

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Romans 8:28

Lesson #6

Calvinism / Arminianism

09/03/2017

Arminians vs Calvinists

Misconceptions

- **Calvinists** have no incentive to evangelize, a superficial view of security, are arrogant, cold, exclusive, and confuse faith with doctrine.
- **Arminians** are in fear of losing their salvation, refuse to accept God's grace, and confuse faith with feeling.



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In the Netherlands in the 17th cent. a theological controversy raged over certain aspects of the Theology of

John Calvin

Jacobus Arminius

was a Calvinist who began to question some of its teachings.

T - U - L - I - P

is an acrostic that sums up the five articles that were in dispute.

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TULIP (High Reformed Theology)

- **T**otal depravity - we are incapable of responding to Christ without first being regenerated.
- **U**nconditional election - God chose individuals for salvation based on His sovereign will alone.
- **L**imited atonement - Christ's death effected the redemption of the elect only.
- **I**rresistible grace - All whom God calls cannot but respond with faith and obedience.
- **P**reservation of the saints - All whom God calls will not fail to display faith and good works until the end.



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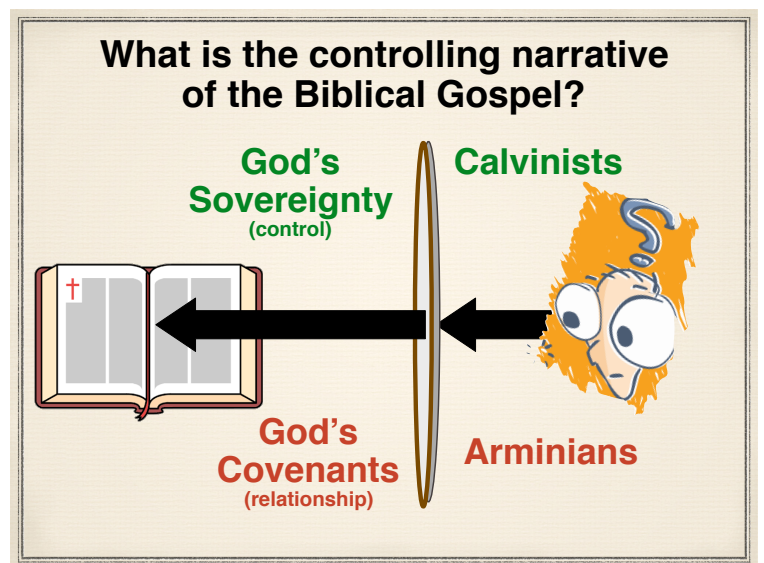
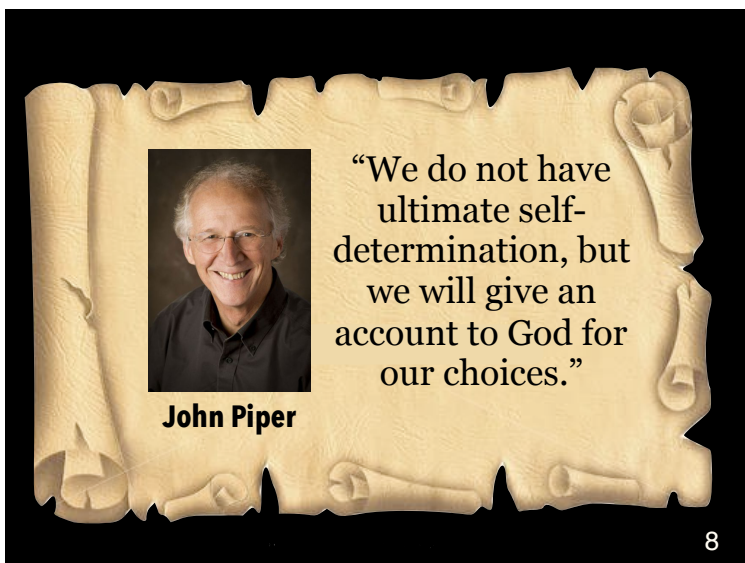
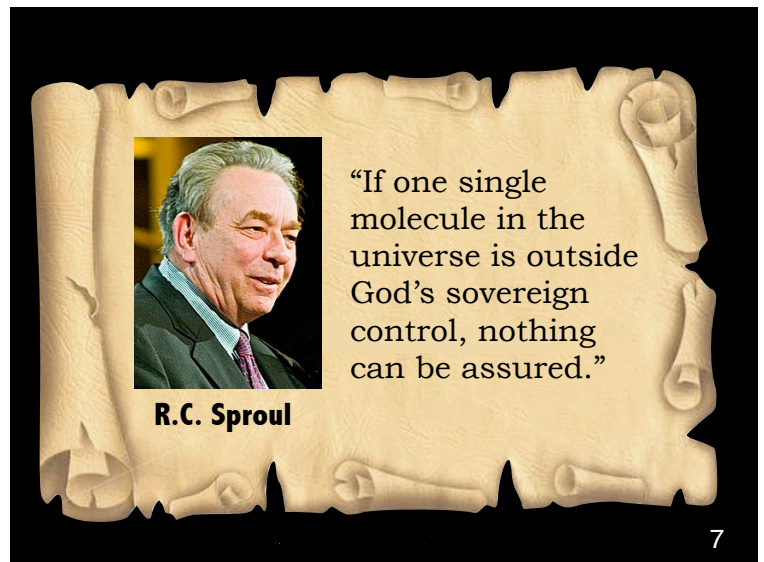
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The Glory of God demands Sovereign Grace!



