit that those who are the elect have a real choice to accept or reject God. If people have a true choice, some will choose to reject God. Therefore, some of the elect will never become Christians. You *cannot* say the elect have a free will to accept or reject God if there isn't the realistic probability some will reject God. Therefore, if you believe in selective salvation and believe these people have a choice in the matter, you are then forced to accept the fact some of the "elect" will end up in Hell.

Article 11 and Error VI (Canons of Dort), say all of the elect are going to Heaven and not one of the elect will go to Hell. Therefore, if you say an elect person cannot reject God, you are forced to accept

the first option that says the elect have no choice or free will to accept or reject God. God has the sovereign right to do this, but I have to stand by my earlier contention that you can't force someone to love you. If this is true, I have to believe there are a large number of people in Heaven who do not love God. They may not hate Him, but they did not choose to love Him.

Choice –Part 4: Do We Really have a Free Will?



Chapter: 14.44

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As mentioned at the beginning of this section, a cornerstone doctrine of selective salvation is the sovereignty of God. Selective Salvationists contend if we could choose our own destiny, it would be the same as us telling God Almighty what to do. They say God would not be a sovereign God if He does not exercise control in every aspect of our lives. Storm says the following about this:

- “By making election conditional upon something that man does, even if what he does is simply to repent and believe the gospel, God’s grace is seriously compromised.” (*Chosen for Life*, p. 55)

Free will has become a four-letter word with Selective Salvationists (well, actually two four-letter words). To say we have a free will is the same as saying God is not on the throne. Listed below are comments from Selective Salvationists about free will:

- “Free will is nonsense.” (Spurgeon, *Free Will – A slave*, p. 3)
- “Free will is the invention of man, instigated by the devil” (Wilmoth, *The Baptist Examiner*, Sept. 16, 1989, p. 5)
- “Free will makes man his own savior and his own god.” (Ross, *Abundant Truth*, p. 56)
- “The heresy of free will dethrones God and enthrones man.” (Best, *Free Grace Versus Free Will*, p. 35)
- “If the theory of free will were true, it would give the possibility of repentance after death.” (Boettner, *Predestination*, p. 221)
- “Man does not have a free will when it comes to the matter of salvation.” (Kober, *Divine Election or Human Effort*, p. 31)
- “The will of the natural man is opposed to God, and he has no will God ward until he has been born again.” (Pink, *John*, p. 30)

This stance on free will has forced many Selective Salvationists into a very unique position. If God controls everything and we don’t have freedom to make our own choices, then God controls all of our actions. If God controls all of our actions, we have to conclude we are forced to sin. The following chapter (*The Choice to Sin*) provides several quotes from Selective Salvationists about how God has forced us to sin.

Although not all Selective Salvationists have taken this extreme position, it is still a predominant view. This view, of course, raises some very serious issues. How can we be held responsible for our

actions if we are forced to do them? How can we be punished for sins we are forced to commit? More importantly, how can God be holy and righteous if He is forcing us to do these evil deeds? Basically, it would be the same as if God had done those evil deeds.

Obviously, we do have a free will to make choices; both good and evil. As we saw elsewhere in this section, God can give us a free will and still be sovereign. The following chapters will expand on this issue further. They will show our actions actually do provoke various responses from God. They will show God can be moved by our choices and requests.

Choice –Part 5: Can Prayer Change Things?



Chapter: 14.45

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Can prayer change things? Does God alter His plans to accommodate our requests? Can our sincere petitions prompt a response from God?

If selective salvation is true, our prayers will not cause God to alter His plans. If everything is already set in stone, there is nothing we can do to change the course of events. Following are some things Selective Salvationists have said about prayer:

- “Prayer does not change things, nor does prayer change God or His mind.” (David West, *The Baptist Examiner*, Feb. 18, 1989, p.5)
- “What God has predestined to be will always

come to pass as He has purposed, and all the praying one can muster will not change that. No, prayer does not change things; it does change us. (Dan Phillips, *The Baptist Examiner*, Feb. 18, 1989, p.5)

- “No man can believe in the glorious, Biblical doctrine of absolute predestination, and believe that prayer changes things. The two are incompatible. They do not go together. If one is true, the other is false. Since predestination is true, it follows, as night follows day, that prayer does not change things.” (Wilson, *The Baptist Examiner*, June 8, 1991, p. 8)
- “It is difficult to reconcile prayer and the unchanging will of God.” (James Wilmoth, *The Baptist Examiner*, Feb. 18, 1989, p.5)

Contrary to the above statements, the Bible does say prayer changes things. James 5:16 says, “The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” The Bible provides scores of powerful examples of prayers being answered. People like Hezekiah, Moses, Joshua, David, Hannah, and Paul received specific answers to their prayers. Even the great leaders in the Bible believed God answers prayers. There are hundreds of verses showing them asking God to change things.

If our requests can move God to change His plans, it shows the course of our lives is not set in stone. It shows selective salvation cannot be true. Following are a few examples of prayers changing the course of events.

- 1 Chron. 5:20 God **responded** to Manasseh’s prayers
- 1 Kings 9:3 God **responded** to their prayers
- 1 Sam. 1:9-23 God **answered** Hannah’s prayer and she gave birth to Samuel
- 2 Chron. 1:11 God **gave** gracious favors in answer to people’s prayers
- 2 Chron. 32:20 God **answered** Hezekiah’s prayer while in battle
- 2 Chron. 33:19 God **was moved** by Manasseh’s prayers

- 2 Chron. 7:12 God **responded** to their prayers
- 2 Kings 20:5 God **responded** to Hezekiah's prayers
- 2 Sam. 21:14 God **answered** prayer on behalf of the land.
- 2 Sam. 21:25 God **answered** prayer on behalf of the land.
- Acts 10:31 Cornelius' prayers were **answered**
- Acts 10:4,5 Cornelius' prayers were **answered**
- Acts 28:8-10 Paul **healed** people through his prayers
- Deut. 9:18,20 Aaron's golden calf greatly angered the Lord. As a result of Moses' prayer, God **didn't destroy** a large number of people.
- Ezra 8:23 God **answered** Ezra's prayers
- Genesis 25:21 The Lord **answered** Isaac's prayers
- Isaiah 38:4,5 God **added** 15 years to Hezekiah's life in response to his prayers
- Job 42:8,9 God **accepted** Job's prayers for his friends
- Josh 10:12-14 Joshua prayed and the **sun stopped** moving
- Luke 1:13 Elizabeth **became pregnant** (with John the Baptist) because of Zechariah's prayers.
- Mark 11:24 We **will receive** whatever we ask for in prayer
- Mark 9:29 Certain kinds of demons can only be **cast out** with prayer
- Matt. 21:22 We **will receive** whatever we ask for in prayer
- Proverbs 15:8 Prayers of the upright **please God**
- Psalms 102:17 God **will respond** to the prayers of the destitute
- Psalms 6:9 God **accepted** David's prayers
- James 5:15 The prayer offered in faith will make the **sick person well**
- James 5:16 The prayer of a righteous man is **powerful and effective**

Choice –Part 6: Can God be Grieved by Our Sins or Moved by Our Repentance?



Chapter: 14.46

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In previous chapters we saw we have a free will to choose between good and evil. We also saw that God responds to our prayers. As you will see, God can also be moved by our actions. Our bad choices will provoke God to anger and jealousy, and our good choices will provoke a positive response. God can even be moved by our requests.

