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THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

The doctrine of the Sovereignty of God is sometimes avoided by Baptists because it often figures in the dark philosophical circles of Calvinistic discussion. However, this is no reason for us to bypass such a blessing, or shirk our responsibility to determine what the Bible teaches.

Any discussion of God’s sovereignty encompasses the following:

The foreknowledge of God
The counsel of God
The will of God
The providence of God

Admittedly, these are some of the more difficult areas of doctrine — largely because we who are finite are attempting to comprehend the Infinite One. Nevertheless, as always, we must be guided by the Word of God.

I. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

It is without dispute that our God is absolutely sovereign. This is affirmed by both logic and Scripture:

A. God’s Sovereignty Is Logical.

“To declare God sovereign is to declare Him God”.¹ If God were not sovereign, He would be finite — someone else would be master.

B. God’s Sovereignty is Scriptural.

The Bible declares God to be supreme (*I Chronicles 29:12; Psalm 47:2*) and therefore sovereign (*Psalm 115:3; Isaiah 14:24*).

1 Chronicles 29:12

12 Both riches and honour *come* of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand *is* power and

¹Pink A. W. **The Sovereignty Of God**: Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1930: pg.19

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might; and in thine hand *it is* to make great, and to give strength unto all.

Psalm 47:2

2 For the LORD most high *is* terrible; *he is* a great King over all the earth.

Psalm 115:3

3 But our God *is* in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

Isaiah 14:24

24 The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, *so* shall it stand:

C. God's Sovereignty Is Harmonious.

The Sovereignty of God does not transcend or overrule His attributes — it is in consonance with them. This fact is extremely important to keep in mind in order to avoid 'Calvinistic-confusion' in matters such as predestination and free will.

The king-pin of the Calvinist philosophy is the Sovereignty of God — the problem being that *their* concept of sovereignty leans towards capriciousness.

However, God *never* ignores His attributes just because He is sovereign and can do anything He wants to. The fact is He is *always* holy, He is *always* loving, He is *always* gracious and merciful, He is *always* longsuffering, He is *always* just, He is *always* immutable, He is *always* Truth — and, He is *always* Sovereign!

God exercises His absolute sovereignty in ways consistent with all His attributes. He is never arbitrary in what He does or decrees.

II. THE FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD

One of the most vexing questions mooted in theological circles deals with the reconciling of God's foreknowledge and His sovereignty.

A. God's Foreknowledge Is Logical.

If God did not know about some thing before it happened, He would not be God. The fact is, nothing ever occurs to God — nothing surprises Him!

B. God's Foreknowledge Is Scriptural.

God is omniscient — therefore He knows "*the end from the beginning*". (Isaiah 46:10).

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See also: *Isaiah 42:9*

Isaiah 46:10

10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

Isaiah 42:9

9 Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them.

This simply means that every event in time, every thought, word, and deed of man, every sparrow that falls, every soul that is *saved* — *everything* — *is* known to God, and was known to God in eternity past.

The Bible gives several specific examples of God's foreknowledge:

1. He Foreknew The Need To Send His Son To The Cross.
Acts 2:23

Acts 2:23

23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

2. He Foreknew All Who Would Receive His Son As Saviour.
Romans 8:29; 1 Peter 1:2

Romans 8:29

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

1 Peter 1:2

2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

3. He Foreknew The History Of His Chosen People, Israel.
Romans 11:2

Romans 11:2

2 God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

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C. God's Foreknowledge Is Harmonious.

The fact that God has known everything that has, is, and will take place in time from eternity past does not condition His sovereignty.

Calvinist philosophy, which argues that since God knew a certain event would take place in time He must of necessity have ordained it to be — or else He could not be sovereign, is erroneous. This rationale, applied to the area of salvation states that since God knew back in eternity past who would be saved, it had to be because He ordained who would be saved. While this logic may make sense to some, the ramifications in the area of sin are startling! i.e. Since God knew back in eternity past that sin would enter into the world, it had to be because He sovereignly ordained it to be so. (God is the Author of sin!)

This matter will be further considered at a later point in this lecture.

D. God's Foreknowledge And His Eternal Purpose.

The Bible speaks of God's 'eternal purpose'. A study of the relevant Scriptures shows this relates to God's plan of redemption through His Son. By His foreknowledge God knew in eternity past what man would do with his free will, and so determined the great Plan of Salvation. His eternal purpose is centered in His Son —*Ephesians 3:11*— and involves the following:

Ephesians 3:11

11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

1. The Provision Of Redemption By Christ.
1 Peter 1 :18-20; Revelation 13:8

1 Peter 1:18-20

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers; 19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: 20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

Revelation 13:8

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

2. The Promise Of Eternal Life Through Christ.
Titus 1:2

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Titus 1:2

2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

3. The Predestination Of Those In Christ.
Ephesians 1:4,5; Romans 8:29; II Thessalonians 2:13,14.

Ephesians 1:4-5

4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Romans 8:29

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Note: The subject of election and foreordination will be dealt with more fully under the Doctrine of Salvation.

4. The Purchase Of The Church Of Christ.
Ephesians 3:3-11

Ephesians 3:3-11

3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, 4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. 8 Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; 9 And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: 10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

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5. The Prospect Of The Consummation By Christ. *Isaiah 14:24-27.*

Isaiah 14:24-27

24 The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, *so* shall it stand: 25 That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. 26 This *is* the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this *is* the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. 27 For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul *it*? and his hand *is* stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

Like the sovereignty of God, His foreknowledge is always consistent with His other attributes — including His counsel.