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Pruning TULIP (Arminian theology)

- T**otal depravity - affects every area of life but not completely.
- U**nconditional election - God elected Christ and all that He foresaw would freely respond to him.
- L**imited atonement - Christ's death paid the debt of all humanity but its benefits were realized only by those who received Christ by faith.
- I**resistible grace - We are free to reject or receive Christ.
- P**erseverance of the saints - Salvation is for those who maintain their faith and hope in Christ.



Even evil seems to be ordained of God.

Isaiah 45:7

“The One forming light and creating darkness, causing well-being and **creating calamity; I am the Lord who does all these.**”

Acts 4

“²⁷ For truly in this city there were gathered together against Thy holy servant Jesus, . . . both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel ²⁸ **to do whatever Thy hand and Thy purpose predestined to occur.**”

A theology that attributes everything to God’s will and control, **makes it difficult to see the difference between God and the devil.**



Some form of human free will must be respected for several reasons.

- The “**image of God**” in all humans involves the ability to respond to God.
- Free volition is **assumed** in much of the Biblical narratives and teachings.
- Ethics, just judgment, warnings, rewards, love, etc. are **meaningless** without human freedom.
- Free volition is necessary to preserve **human responsibility** for sin and evil.
- Free volition is necessary to preserve **God’s integrity** as consistently holy, just, and loving.

“No theology is worth believing that cannot be preached standing in front of the gates of Auschwitz.”

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2. Human moral responsibility (freedom) is also well attested in Scripture.

John 3:16

““For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, **that whoever believes** in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

1 Timothy 2:6

“who gave Himself a ransom **for all,**”

2 Peter 3:9

“The Lord is ... **not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.**”

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3. Divine foreknowledge is mentioned in Scripture.

Romans 8:29

“For whom He **foreknew**, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;”

1 Peter 1

“¹ To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen ² according to the **foreknowledge** of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood:”

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Two concepts

1. **Foreordination (predestination)** - God's decree before creation as to what would and would not happen.
2. **Foreknowledge** - God's sense of what would happen (through free choice) before it occurred.

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Three understandings of the relationship between God's foreknowledge and His foreordination.

1. Foreordination precedes Foreknowledge. (John Calvin)
2. Foreknowledge precedes Foreordination. (John Wesley)
3. **Foreknowledge and Foreordination are inseparable as a part of God's creation of the ages. (a mystery to temporal thought)**

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4. God's creative work included both the universe (cosmos) and history (aion)

Hebrews 1:2

"in these last days (God) has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also **He made the world (aion).**"

Hebrews 11:3

"By faith we understand that the **worlds (aion) were prepared by the word of God,**"

Ephesians 2:2, 3:21

"you formerly walked according to the **course (aion) of this world (cosmos).**"

"to all generations **forever (aion) and ever (aion).**"

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5. On this issue we have limited access to wisdom.

Deuteronomy 29:29

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

1 Corinthians 13:12

"For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now **I know in part**, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known."

Hebrews 11:3

"**By faith we understand** that the worlds (aion) were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible."