Listed below are some verses that show God can be moved by our requests. The fact God can be moved by our requests shows everything is not set in stone. They show God has not predetermined everything in our lives.

- Psalm 34:17 The Lord delivers those who *cry* unto Him
- Jeremiah 29:12 You shall *call* upon me and I will hearken unto you
- Jeremiah 29:13 You shall *seek* me and you shall find me when you search for me with all of your heart.

- Luke 11:9 Ask and it shall be given you and *seek* and you shall find
- Matthew 7:7,8 Ask and it shall be given you and *seek* and you shall find
- Psalms 106:44 Whenever the Israelites *repented* of their sins, God heard their cries

Listed below are a large number of verses showing God can change His mind. Once again, if our actions can change God's mind, it shows everything is not set in stone.

- 1 Chron. 21:15 God *changed His mind* about punishing Israel for David's sin
- 1 Kings 21:29 When Ahab humbled himself before God, God *withdrew His punishment*
- 1 Sam 13:13,14 God was going to establish Saul's kingdom forever, but *changed His mind* because of Saul's sin.
- 1 Sam. 8:19 God *changed His mind* and allowed Israel to have a king
- 2 Chron. 7:14 If my people shall humble themselves ... *I will heal* their land
- 2 Samuel 12 David sinned by committing adultery and murder. God's punishment for these sins was death. Yet, God *changed the punishment* and allowed David to live.
- 2 Sam. 24:16 God *changed His mind* about punishing Israel for David's sin
- Exodus 32:14 God was going to punish the Israelites because of their sins. At the request of Moses, God *changed His mind*.
- Ezekiel 6:9 God *is grieved* by their adulterous hearts
- Genesis 6:6,7 *It grieved* the Lord that He made man
- Isaiah 63:10 God's people rebelled and *grieved* His Holy Spirit
- Jeremiah 18:8 If they turn from their evil ways, God *will repent* from what He was going to do
- Jeremiah 26:13 If they obeyed the Word of the

Lord, He would *change His mind* concerning their punishment
 Jeremiah 26:19 God *changed His mind* about punishment
 Jeremiah 3:12 God told Israel to return from their sins and He will *change His mind* toward them
 Jeremiah 42:10 God *is grieved* over disasters
 Job 33:27,28 God *will save* those who repent
 Joel 2:13 Turn unto the Lord and He *will relent* from sending calamity
 Joel 2:14 God may *relent*
 Psalm 106:23 God's *wrath was turned* away because of Moses' prayers
 Psalm 106:45 God *repented* when He heard the cries of the Israelites
 Psalm 107:13 *They cried* unto the Lord and *He saved* them
 Psalm 107:19 *They cried* unto the Lord and *He saved* them
 Psalm 107:28 *They cried* unto the Lord and *He brought them out* of their troubles
 Psalm 78:40 God's people *grieved Him*
 Psalm 90:13 David is asking God to *change His mind* (relent)

Listed below are a large number of verses that show God can be provoked to anger, jealousy, etc. If God has already pre-determined all of our actions, He would not have had this type of emotional response.

1 Kings 15:30; 16:2, 7, 13, 26; 21:22; 22:53
 2 Chronicles 28:25; 33:6; 34:25
 2 Kings 17:11, 17; 21:6, 15; 22:17; 23:19
 Deuteronomy 4:25; 9:7, 18
 Ezekiel 16:26; 20:28
 Hosea 12:14
 Jeremiah 8:19; 11:17; 25:7; 32:29, 32; 44:3
 Judges 2:12
 Psalm 106:29

Israel's actions made God ANGRY

2 Chronicles 28:11; 29:20, 23, 24, 27, 28;

32:19, 21, 22
 2 Kings 22:13
 Ezra 8:22
 Job 21:20
 Joshua 23:16
 Mark 3:5
 Psalms 78:17, 18, 21, 31, 38, 40, 41, 49, 50, 56, 58, 59, 62
 Psalms 95:10,11; 106:23, 29, 32, 33, 40, 43
 Romans 9:22

God is a JEALOUS God and is moved by our actions

1 Kings 14:22
 Deuteronomy 4:24; 5:9; 6:15; 29:20; 32:16, 21
 Exodus 34:14; 20:5
 Ezekiel 16:38, 42; 23:25; 36:6
 Ezekiel 8:3, 5; 35:11
 Joel 2:18
 Joshua 24:19
 Nathan 1:2
 Psalms 78:58; 79:5
 Zechariah 1:14; 8:2
 Zephaniah 1:18; 3:8

God can be grieved by our actions and calamities

1 Chron. 2:15 God was *grieved* because of their calamity
 2 Samuel 24:16 God was *grieved* because of the calamity
 Acts 7:51 The Holy Spirit can be *resisted*
 Ephesians 4:30 The Holy Spirit can be *grieved*
 Ezekiel 6:9 God is *grieved* by their adulterous hearts
 Genesis 6:6 It *grieved* God that He made mankind
 Isaiah 63:10 Their actions *vexed* the Holy Spirit
 Isaiah 63:10 God's people rebelled and *grieved* His Holy Spirit
 Jeremiah 42:10 God is *grieved* over disasters
 Psalm 78:40 God's people *grieved* Him

Choice –Part 7: The Choice to Sin



Looters in an Argentina riot

Chapter: 14.47

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As stated in another chapter, Selective Salvationists say God cannot be sovereign if man has a free will to choose or reject salvation. They say this would be the same thing as us telling God what to do.

Selective Salvationists say God is sovereign and in complete control. They say He controls everything that takes place in the world. They say if we can control *any* aspect of our lives, God would not be sovereign. God has ordered every action, including our sins. Following are some things Selective Salvationists have said concerning this:

- “Even the fall of Adam, and through him the fall of the race, was not by chance or accident, but was so ordained in the secret counsels of God.” (Boettner, *Predestination*, p. 174)
- “Surely, if God had not willed the fall, He could, and no doubt would, have prevented it; but He did not prevent it: ergo, He willed it. And if He willed it, He certainly decreed it.” (Zanchius, *The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination*, p. 88)

- “Plainly it was God’s will that sin should enter this world, otherwise it would not have entered, for nothing happens save as God has eternally decreed. Moreover, there was more than bare permission, for God only permits that which He has purposed.” (Pink, *Sovereignty*, p. 147)
- “Not only did His omniscient eye see Adam eating of the forbidding fruit, but He decreed beforehand that he should do so.” (Pink, *Sovereignty*, p. 249)
- “It is even Biblical to say that God has foreordained sin.” (Palmer, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, p. 82)
- “Nothing comes to pass contrary to His decree. Nothing happens by chance. Even moral evil.” (Shedd, *Calvinism*, p. 37)
- “Sin is one of the ‘whatsoever’ that have ‘come to pass,’ all which are ‘ordained.’” (Shedd, *Calvinism*, p. 31)
- “God justly wills that sins be committed by us, and indeed absolutely wills that they be committed; nay, procures in time these sins themselves.” (John Piscator as quoted in Newman, *A Manuel in Church History*, Vol. 2. 338)
- “The idea that God knows the future without having planned it and without controlling it is totally foreign to Scriptures.” (Gunn, *The Doctrines of Grace*, p. 13)
- “If God did not foreordain all things, then he could not know the future. God foreknows all things because He decreed all things to be.” (West, *The Baptist Examiner*, March. 18, 1989, p. 5)
- “Foreknowledge of future events then is founded upon God’s decrees, hence if God foreknows everything that is to be, it is because He has determined in Himself for all eternity everything which will be.” (Pink, *Sovereignty*, p. 110)

They are saying God forced us to commit each and every sin. They are saying each of our sins were predetermined and ordained by God to take place. This raises some very troubling issues.