III. THE COUNSEL OF GOD

The Counsel of God is an aspect of His attribute of wisdom — we may define it as the *expression* of His infinite wisdom. The Counsel of God figures into the discussion on the sovereignty of God because in Calvinist thinking it is synonymous with His sovereign decree.

A. The Counsel Of God — Viewed Philosophically.

Based upon Scripture references such as *Acts 2:23* and *Acts 4:28*. Calvinists see the Counsel of God as a foreordaining decree, predetermined in eternity past by a sovereign God.

Acts 2:23

23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

Acts 4:28

28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism states: “*The decrees of God are His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.*”

Bancroft says: “*The counsel of God is that eternal scheme of all things adopted by the Divine mind which embraces all His original designs, including everything in the creative and redemptive program of God and involving or embracing the free actions*”

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of men.”²

Thiessen states: “*The decrees of God are His eternal purpose or purposes, based on His most wise and holy counsel, whereby He freely and unchangeably, for His own glory, ordained either efficaciously or permissively, all that comes to pass.*”³

B. The Counsel Of God — Viewed Scripturally.

As always, we must let Scripture define and interpret Scripture. On this subject, the Word of God reveals some interesting facts (not speculations!):

1. The Counsel Of God *Is* The Word Of God.

The following Scriptures show that we have the counsel of God in our hands: *Psalm 33:11; 73:24; 107:11; Jeremiah 23:18; Micah 4:12; Acts 20:27.*

Psalm 33:11

11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

Psalm 73:24

24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me *to* glory.

Psalm 107:11

11 Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High:

Jeremiah 23:18

18 For who hath stood in the counsel of the LORD, and hath perceived and heard his word? who hath marked his word, and heard *it*?

Micah 4:12

12 But they know not the thoughts of the LORD, neither understand they his counsel: for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor.

Acts 20:27

27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

²Bancroft, E. H. **Elemental Theology**: Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan 1977: pg 106.

³Theissen, H. C. **Lectures In Systematic Theology Grand Rapids**, Michigan, Eerdmans, 1974: pg 147.

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Note the following:

- a. We Have The “Mind Of Christ” — *I Corinthians 2:16*

1 Corinthians 2:16

16 For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

- b. We Have ALL Of God’s Counsel — *Acts 20:27*

- c. We May Not Understand It Fully — *Romans 11:33,34*

Romans 11:33-34

33 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?

Truly, God’s wisdom is infinite.

See also: *Isaiah 55:8,9*.

Isaiah 55:8-9

8 For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

- d. We Can Reject It — *Luke 7:30; Proverbs 1:24,25,30*

Luke 7:30

30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

Proverbs 1:24-25,30

24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; 25 But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: 30 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.

2. The Decrees Of God Are Stated In The Word Of God.

These are:

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a. God's Decree To Provide Rain — *Job 28:26*

Job 28:26

26 When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder:

b. God's Decree Concerning The Lord Jesus Christ — *Psalm 2:7*

Psalm 2:7

7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou *art* my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

The decree to send His Son into the world to die for the sins of mankind is the only stated **predetermined** act of God. See: *Acts 2:23; 4:28; 1 Peter 1:20; Luke 22:22a.*

Acts 2:23

23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

Acts 4:28

28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

1 Peter 1:20

20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

Luke 2:22

22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present *him* to the Lord;

c. God's Decree To Establish The Heavens — *Psalm 148:6*

Psalm 148:6

6 He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.

d. God's Decree To Contain The Sea — *Proverbs 8:29; Jeremiah 5:22*

Proverbs 8:29

29 When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth:

Jeremiah 5:22

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22 Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand *for* the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?

- e. God's Decree To Deliver Israel — *Isaiah 10:22*

Isaiah 10:22

22 For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, *yet* a remnant of them shall return: the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

- f. God's Decree Concerning King Nebuchadnezzar — *Daniel 4:24*

Daniel 4:24

24 This *is* the interpretation, O king, and this *is* the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:

There *are* no other decrees of God.

3. Other Things Are Determined By God.

The Bible does speak of the Lord determining certain events. For example:

- a. God Has Determined Certain Prophetic Events.
Daniel 9:24,26,27; 11:36.

Daniel 9:24-27

24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. 25 Know therefore and understand, *that* from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince *shall be* seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. 26 And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. 27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make *it* desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Daniel 11:36

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36 And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.

- b. God Has Determined The Days Of A Man.
Job 14:5.

Job 14:5

5 Seeing his days *are* determined, the number of his months *are* with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;

Some interpret this to mean that God has decreed the length of each man's life. Obviously, God knows how long each man will live. However, since it is possible for a man to "*die before his time*" (*Ecclesiastes 7:17*), it appears this reference relates more to the "bounds" (boundary) set by God in *Psalms 90:10*.

Ecclesiastes 7:17

17 Be not over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before thy time?

Psalms 90:10

10 The days of our years *are* threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength *they be* fourscore years, yet *is* their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

- c. God Has Determined The Boundaries Of The Nations.
Acts 17:26; Deuteronomy 32:8.

Acts 17:26

26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

Deuteronomy 32:8

8 When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.

Obviously, this determination by a sovereign God is not irresistibly enforced. Man has violated these boundaries — albeit to his own sorrow!