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We will ask the question but cannot demand a full explanation.

Romans 9

"¹⁶ So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy. ¹⁷ For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, *"For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth."* ¹⁸ So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. ¹⁹ You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who resists His will?" ²⁰ On the contrary, **who are you, O man, who answers back to God?** The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it? ²¹ Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use, and another for common use?"

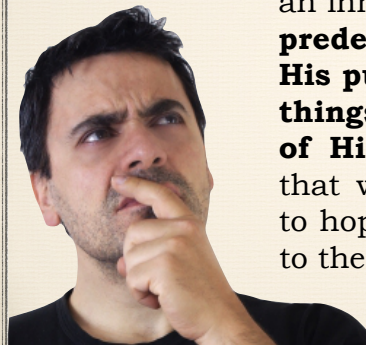
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How does God work all things together for his purposes?

Predestination

Ephesians 1

"¹¹ also we have obtained an inheritance, having been **predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,** ¹² to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory."



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Romans 8:28
"And we know that **in all things God works for good** to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

Examples

- **Paul's thorn in the flesh** (2 Cor. 12:1-10) - It was from Satan but God used it for good.
- **Our suffering in this life** (2 Cor. 1:1-11) - It enables us to comfort others who suffer.
- **The Cross of Christ** - It was unjust but God used it for good.
- **Joseph's captivity** (Gen. 50:20) - It was evil but God used it for good.
- **What is painful for you right NOW** - It is a door to develop or demonstrate the image of Christ.

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Consideration #1
Is God's loving, sovereign, power SELF LIMITED IN THIS AGE?

Could God's love and respect for those created in His image limit His absolute control of them?

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Consideration #2
Is God's loving, sovereign, power MANAGED BY HIS CREATIVE WISDOM?

Whose Line is it Anyway?
"They create humor out of anything."

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Consideration #2
Is God's loving, sovereign, power MANAGED BY HIS CREATIVE WISDOM?

"God changed chaos to cosmos (in part) through natural means."

Genesis 1

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Consideration #3

**Is God's loving, sovereign, power
SYNCED WITH HIS FOREKNOWLEDGE .**



Carlsen Magnus

Like a grandmaster in chess, God can see how history is set up to enable certain things to unfold, and He uses this as a part of His providential plan. 30

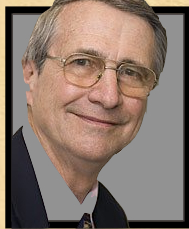


With respect to our bank account:

**Do we possess
the money
upon deposit
or withdrawal?**



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Peter Kreeft

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

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"Calvinism emphasizes divine sovereignty and free grace; Arminianism emphasizes human responsibility. The one restricts the saving grace to the elect; the other extends it to all men on the condition of faith. Both are right in what they assert; both are wrong in what they deny. If one important truth is pressed to the exclusion of another truth of equal importance, it becomes an error, and loses its hold upon the conscience. The Bible gives us a theology which is more human than Calvinism, and more divine than Arminianism, and more Christian than either of them."

Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, vo. VIII:815-6

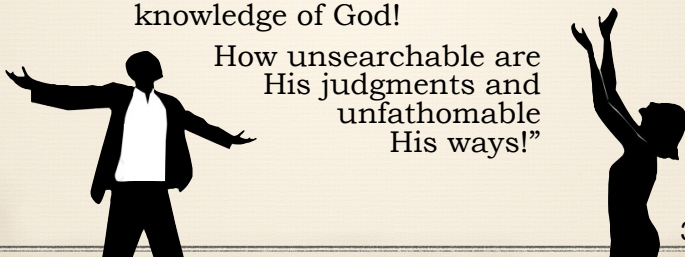
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**God's Grace should inspire
awe and worship
not passivity and fatalism
or pride and fear.**

Romans 11:33

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

How unsearchable are
His judgments and
unfathomable
His ways!"



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What is the take-home of this study?

- **Interpretation of Scripture** - Approach apparent contradictions in the Bible responsibly.
- **Worship** - Develop an understanding of God's integrity, which will inspire respect and trust.
- **Tolerance** - Gain understanding / respect for differing theological views.
- **Responsibility** - Don't be fatalistic but Accept responsibility for your decisions, attitudes, etc.
- **Humility** - Embrace an enlightened view of Christian grace, truth, and human nature.

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