We cannot be held accountable for sins we are forced to do. We cannot be punished for our actions if we had no say in the matter. More importantly, if God does force us to sin, what does this say about God? God cannot be holy, righteous, and just if He forces us to sin. Look at my chapter *Do We Really have a Free Will?* for more information about this.

Is it true we don't have any control over our actions? No, of course not. Even a casual observation of everyday life will tell us we do have control over our actions. Although observations are helpful in verifying the validity of a doctrine, the Bible must be our final authority.

Apart from the hundreds of verses that say we have the ability to choose, there are two other doctrines from the Bible that show we have control over our actions. The Bible says there will be varying amounts of rewards for us when we get to Heaven (2 Cor. 5:10-15 and Col. 3:24). The fact that there are different amounts of rewards means we have control over the decisions we make. If we have no control over our decisions, we would all receive the same amount of rewards in Heaven. Actually, these rewards would have to be called gifts because they were not earned.

The Bible also says there will be various levels of punishment in Hell. Following are verses that say this:

- 2 Cor. 5:10 Judgment seat of Christ
- Heb. 10:29,30 Punishment will be more severe for those who "trample the Son of God under foot"
- Jude 1:15 Judgment will be executed upon the ungodly for their ungodly deeds

Luke 12:47,48 Parable of those who were punished because they knew the Lord's will and did not do it. To those who were given much, much is required.

Luke 20:46,47 False teachers will be punished more severely

Mark 12:40 False teachers will be punished more severely

Mark 14:21 For the person who betrayed Jesus, it would have been better if he were never born

Matthew 11:24 In the day of judgment, it will be more tolerable for Sodom than it will be for Capernaum

Matthew 12:36 We will give account for every idle word in the day of judgment.

Matthew 23:14 False teachers are warned of punishment

Rev. 20:11-15 White Throne Judgment

Rev. 20:12,13 Non-Christians are judged according to their ungodly deeds

Romans 2:12 Those who have sinned without the law will be judged without the law

Romans 2:5 A hardened heart stockpiles wrath against the Day of Wrath

The fact our actions can cause us to be punished more severely than others means we do have control over our decisions. Once again, this proves we have control over our choices. If we have control over choices that profoundly affect eternity, it stands to reason we have control over our choice to accept or reject salvation.

Choice –Part 8: Are We Incapable of Choosing God?



PNI file

The infamous "shell" game

Chapter: 14.48

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Selective Salvationists say we are incapable of choosing God. They say being “spiritually dead” means we lack any ability to desire or choose God. They liken us to dead bodies floating in the water. Even if a life preserver is thrown to the body, it would not be able to respond. We are dead and totally incapable of responding to any rescue attempt.

Selective Salvationists say we are totally incapable of desiring God or what He has to offer. They say the only way we would desire God and His salvation is by having God implant a supernatural desire within us. Once we have been implanted with this desire to want God, it is impossible to resist or reject this prompting.

Are we capable of making choices? Yes, of course, we are. For example, let’s say we are given a choice between two trips. The first trip would require us to spend a month doing very disgusting things like cleaning sewers with our bare hands for fourteen hours a day. We would have to sleep outdoors in the rain (unprotected) and eat spoiled food.



The second trip would require us to spend a month at a very plush resort. We can participate in all sorts of activities such as swimming, tennis, spa, etc. A five-star restaurant would provide all of our meals. Someone else, of course, pays for all accommodations.

Which of the two trips would we choose? Obviously, we would choose the second trip. Our minds are fully capable of differentiating between desirable and undesirable things. We have the ability to choose a good destiny over a bad destiny.

Sin has ravaged so many areas of our lives. Sin brings guilt, remorse, and sadness. It causes a desperate struggle within us as we try to compensate for our massive shortcomings. Our lives are unhappy and unstable because of this sin. We are at odds with our creator, and our inner conscience tells us we are going to be held accountable for our sins. This is a terrifying and dreadful prospect.

On the flip side, we see Christians who have been able to get their lives back into order. This stability has saved their marriages, jobs, and future. They are happy and at peace with themselves and with God. On top of all this, they have even found a remedy for their sin problem. They have reconciled their differences with their Creator and they are no longer going to Hell.

These observations are plain, simple, and straightforward. Anyone who is aware of all of the facts would be able to see the benefits of resolving their sin problem. This person would desire to choose a good destiny over a bad destiny.

Yes, it is true we have a sinful nature and a heart bent on doing wrong. Yes, it is true we lack the ability to stop sinning. Yes, it is true we lack the ability to live in a way that is pleasing to God. It is not true, however, that we can't comprehend the benefits of resolving our sin problem with God. Our hearts are fully capable of desiring God's benefits over our terrible lives. We understand the benefits and we have the ability to choose them.

Choice –Part 9: Choice and the Moral Standard



Adam and Eve with the forbidden fruit

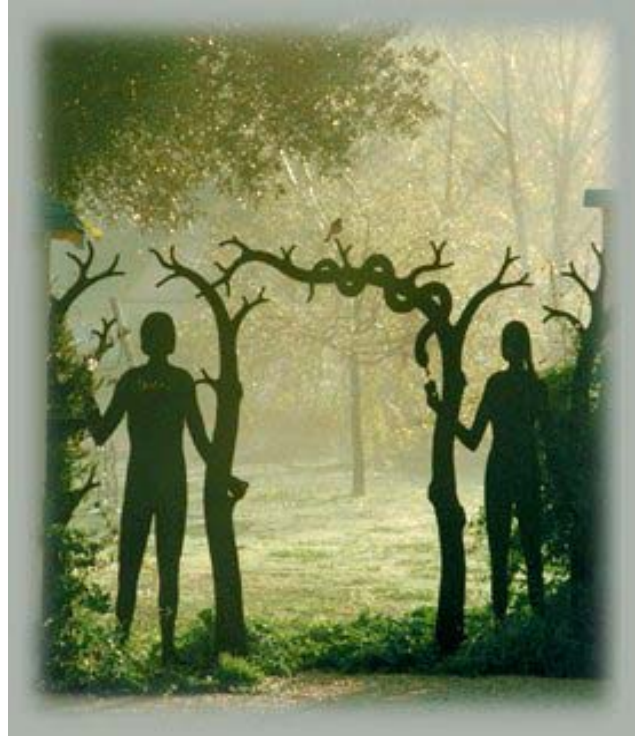
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The only thing in this humongous universe that has a will and independent thought are living creatures. Living creatures have the unique ability to make choices. In contrast, the rest of the universe has no ability to make choices. It moves exactly as God programmed it. It has no independent thought and cannot alter its course. It has no consciousness. The contrast between the two systems is undeniably obvious.

