

THE SPURIOUS TULIP V 1.1

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A critical examination of the five points of Calvinism (TULIP), presenting arguments against the doctrines of total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints from an Arminian perspective.

13 Chapters

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01-INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The tulip is truly a beautiful flower. Unfortunately, it has become the symbol of a system of belief that is spurious. The word spurious means; not authentic, genuine, or true; in other words false. The system of belief I am referring to is Calvinistic Soteriology. The word soteriology comes from the Greek word soteria, meaning salvation. God has revealed in His Word the means to have forgiveness for our sins and a home in Heaven when we die. However, there is not total agreement in the Christian realm as to how God provides His gift of salvation to mankind and to whom this gift is offered. For the past 500 years there has been much contention within the Church of Jesus Christ regarding who can receive God's gift of salvation. The central point of contention is this: Did God choose who will be saved and who will be damned, or does God offer the gift of salvation to any who will believe and receive it? The purpose of this paper is to examine Calvinistic Soteriology, establish the fact that it does not comply with the teachings of Scripture and present true Biblical soteriology. A topic as serious as salvation is something of which God wants us to have no doubts. Therefore, we should be able to find the truth in the Bible. As a personal testimony, let me tell you that I followed the teachings of Calvinism for 35 years. What caused me to change my beliefs? I know for sure that it was God's influence in my life! Due to a situation that occurred in my church, my wife Nancy and I were having a discussion on the teachings of Calvinism. I could see that she was becoming increasingly distressed that I was so adamant about my beliefs. Finally, she tearfully asked me not to discuss it with her any more because she did not believe it and she was becoming too upset. That night I fervently asked God to show me the truth about salvation at a time when I was not looking for it. I asked in that way because I had studied the doctrines of Calvinism many times in the past, but it was always with the mindset that it was true; an a priori if you will. I wanted God to show me the truth at a time when I was not looking for it, and my mind was open. Two days later, as I was preparing my Sunday School lesson, I was working on the point that Jesus is the mediator between God and man and not Mary. I was in the e-Sword program highlighting the verse 1 Timothy 2:5 so I could copy and paste into my lesson outline. As I was highlighting the verse, my eye moved up (was moved up!) to the previous verse.

1 Timothy 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. That was it!! It hit me right between the eyes!! Even though I had read that verse many times before, it was always under a Calvinistic mindset. But as soon as I read that verse with an open mind, I knew that God was speaking to me!!

Now please don't misunderstand, I am not suggesting that this verse absolutely proves that Calvinism is wrong, but I had asked God to show me the truth at a time when I was not looking for it and He did just that. I truly believe that He was sending me a message and I cannot tell you how many things God has revealed to me since that time when I was not looking for them!! It has been an incredible experience for me and I want to share it with you. Before we begin, I would like to clarify some terminology. Many who believe in Calvinistic Soteriology do not want to be labeled

Calvinists. They say correctly that John Calvin was wrong in many of his doctrinal teachings. Some prefer to use the term Reformed Doctrine, others prefer the term Doctrins of Grace, or the Sovereignty of God. Accordingly, in this study, we will use the terms Calvinism and Calvinist only with referent to Calvinistic Soteriology. There are also some variations within the teachings of Calvinism. For example, Calvinism teaches that election unto salvation is based on God's decree, but there are different opinions as to when this decree was established. Some Calvinists believe that God decreed who will be saved and who will be lost before He even created the world. Others believe that God made His decree after the fall of man. Still others believe that God did not establish His decree until after Jesus atoned for sin on the cross. In a later section, we will see that none of these teachings are true, but before we do that, I would like to describe to you how we will use the Scriptures to determine the truth.

02-COMMON MISTAKES INTERPRETING SCRIPTURE

Chapter One Common Mistakes in Interpreting Scripture

When studying Scripture, it is possible to mistakenly draw a conclusion based on an erroneous interpretation and application of specific verses. There have been many cults established based on an incorrect interpretation of God's Word, or using it in the wrong context. Here are some examples:

James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Joseph Smith mistakenly believed this verse taught that the Bible did not give us all the counsel of God. Therefore, he asked God to give him more information (wisdom) about His will. This led to the Book of Mormon, and all the false teachings of Mormonism.

There are other cult teachings that use an incorrect context of Scripture to support their false teachings:

Revelation 7:4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. The Jehovah's Witnesses use this verse to support their teaching that there will be 144,000 elite leaders from their church who will rule in the kingdom.

Sometimes we may come to a verse that seems to contradict other teachings in the Bible:

Acts 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. This verse is used by some denominations to teach Baptismal Regeneration, or salvation by Baptism.

These are three examples of errors in interpreting Scripture that lead to doctrinal error. It is not the purpose of this paper to study the correct interpretation of these passages, I will leave that to you.

These are examples of what has happened when Scripture was incorrectly interpreted, and if we are not careful, we can fall into the same error pattern concerning the doctrines of Calvinistic Soteriology.

There is no excuse for misinterpreting God's Word. He has given us many admonitions and promises throughout the Scriptures:

John 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

2 Timothy 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

God has also given us some specific principles to help us understand His Word. In the next chapter, we will expand on these principles found in Isaiah, chapter 28.

03-PRINCIPLES IN INTERPRETING SCRIPTURE

Chapter Two Principles in Interpreting Scripture

Isaiah 28:9-10

9 Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little:

Here in Isaiah, God teaches us how to study and interpret the Scriptures. Bible verses should not be used to oppose each other like shots in a tennis match. Isaiah tells us that precepts and lines from the Word must be built upon each other, not against each other. Also he tells us to search the Scriptures (John 5:39) to find the answers; a little here and a little there. There are no contradictions in the Bible. If we find a concept in the Bible that seems to teach something contrary to other places, then we must strive to understand the correct interpretation by using the following principles. The first principle is to be sure to know the correct meaning of all the words in a text by consulting the original languages: Hebrew in the Old Testament, and Greek in the New Testament. Many times the English translation of these original languages does not give us the full meaning of the word. A good example of this can be seen in the Greek word that is translated love in the New Testament. There are actually four Greek words that can be translated to love. - Eros, which is physical or romantic love. This word is not found in the New Testament. - Phileo, which is friendship or brotherly love, as in the following: Matthew 10:37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. - Thelo, which means a preference, as in "I love chocolate". We find this example in the following:

Mark 12:38-39

38 And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, 39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: - Agape, which is God's love, a benevolent love, as in the following verse:

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

As an illustration of this principle, we will examine the Greek words translated love in this following dialogue between Jesus and Peter. Notice how the deeper meaning of of this scripture is revealed when we understand the meaning of the Greek words.

John 21:15-17

15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (agape) thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love (phileo) thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (agape) thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love (phileo) thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest (phileo) thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, lovest (phileo) thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love (phileo) thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

We see here that by consulting the Greek words translated love, we discover a deeper meaning to this passage. Jesus gives Peter two opportunities to express agape love for him, but Peter reverts to the lesser phileo love for his Savior. The third time Jesus asks Peter of his love for him, He reverts to Peter's phileo love, and this is the reason that Peter was grieved (John 21:17). It was not that Jesus asked him three times about his love, but that Jesus needed to use the lesser form of love the third time, showing Peter that his love was inadequate. We can use this same method of study for any scripture we want to "delve into." The second principle is to stay in the context of the scripture you are studying. The context of a scripture passage is the perspective, background, and situations surrounding the words in the passage. If we lift a verse out of its context, we will misunderstand and misapply the meaning of the verse. The best way to understand this principle is to use an example of taking a verse out of context and seeing the results of doing so. John 6:50-56 50 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. 52 The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? 53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. 54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. 56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. This passage is infamous for being taken out of context, with disastrous results. How many dear Catholic friends do you have who think they are receiving the real body of Christ every time they take communion? The last thing they do before they die is to receive this sacrament, thinking it will bring them to Heaven, only to wake up and see that it did not. We will see the true context of this passage later in the section on foreknowledge, but for now it is sufficient to understand what can happen if we are not careful to understand the context of the scriptures we are studying. The third principle is to ask the Holy Spirit to guide us as we study the Bible.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. John 16:12-15 12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you. In

this study, we will endeavor to use these principles to expose the errors of Calvinism. We will refer to these principles as The Isaiah Principles

04-THE DECREES OF GOD

Chapter Three The Decrees of God

There are several words in the Old Testament that are translated decree. Many of them are Chaldean or Persian words and only refer to the decrees of these eastern kings. However, there are two Hebrew words translated decree in which refer specifically to the decrees of God.

Geze■ra■h - A primitive root; to cut down or off; to destroy, divide, exclude, or decide. (Strong)

This word is used to describe the decrees of God almost always as a command to stop, separate, or eliminate something or someone; as we see in this passage:

Daniel 4:24-25 24 This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the most High, which is come upon my lord the king:

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.