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IV. THE WILL OF GOD

The expressed Will of God is the same thing as the Counsel of God. God has sovereignly determined to reveal Himself to man and His will is fully expressed through His Word — *Deuteronomy 29:29*.

Deuteronomy 29:29

29 The secret *things belong* unto the LORD our God: but those *things which are* revealed *belong* unto us and to our children for ever, that *we* may do all the words of this law.

A. The Will Of God Is Revealed To Man.

How do we know this?

1. Because It Can Be Known.

Ephesians 5:17; Colossians 1:9; 4:12.

Ephesians 5:17

17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*.

Colossians 1:9

9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

Colossians 4:12

12 Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

2. Because It Can Be Done.

God would not expect us to actually do His will without telling us what it is. The following Scriptures establish that God's will can be done:

Psalms 40:8; 143:10; Matthew 6:10; 7:21; 12:50; Mark 3:35; John 7:17; Hebrews 10:36; 1 Peter 4:2; 1 John 2:17.

Psalms 40:8

8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law *is* within my heart.

Psalms 143:10

10 Teach me to do thy will; for thou *art* my God: thy spirit *is* good; lead me into the land of uprightness.

Matthew 6:10

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10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.

Matthew 7:21

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 12:50

50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Mark 3:35

35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

John 7:17

17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself.

Hebrews 10:36

36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

1 Peter 4:2

2 That he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

1 John 2:17

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

3. Because It Can Be Proved.

Romans 12:2. How is the mind renewed? How is the will of God proven? Through the knowledge of the Scriptures!

Romans 12:2

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

4. Because It Is Explicitly Stated.

See: *1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:18; 1 Peter 2:15.*

1 Thessalonians 4:3

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3 For this is the will of God, *even* your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:

1 Peter 2:15

15 For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

The Word of God reveals numerous details about the will of God — both to the lost, and to the child of God.

B. Is There A “Secret” Will Of God?

If there is, then no man can be expected to do it.

However there is no secret will of God whereby He sovereignly determines who will be saved and who will not be saved. This would be impossible because His *revealed* will clearly is:

1. That All Should Be Saved.

II Peter 3:9; Matthew 18:14; 1 Timothy 2:4.

2 Peter 3:9

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Matthew 18:14

14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

1 Timothy 2:4

4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

2. That All Who Believe On Christ WILL Be Saved.

John 3:18. Compare this with Isaiah 45:19.

John 3:18

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Isaiah 45:19

19 I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth: I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain: I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.

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God never wills sin. See: *Jeremiah 19:5*.

Jeremiah 19:5

5 They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire *for* burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake *it*, neither came *it* into my mind:

C. Is There A “Permissive” Will Of God?

Though this term is not found in Scripture, the concept of a permissive will (at least from a human perspective) is. This term is applied to situations where the express will of God (the ‘*perfect*’ will of God — *Romans 12:2*) is not followed, and yet where the Lord apparently permits certain things to proceed anyway.

Romans 12:2

2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

For example:

1. Abraham Was Permitted To Go Down To Egypt.

See: *Genesis 12:10* etc.

Genesis 12:10

10 And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine *was* grievous in the land.

God’s perfect will was for Abram to remain in the Land he was specifically called to. Nevertheless, God allowed him to step out of that will and go to Egypt (a picture of the world — *Isaiah 31:1*). In Egypt, Abram compounded his folly by having his wife lie.

Isaiah 31:1

Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because *they are* many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!

2. Israel Was Permitted To Have A King.

See: *1 Samuel 8:4-22*.

1 Samuel 8:4-22

4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, 5 And

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said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. 6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. 7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. 8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. 9 Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them. 10 And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king. 11 And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint *them* for himself, for his chariots, and *to be* his horsemen; and *some* shall run before his chariots. 12 And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and *will set them* to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. 13 And he will take your daughters *to be* confectionaries, and *to be* cooks, and *to be* bakers. 14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, *even the best of them*, and give *them* to his servants. 15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. 16 And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put *them* to his work. 17 He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. 18 And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day. 19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; 20 That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. 21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD. 22 And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

Clearly, God's perfect will for His chosen people was a Theocracy, (*Judges 2:16*). However, God permitted them to have a king—something they later regretted (see: *verses 11-18; I Samuel 14:52; I Kings 12:1,4,11*).

Judges 2:11-18

11 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: 12 And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that *were* round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. 13 And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. 14 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. 15 Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn unto them: and they were greatly distressed. 16 Nevertheless the LORD raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them. 17 And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but

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they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themselves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; *but* they did not so. 18 And when the LORD raised them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: for it repented the LORD because of their groanings by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them.

1 Samuel 14:52

52 And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul: and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him.

1 Kings 12:1,4,11

And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king. 4 Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee. 11 And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

3. John Mark Was Permitted To Return Home.

See: *Acts 13:5,13.*

Acts 13:5,13

5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to *their* minister. 13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing from them returned to Jerusalem.

God's perfect will was for the Gospel to be preached to "*every creature*". John Mark accompanied Saul and Barnabas on a church-planting venture into Asia-minor. For some reason (homesickness, fear, etc.) he quit the team and went home. Evidently the apostle Paul believed he had stepped out of God's will and had weakened the effectiveness of their mission. The issue later became a divisive matter of contention between he and Barnabas — *Acts 15:36-40.*

Acts 15:36-40

36 And some days after Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they do. 37 And Barnabas determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark. 38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work. 39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus; 40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.