Although the universe's beauty and magnitude brings God glory, it does not bring Him love and friendship. The universe can provide as much friendship as a pet rock. Love and affection can come only from a heart that is truly free to choose. God understood this when He created Adam and

Eve. He made them different from the rest of the universe. These people had a free will that gave them the ability to make choices.



God has created a large variety of living creatures here on Earth. The minds of some of these creatures are very sophisticated while the minds of others are quite limited. All of these creatures were created with three governing qualities: Instinctive behavior, independent thought, and the ability to choose.

Instinctive behavior is the internal instinct that causes creatures to act certain ways. Pigs, for example, instinctively act differently from cats. Salmon instinctively swim hundreds of miles to spawn in their birth place. The remarkable engineering of the honeycomb is another example of instinctive behavior.

Independent thought, on the other hand, is the ability of a creature to evaluate his surroundings. For example, when a deer hears a sound and sees

some movement, he evaluates the degree of threat he is facing. This independent thought we take for granted is unique compared to the vast majority of the universe.



Ability to choose: Once the evaluation has been made, the creature chooses to implement a response. Since this choice is made from a free will, it is not always predictable. This choice is not always logical or the most appropriate response to a situation. The creature's emotions can influence its decisions. Biological imbalances (such as low blood sugars) can also influence the creature's decisions.

Obviously, these governing qualities vary from species to species. Some have more independent thought than others. Some have stronger wills than others. As a result, some creatures are more "self-controlling" than others.

When God created mankind "in His image," He added three more qualities: An eternal soul, self-realization, and a moral conscience. Our *eternal soul* is the part of us that lives on after the death of our physical body. It is our true identity. This is the reason why the fuss over racial superiority is so ridiculous.

Self-realization is our ability to be aware of our

existence. It's the part of us that makes us wonder, "Why are we here? What is the meaning of life?" It causes us to search for answers. Just because a creature has independent thought does not mean he has a consciousness of his own existence. Obviously, no one can emphatically say, "Animal life does not have self-realization?" There is no way to substantially prove it one way or another. I once asked my dog if he had self-realization, but he was too busy watching *Seinfeld* to give me an answer.

Our *moral conscience* is the part of us that makes us aware of moral issues. It lets us know if something is morally right or wrong. Animals don't have a moral conscience. When animals evaluate a situation, they make decisions based on efficiency, safety, etc. They don't make their decisions based on whether an action is morally right or wrong. This is the reason animals don't "sin." This is the reason animals don't "go to Hell."

Humans, on the other hand, have a moral conscience. We understand there are certain absolute truths. We understand there is a moral standard that sets certain boundaries. We inherently know there are repercussions for violating this moral standard. Humans know when they have sinned and understand they will be held accountable for these transgressions. This is the reason you'll find religion in the remotest corners of the world.

Choice –Part 10: The Purpose of Choice



Chapter: 14.50

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For thousands of years mankind has pondered the ultimate questions, “Why are we here? What is our purpose? What is the meaning of life?” True Christianity provides some of the answers.

The Bible says the primary reason God created our magnificent universe was to bring Himself glory. Nevertheless, there was another reason God created us. God wanted someone to care for and to love. He wanted someone who would reciprocate this affection and love Him in return. He wanted a friend He could cherish. He wanted a friend who would respond to His overtures and cherish Him in return. Basically, God wanted to love and be loved.

As discussed in a previous chapter, you can't force someone to love you. Love is an emotion that develops from a free heart. Only a heart that has the freedom to hate and reject can generate love and acceptance.

God could have created robots that would say and do everything He wanted. He could have created robots that would sing praises to Him and say things like, “I love and adore you, God.” God could have created a robot that would do all of the typical things normally associated with love.



Yet this would not be love. This would not have any meaning or value to God. This would bring no pleasure and joy to Him. It would be as worthless as counterfeit money.

Yes, it is true; God could showcase these robots and say, “Look at these magnificent robots. They are complex and beautiful. They will respond exactly the way I wish; they are completely obedient subjects. They are examples of my magnitude, power, and glory. They are a testimony of what I can accomplish. This is proof that I am sovereign and in control.”

Although God could certainly do that, there is no need. He has a humongous universe that already does that (See the section *Understanding God and His Universe* for a comprehensive look at this awe-inspiring creation.) The size of the universe declares God's greatness. The energy needed to create the universe declares His power. The complexity of the universe declares His skill and craftsmanship. The beauty of the universe declares His creativity. There is no need to create robots to display His greatness.

The universe also displays God's sovereignty and control. This finely tuned universe obeys His every command. Think about it, everything in this universe (except for an incredibly small speck) is already a "robot." It does exactly as it was preprogrammed to do. There is no deviation whatsoever. In fact, 99.99999999~ % of the universe has no will, no independent thought, no ability to make choices, and no consciousness. (In fact, if you added another billion trillion 9's to the number above, it still would not come close to the actual number. This huge universe supplies ample proof God is sovereign and in control.

As discussed in a previous chapter, God created mankind with the capacity to love or hate and the ability to accept or reject. He gave us the gift of choice. He wanted mankind to freely choose to love Him. In order for "love to mean anything, it had to be done from a truly free heart.

In order to be able to choose God, man had to have the option to reject Him. This is the reason God prohibited Adam and Eve from eating of the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil* in the Garden of Eden. God didn't prohibit this tree because it contained poison or possessed some mystical power. Rather, the tree was a tangible way for mankind to accept or reject God. It was the *only* prohibition they had. It was a way for them to express their free will.

As we all know, Adam and Eve chose to reject God. Yet, this did not surprise God. He knew they would sin and reject Him long before He created

them. The Bible says before the universe was created, God knew we would sin and He prepared a solution for us. Revelation 13:8 says, "The Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world." This was God's way of showing us the *depth* of His love.



The forbidden fruit was not necessarily an apple

Some people have asked, "Why did God create us if He knew we were going to sin and make such a terrible mess of things? Couldn't He have created a race who would not have sinned and rebelled against Him?" Yes, it is true God could have created a race of "robots" who would have never rebelled. This race, however, would never have been capable of love.

The choice to love and accept can come only when there is the true choice to hate and reject. There had to be a realistic choice to sin if God was going to have a people who would love Him out of a truly free heart. Therefore, not only did God create a race who had the ability to sin, but He created a solution for the sin.

As a result, God had a people who would choose to love Him out of a free will. He had a people He could love and could choose to love Him in return.

This group of people became the “Bride of Christ.” God created a race that would eventually be married to God Almighty. This marriage will not be a “shotgun wedding” where the bride is forced to marry someone against her will. This will be a wedding of mutual love and adoration. This will be a wedding of choice.



The shotgun wedding

If, however, selective salvation is true, none of this is correct. There will be no mutual love and adoration in this marriage. Our “love” for God will be totally worthless and as valueless as counterfeit money. We are nothing but robots.

Think about it, there is no glory in forcing someone to say the words, “I love you.” There is no sense of accomplishment or satisfaction from doing this. Yet, there is tremendous glory, satisfaction, and value in creating a people who can choose you out of a truly free heart. There is tremendous awe and victory when someone chooses God despite great adversity and suffering.

Choice –Part 11: The Suffering of Job



Chapter: 14.51

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In a previous chapter we saw there is no glory or accomplishment in forcing someone to say the words, “I love you.” Forcing someone to be on your side provides no pleasure. There is no victory in creating a “loving” family that basically consists of “robots.”