This is God's decree against Nebuchadnezzar when He caused him to lose his mind and live like an animal because of his pride.

Zephaniah 2:1-3 1 Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O nation not desired;

2 Before the decree bring forth, before the day pass as the chaff, before the fierce anger of the LORD come upon you, before the day of the LORD'S anger come upon you.

3 Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD'S anger.

This is God's decree against the heathen nations about the coming judgment of God

Cho■q - An enactment; hence an appointment of time, space, quantity, labor, or usage - appointed, bound, commandment, custom. (Strong)

This word describes a decree from God making an appointment for someone or something, as we see in these verses:

Job 28:23-28 23 God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof.

24 For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven;

25 To make the weight for the winds; and he weigheth the waters by measure.

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

27 Then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out.

28 And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Psalms 148:1-6 1 Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights.

2 Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.

3 Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.

4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.

5 Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created.

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

God has made many decrees, but the most important one is this: Psalms 2:7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. This decree sent the Son of God to the earth as a man to offer his life to pay for the sins of all of mankind. But where in the Bible do we find the decree of God where He chooses who will be saved and who will be damned according to the good pleasure of His will?? Don't try to find it---- it's not there!!

Calvinism teaches that following verse and other similar verses prove their claim that God decreed who will be saved and who will not: Ephesians 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

I refer to this verse because it contains a word that is very controversial. That word is predestinated. Predestination is really the central teaching in Calvinistic soteriology. We will use a good portion of this paper examining the true meaning of predestination. The doctrine of predestination is in the Bible and we cannot ignore it or deny it, but we need not be afraid of the term. We will be using the Isaiah Principles to understand predestination, as well as the five points of Calvinism (TULIP).

Before we do that, we need to understand that those who propagate Calvinism are not heretics. They are fellow Christians who have a sincere desire to give God all the acknowledgment for our salvation. They consider any teaching of the free will of man to be an act of works and not grace. Calvinism teaches that God is totally sovereign in salvation. We are completely passive in the matter, and have no free will concerning salvation because God has decreed, before the foundation of the world, who will be saved and who will be damned. Now, does God have the right to do this? Yes He does, but do the Scriptures teach us that salvation is strictly by the decree of God? Does God force His grace upon the elect only, or does He offer salvation as a free gift to all who will believe? Does God want to control us as a puppeteer controls his marionettes, or does He give us the freedom to believe and receive the gospel or reject it? These are intriguing questions which we will endeavor to answer scripturally. The scriptures reveal many things about God's character and the way He deals with us. Specifically, we will examine five Biblical tenets which refute the teachings of Calvinism. They are as follows:

God's Foreknowledge The Atonement

Free Agency God's Drawing God's Compassion

My goal in this paper is to help people know the true character of God as it is revealed in the Bible, and to understand how God redeems the lost. My prayer is that you, the reader, will consider the following arguments with an open mind and a sincere desire to know God as He is portrayed in the scriptures. Please don't be of the opinion that these doctrines are not important, or that they are above our understanding, or that both election and free will are taught in the Bible, so it is acceptable to believe either or both. Unconditional election and man's free will are diametrically opposed doctrines, they cannot both be true. The teachings of Calvinistic Soteriology misrepresent many of God's characteristics; namely, His compassion for the lost and His love for sinners. We must see God as He truly is and reject the Spurious Tulip!

05-THE GENERAL TEACHINGS OF CALVINISM

Chapter Four The General Teachings of Calvinism The teachings of Calvinism are usually represented by the acronym TULIP, which denotes the five points of Calvinistic Soteriology. We will define and expand upon these five points according to the principles of Calvinism. They are as follows:

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

TOTAL DEPRAVITY The word depravity is not found in the Bible. The meaning of the word is: corrupt, wicked, unholy. However, the condition of the depravity of all people is clearly seen as in the following verses:

Romans 3:10-18 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:

14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

15 Their feet are swift to shed blood:

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways:

17 And the way of peace have they not known:

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Ephesians 2:1-3 1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

These verses and others teach us that all men are depraved: wicked and born with a sinful condition. This is the Biblical meaning of depravity, but Total Depravity means much more than that. Total Depravity teaches that man has absolutely no ability to know anything about God, or to seek Him in any way until he is first born again. The idea is that if we are born with a spirit that is

"dead in trespasses and sin," we have no ability to know anything spiritual.

1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Calvinism uses these verses to show that the "natural man," a person who is not born again, has no ability to know or understand anything spiritual in nature. In fact, Calvinism teaches that the faith which is necessary to receive Jesus as Savior must be given to an individual before he can believe. Or to put it another way, regeneration must precede faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. This teaching is not scriptural. In fact, in the section on Free Agency, we will consider several portions of God's Word that refute this teaching.

UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

This doctrine teaches that before God created the world, he chose and predestinated certain ones to be saved and certain ones to be damned. Those who are not part of this elect group have no hope of salvation.

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,

Some Calvinists prefer not to say that God chose some individuals to be damned (Reprobation), But that God chose some to be saved, and passed over the rest (Preterition). Reprobation means to cast away, and preterition means to pass over or ignore. We will see that the Bible teaches neither of these two principles.

LIMITED ATONEMENT

The doctrine of Limited Atonement teaches that when Jesus died on the cross, He accomplished atonement, redemption, and regeneration for the elect only.

John 10:14-15 14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

The teaching in this passage, according to Calvinism, is that the sheep are the elect, and Jesus gave His life only for them. However, when we analyse the meaning and application of atonement in a later chapter, we will see that Limited Atonement is an unbiblical doctrine.

IRRESISTABLE GRACE

The doctrine of Irresistable Grace teaches that those whom God has chosen cannot resist His call to salvation. They have no free will in the matter.

John 6:37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

At first glance, this may seem to be an acceptable teaching, but upon further consideration, we will see that this doctrine makes God's grace a force rather than what the Bible teaches; specifically that God's grace is His lovingkindness toward us, and that salvation is a gift that must be freely received.

PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

Perseverance of the Saints is the easiest part of the TULIP to accept because it is very deceptive in its teaching. The doctrine means more than the fact that a Christian can never lose his salvation, as we see in the following verse:

John 10:27-29 27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

Additionally, some Calvinists believe that the elect will persevere in their sanctification to the end. They may backslide at times, but they can never die in a backslidden condition. Furthermore, some Calvinists go as far as to say that if a professing Christian dies as a backslider, it is an indication that he was never really one of the elect! In other words, the true elect person will never die as a carnal Christian. Matthew 24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. There is some truth in parts of these five points, but taken as a whole, all five points contain doctrinal error. The Bible does teach the following:

1. All people are in a desperate condition of sin.
2. God's election is according to His foreknowledge.
3. The atonement was accomplished by Jesus Christ on the cross for all.
4. We are saved totally by God's grace.
5. We will never lose our salvation.

But the following teachings are not biblical 1. Man is totally unable to know anything spiritual, or believe on Christ until he is first born again. 2. Before God created the world, He decreed who will be saved and who will be damned. 3. Atonement, redemption, and regeneration was accomplished on the cross by Jesus Christ only for the elect. 4. All those whom God has chosen to be saved will be irresistibly drawn by God's grace. There is no free will involved. 5. The elect will persevere in faith and sanctification and cannot die in a carnal state. In this study, we will not refute each of the TULIP points in turn, but rather, we will consider the five contrasting points mentioned above to help us understand soteriology from a non-Calvinistic viewpoint. As stated previously, there are no contradictions in the Bible. We can carefully examine what the Bible teaches about salvation. We must not allow the Spurious Tulip to lead us into the garden of falsehood. As we continue this study, please ask God to open your mind to the truth. I promise you that He will do that if you prayerfully and faithfully seek the true teachings of the Scriptures.

06-FOREKNOWLEDGE

Chapter Five

Foreknowledge

The Central teaching of Calvinism is Unconditional Election, which has already been defined above. It is true that the principles of election and predestination are found in the Scriptures, but there is a basis for "election unto salvation." That basis is God's foreknowledge. In order to understand the true meaning of election and predestination, we must first understand the meaning of foreknowledge. This is the definition of the Greek word translated foreknowledge:

Proginosko - From pro (before) and ginosko (to know) To perceive or recognize beforehand, to know previously, to take into account or specially consider beforehand, to grant prior acknowledgement or recognition to someone. (Robinson) The key verse which presents predestination according to foreknowledge is found in the book of Romans:

Romans 8:29 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.