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This so-called permissive will of God really falls into the category of the Providence of God, because God invariably uses it to accomplish His perfect will anyway.

- * We note that God used the adverse situation in Egypt to bring Abram back into the center of His perfect will (*Genesis 12:20; 13:1,3*).

Genesis 12:20

20 And Pharaoh commanded *his* men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.

Genesis 13:1-3

And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. 2 And Abram *was* very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. 3 And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai;

- * We understand through the prophetic Word that God will use the throne of David to re-establish Israel under a true Theocracy (*Isaiah 9:6,7; 43:15; Jeremiah 23:5,6*).

Isaiah 9:6-7

6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

Isaiah 43:15

15 I *am* the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.

Jeremiah 23:5-6

5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. 6 In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this *is* his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

- * God used the circumstances surrounding John Mark's departure to increase the spread of the Gospel. The sharp contention between Paul and Barnabas (an incident itself normally outside of God's perfect will — *Proverbs 13:10; 18:18,19*) resulted in *two* evangelistic teams instead of one taking the Gospel to the lost. As for John Mark, the Lord evidently used this personal failure in his life to produce a trustworthy servant — the writer of the Gospel of

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Mark and a profitable ally of Paul (*II Timothy 4:11*).

Proverbs 13:10

10 Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised *is* wisdom.

Proverbs 18:18-19

18 The lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty. 19 A brother offended *is harder to be won* than a strong city: and *their* contentions *are* like the bars of a castle.

2 Timothy 4:11

11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

No one should use the permissive will of God as an excuse for disobedience to the revealed will of God. No matter how acceptable the permissive will of God may be, it will never be as acceptable to God as His perfect will.

From man's perspective, see: *Psalms 106:15*

From God's perspective, see: *Numbers 14:18*

Psalms 106:15

15 And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

Numbers 14:18

18 The LORD *is* longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation*.

D. Is There A Purpose To God's Will?

Some believe God's ultimate aim is the happiness or the holiness of man. Others think it is the establishment of His rule over all creation. While these aims may be encompassed in what God does, the single purpose of His will is His glory. Everything God does is designed ultimately to His glory — *I Chronicles 16:24,28,29; Psalms 115:1; Ephesians 1:6,12,14c; Philippians 2:11; I Timothy 1:17; I Peter 4:11; Jude 25*. See also: *Acts 12:23; Romans 1:21; 3:23*.

1 Chronicles 16:24,28-29

24 Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations. 28 Give unto the

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LORD, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength. 29 Give unto the LORD the glory *due* unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

Psalms 115:1

Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, *and* for thy truth's sake.

Ephesians 1:6,12-14

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13 In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Philippians 2:11

11 And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1 Timothy 1:17

17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, *be* honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 4:11

11 If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Jude 25

25 To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

Acts 12:23

23 And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

Romans 1:21

21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Romans 3:23

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

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1. Creation Glorifies God.
Psalm 19:1

Psalm 19:1

1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

2. Israel Glorifies God.
Isaiah 48:11; 49:3; 60:21

Isaiah 48:11

11 For mine own sake, *even* for mine own sake, will I do *it*: for how should *my name* be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.

Isaiah 49:3

3 And said unto me, Thou *art* my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

Isaiah 60:21

21 Thy people also *shall be* all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

3. Salvation Glorifies God.
Romans 9:23; Ephesians 1 :6,12,14c

Romans 9:23

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

Ephesians 1:6,12-14

6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13 In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

4. Believers Glorify God.
I Corinthians 6:20; 10:31; Romans 15:6

1 Corinthians 6:20

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

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1 Corinthians 10:31

31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

Romans 15:6

6 That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

a. By their works — *Matthew 5:16*

Matthew 5:16

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

b. By their fruit — *John 15:8*

John 15:8

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

c. By their words — *Psalms 50:23; II Corinthians 4:15*

Psalms 50:23

23 Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth *his* conversation *aright* will I shew the salvation of God.

2 Corinthians 4:15

15 For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

d. By their sufferings — *II Thessalonians 1:10,12; I Peter 4:14,16*

2 Thessalonians 1:10-12

10 When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. 11 Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the work of faith with power: 12 That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 4:14-16

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. 15 But let none of you

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suffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. 16 Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

e. By their death — *John 21:19*

John 21:19

19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

5. Churches Glorify God.
Ephesians 3:21

Ephesians 3:21

21 Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

6. The Millennium Will Glorify God.
Psalms 86:9

Psalms 86:9

9 All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.

7. Heaven Glorifies God.

a. Its occupants — *Revelation 4:9,11; 5:12,13*

Revelation 4:9-11

9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, 10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Revelation 5:12-13

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. 13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

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- b. Its city — *Revelation 21:11*

Revelation 21:11

11 Having the glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;

etc.

VII. THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

A. The Providence Of God Defined.

“Providence” comes from the Greek root, “*pronoia*” which means “to provide.” It is the provision and care God exerts to accomplish His divine purpose. It is God’s bidding, control, direction, overruling, and permission in the affairs of His creation.

B. The Basis Of God’s Providence.

The providence of God extends from, and is in consonance with, the attributes of God.

1. He Is Wise.

Therefore we may expect God to act rationally.

2. He Is Good.

Therefore He will have the interests of His creatures at heart.

3. He Is Omnipotent.

Therefore we can be confident He has the ability to accomplish His purposes.