On the flipside, there is tremendous glory in creating a people who can choose you out of a truly free heart. There is great pleasure in being loved by someone who chooses you out of their free will. There is great victory when people choose you despite great suffering and adversity. There is tremendous thrill and satisfaction from having someone choose you when such a choice will result in great loss, intense suffering, or even death.

Satan understood this. When he approached God about Job, he said it was easy for Job to love God when Job had great wealth. Satan said, “Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But, stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.” (Job 1:9-11)

Satan understood people have a free will and are capable of choosing their friends. He figured if Job lost his great wealth and was tormented enough, he would choose to reject God. Satan’s plan backfired. Instead of Job responding like most people, Job remained faithful to God. As a result, God was greatly glorified. I believe Job’s actions brought God tremendous pleasure. To have someone choose you despite great adversity is far more valuable than having someone choose you when times are going well.

Job’s experience demonstrates the importance and necessity of a free will. It highlights the fallacy of the doctrine of forced conversions. If God was glorified with Job’s decision, think how much He is glorified when a person makes the ultimate decision (salvation).

Choice –Part 12: Why is God Pleased with Obedience?



Chapter: 14.52

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Let's say that by some quirk of fate, you were invited to Bill Gates' birthday party. What do you bring as a gift? What do you buy for a person who happens to be the richest man in the world? Obviously, he probably already has any item you could possibly afford.

As you enter Bill Gates' mansion, you notice many rich and famous people. You also notice a young boy who seems out of place. Although he's not dirty or dressed in rags, his clothes and mannerisms indicate he's probably very poor. As it turns out, Bill Gates met this boy while volunteering with the Big Brother program.



As the gifts are opened, you are stunned by their value. Michael Eisner (Disney) gives Bill a red

Ferrari. Donald Trump gives Bill a 75-foot yacht. The Rockefellers give him a summer home in Martha's Vineyard.

As the gifts are opened, you start to feel self-conscious about your gift. You wonder how humiliating it will be for everyone to see your inexpensive gift. Your thoughts are interrupted when you see the boy present Bill his poorly wrapped gift. You feel embarrassed for the child. You think to yourself, "How could this boy compete with these other gifts. Obviously, Bill will pretend to be grateful before he moves on to the next gift."

To everyone's surprise, Bill is truly touched by the gift. In fact, it is obvious Bill is fighting to hold back his tears. You wonder what this boy gave that could provoke such an emotional response.

Everyone moves closer to get a better look at the gift. Inside the box is a single inexpensive baseball card. This, of course, only increases the mystery.

As it turns out, when Bill was young, his best friend moved away. As a token of his friendship, his friend gave Bill a baseball card of Al Simmons. Although Bill was not a big baseball fan, the card was a special reminder of the friend he missed. About a year later he lost the card. It was like losing his friend all over again.

The little boy heard this story from Bill. As part of the Big Brother program, Bill took the boy to a baseball game. Bill told him although he didn't care much for baseball, he once had a baseball card that meant much to Him. Bill explained the story to the child.

The boy paid close attention to Bill's story and decided to buy him an Al Simmons baseball card to replace the one he lost. Even though the card cost only \$10, it was a fortune to this impoverished child. The boy did odd jobs and saved everything he could to pay for the card.

Obviously, the card itself is not what touched Bill so deeply; it was the thought and concern behind the

card. Clearly, the boy cared enough to remember something that was so special to Bill. The boy cared enough to give Bill a gift that cost him his life's savings. The boy's gift showed he cared for Bill personally; not his status in society. Even though the boy was poor, his gift was valuable.



This is similar to our situation with God. What gift do you give God Almighty? God is clearly the richest person in the universe. What do we have that could hold any value with God?

The Bible says obedience is something God values highly. Our obedience is one thing we can give God Almighty that He will cherish. This is especially true with total obedience.

The life of King Saul provides us with a couple of examples of the value of obedience. In the first situation (1 Samuel 13:5-14), King Saul and his army were surrounded by an incredibly large Philistine army. King Saul's soldiers were terrified and starting to scatter. Although Samuel told him to wait for his arrival, King Saul got impatient and performed Samuel's task (presenting the offerings to the Lord).

Immediately afterwards, Samuel showed up (I'm sure his late arrival was a test). Samuel said, "You have done foolishly: You have not kept the commandments of the Lord your God, which He has commanded you." As a result of his folly, Samuel said King Saul's kingdom would not be established

forever.

In the second situation (1 Samuel 15:1-23) King Saul was told to completely destroy the Amaleks, including all of their livestock. King Saul, however, spared the Amalek's King and the best livestock. After the battle, the first thing King Saul said to Samuel was, "I have performed the commandment of the Lord." When questioned about all the animals he had brought back from the battle, King Saul still insisted he followed God's instructions.

When pressed on the issue, King Saul said he kept the best of the livestock so he could offer them as sacrifices to the Lord. Samuel's response was, "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to listen than the fat of rams." As a result of this disobedience, King Saul lost his kingdom to David.

Psalm 116:15 says, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Although this verse is often used at the funeral services of Christians, it is actually talking about Christians dying to themselves (or to their dreams). If you look at the previous verses, it is talking about making sacrifices to the Lord. God is saying it is precious to Him when we die to our own will. It is very precious to God when we *choose* to be obedient to Him and give Him complete control over our will.

In a previous chapter (*The Suffering of Job*) we saw how God is glorified when someone chooses Him in the midst of adversity. God is also glorified when we choose to be obedient when tempted. Our obedience brings God great pleasure. If our obedience in these "small" things makes God happy, think how excited He is when we choose to make the most important decision; becoming a Christian.

The above story of Bill Gates is fictional and is used only for the purpose of illustrating a point.

Choice –Part 13: The Rich Young Ruler



Jesus and the rich young ruler

Chapter: 14.53

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Another story in the Bible that leads me to believe selective salvation is not true is the story of the rich young ruler. In this story a rich young ruler asked Jesus about what he must do to inherit eternal life. After Jesus tells him, the rich young ruler leaves in sorrow; the price was too great.

According to selective salvation, God hates all of those who are not part of the elect. Yet, we find just the opposite in this situation. Mark 10:21 says Jesus “loved” this rich young ruler. Here we have a situation where Jesus loved a person who was going to Hell. If selective salvation is true, why did Jesus love one of the non-elect? Listed below are some comments concerning God hating the non-elect.

- “Pharaoh was sovereignly hated from eternity, even as was Esau.” (Hoeksema, *Good Pleasure*, p. 46)
- God “... hated the non-elect before their birth.” (Owen, *The Death of Christ*, p. 227)
- “It has been customary to say God loves the sinner, though He hates His sin. But that is a meaningless distinction. What is there in a sinner but sin?” (Pink, *Sovereignty*, p. 200)
- “We conclude, therefore, that the predestination of Jacob and Esau is a personal election and reprobation unto salvation and eternal desolation respectively. (Haldane, *Commentary of Romans*, p. 462)

Listed below are the passages talking about the rich young ruler

- Luke 18:18-27
- Mark 10:17-25
- Matthew 19:16-30

Choice –Part 14: Why was God so excited when the Lost Sheep was found?