Even though this verse is not specifically addressing salvation, Calvinistic Soteriology uses it as such, so therefore so will we. This passage in Romans and another in Ephesians are the only places in the Bible where we see the word predestinate. Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the word. Predestination is connected to the teaching of Unconditional Election. The meaning is, as we have seen above, that God selected some before the foundation of the world, and predestinated, or predetermined, them to be saved in the future. However, Romans 8:29 says that God predestinated according to His foreknowledge (foreknow). The ancient argument is this: What is it that God foreknew? C.I. Scofield, writes in his reference version: "Election looks back to foreknowledge; predestination forward to destiny. But Scripture nowhere declares what is in divine foreknowledge which determines divine election and predestination." (note on 1 Peter 1:20) The question is: Did God know beforehand whom He would choose, or who would believe? Calvinists will tell us that there is no place in the Bible that says that God predestinated those whom He knew would believe in the future. This statement in itself may be true, but let us consider this question: Can we find any examples in the Bible where God intervened with a person or persons based on His foreknowledge of what they would do in the future?? Yes we can!! I would like to offer three:

Exodus 9:13-16

13 And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

14 For I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people; that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth.

15 For now I will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth.

16 And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

God told Pharaoh, through Moses, that He had raised him up to show His power to the world through His judgments on Egypt. He went on to say fifteen times in the book of Exodus that He would "harden Pharaoh's heart." However, notice what God says to Moses previous to that from the burning bush in Exodus chapter three:

Exodus 3:18-20

18 And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.

19 And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand.

20 And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.

We see in verses 19-20 that God foreknew that Pharaoh would refuse to let the Jews go and His judgments against Egypt were based on His foreknowledge. This passage is a genuine example of God taking action based on foreknowledge of what a person would do in the future.

Here is another example:

Exodus 13:17 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt:

We need some clarification here first. The word peradventure does not refer to a possibility of something happeneng. The two words "lest peradventure" are actually translated from one Hebrew word Pen, which means: to remove or prevent something from happeneng. God foreknew that if He allowed Israel to go through the land of the Philistines, there would be conflict and Israel would change their mind (repent) and return to Egypt. Acting upon His foreknowledge, God led them to the Red Sea, and we know what happened there!!

One more example (Please follow this account very carefully and notice how it unfolds):

John 2:23-25

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, 25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man. Did Jesus foreknow something about these "believers?" What did He know about them that would cause Him not to commit Himself to them? Jesus' foreknowledge begins to unfold in John chapter six, the day after He had fed five

thousand men with a few loaves and fishes. The multitude had followed Him from Tiberius, across the Sea of Galilee, to the shores of Capernaum where they confronted Him.

John 6:26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

Jesus foreknew that these "believers" would be following Him because they wanted something. They sought Jesus because they were looking for more free bread. They reminded Jesus that God had supplied Israel with manna from heaven (John 6:30-31). Jesus foreknew back in chapter two that these "believers" would show their true colors in chapter six. Therefore, He would not commit Himself to them. Further evidence for this conclusion will become more convincing as we continue in the passage. Now, notice what Jesus tells them in verses 35-37:

John 6:35-37

35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. In verse 36, Jesus clearly tells the followers that they are unbelievers. He tells them, Ye also have seen me. They had heard His words, they had seen His miracles, but they did not believe he was the Messiah. Calvinism claims that verse 37 teaches election, but the qualifying factor of verse 37 is found in verse 36, namely, belief. Calvinists will tell us that these followers would not believe in Jesus because God did not "give" them the faith to believe. But actually, the opposite is true. God did not give them to the Savior because of their unbelief. We will find this to be true in later verses, but for now let us continue the narrative. In verses 38-63, Jesus gives His famous theme on the Bread of Life. The statements He makes in these verses cause many of His followers to be offended.

John 6:60-63 60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

Now please understand what is happening here. Jesus is in the process of exposing the counterfeit disciples. He uses His Bread of Life theme to uncover their unbelief (v.60). Now notice the statements He makes in verses 64-66:

John 6:64-66

64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

66 From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

There are two significant statements here in these verses. Verse 64 tells us that Jesus knew from the beginning who were the unbelievers. This was the reason He would not commit Himself to them back in chapter two. The other significant statement is found in verse 65. We will need to consult the original Greek to get the full impact of Jesus' words. Notice the underlined word in verse 65 (Therefore). This word is translated from two Greek words *dia* and *touto*.

Dia - A primary preposition denoting the channels of an act; in very wide applications, local, or causal. In composition, it retains the same general import: after, always, among, at, to avoid, because of. (Strong). To put this definition in simpler terms: *Dia* is a preposition denoting the channeling of an act, or simply the reason for an action.

Touto - That thing, here, unto, it, partly, self, the same, this. (Strong). Or simply *touto* means that thing referred to.

Now if we put these two Greek words together, we see that "therefore" in verse 65 means "The reason I said that thing to you." We must be very careful to correctly interpret what Jesus is saying here. Calvinism teaches that Jesus is saying that these followers cannot believe because God did not give them the faith to believe.(v.37) Their teaching is that no person can believe in Jesus Christ until God gives him the faith to believe. They call it Irresistible Grace, and they teach that God is selective as to whom He gives this grace. Is this what Jesus is saying here?? Let us examine His words again. In verse 64, Jesus tells some of the followers that they do not believe, and the verse goes on to say that Jesus knew, or foreknew who they were from the beginning (John 2:24). In verse 65, Jesus says "therefore" or because of that thing (*dia touto*), I had told you before that no man can come to me except it were given unto him of my Father (John 6:37). Because of what thing? What was the cause and what was the effect? The cause was their unbelief and Jesus foreknowledge of their unbelief. The effect was that God would not give these disciples to Jesus. Calvinism has it backwards!! If we carefully examine the words of Jesus throughout the entire passage; if we compare precept upon precept and line upon line, we can come to no other conclusion. If we were to make a paraphrase of Jesus words in chapters 2 and 6, based on what we have learned, we could say it this way: Some of you disciples following me are not true believers (John 6:64), and I knew who you were from the beginning (John 6:64). Therefore, I would not commit myself to you (John 2:24). And that is the reason I said to you that no man can come to me (John 6:65), except it is given to him of my Father (John 6:37), because of your unbelief. As stated above, Calvinism teaches that God must give a person the necessary faith before he can come to the Savior, and no man can come to Jesus until the Father gives him to Jesus. But we can clearly see from this passage that it was the disciples unbelief that was the cause of God not giving them to the Savior. In fact, belief and unbelief are the underlying themes throughout this passage.

6:26 Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

- They were only interested in physical satisfaction

6:27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

- Jesus was interested in giving everlasting life 6:28 Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

-They were interested in works, not faith 6:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

-Jesus was interested in faith, not works 6:31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat.

-They were interested in more free bread

6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

-Jesus was offering them Spiritual Bread, but they must believe 6:36 But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.

-Their problem was unbelief 6:37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

-Don't put the cart before the horse - God gives us to Jesus when we believe

6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

-The key is belief 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

-Jesus clarifies this statement in verse 65

6:64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

-Not only was their unbelief the hindrance, but Jesus foreknew who the unbelievers were, and based His judgment on that foreknowledge (2:24) 6:65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

-It was their unbelief that prevented them from being given to Jesus. Not all the disciples left Jesus that day. Some stayed, but why did they stay??

John 6:67-69 67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.

69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

- Even as unbelief was the hindrance, belief was the assurance!!

It is also true that God must take the first step in drawing us to the Savior before we believe, and we will see how He does that in the section on God's Drawing. For now we need to be clear on what the Bible teaches about election. We have seen in these three examples how God responds to individuals based on His foreknowledge. If we apply this knowledge to Romans 8:29 (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.), we can conclude that God's predestination is indeed based on His foreknowledge of who will believe. Again, the clear teaching of the Bible is that the doctrine of predestination according to foreknowledge means that God foreknew, before the foundation of the world, who will believe and embrace the gospel, and these he predestinated. God's free gift of salvation is offered to ALL PEOPLE, even though he knows who will believe and who will reject. But there is a big difference between knowing who will believe and choosing who will believe. God endures all the wickedness of an ungodly world so that He can give more people an opportunity to accept his free gift of salvation. He is a God of love, patience, and mercy. Here is an interesting thought. If God decreed all things before the foundation of the world, as Calvinism teaches, why would He have the kind of response we see in the following passage?

Genesis 6:5-7

5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. The word repented here does not mean to change one's mind about something. The Hebrew word is na■cham which means a deep inward sigh caused by great sorrow. Why would God have great sorrow and grief about the conditions He saw on the earth if everything that happens is according to his decrees? There may have been millions of people on the earth in the 1656 years from the creation to Noah's time. Of all these people, could it be true that God only predestinated eight people to be saved?? Would it not be more biblically accurate to say that God gave all people free will to accept or reject Him, and when He saw so many people reject Him that it grieved Him in His heart? That would be my conclusion, based on what the Scriptures teach us about God. In the section on the Compassion of God, we will discover some other stirring emotions that God reveals to us about Himself.