C. The Scriptural Proof Of God’s Providence.

That God’s sovereignty extends over all His creation is made abundantly clear in the Bible. For example:

1. Providence In The Physical Realm.

Psalms 103:19; 147:16-18; I Samuel 7:10; Job 9:5-7; 37:10; 38:12-35; Acts 14:17.

Psalms 103:19

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19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

Psalm 147:16-18

16 He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. 17 He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold? 18 He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, *and* the waters flow.

1 Samuel 7:10

10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.

Job 9:5-7

5 Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger. 6 Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble. 7 Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars.

Job 37:10

10 By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened.

Job 38:12-35

12 Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; *and* caused the dayspring to know his place; 13 That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it? 14 It is turned as clay *to* the seal; and they stand as a garment. 15 And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken. 16 Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth? 17 Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death? 18 Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all. 19 Where *is* the way *where* light dwelleth? and *as for* darkness, where *is* the place thereof, 20 That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths *to* the house thereof? 21 Knowest thou *it*, because thou wast then born? or *because* the number of thy days *is* great? 22 Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, 23 Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war? 24 By what way is the light parted, *which* scattereth the east wind upon the earth? 25 Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder; 26 To cause it to rain on the earth, *where* no man *is*; *on* the wilderness, wherein *there is* no man; 27 To satisfy the desolate and waste *ground*; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth? 28 Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew? 29 Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it? 30 The waters are hid as *with* a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen. 31 Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? 32 Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? 33 Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion

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thereof in the earth? 34 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? 35 Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we *are*?

Acts 14:17

17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

2. Providence In The Animal Kingdom.

Job 12:10; Psalm 104:21,28,29; 147:9; Matthew 6:26; 10:29.

Job 12:10

10 In whose hand *is* the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

Psalm 104:21,28-29

21 The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God. 28 *That* thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good. 29 Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

Psalm 147:9

9 He giveth to the beast his food, *and* to the young ravens which cry.

Matthew 6:26

26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

Matthew 10:29

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

3. Providence In The Affairs Of The Nations.

Job 12:23; Psalm 22:28; 66:7; 75:6,7; Proverbs 21:1; Isaiah 10:5-7; Daniel 4:25b; Acts 17:26; Romans 13:1.

Job 12:23

23 He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them *again*.

Psalm 22:28

28 For the kingdom *is* the LORD'S: and he *is* the governor among the nations.

Psalm 66:7

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7 He ruleth by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations: let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.

Psalm 75:6-7

6 For promotion *cometh* neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. 7 But God *is* the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

Proverbs 21:1

The king's heart *is* in the hand of the LORD, *as* the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Isaiah 10:5-7

5 O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. 6 I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. 7 Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but *it is* in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.

Daniel 4:25

25 That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

Acts 17:26

26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

Romans 13:1

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

4. Providence In The Preservation Of His Word. *Psalm 12:6,7; Matthew 24:35; etc.*

Psalm 12:6-7

6 The words of the LORD *are* pure words: *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. 7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

Matthew 24:35

35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

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[See: Unit 1, Lecture 8]

5. Providence Over All Individuals.

a. In Birth And Life:

1 Samuel 16:1; Esther 4:14; Psalm 139:16; Isaiah 45:5; Jeremiah 1:5; Galatians 1:15,16.

1 Samuel 16:1

And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

Esther 4:14

14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, *then* shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?

Psalm 139:16

16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all *my members* were written, *which* in continuance were fashioned, when *as yet there was* none of them.

Isaiah 45:5

5 I *am* the LORD, and *there is* none else, *there is* no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me:

Jeremiah 1:5

5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, *and* I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.

Galatians 1:15-16

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace,
16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

b. In The Course Of Man's Life:

Matthew 10:30; Luke 1:52; Proverbs 16:1,33; 1 Samuel 2:6-8; Exodus 12:36.

Matthew 10:30

30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

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Luke 1:52

52 He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree.

Proverbs 16:1,33

The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, *is* from the LORD. 33 The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof *is* of the LORD.

1 Samuel 2:6-8

6 The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. 7 The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. 8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, *and* lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set *them* among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth *are* the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them.

Exodus 12:36

36 And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them *such things as they required*. And they spoiled the Egyptians.

c. In Needs:

Psalm 4:8; 5:12; 63:8; 121:3; Romans 8:28; Philippians 4:19; Isaiah 64:4.

Psalm 4:8

8 I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.

Psalm 5:12

12 For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as *with* a shield.

Psalm 63:8

8 My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.

Psalm 121:3

3 He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

Romans 8:28

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

Philippians 4:19

19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

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Isaiah 64:4

4 For since the beginning of the world *men* have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, *what* he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

- d. In Eternal Destiny:
Psalms 73:24; 37:23,24; 11:6.

Psalms 73:24

24 Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me *to* glory.

Psalms 37:23-24

23 The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. 24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth *him with* his hand.

Psalms 11:6

6 Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: *this shall be* the portion of their cup.

6. Providence Over The Actions Of Men.

- a. In General:
Exodus 12:36; 1 Samuel 24:18; Exodus 7:27; Proverbs 19:21; 21:1; Jeremiah 10:23; Philippians 2:13.

Exodus 12:36

36 And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them *such things as they required*. And they spoiled the Egyptians.

1 Samuel 24:18

18 And thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not.

Exodus 7:25

25 And seven days were fulfilled, after that the LORD had smitten the river.

Proverbs 19:21

21 *There are* many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.