Chapter: 14.54

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Jesus gave three parables about the thrill of finding something that was lost. They are the parables of the lost sheep, lost coin, and the lost son (prodigal son). All three parables contradict the doctrine of selective salvation.

The parable of the lost sheep is about a Shepherd who has 100 sheep. He discovers one of his sheep is missing, so he sets off looking for it. When he finds the lost sheep, he puts it on his shoulder and rejoices. He sends for his friends with the message, “Rejoice with me for I have found my sheep that was lost.” An analogy is then given how there is great joy in Heaven over the salvation of one lost sinner.



The woman looking for the lost coin

The parable of the lost coin is about a woman who has lost one of her coins. She continually searches the whole house until she finds it. After she finds the coin, she asks her friends to rejoice with her. Again, an analogy is given how there is great joy in Heaven over the salvation of a lost sinner.



The return of the prodigal son

The parable of the prodigal son is about a son who decides to take his inheritance and spend it on a life of sin. After his money runs out, his life hits rock bottom. Things are so bad even the pigs are eating better than he. He decides to return home and see if his father will take him back as a lowly servant. His father, however, doesn't take him back as a servant. Instead, he takes him back as a son. His father clothes him with the best robe, kills the fatted calf, and throws him a party. The father is rejoicing because his prodigal son has returned.

All three parables share a common theme: The recovery of a lost item brings great joy. More importantly, the salvage of a lost soul brings great pleasure to God. You would expect this type of reaction from God with open salvation, but you would not expect it with selective salvation.

In fact, with selective salvation, there is no cause for celebration when a person gets saved. There are no lost souls who are salvaged. There are no people rescued from the gates of Hell. All of the people who get "saved" were actually saved long before the world was created. These parables don't make sense if selective salvation is true. It would be like a person pretending to lose a coin and then throwing a large party when he "finds" it. In my opinion, these parables show selective salvation is not Biblical.

Luke 15:3-7 Parable of the lost sheep

Luke 15:8-10 Parable of the lost coin

Luke 15:11-32 Parable of the lost son

Choice –Part 15: A Man After God’s Own Heart



David facing Goliath

Chapter: 14.55

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The Bible says David was a man after God’s own heart. Why did God call him this? Basically, it was because David chose to follow God with all of his heart. David deliberately put God first above everything else. David made it a point to keep his heart pure and devoted to God. It appears the *choices* he made produced a heart that was rare.



David holding Goliath’s head

How does this fit in with the doctrine of selective salvation? According to selective salvation, all of our hearts (mindsets) have been molded by God. They are exactly the way God wants them. If this is true, all of the elect should be people after God’s own heart. The comments about David’s heart suggest to me selective salvation can’t be true.

In addition to the above, there is also the verse about God seeking someone who has a pure heart. Before David came onto the scene, the Bible says God “sought a man after His own heart.” If selective salvation is true and God preprogrammed all of our hearts, there was no need for Him to look. God already knew who had the right kind of heart. Once again, this indicates to me selective salvation can’t be true.

Some may counter my argument by saying, “Even if selective salvation is false, an omniscient (all-knowing) God would know everyone’s heart. Therefore, there still is no need for God to seek someone after His own heart.

This observation, of course, is true. God’s “search,” however, had nothing to do with His not knowing the hearts of men. People often think this verse is saying God was doing a person-to-person search of people’s hearts. In reality, this verse is saying God *desired* a man after His own heart.

The word “seeking” often means desiring or wanting, not the actual act of seeking. For example, when I was single, people would often ask me, “What kind of girl are you *looking* for?” or “What kind of girl are you *seeking*?” Basically, they were asking, “What kind of girl do you *desire*?”

Yes, it is true; God desires a person after His own heart. He is looking for people who will choose to be pure and wholly devoted to Him. Will you be one of these people? Listed below are verses talking about David’s heart:

1 Kings 11:4 God said Solomon’s heart was “not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David.”

- 1 Kings 14:8 God said David “followed me [God] with all his heart.”
- 1 Kings 15:3 The Bible said Jeroboam’s “heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his forefather had been.”
- 1 Sam. 13:14 The Bible says after Saul’s failure, God had “sought Him a man after His own heart.”
- Acts 13:22 God said, “I have found David ... a man after My own heart.”

Choice –Part 16: Choose You This Day



Chapter: 14.56

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Near the end of Joshua's life he made the following statement, "Choose you this day who you will serve ... as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). What was the reason Joshua gave us this admonition? What was the reason he felt it was important to warn the Israelites?

Joshua knew firsthand how stubborn and rebellious the Israelites were. He knew how easily they could be led astray. Joshua understood the children of Israel were prone to reject God and His laws.

If selective salvation is true, all of our choices and actions have been preprogrammed. Our spiritual destiny has been set in stone. There is nothing we can do to alter this. If selective salvation is true, there would be no need for Joshua's admonition. The very fact Joshua made this admonition indicates to me selective salvation can't be true.

Choice –Part 17: Being Made Rulers Over Many Cities



Chapter: 14.57

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The parables of the Talents and Pounds talk about how we are rewarded when we are faithful in the tasks we have been given. If we are very faithful in these tasks, we will be greatly rewarded (i.e. made rulers over many cities). If we are less faithful, our rewards will be much smaller (i.e. made rulers over only a few cities).

These parables show our actions and obedience influence our eternal rewards. Therefore, it is obvious we have control over our choices and

actions, and those choices and actions impact eternity. These parables suggest selective salvation can't be true. If selective salvation were true, there would be no differences in our rewards. In fact, we would not be rewarded at all because we lack the ability to make decisions that impact eternity. The existence of a reward system means we do have control over eternal and Heavenly issues.

- Matt 25:14-30 Parable of the Talents
- Luke 19:11-27 Parable of the Pounds

Part 5

Difficult Questions Answered

Part 5 of 5 parts in the Selective Salvation section

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Jacob and Esau



Chapter: 14.58

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The phrase “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated” (Romans 9:13) is often used to support selective salvation. Selective Salvationists point to this verse (which is actually a quote from Malachi 1:2, 3) as proof God has chosen certain people to love and certain people to hate. In fact, it is often used as the cornerstone of the doctrine of selective salvation.

Was God actually saying He personally hated Esau or is there more to this story than what first meets the eye? Esau and Jacob were, of course, Isaac’s twin sons. God told Isaac he would be the father of a great nation. Esau was the first-born and was entitled to two-thirds of the family inheritance and the birthright. Nevertheless, God had told Isaac that the great nation (Israel) was to come through Jacob, not Esau.

Although Esau was the firstborn and Isaac’s favorite (Genesis 25:28) God, in His sovereignty, chose to *use* Jacob. God, in His sovereignty, chose to break

tradition and have the older brother serve the younger (Genesis 25:23). God’s choice of Jacob had nothing to do with salvation, but had everything to do with who would father the nation of Israel. God, in His sovereignty, chose to use Jacob’s seed (not Esau’s) to be the source of the Messiah.

Did God actually hate Esau? If you look at the life of Esau, there was no indication he had the disfavor of God. He was wealthy and in good health. God did not display any hatred toward Esau. I believe the message being presented in Romans 9:13 is, “I have *chosen to use* Jacob, not Esau.”