07-ATONEMENT

Chapter Six

Atonement We will begin this chapter with a premise:

If unconditional election is true, then the gift of salvation can only be for the elect, and likewise, atonement can only be for the elect. However, if it can be proven that atonement is for all people, then the gift of salvation can be offered to all people, and unconditional election cannot be true.

We will begin examining this premise from the back end - Atonement. The Hebrew word for atonement is as follows:

Ka■phar - A primitive root; to cover; figuratively to expiate or condone, to placate or cancel. (Strong)

We must be sure that we understand the meaning of atonement. Atonement and redemption are not the same thing. Redemption is the salvation of one's soul because the debt has been paid. Atonement is that necessary payment for sins which purchases our redemption (1 Peter 1:18-19). Only the blood of Christ, the perfect lamb, is sufficient to pay for our redemption. Atonement is like bail. If a father had a son who had committed a crime, and was being held in prison, what would he do? Well the first thing he would do is to go to court and pay the bail to allow his son to be free until the trial. Now the bail payment itself is not the freedom for the son, but the bail is the payment that allows the son to be free. Atonement is the same idea. The actual word atonement is found in only one place in the New Testament:

Romans 5:11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. The Greek word used in this verse is katallage■ which means: to reconcile, restore, exchange. A change or reconciliation from a state of enmity between persons to a state of friendship. (Robinson) Katallage■ is a Greek word which denotes reconciliation, not atonement in the true meaning of the word. As we saw above, atonement is the required payment which allows us to be reconciled to God.

The New Testament word which better denotes the meaning of atonement is the word propitiation. The Greek word translated propitiation is:

Hilaste■rion - An expiatory place or thing, an atoning victim. (Strong) This word obviously gives us the true meaning of atonement. There are four places in the New Testament where we see the Greek word hilaste■rion. In three places it is translated propitiation, and in one place it is translated into a word that may surprise you. Here are three places using the word hilaste■rion:

Romans 3:25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

1 John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Hebrews 9:5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

We see that in Romans and 1 John, the word is translated propitiation, but in Hebrews it is translated mercy seat. We need to understand the connection in Hebrews nine between the Mercy Seat and the Atonement. Let us remember that the Mercy Seat covered (ka■phar) the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the Law. The Law represents the knowledge of sin and sin's consequences on man (Romans 3:20). The Mercy Seat represents the only thing that could hold back God's judgment on sin in the Old Testament. Only the mercy of God can suppress the judgment of the Law. The Day of Atonement typified the means of forgiveness, through the blood of the sacrificial goat. When the High Priest sprinkled the blood of the goat on the Mercy Seat, it covered the sins of Israel for one year. (Leviticus 16:1-34)

All this was a figure of of the future, perfect, one time offering of Christ on the cross for the sins of all. (Hebrews 10:10)

Now the question arises; for whom is propitiation / atonement? God gives us the answer in His Word!

1 John 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

The Greek word used here is halasmos, which is a form of hilaste■rion, and means propitiation. Atonement, or propitiation is Christ's work on the cross that satisfies the required payment for all sin.

According to 1 John, the atonement was not limited to only the elect, but was efficacious for the sins of the whole world!! The term "the whole world" is taken from the Greek word kosmos, which means all of humanity, but Calvinism tries to negate this verse by suggesting that "the whole world" does not mean all people, but only people of every nation. They cite Revelation 5:9 as a so called proof.

Revelation 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; This is a misapplication of Revelation 5:9 because the passage is related to redemption, not atonement. There can be no doubt that Jesus atonement covers the sins of all humanity. As a matter of fact, if you study "The Day of Atonement" in Leviticus 16:1-34, you will see that the blood of the sacrificial goat covered the sins of the entire nation of Israel every year.

Now we can return to our original premise and ask the question: If the atonement is not limited to the elect only, then can God's gift of salvation be limited to only the elect?? The only answer to that question is a resounding NO!! Limited Atonement and Unconditional Election are both false doctrines. The Atonement of our Savior Jesus Christ covers the sins of all of humanity, so that God can offer His gift of salvation by grace through faith to any who will only believe and receive. Before going on to the next section, we need to address one more point on the teachings of Calvinism concerning atonement. Many Calvinists believe that not only atonement was accomplished on cross, but also the redemption and regeneration of the elect was "finished" on

Calvary. The teaching is that atonement, redemption, and regeneration of the elect was achieved on the cross of Calvary. Now let us see what Jesus taught on this subject. In John 3:16, we see Jesus telling Nicodemus:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. When a verse begins with the word for, it is usually referring to something stated in previous verses. Let's see what was said:

John 3:14-15 14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Now we see Jesus referring to something that occurred in the Old Testament, and applying it to Himself. The reference is to Numbers chapter 21.

Numbers 21:5-9

5 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread.

6 And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people.

8 And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

Jesus said that as the serpent was lifted up, He also will be lifted up. But the parallel does not stop there. When the serpent was lifted up, was anyone who was bitten healed? The answer is no. It was only when the stricken person believed God, and then came and looked up to the serpent that he was healed. Jesus died on the cross to accomplish the atonement, but atonement is not salvation. If it was, then according to 1 John 2:2 everyone would be saved. Atonement is the price Jesus paid with His blood to reconcile us to God. But in order for a person to receive the gift of salvation, he must "Look and Live." People are saved only when they trust in the blood of Jesus to redeem them from their sin. Just as the stricken Jew in Numbers 21:1-35 must go and look up at the brazen serpent for healing. Again, the salvation of the elect or anyone else was not accomplished on the cross of Christ, it was the atonement that was accomplished. The lost sinner, any lost sinner, must come to the Savior by faith, trusting in the blood of Jesus Christ to wash away their sin.

In summary, we see that the word propitiation is the New Testament word for atonement, and that the atonement covers the sins of the whole world, not only the elect. Also we learned that

atonement is not salvation, but the price that was necessary to pay for our salvation. A person can be saved only when he or she has complete faith in the blood of Jesus Christ to take away their sins. And most importantly, we learned that since the atonement is clearly for all the sins of all people (1 John 2:2), then salvation is a gift from God that is offered to any who will believe and not just a select few (the elect).

08-FREE AGENCY

Chapter Seven

Free Agency

Free Agency is a doctrinal term. The exact words are not found in the Scriptures, but the concept is there. Free Agency is tied in with the concept of free will. In this chapter, we will consider Free Agency from two points of view, an internal influence and an external influence. God has given all people the ability to know right from wrong. He has given us an internal influence to show us that we need Him, and an external influence to lead us to the truth. Calvinism cites Romans 3:10-18 to show that man cannot seek God because he is totally depraved, but Paul here is showing the Jews that they are no better than the Gentiles because we are all under the bondage of sin. In the previous chapter of Romans, Paul shows us that the Gentiles have an inner, God given ability to know and keep God's Law, even though they did not have access to it!

Romans 2:13-15 13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:

15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) This passage shows us the internal influence God has put in every man's heart. A person does not need to be born again before he can understand the wrongness of sin. All people have a God-given sense of right and wrong. God has written it in our hearts (v.14) Furthermore, God has given us all a conscience (v.15). We can all remember the feeling we had inside when we did something wrong, even before we were saved. Everyone has a conscience, it cannot be denied, and we received it from God. This is all part of the concept of Free Agency. Now please don't misunderstand, I am not saying that man does not need the influence of God to draw him to the Savior. Nor am I saying that conscience alone can lead us to the Savior. Nor am I saying that an unbeliever can understand the deep things of God (1 Corinthians 2:7-16). I am simply saying that God has given all people both an internal and an external influence to draw us to Him.

The next verses show us how God influences us externally

Romans 1:18-20

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

God's creation is a testimony of His existence and His omnipotent power. There is no excuse for atheism, nor is there any reason for a person to believe in the theory of evolution. The complexities of the creation declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork.

God has also given mankind the influence of the Holy Spirit.

John 16:7-11

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. The word reprove in verse 8 is the Greek word *elegcho* - to shame, disgrace, to convict, to prove one is in the wrong and thus to shame him. (Strong) The word world is the Greek word *kosmos* which we already have seen to mean all of humanity. Notice the convincing influence the Holy Spirit applies to all people: Of sin - Not believing in Jesus as Savior Of righteousness - The work of atonement is finished and has returned to the Father Of judgment - Satan will ultimately be judged, and so will all unbelievers This ministry of the Holy Spirit is not only to the Christian, but to all mankind. It is another way that God draws men to Himself. We will be studying the drawing of God more extensively in the next chapter. Free Agency encompasses all these concepts, but there is something else that God has given all of us, and that is the free will to accept or reject these internal and external influences.

Consider the following verses:

Joshua 24:14-15

14 Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD.

15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

Matthew 11:28-29 28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

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

John 3:18-21

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.