Proverbs 21:1

The king's heart *is* in the hand of the LORD, *as* the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

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Jeremiah 10:23

23 O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

Philippians 2:13

13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

b. Sometimes, God Permits Sin:

II Samuel 16:10; 24:1; II Thessalonians 2:11,12; II Chronicles 32:31; Psalm 81:12,13; Hosea 4:17; Acts 14:16; Romans 1:24,26,28.

2 Samuel 16:10

10 And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?

2 Samuel 24:1

And again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.

2 Thessalonians 2:11-12

11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

2 Chronicles 32:31

31 Howbeit in *the business of* the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to enquire of the wonder that was *done* in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all *that was* in his heart.

Psalm 81:12-13

12 So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: *and* they walked in their own counsels. 13 Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, *and* Israel had walked in my ways!

Hosea 4:17

17 Ephraim *is* joined to idols: let him alone.

Acts 14:16

16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

Romans 1:24-28

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24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Note: This is only after opportunities for righteousness have been rejected.

- c. Sometimes, God Prevents Sin:
Genesis 20:6; Psalm 19:13; Hosea 2:6.

Genesis 20:6

6 And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

Psalm 19:13

13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous *sins*; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.

Hosea 2:6

6 Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths.

- d. Always, God Limits Sin:
Job 1:12; Psalm 124:2,3; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Revelation 20:2,3.

Job 1:12

12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath *is* in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

Psalm 124:2-3

2 If *it had not been* the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us: 3 Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us:

1 Corinthians 10:13

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13 There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

Revelation 20:2-3

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

D. The Purpose Of The Providence Of God.

According to *Romans 8:28*, all things work together for GOOD. See also: *Psalm 84:11*.

Romans 8:28

28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

Psalm 84:11

11 For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

Even with the unsaved, God's providence is for good. See *Acts 14:17*. Providential goodness to the lost has for its end their salvation. See: *Romans 2:4*.

Acts 14:17

17 Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

Romans 2:4

4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

The ultimate end of Providence is the glory of God. *Isaiah 48:11*.

Isaiah 48:11

11 For mine own sake, *even* for mine own sake, will I do *it*: for how should *my name* be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.

E. Theories Opposed By The Providence Of God.

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1. Naturalism.
This view states that everything is governed by the laws of nature, and that man's happiness depends on his cooperating with these laws.
2. Fatalism.
This view states that everything is determined by fate. Fatalists may call fate "God," (as does Islam), but such a "god" is arbitrary, non-moral, and impersonal.
3. Pantheism.
This view makes man part of "god," thus making God sinful, weak, and of corrupt morality.

F. Difficulties Associated With The Providence Of God.

1. Does Providence Deny Human Freedom?
The providential workings of God do not limit God. Sometimes He allows man to do as he pleases; other times He restrains, or prevents man from doing what he desires; always God over-rules in ways to accomplish His glory.

While we will never properly comprehend the ways of God, we know from Scripture that according to His foreknowledge, God achieves His sovereign purpose by whatever of the above methods He chooses.

2. Does Providence Mean I Don't Have To Pray?
To say this would deny the many Scriptural exhortations to pray. Evidently, there are some things God does only in answer to prayer.

Again, we may not be able to fully understand the ways of God (that's because He is God!) - but we must be guided by Scripture.

For example, it would be foolish to pray for the sun to rise (God's providence takes care of that!), but we would certainly need to pray for the sun not to set. (*Joshua 10:12-14.*)

Joshua 10:12-14

12 Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. 13 And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. *Is not this written in the book of Jasher?* So the sun stood

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still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. 14 And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.

A father will provide many good things for his child, whether the child asks for them or not — but he loves to be asked, and may not give some things until such time as he is asked.

VI. THE CALVINIST QUAGMIRE

Calvinist philosophy impales itself on the horns of a dilemma when it elevates the Sovereignty of God above His other attributes.

The Calvinist logic goes something like this:

God is Sovereign

God is Omniscient

God knows everything from the beginning

Therefore God must have *decreed* everything from the beginning

Therefore God foreordains
every
thought, word, and deed
of
every man
(*Proverbs 16:1,9,33; 19:21; 20:24; 21:1; 29:26*)

Proverbs 16:1,9,33

The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, *is* from the LORD. 9 A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps. 33 The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof *is* of the LORD.

Proverbs 19:21

21 *There are* many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.

Proverbs 20:24

24 Man's goings *are* of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?

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Proverbs 21:1

The king's heart *is* in the hand of the LORD, *as* the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Proverbs 29:26

26 Many seek the ruler's favour; but *every* man's judgment *cometh* from the LORD.

A. The Calvinist Concept Of "Decrees".

Calvinist 'logic' refers to the decrees of God (or THE Decree, of which all decrees are but a part), teaching that God has decreed all things.

A. J. Gordon said, "*A universe without decrees would be as irrational and appalling as would be an express train driving on in the darkness without headlight or engineer, and with no certainty that the next moment it might not plunge into the abyss.*"

*"God foreknows all events as certainly future because he has decreed them and thus made them certainly future."*⁴

*"The decrees of God are His eternal purpose or purposes, based on His most wise and holy counsel, whereby He freely and unchangeably, for His own glory, ordained either efficaciously or permissively, all that comes to pass."*⁵

Calvinists usually speak of the decrees of God in the following way:

1. God's Decrees Are Eternal.
They were not formulated in time, as human history progressed, but were made in eternity.
2. God's Decrees Are Unalterable.
They are sovereign.
3. God's Decrees Are Wise And Holy.