I don’t know why God used the word “hate.” Maybe it had more cultural significance a few thousand years ago. Maybe the choice of words was to produce an emphasis or contrast. In Luke 14:26, God uses the word “hate” to contrast what our love should be toward Him. Here He says, “If anyone comes to me and does not *hate* his father and mother, his wife and children, his brother and sisters –yes, even his own life –he cannot be my disciple.” Obviously, God is not saying we should actually hate our parents. He was only making a contrast of how great our love for God should be in comparison to our love for our family.

There are a couple of other verses that use the word “hate” for comparison. Matthew 6:24 says, “No one can serve two masters. Either he will *hate* the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.” John 12:25 says, “The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who *hates* his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.”

Using the verse about God “hating” Esau, Selective Salvationists have built a doctrine that God actually hates everyone who is not elect. In fact, they say that God hated the non-elect before their birth. Following are some of the comments made by Selective Salvationists:

- “Pharaoh was sovereignly hated from eternity, even as was Esau.” (Hoeksema, *Good Pleasure*, p. 46)

- God "... hated the non-elect before their birth." (Owen, *The Death of Christ*, p. 227)
- "It has been customary to say God loves the sinner, though He hates His sin. But that is a meaningless distinction. What is there in a sinner but sin?" (Pink, *Sovereignty*, p. 200)
- "We conclude, therefore, that the predestination of Jacob and Esau is a personal election and reprobation unto salvation and eternal desolation respectively. (Haldane, *Commentary of Romans*, p. 462)

Think about what's being said here. Hatred is a very strong emotion. Hatred is a response to someone else's offense. If I were to open up a phone book from another state and blindly point to a name of a person I don't know, I couldn't honestly say I hate or love that person. Both of these emotions are something that needs to be developed.

I find it hard to believe that God (the author of our emotions) would have such strong emotions toward someone who has never been in existence. I find it inconceivable God would passionately hate someone who hasn't even done anything to spurn this hatred. (Remember, according to Selective Salvationists, this hatred is not based on anything the person has done.) More importantly, that type of behavior contradicts everything we know about God from the Bible.

Mark 10:22 talks about the encounter Jesus had with the rich young ruler. After the rich young ruler rejected Jesus, the Bible says Jesus "loved" him. Jesus loved this person who was Hell bound. This is the type of emotion you would expect from someone who wants the *whole* world to come to salvation.

In the chapter (*Children of the Elect*) I talked about how the Canons of Dort specifically says the children of the elect are also elect. If this is true, Esau (the twin brother of Jacob) is one of the elect. If he was one of the elect, God obviously does not hate him. If, however, Esau was not one of the

elect, there are other issues that need to be addressed. Refer to the chapter *Children of the Elect* for more information.

God is not a respecter of persons. God does not have his favorite "pet students." We tell our children the Bible teaches it is wrong to have elite cliques at school where some kids are shunned. We tell our kids is it wrong to have groups of friends where some are excluded simply because they are not part of the current "in" crowd. Personally, I find it hard to believe that God who says it's wrong to have cliques would have His own cliques. Listed below are some verses showing God does not show partiality.

- Deut 10:17 "The great God, mighty and awesome, who ***shows no partiality*** ..."
- 2 Chron. 19:7 "For with the LORD our God there is no injustice or ***partiality*** ..."
- Job 34:19 "[God]" who shows ***no partiality*** ..."
- Acts 10:34 "I now realize how true it is that God does ***not show favoritism***"
- Romans 2:11 "For God does ***not show favoritism***."
- Galatians 2:6 "As for those who seemed to be important—whatever they were ***makes no difference*** to me; God does not judge by external appearance."
- Ephesians 6:9 "and there is ***no favoritism*** with him."
- Col. 3:25 "... and there is ***no favoritism***."
- 1 Peter 1:17 "Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work ***impartially*** ..."

Hardening Pharaoh's Heart



Chapter: 14.59

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Another passage Selective Salvationists use to support selective salvation is Romans 9:17,18. This is where God “hardened Pharaoh’s heart.” Herman Hoeksema said, “Pharaoh was sovereignly hated from eternity, even as was Esau.” (Hoeksema, *Good Pleasure*, p. 46)

I don’t believe, as some have suggested, God hardened Pharaoh’s heart against salvation. I believe Pharaoh had already rejected God and was not receptive to His leading. Pharaoh’s heart was only hardened against following Moses’ request of releasing the Israelites.



God’s desire, in this situation, was to show the world His mighty power. He allowed this hostile, arrogant, and stubborn Pharaoh to push the situation to the extreme. He only hardened Pharaoh’s heart in the direction Pharaoh had already chosen for himself. Listed below are some verses that talk about God hardening Pharaoh’s heart toward Moses’ request:

- Exodus 4:21
- Exodus 7:3-4
- Exodus 10:1
- Exodus 10:20, 27
- Exodus 14:8

I believe if Pharaoh had been receptive to God’s leading, God would have waited until another Pharaoh was on the throne. The reason I feel God would have waited for another Pharaoh, if needed, is because of the example set forth in Genesis 15:13-16. Here, God waited 400 years before He sent the Israelites into the Promised Land. The reason He waited was because “... the sin of the Amorites has not reached its full measure.” If the condition of the Amorite’s heart caused God to wait 400 years to destroy them, I think He would have waited for another Pharaoh, if the current Pharaoh’s heart were not suited for the situation.

Even Mordecai (uncle of Queen Esther) understood God was able to adjust His plans when someone’s heart was not right for a specific task. When

Queen Esther was reluctant to approach the King about the plight of the Jews, Mordecai said, “For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews *will arrive from another place*, but you and your father’s family will perish.”



Queen Esther

God does work in the hearts of the kings to carry out His plans. I don’t believe, however, He forces them to accept or reject His salvation. I believe God will only “harden” a person in the direction that person has already chosen.

When was Pharaoh’s heart hardened? Selective Salvationists say God decided to send Pharaoh to Hell “before the foundation of the world.” Pharaoh’s life was cast in stone long before Pharaoh existed. Pharaoh’s heart was hardened long before the world was created.

Yet this is not what the Bible says. Several times during Pharaoh’s encounter with Moses, the Bible says God hardened Pharaoh’s heart. Pharaoh’s heart was hardened *at the time* he was dealing with Moses. Nowhere does it say anything about it being hardened before the world was created.

The timing of Pharaoh’s hardening is crucial. Even if selective salvation is true, these passages could not be talking about Pharaoh’s heart being hard-

ened toward salvation. (This hardening would have taken place before the world was created.) Therefore, the only thing these passages can be talking about was the hardening that took place toward the requests of Moses.

Even if selective salvation is true, Selective Salvationists cannot use the life of Pharaoh as an example of this selection process. Although this has been the flagship of selective salvation, it needs to be removed from their list of proofs. The life of Pharaoh is an example only of God controlling the politics of man, not the salvation of man.

"I have Chosen You"



Chapter: 14.60

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Another verse used to support selective salvation is John 15:16, which says “You did not choose me, but I chose you.” Before I explain this verse, let me present a scenario to you. Let’s say I embezzled all of your money (savings, retirement, etc.). I then took this \$500,000 and lost it all gambling. A couple of months later I come knocking at your door saying I want us to be friends again. I tell you I am willing to let bygones be bygones and am willing to overlook any differences that might be between us.