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

These passages depict people making conscious decisions to either receive or reject the gift of salvation. They do not show us salvation based on God's decree before the foundation of the world. As stated above, Calvinism teaches that an unregenerated man, one who is not born again, has no access to spiritual things because he has a dead spirit within him. However, the Scriptures we have considered show us that God gives all people a conscience, and the influence of the Holy Spirit. We have also seen that we all have the freedom and responsibility to believe the gospel and come to the Savior. The concept of Free Agency encompasses all these truths. God loves us so much that He was willing to send His own Son to die for us, but He also gave us the free will to accept or reject His gift of redemption.

09-GOD'S DRAWING

Chapter Eight God's Drawing

Calvinism teaches that no man can come to the Savior until God draws him, and God only draws the elect.

John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

We have studied the meaning of this verse in the chapter on Foreknowledge, and learned that God draws those who He foreknows will believe, not those who He predestinates to believe. (see notes on John 6:64-66) In this chapter, we will consider how God draws people to the Savior. I am not denying that God must draw people to Christ. Because of our nature it is true that God must initiate an influence in us before we will come to the Savior, but how does He do that? This question has already been partially addressed in the chapter on Free Agency. Let us return to that point in more detail.

John 16:7-11

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

We have already seen the meaning of the words reprove and the world in chapter seven, we will now consider the ministry of the Holy Spirit in more detail.

Verse 9 - The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin. Not only sin in general, but specifically the sin of rejecting the Jesus Christ as Savior. This is the sin that condemns a person to Hell. It is the only sin that God cannot and will not forgive. It is the only sin for which there is no remedy, yet faith in the Savior is the remedy for all sin.

Verse 10 - The word righteousness here is the Greek word *dikaiosisune* which means justification. The Holy Spirit shows the world that Jesus has returned to Heaven because His work of atonement is completed. One of the utterances of Christ on the cross is "It is finished." The price of atonement is paid, now justification can be offered to anyone who will believe.

Verse 11 - The Holy Spirit warns the world of impending judgment. Satan, the prince of this world, has already been judged. When did this happen? It happened on the cross of Calvary! Satan is a defeated foe and his judgment is sure. So it is for anyone who dies rejecting the Savior. This

ministry of the Holy Spirit is one way that God draws people to the Savior, another way is through the preaching of the gospel

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Romans 10:13-14; Romans 10:17 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

1 Peter 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. The Word of God is the power of God unto salvation. The Greek word for power is dunamis, from which we get the English word dynamite. But the word means more than just power in a conventional way, it means miraculous power. This miraculous power can resurrect a spirit that is "dead in trespasses and sin" unto a new life. God uses the influence of this power to draw people to the Savior.

Another way that God draws people is by the testimony of a Christian life.

Matthew 5:14-16 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

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

Whether we realize it or not, when we profess to be a Christian, people watch us. God uses the things we say and do to influence our acquaintances. This is why we should always guard our testimony. God can use a godly Christian life to draw an unbeliever to the Savior. Also there is this:

1 Corinthians 7:13-14; 1 Corinthians 7:16

13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?

There are thousands of unbelievers who were drawn to the Savior through the godly influence of their believing spouse. There may be some of you reading these lines that are married to an unbeliever. You can take courage that your spouse is constantly being influenced by your life, whether they admit it or not. This is a great encouragement, but it cautions us to always be

guarding our testimony because if you are not careful, you can be a negative influence also.

As stated before, there is no doubt that God must draw us to His Son, but He does not do so by forcing His grace on us. He lovingly urges us to come to the Savior using the methods shown above. Calvinism gives us a picture of a forceful, relentless God who pursues only a chosen few. In the Bible, we see a loving, encouraging, merciful God who will do everything necessary to provide redemption for all, but who also gives us all the free will to accept or reject His gift of salvation. God is not looking for robots or puppets, He wants us to receive the gift of eternal life of our own free will.

10-GOD'S COMPASSION

Chapter Nine God's Compassion

Calvinism teaches that the people whom God has not chosen for Himself have absolutely no chance for redemption. Their destiny is eternal punishment in hell. Yet the Bible documents numerous instances showing God's compassion for the lost. He pleads with them and reasons with them to come to Him, and laments when they reject Him. Here are some poignant examples:

PLEADING

Jeremiah 2:5-9

5 Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?

6 Neither said they, Where is the LORD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, that led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought, and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt?

7 And I brought you into a plentiful country, to eat the fruit thereof and the goodness thereof; but when ye entered, ye defiled my land, and made mine heritage an abomination.

8 The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.

9 Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the LORD, and with your children's children will I plead.

Ezekiel 20:35-36; Ezekiel 38:1-23; Ezekiel 43:1-27; Ezekiel 44:1-31 35 And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face.

36 Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord GOD.

38 And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.

43 And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed.

44 And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have wrought (labored) with you for my name's sake, not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD.

REASONING

Isaiah 1:16-20 16 Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

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

19 If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land:

20 But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

LAMENTING FOR THE LOST Ezekiel 33:10-11

10 Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?

11 Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

Jeremiah 4:14; Jeremiah 19:1-15; Jeremiah 20:1-18 (These are God's words)

14 O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?

19 My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.

20 Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment.

Notice the highlighted statements. These are not the words of a God who chooses who will be saved, passing over and disregarding the rest. We need to take special note of the passage in Jeremiah four. Notice the pain it causes God when He must judge the people He loves. My bowels, My bowels: This is a touching description of how God was feeling at the sound of the approaching judgment on Israel by the Chaldeans. The word bowels here is the Hebrew word *me'eh*. It is a plural word that refers to the internal organs. In order to get the full meaning here, try to remember the feeling deep in your gut when you received some very bad news, or when a death happened in your family. That terrible feeling seemed to control your whole being, and you could think of nothing else because of your deep grief. This is what God was feeling when it became necessary to judge His people through the Babylonian overthrow of Israel, and the resulting captivity. I believe God feels the same way when He must cast an unbeliever into eternal punishment (Ezekiel 33:11 - above). Now according to Calvinism, the judgment of the lost is governed by God's eternal decree, and God chooses who will be redeemed and who will be damned. But if this is true, why would we see God grieving like we do in Jeremiah four?? He wouldn't, this record shows us that God will do everything possible to redeem the lost, and it grieves Him when He must condemn the unbeliever. Someone may say that all these scriptural

examples given are from the Old Testament and apply only to Israel, but I will remind you that the Bible tells us that things that happened in the Old testament are examples for us (1 Corinthians 10:11). The phrase "as it is written", refers to Old Testaments events 34 times in the New Testament. Furthermore, we have a very touching example of how Jesus feels when He is rejected by unbelievers:

Matthew 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

These passages do not portray an angry God who chooses a few to be saved and callously allows the rest of humanity to go off into perdition. No no, the scriptures show us a merciful God, one who pleads with sinners to accept His plan of salvation, one who is full of sorrow at the rejection of those to whom He offers His gift of salvation. God's love is boundless! His longsuffering for sinners is beyond measure! His grace is sufficient for all, and the only hinderance to His benefits is unbelief. We have now considered five arguments which refute the teachings of Calvinistic Soteriology and have reached the following conclusions:

1. Election and predestination unto salvation are based on God's foreknowledge of who will believe and who will not.
2. Jesus atonement on the cross paid the penalty for the sins of the whole world, making it possible for God to offer redemption to anyone who will only believe.
3. God has given all people the internal influence of conscience and the external influence of the Holy Spirit, as well as the free will to accept or reject God's gift of salvation.
4. God utilizes many methods to draw people to Himself as we saw in chapter eight, but God's grace is not an irresistible force, it is a loving invitation to come to Christ and be saved.
5. The examples of God's compassion for the lost, His pleading with them to come to Him, and His grief when people reject Him are not a picture of a God who chooses a few to be saved and disregards the rest.

I Hope that these five arguments are enough to convince you that the Tulip of Calvinism does not give us an accurate representation of God's plan of salvation. God loves us much more than we can imagine, so much so that He was willing to pour out His wrath against sin on His own Son while He hung there on the cross of Calvary! He did that so we can escape the judgment of sin by trusting in Jesus as Savior. This is the God of the Bible! This is the God on whom we can depend! This is not the God portrayed by Calvinism. Turn your eyes upon the God of the Scriptures, and reject the false representation of the Spurious Tulip!

11-THE FLAGSHIP OF CALVINISM

Chapter Ten The Flagship of Calvinism?