⁴Hodge, A. A. **Outlines Of Theology.** Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1879(1972 ed.): pg 202

⁵Theissen, H. C. **Lectures In Systematic Theology.** Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, pg 197

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This is because God is Wise and Holy. Because God is omniscient(all-knowing), He knows what is best. Because God is Holy, He cannot decree anything that is wrong.

4. God's Decrees Are Free.
The decrees of God did not originate out of necessity. God may have chosen to confine His activity with Himself in the Godhead. He was not influenced or bound — what God purposed, He purposed voluntarily according to His attributes.
5. God's Decrees May Be Efficacious Or Permissive.
An efficacious decree is one God determines to bring about. A permissive decree is one God determines to permit.

As noted above, the Bible lists the actual decrees of God. They are not as the Calvinist asserts.

B. Calvinist Logic Leads To Error.

If God decreed all things, as Calvinists assert, then He must have decreed sin! This matter has been a source of contention among Calvinists, who divide into three 'camps' over the issue of the fall (*lapis*) of man. These opinions are:

1. Supralapsarianism.
This view holds that God decreed the fall of man. The supralapsarian order in the decree is:
 - a. God decreed the salvation of some and the damnation of others for the end of His own glory.
 - b. God decreed, as a means to that end, to create those already elected or reprobated.
 - c. God decreed the fall of man.
 - d. God decreed the atonement for the elect.
 - e. God decreed salvation for the elect.

This viewpoint makes God the Author of sin, and teaches that He created certain men so that He could damn them; consequently it is held by the

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minority of Calvinists. It is often referred to as *hyper*-Calvinism, no doubt to make mainstream Calvinism appear moderate. Nevertheless, it illustrates where philosophy and man's logic will take you.

2. Infralapsarianism.

The prefix *infra* means below. The order in the decree in this system is:

- a. God decreed to create man.
- b. God decreed the fall of man.
- c. God decreed election (salvation) and reprobation (damnation).
- d. God decreed the atonement for the elect.
- e. God decreed salvation for the elect.

This viewpoint is held by the majority of Calvinists. While it does not have God creating men in order to damn them, like all theories within the Augustinian-Calvinist theology, it teaches that some are predestined to salvation and others to damnation.

3. Sublapsarianism.

This view, otherwise known as “Four-point Calvinism”, has the decree in the following order:

- a. God decreed to create.
- b. God decreed the fall.
- c. God decreed the atonement for all men.
- d. God decreed election (salvation) and reprobation (damnation).
- e. God decreed salvation for the elect.

In this scheme, reprobation is usually divided into two acts — first, Preterition (where God sovereignly *passes by* [i.e. did not choose] the non-elect); second, Condemnation (where God later judicially punishes those He passed over for their sin).

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C. The Scriptural Teaching.

The decrees of God actually stated in Scripture have already been listed. The Bible does not mention anything of an eternal decree which foreordains every thought word, and deed of every man in time.

More on this subject will be covered under the doctrines of Man, Sin, and Salvation. However, a few important Biblical truths are stated below.

1. God NEVER Decrees Wickedness.

See: *Isaiah 10:1; Job 34:10; 36:23; Psalm 5:4.*

Isaiah 10:1

Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness *which* they have prescribed;

Job 34:10

10 Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding: far be it from God, *that he should do* wickedness; and *from* the Almighty, *that he should commit* iniquity.

Job 36:23

23 Who hath enjoined him his way? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity?

Psalm 5:4

4 For thou *art* not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.

The Bible does teach that God allows evil to happen (e.g. *II Samuel 17:14; Nehemiah 13:18; Isaiah 45:7; Lamentations 3:38; Ezekiel 14:22; Daniel 9:14; Amos 3:6*; etc.), but this kind of evil is judgment which is dispensed because of man's sin — *Jeremiah 19:3-5.*

2 Samuel 17:14

14 And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The counsel of Hushai the Archite *is* better than the counsel of Ahithophel. For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.

Nehemiah 13:18

18 Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.

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Isaiah 45:7

7 I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these *things*.

Lamentations 3:38

38 Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good?

Ezekiel 14:22

22 Yet, behold, therein shall be left a remnant that shall be brought forth, *both* sons and daughters: behold, they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way and their doings: and ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, *even* concerning all that I have brought upon it.

Daniel 9:14

14 Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God *is* righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.

Amos 3:6

6 Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done *it*?

Jeremiah 19:3-5

3 And say, Hear ye the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle. 4 Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, nor the kings of Judah, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents; 5 They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire *for* burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake *it*, neither came *it* into my mind:

If God decreed sin, He would deny Himself, *II Timothy 2:13b*. God is not the Author of sin — *James 1:13,14* — for that would be inconsistent with His divine, holy nature.

2 Timothy 2:13

13 If we believe not, *yet* he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

James 1:13-14

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

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2. God Permitted Man To Be Tested.

God permitted (not decreed) this, knowing before-time that man would fail and that sin would enter the universe.

It was necessary for man to be tested in his innocent (neither sinful or holy) state because the relationship God desired with him was to be free.

3. God Over-rules Sin For Good.

This fact must go hand in hand with the above, otherwise the entrance of sin into the world would have bested God. While God sometimes permits sin, He also can control its manifestation.