Since I am the offending party with no means of compensation, I have no right to *initiate* a friendship. The choice of initiating reconciliation is up to you, the offended party. This scenario is similar to our situation with God. Since we are the offending party (with no means of compensating for our wrongdoings), we have no right to request reconciliation. The *choice* is not ours; it belongs only to God.

Despite the way we have abused God; He still loves us. In fact, his love is so great He is willing to go to incredible extremes to resolve the problem. He initiated the resolution. He *chose* to bring us back to Him. He *chose* to do more than resolve our sin problem; He *chose* to allow us to live in Heaven and to become His bride.

Yes, God has chosen us and we have not chosen Him. This verse is not saying He has chosen to force us to become believers. Rather, it is saying He has chosen to offer salvation to us.

Another verse people use to support selective salvation is John 17:24. Here Jesus talks about those God has given to Him. They say this shows God has given some people to Jesus. This verse says, “Father, I want those *you have given me* ...”

Who is this special group of people given to Jesus? This group is the whole human race. If you look at the previous verse (v. 23), Jesus says, “... let the *world* know that you sent me *and loved them* even as you have loved me.” Yes, God the Father has given a group of people to Jesus; this group is the world.

Another verse used to support selective salvation is 2 Thessalonians 2:13, “... from the beginning, God chose you to be saved” This is one of those verses that could be viewed either way. Without the context of the rest of the Bible, either viewpoint could have a valid claim. You may ask, “How is it valid both ways? I can see how it is consistent with selective salvation, but not the other way.”

Sometimes we forget that God *chose* to save the fallen human race, but not the fallen angelic race. The angels, too, have rebelled against God, but it appears He has made no provision to redeem them. Yes, God chose us to be saved. He didn’t have to, but He chose to make salvation available to the human race. Before the beginning of time God knew we were going to sin and He knew Jesus was going to have to die on the cross to provide us salvation (Revelation 13:8 and 1 Peter 1:20).

Nation of Israel



Chapter: 14.61

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People who believe in selective salvation will point to the Nation of Israel as proof God has chosen a group of people for salvation. I see three problems with this. First, since a very large number of these Israelites were not believers, this selection could not have been for salvation. Following are some things God has said about Israel:

- God said Israel was “ignorant of God’s righteousness” (Romans 10:3)
- Israel was “a disobedient and gainsaying people” (Romans 10:21)
- Things were so bad with Israel that “the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.” (1 Thes. 2:16).

Second, if their selection was for salvation, then all of the present day Israelites should also be Christians. This, of course, is not true. Selective Salvationists may say Israel’s great sin 2,000 years ago (the rejection of Christ) caused God to select others for salvation instead of the Jews, but this can’t be true. The main premise of selective salvation is a person’s heart, and repentance has nothing to do with God’s selection. Therefore, all of the present day Jews should also be believers. Besides, Article 8 (Canons of Dort) says that God’s election is the same in the New Testament as it was in Old Testament times.

Third, “Outsiders” (in Old Testament times) were welcomed to partake in God’s salvation. The Bible provides plenty of examples of outsiders being included into God’s redemption. Ruth, who was a Gentile, had a whole book in the Bible written about her. In fact, Joseph, the father of Jesus, was her descendant. Outsiders were welcomed and accepted.

God did not select the Nation of Israel for salvation, but for *service*. There were certain things God wanted to accomplish through these people. One of the main things God wanted to do was to create a people from whom the Messiah would come.

"Clay in the Hands of God"



Chapter: 14.62

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Romans 9:20-24 says, "Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why has thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, on the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?" This verse is often used to support selective salvation. Selective Salvationists say this is proof God creates certain people for eternal damnation. Hoeksema says the following:

- "God's absolute sovereignty to determine the final destiny of men either to honor or dishonor, to salvation and glory or to damnation and desolation." (Hoeksema, *Good Pleasure*, p. 60)

Are these verses talking about God creating people just for the sake of damning them to Hell, or are they talking about something else? The illustration of the potter and clay is used several times in the Old Testament (see the following list).

- Isaiah 29:16
- Isaiah 45:9
- Isaiah 64:8
- Jeremiah 18:1-6

Since not all of the Israelites became believers, these references could not have been referring to salvation (look at the chapter *Nation of Israel* for more information). When God referred to Israel as clay, He was talking about forming it to be used to bring the Messiah into the world. It is talking about service, not salvation.

The passage in Romans 9 is also talking about service. God is saying He can do whatever He wants with us. He often intervenes in our lives to fit things into His master plan. He has a plan for each of our lives. We often choose to ignore it and as a result, we miss out on many blessings and rewards. Yet, there are times when God steps in and intervenes. Sometimes it's for the purpose of punishment and sometimes it's for the purpose of redirecting our lives toward a better path.

All God is saying in Romans 9 is He has the right to do whatever He wants to do in our lives. He has the right to mold our lives into whatever He desires. If He wants to make us live in deplorable poverty, He has the right. If He wants to make us live as kings, He has the right. If He wants to make you a successful world-renowned Christian leader or a lowly janitor at a rest stop, He has the right.

Appendix

Foundational Documents used by Selective Salvationists

Appendix for the Selective Salvation section

Canons of Dort
Belgic Confession of Faith
Heidelberg Catechism
Westminster Catechism

Since each of these documents is about 20 pages long, they are not included in this book. They can be viewed at my website:

<http://www.biblehelp.org/dort.htm>

<http://www.biblehelp.org/belgic.htm>

<http://www.biblehelp.org/heidel.htm>

<http://www.biblehelp.org/west.htm>

If Selective Salvation is True ...

■ How do you know you are one of the elect?

There is nothing in the Bible that says, “You will know you are one of the elect because” Some people say they know they are one of the elect because of the fact they have become a Christian. “Being a Christian” doesn’t prove anything. The Bible says that not everyone who calls God “Lord” and performs miracles will go to Heaven. If Selective Salvation is true, you can only hope you are one of the elect. There is absolutely nothing you can do to verify you are going to Heaven. In fact, your chance of being one of the elect is about 1 in 13.

■ Are we lying when we witness?

When we share Christ with others, we usually say things like, “God loves you and wants to forgive you. If you accept Him as your Savior, you will spend eternity with Him.” If Selective Salvation is true, we are lying to the person if he is not one of the elect.

I realize some people say that since they can’t identify the elect, they witness to everyone as though they are the elect. This lack of knowledge, however, does not justify lying. God is not glorified if we lie when we are witnessing. More important, God would never create a system of evangelism that requires continued lying. If Selective Salvation is true, we need to completely revamp the way we witness.

■ Can we influence our children’s response to the gospel?

Most Christian parents assume that their prayers, godly influence, and Biblical training will increase their child’s chance of becoming a Christian. However, if Selective Salvation is true, a child from a Christian home is no more likely of becoming a Christian than a child from an atheist home. In fact, each child has only about a 7% chance of becoming a Christian.

If you are like most Christians, you find the subject of Selective Salvation confusing, contradictory, and intimidating. Most churches, as a result, are very reluctant to cover this subject in depth. This lack of teaching only increases the confusion.

Although I think this book will clear up much of this confusion, that is not the reason I wrote it. I wrote it because of my concern for the lost. If selective salvation is true, everyone who is supposed to get saved will get saved. If, however, it is not true, then there are billions of people needlessly going to Hell.