At this point in our study, I feel it is important to address an area in the Bible where Calvinism draws some of its strongest arguments. Romans chapter nine contains some very strong language that to some, would seem to support Calvinistic Soteriology. We will now study this portion of Scripture, using the Isaiah Principle to rightly divide the Word of Truth. Paul begins the chapter with a heavy heart. His bretheren, the Jews, have rejected their Messiah. His desire is for Isreal to be saved. He even says that if it were possible, he would be willing to be "accursed from Christ" himself for the sake of his kinsmen (v.3). In verse 6, Paul tells us that the national rejection of the Messiah by Israel does not mean that God's promises have failed. He then goes on to cite several Old Testament examples of the development of God's plan of salvation, culminating with the rejection of Israel leading to the salvation of the Gentiles. When studying Romans 9:1-33, we must be careful to stay in the context that Paul intended, but what is the context of Romans 9:1-33? Calvinists believe they see selective salvation by God for some and not others. They see in the following verses:

- God choosing Isaac over Ishmael (v.7-8) - God choosing Jacob over Esau (v. 11-13) - God having mercy and compassion on some and not others (v.15)

Calvinism teaches that all these exclusive choices are based on God's will, focusing on the "on whom" instead of the "I will" in Romans 9:15. We will develop that point when we get to v.15, but for now, we need to determine the true context of this chapter.

Paul is showing us that Israel's rejection of the Messiah is not an indication of the ineffectiveness of God or His promises (v.6). When we look deeper into this chapter, we will discover that God is teaching us two things: 1. His promises fail not 2. They are received by faith

I believe that if we study Romans 9:1-33 in the proper context, we will come to a vastly different conclusion than we would if we see it in a Calvinistic context. Let us now study the rest of Romans 9:1-33 and see if this is true.

Romans 9:7-15 7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.

8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

9 For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sara shall have a son.

10 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) 12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. As stated above, there are three statements in these verses which Calvinism uses to support their teaching of election. These are very compelling statements, but do they teach us what Calvinism claims? Let us look deeper into these verses to discover the true meaning and application.

God chose Isaac and not Ishmael to continue the seed of Israel. This first statement in verse 9 is easy to understand. God chose Isaac over Ishmael because Isaac was the son of the promise (through Sara) and Ishmael was the son of bondage (through Hagar). Paul alludes to this passage in the book of Galatians and applies it to all Christians.

Galatians 4:28-31 28 Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

29 But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.

30 Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

God chose Jacob over Esau before they were even born. This second statement is a little more complicated. Why did God choose Jacob over Esau before they were even born? Verse 11 tells us... "that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth". What is the purpose of God according to election? No matter which word you choose to use: called, chose, elected or predestinated, the purpose is this: For whom He did foreknow. We have already seen in the chapter on foreknowledge that God foreknows who will believe and they are the ones He chooses. God foreknows everything that will happen! Verse 11 also says that the children in Rebecca's womb had not yet done any good or evil and that the basis of God's choosing was not of works, but of Him that calleth. It does not say not of faith, but not of works. Believing is not works, faith is not works. We see faith and works contrasted many times in the New Testament:

Galatians 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. Which of the two brothers would demonstrate faith later in life?

Genesis 28:6-9 (Esau)

6 When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan;

7 And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram;

8 And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father;

9 Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.

Genesis 28:20-22 (Jacob)

20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, 21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God:

22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Esau had nothing but disregard for the things of God, but Jacob had faith in God, even though he failed many times. Notice that when Rebecca went to inquire to God about the struggle within her womb, God said nothing about choosing one over the other, but He prophesied about the future of her two boys.

Genesis 25:22-23

22 And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.

23 And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

Based on the principle of God acting on His foreknowledge, we can conclude that God foreknew what Jacob and Esau would do in the future, and based on that foreknowledge, He chose Jacob over Esau. This conclusion is not skewing the Scriptures, making them say what we want them to say. We are comparing "precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little there a little", according to the the Isaiah Principle.

God loved Jacob and hated Esau This third statement is easily misunderstood. The actual quote is found in the book of Malachi, written 1300 years after the days of Jacob and Esau.

Malachi 1:2-5

2 I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, 3 And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.

4 Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD hath indignation for ever.

5 And your eyes shall see, and ye shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel.

These words are against the descendants of Esau, the nation of Edom. The people of Edom were always adversaries of Israel (see Numbers 20:14-23; 1 Samuel 14:47). God called them "The

border of wickedness and the people against whom the Lord hath indignation." The prophecy of Romans 9:12 (Genesis 25:23), was fulfilled in the time of David...

2 Samuel 8:14 And he put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became David's servants. And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.

... But the reason this happened was because of the actions of Esau and his descendants, NOT because it was decreed by God. We have seen in the chapter on the Decrees of God, that God has made no decree as to who will be saved and who will be lost. We have seen that election, or predestination, or calling, or any other term you wish to use is based on God's foreknowledge.

I believe that Paul is teaching here that God's Word, and His promises never fail. God has been preserving a remnant of Israel all through history. The preservation of this remnant is not based on God's decree, as Calvinism teaches, but it is based on God's foreknowledge of the faith that the remnant will display and the rejection that the others will show in the future. In verses 14-16, Calvinism teaches that God is selective with His mercy and compassion.

Romans 9:14-16 14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

These verses are interpreted by Calvinism to mean that God shows mercy to whom He chooses. The word unrighteousness in verse 14 comes from the Greek word *adikia*, meaning injustice. Calvinism teaches that it is not unjust for God to choose who will be saved and who will not, because He has the right to do what He wants (v.15). But is this truly the teaching here? We must stay true to the context by looking deeper into the meaning of the verses. Verse 15 is a quote from Exodus 33:1-23. This verse also begins with the word "for" denoting that it is not only referring back to something previously stated, but also the context of the passage quoted must be taken as meaning the same. Let us go back to Exodus 33:1-23 to learn the contextual meaning of the passage.

Moses is concerned about bringing the people of Israel into the Promised Land. He wants to be sure that God will be with them.

Exodus 33:12-13

12 And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight.

13 Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.

God then reassures Moses that He will go with them.

Exodus 33:14 And he (God) said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. But Moses needs more assurance.

Exodus 33:15-16 15 And he (Moses) said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.

16 For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.

God again reassures Moses

Exodus 33:17 And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.

Moses then asks God to show him His glory. This is the passage where God sets Moses in the cleft of a rock and covers him with His hand while He passes by, then removing His hand to allow Moses to see only His back. But notice what God says to Moses before He allows him to see His glory:

Exodus 33:19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. This is the verse quoted in Romans 9:15, but the context of the passage quoted is not about God being exclusive with His mercy and compassion. The emphasis here is God's assurance that His promises will never fail, not only to Moses, but to all of Israel. God was telling Moses that he need not worry about His faithfulness to His promises. If I promise to be faithful to Israel, then be sure that I will. The emphasis in Romans 9:15 is the same; I WILL have mercy - I WILL have compassion. The terms "on whom I will have mercy" and "on whom I will have compassion," are not meant to teach God's selectiveness. God is saying that if He promises His mercy and compassion, He will give it. The only requirement on our part is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and not faith on our own good works (v. 16). This same theme is repeated several times in Romans 9:1-33, as well as other places in the Scriptures. Calvinism puts the emphasis on the "on whom" instead of on the "I will"

Romans 9:17-18

17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

18 Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

Once again, Calvinism misapplies these verses, teaching that God used Pharaoh for the purpose of showing His power, and that was the reason He hardened Pharaoh's heart. We have already seen in the chapter on foreknowledge that God foreknew that Pharaoh would not free the Jews from their bondage, and for that reason, He further hardened his heart.

Exodus 3:18-20

18 And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.

19 And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand.

20 And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go. The promises of Romans 9:1-33 are a two-edged sword. For those who believe, there is mercy and compassion, but for those who reject, there is judgment.

Romans 9:19-23 19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

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

Romans 9:19-23 really seems to be Calvinistic in doctrine, but Paul is answering a hypothetical objection in verse 19 which seems to be asking: How can God find fault with anyone if He is the one who chooses who will be saved and who will not? This conclusion has not been the theme thus far in this chapter, as we have seen, but Paul is anticipating this false conclusion and is about to address it in verses 20-23. In verse 20, Paul reproves anyone who dares to question God's ways. Then he uses an intriguing example to illustrate his point: the potter and the clay. I say it is an intriguing example because the allusion to the potter and the clay does not fit the supposed application here in Romans. In order to explain what I mean, let us go to the original passage of the potter and the clay in the book of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 18:1-11 1 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words.

3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels.

4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.