The following examples show this to be so: *Genesis 50:20; Psalm 33:10,11; 76:10; Daniel 3:19-30*; etc.

Genesis 50:20

20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive.

Psalm 33:10-11

10 The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. 11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

Psalm 76:10

10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

Daniel 3:19-30

19 Then was Nebuchadnezzar full of fury, and the form of his visage was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: *therefore* he spake, and commanded that they should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated. 20 And he commanded the most mighty men that *were* in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, *and* to cast *them* into the burning fiery furnace. 21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 22 Therefore because the king's commandment was urgent, and the furnace exceeding hot, the flame of the fire slew those men that took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, *and* spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. 25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. 26 Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the

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mouth of the burning fiery furnace, *and* spake, and said, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come *hither*. Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, came forth of the midst of the fire. 27 And the princes, governors, and captains, and the king's counsellors, being gathered together, saw these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power, nor was an hair of their head singed, neither were their coats changed, nor the smell of fire had passed on them. 28 *Then* Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed *be* the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God. 29 Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort. 30 Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, in the province of Babylon.

4. God Determined To Provide For Man's Salvation.
Acts 2:23; 4:27,28; 1 Peter 1:20.

Acts 2:23

23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

Acts 4:27-28

27 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

1 Peter 1:20

20 Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

As noted above, the atoning death of Jesus Christ was the only stated predetermined act of God.

5. God Chose (Elected) To Save All Who Trust Christ As Saviour.

- a. God Seeks To Save All Men.

God took the initiative in our salvation. See: *Genesis 3:8,9; Isaiah 59:15,16; John 15:16; Romans 2:4; Titus 2:11.*

Genesis 3:8-9

8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam

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and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.
9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou?

Isaiah 59:15

15 Yea, truth faileth; and he *that* departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw *it*, and it displeased him that *there was* no judgment.

John 15:16

16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Romans 2:4

4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Titus 2:11

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

- b. God Knows All Who Will Be Saved.
This is called “divine foreknowledge,” and is predicated in the omniscience of God.
- c. God Elected To Save All Who Will Trust Christ.
Election is based on the foreknowledge of God. *Romans 8:29; 1 Peter 1:1,2*. By election, we mean that sovereign act of God in grace, whereby from eternity past He chose in Christ all whom He foreknew would accept His Son.

Romans 8:29

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

1 Peter 1:1-2

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

- d. God Predestines All Who Trust Christ To Salvation And Its Benefits.
John 1:12; 6:37; Ephesians 1:5; Romans 8:29.

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John 1:12

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:

John 6:37

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Ephesians 1:5

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

Romans 8:29

29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

6. God Declares He Will Punish All Who Reject Christ.
 Psalm 9:17; Isaiah 3:11; Revelation 20:11-15; etc.

Psalm 9:17

17 The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God.

Isaiah 3:11

11 Woe unto the wicked! *it shall be ill with him*: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

Revelation 20:11-15

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book of life*: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. 14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Men will be cast into the Lake of Fire, not because of a sovereign eternal decree predestinating them to such, but because they have wilfully rejected their only hope of salvation in Jesus Christ. In this sense, all sinners are (by virtue of their sin) predestined to Hell — until they receive Christ, whereupon they are then predestined to Heaven!

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D. Conclusion.

Calvinists and Bible-believers have one thing in common — none of them can fully comprehend the ways of an Infinite God. None can explain why God is as He is, does as He does, or permits as He permits.

The *difference* between the two groups is that Calvinists resort to philosophical speculations for an explanation (*Colossians 2:8*), whereas Bible-believers stand on what God has revealed in His Word.

Colossians 2:8

8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

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**STUDY QUESTIONS
UNIT 2, LECTURE 6**

NAME _____ DATE _____

Each question worth 4.1 points

The Doctrinal Statement given by Bancroft on page 111 is Calvinistic heresy. The offending words are, "certain individuals". A more correct statement would read: ("The Scriptures teach that God has from eternity purposed to save all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ..." The student is warned to be extremely careful of this doctrine of men.

1. What is the implication of God not being sovereign?

2. What Is the important thing to remember about the Sovereignty of God and His other attributes?

3. What is meant by the "foreknowledge" of God?

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4. What is the 'focus' of the eternal purpose of God?
5. How do Calvinists view the Counsel of God?
6. What is the Counsel of God?
7. Is there any decree recorded in Scripture which states that God foreordained certain men to salvation?
8. Where do we find the will of God revealed?
9. What is the will of God concerning the salvation of men?

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10. What is meant by the 'permissive will' of God?

11. Give a Biblical example of God's permissive will.

12. What is God's supreme purpose and aim?

13. List 3 ways in which Christians can glorify God.
 - A.**

 - B.**

 - C.**

14. What is meant by the Providence of God?

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15. Give an example where God providentially permitted sin.

16. Give an example where God providentially prevented sin.

17. Cite a Scripture reference which teaches the Providence of God working in the life of a believer.

18. Cite a Scripture reference which teaches the Providence of God working in the preservation of the Scriptures.

19. Why must we pray if God providentially works all things for good toward us?

20. Outline the basic logic of Calvinism.

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21. What is the basic difference between supralapsarianism and infralapsarianism?
22. What is the basic feature of sublapsarianism?
23. Who did God elect to save?
24. What is the "in a nutshell" difference between Calvinists and Bible-believers?