5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

7 At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it;

8 If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.

9 And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it;

10 If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.

11 Now therefore go to, speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.

Now we will need to consult the Hebrew grammar used here, particularly, the Stem. In Hebrew, the stem has a similar function as does the voice in Greek. It denotes whether the action of the verb is active or passive as it relates to the subject of the verb. Qal Stem Qal is the most frequently used verb pattern. It expresses the fundamental action of the verb as active by the subject, as in "He sat, He sent, He drove" Niphal Stem Niphal is the passive form of a verb QalNiphal He sawHe was seen He sentHe was sent He droveHe was drivenIn verse 4 of Jeremiah 18:1-23, we see that the vessel was marred in the hand of the potter. The stem of the verb marred is Niphal, denoting that the subject of the sentence, the potter, was passive in the action of the verb. The potter did not intentionally make a marred vessel, no potter would do that! He took the marred vessel off the wheel, removed the imperfections in the clay (pebbles, bits of dirt,etc...) and formed it again, a vessel as seemed good for the potter to make it. It was the same vessel, but now the imperfections were removed and thus the vessel was acceptable. God, in applying this principle to Israel, was telling them that they had marred themselves with the corruption of the heathens, and that He must remove their imperfections through the coming judgments. It is difficult to use this application in Romans 9:1-33 because in that context, the potter seems to intentionally make some vessels of honor and some of dishonor. What should we conclude from these observations? I believe that Paul is reminding the hypothetical objector that no one has the right to question God . If he chose to, He could treat us all as lumps of clay and form us the way He wants, but on the contrary, God, in His love, works in a very different way. We will see this in the way Paul ties in verse 21 with verse 22. There is an important clause found in verse 22 that needs to be examined, that clause is What if.

Romans 9:22-23

22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

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

Here, we need to consult the original language of the passage. This time it is Greek grammar. The clause What if is translated from two Greek particles, δε and ei. In Greek grammar, a particle is a conjunction or clause used to show the relationship between two sentences or concepts. In Romans 9:22 we have two particles:

δε - A particle used after a phrase or sentence which typically means but. It denotes a transition or change to another idea and serves to introduce something else, either opposed to what preceded (adversative), or simply continuing to explain (continuative). ei - A conditional particle

meaning if. It expresses a condition which is hypothetical and separate, indicating a subjective possibility. (see below for further meaning) What is the difference between an adversative transition and a continuative transition?

An adversative transition is a contrasting or opposing change in the theme or idea being presented, as in the following example:

If we trust Christ as our Savior, we will have eternal life in Heaven, but if we reject Christ, we will suffer forever in Hell.

Notice the two contrasting statements separated by but if (δε■ ei)

A continuative transition is a continuation of the same idea, adding to the theme, as in the following example:

If we trust Christ as our Savior, we will have eternal life in Heaven, and if (δε■ ei) we continue to trust Him, he will guide us throughout our lives. Can you see the difference between the two? Usually when δε■ ei is adversative, it is translated but if, and when it is continuative, it is translated and if. Moreover, when δε■ ei are used together, they are almost always meant in the adversative mode. In fact, the dual particles δε■ ei appear together at least 120 times in the New Testament, translated various ways (but if, and if, yet if, now if, etc...) In 107 of those cases, they introduce an adversative transition from what was stated previously. In only 13 cases we see δε■ ei introducing a continuative transition. In other words, in these 13 cases: (Matthew 5:29 - Rom. 6:8 - 7:20 - 8:9-10 - 11:12 - 11:16 - 11:19 - 1Cor. 3:12 - 4:7 - 15:12 - 16:10), δε■ ei is used in a continuative transition. However, if you analyze these cases, you will discover that they are all contained within a continuing adversative argument, giving contrasting statements throughout the passage and begun with an adversative δε■ ei, or just δε■.

Here is an example of δε■ ei being used in a continuative transition:

Romans 8:6-17 6 For to be carnally minded is death; but (δε■) to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But (δε■) ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10 And if (δε■ ei) Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 But if (δε■ ei) the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if (δε■ ei) ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if (δε■ ei) children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. In verses 10 and 17, we see δε■ ei used in a continuative transition, continuing on the same thought. But this whole passage is a contrast between living in the flesh and living in the Spirit. We see the contrast introduced by the word but (δε■) in verses 6 and 9, and continued with the words but if (δε■ ei) in verse 13. The theme in this whole passage is a contrast. If you examine the other examples mentioned above, you will see that the same is true in all cases. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that δε■ ei used together is meant to be an adversative or contrasting transition from what was previously stated. It is similar to introducing a different point of view by employing the terms: on the contrary, or however, or on the other hand.

We will now consider some examples of δε■ ei used in an adversative context: In Matthew 12:1-50, Jesus is responding to a charge by the Pharisees that He broke the Sabbath by picking ears of corn while he and His disciples were walking through a corn field.

Matthew 12:3-8 3 But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him;

4 How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?

5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

6 But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple.

7 But if (δε■ ei) ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

Jesus tells the Pharisees that He is greater than the Temple, and even greater than the Law of the Sabbath! But if (δε■ ei) they understood that God was more interested in mercy than in keeping the law, they would never have accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath. We see here δε■ ei introducing an adversative transition from the keeping of the law to the greater importance of the mercy of God. In Luke 11:1-54, the Pharisees have accused Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub.

Luke 11:15-20 15 But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

16 And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.

17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.

18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

19 And if (δε■ ei) I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.

20 But if (δε■ ei) I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. In this passage, we see δε■ ei used both in the continuative context (V.19) and the adversative context (v. 20). In verse 19, δε■ ei is used to continue the theme of Jesus working by the power of Beelzebub, but in verse 20, we see δε■ ei used to introduce the adversative theme of Jesus working by the finger of God. In John 10:1-42, the Pharisees are at it again. This time the charge is blasphemy because Jesus had just proclaimed that He is the Son of God, and equality with God (vs.25-30).

John 10:36-38

36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?

37 If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

38 But if (δε■ ei) I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.

Again, we see δε■ ei introducing two contrary statements (vs. 37-38).

Sometimes δε■ by itself is translated nevertheless and denotes the same opposing transition, as in the following passages:

Galatians 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless (δε■) I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Php 1:23-24 23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

24 Nevertheless (δε■) to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.

Hebrews 12:11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless (δε■) afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

It should be clear now that when the dual particles δε■ ei appear together, or δε■ appears alone, the function is to introduce or present an opposing point of view from what was previously stated. If we apply this same function to Romans 9:22-23, we can see that Paul is presenting an adversative or opposing transition from what was stated in verse 21, which seems to describe God as a potter who deliberately makes some vessels unto honor (those elect) and some vessels unto dishonor (those not elect). However, verses 22-23 describe God as willing to endure those vessels of wrath

(unbelievers) who have rejected Him and thus fitted themselves to destruction (see below), that He might make known the riches of His glory to those vessels of mercy (believers) which He has prepared unto glory. Moreover, there is another grammatical significance to the word if (ei). In Romans 9:22, the word if is a First Class conditional conjunction. Conjunctions of the first class do not denote a mere possibility of something to be true, they show the assumption that it is true. We have a wonderful example of this case in 1 Corinthians 15:1-2.

1 Corinthians 15:1-2

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

2 By which also ye are saved, if (ei) ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. The word if in verse 2 is a first class conditional conjunction. It does not denote a conditional possibility of the Corinthians being saved only if they keep in memory what Paul preached to them. The word carries the idea that Paul assumes that they will keep in memory what he preached unto them. Another way to understand Paul's meaning would be to say: "By which also ye are saved, since ye keep in memory what I preached unto you...", or "By which also ye are saved, because ye keep in memory what I preached unto you..." The word if in Romans 9:22 is in the same first class category. It does not present the possibility of God doing what the verse says, it presents Gods actions as a fact which can be assumed as true. With all this in mind, let us revisit Romans 9:21-23 in a different, non-Calvinistic point of view.

Romans 9:21-23

21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

22 What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Firstly, we learned that the example of the potter and the clay does not fit the application of Jeremiah 18:1-23.

Secondly, we learned that Paul was reprimanding a hypothetical objection to God's right do His will by using the allegory of the potter and the clay.

Thirdly, we learned that the particles δε■ ei indicate that verse 22 gives us an adversative, opposing transition from what we see in verse 21.

Notice the word willing in verse 22, which is translated from the Greek words thelo■ or ethelo■ . Either one of these two words, depending on the tense used, means: to determine, to desire, to wish, to want to do something (Strong). The word willing here does not mean to give in or allow. Verse 22 is telling us that God desires to pour out His wrath and judgment on sin the same way He did in the days of Noah. God hates sin, but His love for the sinner and His desire to redeem him is greater than His desire to judge sin. This is the reason that He endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

Another grammatical significance in verse 22 is found in the phrase: vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. The verb fitted is translated from the Greek word *katartizo*, meaning: to complete thoroughly, repair, adjust, prepare. (Strong). The verb is in the Passive Voice. A verb in the passive voice indicates that the subject of the verb is not the doer of the action but is passive in the action of the verb. In other words, God, the subject of the verse, did not "fit" or prepare the vessels of wrath to destruction, these vessels have fitted themselves to destruction. How? By rejecting the Savior.

So what is Paul teaching in this passage? I think that he is showing us that God is NOT like the callous potter who makes some honorable vessels and some dishonorable vessels (v. 21). On the contrary (*δέ*), God, in His patient mercy, is enduring all the iniquities He see in the world every day in order to make known the riches of His glory to those who will come to him by faith and receive His redemption (vs.22-23). God truly hates sin. He desires to judge the sin of the world. But His love for the sinner causes Him to hold back His wrath and offer the world mercy and redemption. Thank God for such love!! From verse 24 to the end of the chapter, Paul teaches us that the rejection of the Lord Jesus by the Jews led to the salvation of the Gentiles. He also expands on this theme in chapter 10. In verses 24-29, Paul quotes from three Old Testament prophecies concerning the unbelief of the Jews and the salvation of the Gentiles:

Romans 9:24-29 24 Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

25 As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved.

26 And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God.

27 Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:

28 For he will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.

29 And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.

Now notice what Paul says in verses 30-33:

Romans 9:30-33

30 What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

32 Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

Paul makes several important statements here:

The Gentiles attained salvation by the righteousness of faith - v. 30 The Jews followed after the righteousness of the Law - v.31 The Jews were not saved because they sought it by works instead of faith - v. 32 The Jews failed to receive their Savior because he was a stumblingstone and a rock of offence to them. - vs. 32-33

What does Paul mean by the terms "stumblingstone" and "rock of offence"? The word stumblingstone is translated from two Greek words: proskomma, meaning to trip, or figuratively to fall into apostasy. And lithos, meaning a stone. The term "rock of offence" is translated from two Greek words also. Petra, meaning a large rock, and skandalon, meaning a scandal, snare, or an occasion to fall.

The people of Israel claimed to be the seed of Abraham and therefore heirs to the Kingdom of God, but when their long-awaited Messiah arrived, He was a scandal to them because he did not set up His kingdom. They had apostasized from the true purpose of Messiah's first advent. They had ignored passages like Isaiah 53:1-12 and Psalms 22:1-31 which tell of a suffering Savior who must die for the sins of the world. They rejected their Messiah and Savior. They stumbled because Jesus did not immediately set up His kingdom and relieve Israel from the oppression of Rome. The national rejection of Israel led to the evangelization of the Gentiles, who did not have the "Stumblingstone syndrome", and a multitude of them believed on Jesus and were saved. Now this is the significant point in the passage: verses 30-32 tell us that the Gentiles followed not after the righteousness of the Law, but were saved by the righteousness of faith; whereas the Jews followed after the righteousness of the Law. Why were the Jews not saved? It was because they sought it not by faith, but by the works of the Law. The key word in this passage is FAITH, not election, not calling, not predestination. God "drew" the Gentiles to salvation by the Gospel of faith, and he predestinated before the foundation of the world those whom he foreknew would believe!! Romans 9:1-33 is not the Flagship of Calvinism," it is the "Flagship of Faith." Paul shows us the faithfulness of God in providing salvation to the Gentiles, even though His own people had rejected Him. He shows us that faith is the key, not works and not election. The Spurious Tulip wants us to believe that God chooses who will be saved and all others have no chance to escape judgment. We must reject that teaching because it is adverse to the loving, longsuffering character of God. Try to imagine what it must be like for God to endure all the evil He sees every day in the world. He absolutely hates sin, and desires to eradicate it from before His eyes. But His love for us is far greater than his desire to judge sin. God suffers with the sin He sees in order to extend the opportunity for more people to come to Him by faith. This is the teaching of Romans 9:1-33, not election, not God's decree as to who will be saved and who will not. We can depend on God's lovingkindness (grace) to ALL people, not just a select few.

12-CALVINISM AND EVANGELISM

Chapter Eleven Calvinism and Evangelism

There are those who will say that the teachings Calvinism have no effect on the gospel. They say that Calvinism still teaches the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and that by embracing the gospel, a person will be saved. While it is true that the teachings of Calvinism do not modify the gospel itself, these teachings can have an influence on evangelistic outreach of the gospel by its proponents. In order to expand on what I mean by that statement, I will give you one example of something that happened in my own family. My brother Bob was a teacher in a Christian school in Ohio. At the time, he was not aware of all the beliefs of the pastor of the church. His pastor was also the principal of the school. Bob had been observing one particular student who seemed to be having spiritual problems. In fact, Bob suspected that that the young boy was not saved. One day, Bob had the opportunity to counsel with the boy. Bob gave him the gospel and encouraged him to trust in Christ as his Savior. Bob's pastor had been observing this incident and later he called him into his office. The pastor informed Bob that he had observed him counseling the young boy about his need to be saved. Then he said something to Bob that shocked him to his roots: he said "we do not do that here." He told Bob that he was usurping the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and that if God wanted the boy to be saved, He would draw him unto Himself. It was not Bob's place to initiate a call to salvation!! Bob was shocked and saddened by the attitude of his pastor, and he told him that he believed that he should always give the gospel to an unsaved person when the opportunity arose. Consequently, he lost his teaching position and later felt that it was time to leave the church. Now you may think that this is an isolated incident, but my brother tells me that this is a big problem in his area. In fact, he could not find a church near him that did not have the same beliefs. He is currently having his own services in his garage and inviting neighbors to attend. Now I am not implying that all Calvinists have this same attitude in regard to evangelism. My own church supports some missionaries who have Calvinistic beliefs, yet they are very active in evangelism. The point is that Calvinistic Soteriology has the potential of spawning a dangerous attitude about evangelism. This trend is growing in the mid-west. If a person has the idea in the back of his mind that God chooses who will be saved, then there is a strong possibility of less fervency with the gospel. That is simply a logical conclusion. I had Calvinistic beliefs myself for many years, and I must admit that I often felt the influence of the teachings of election in my heart. In conclusion, let me say that the attributes of the God of the Bible ARE NOT manifested in the teachings of Calvinism. We need to cast ourselves upon the the God of infinite mercy and portray Him as such to a lost world. God has given us a myriad of promises in the Scriptures and one of the most endearing is this:

2 Peter 3:9 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.

We must make a decision. Do we believe in the Calvinistic view of God's method of salvation, or do we believe that the teachings of Calvinistic Soteriology are spurious? I believe that Calvinism

paints an unfitting portrait of God concerning His dealings with mankind. Calvinism does not adhere to the biblical template of salvation. We are saved by God's grace, through faith, and not of works. Salvation is a gift of God that must be received by faith or it will be lost. God does not want robots or puppets who follow Him because they are forced to do so. God wants us to be like little children who trust Him, and obey Him out of love (agape). The teachings of Calvinism ignore many of the attributes of God, such as His longsuffering patience with a lost world, His pleading and reasoning with a rebellious generation, and His touching grief at the rejection of the people He loves.

Yes, the Tulip of Calvinism is spurious indeed, and I plead with those of you who embrace its petals to pluck them from your mind and replace them with the flowers that portray a true picture of God: The Lily of the Valley, The Rose of Sharon, and the Camphire of the Vinyards. Let us not follow a false concept of God's attributes. Yes, God hates sin. Yes, God will judge sin. But God loves us. His compassion is boundless. His mercy endureth forever. The sphere of His longsuffering patience is beyond our comprehension. He want us in Heaven with Him, and He has provided everything necessary for that to happen. But He does not force His incredible gift on anyone, nor does He choose who will receive it and who will not. God's gift of salvation is available to any and all who will beleive and receive it! For the most part, this paper has been written for Christians who may have questions about the doctrines of Calvinism. But there may be some who are reading this paper out of curiosity and you may not be sure of your eternal destiny. This is a very dangerous condition to be in, and I implore you to take these next Scripture verses as the most important information you have received in your life! God loves you with all his heart, and He wants you in heaven with Him. But you, like all humanity, have an obsticle in your being that must first be removed. That obsticle is sin, and the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). This is not only physical death, but the Bible tells us of a second death.

Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Every person born has the nature of sin in him. We inherited this nature from Adam when he and Eve sinned against God:

Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man(Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

We are all sinners by natrure and sinners by practice:

Romans 3:10-12 10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

God solved this dilemma Himself by sending His own Son to become a man, live a sinless life, and take the sins of the world upon His own body on the Cross of Calvary.

Romans 5:8-9 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

Colossians 1:13-14 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

1 Peter 2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. The wages of sin is death, but the price has been paid by The Savior Jesus Christ. Now the gift of salvation can be offered to you, but you must believe and receive it by faith. God will not force you to accept his gift of salvation.

Romans 10:8-10

8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

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

If you will put your faith in Jesus Christ, and His death, burial, and resurrection, the Bible says that God will redeem you from the power of sin, and receive you unto Himself.

I fervently invite you to do that now, please don't put it off, now is the time for salvation!!

Let us thank God for His love and mercy toward a people who do not deserve it!!

2 Corinthians 9:15 Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.

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