



God's Rule over Our Decisions

The heart of man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps. (Proverbs 16:9)

The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes. (Proverbs 21:1).

The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord. (Proverbs 16:33).

Who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted to us in Christ from all eternity. (2 Timothy 1:9).

For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth." (Romans 9:17).

"I know, O LORD, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps." (Jeremiah 10:23)

"For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matthew 5:45)

"this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men." (Acts 2:23)

"in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place" (Acts 4:28)

"So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honoured use and another for dishonourable use?" (Romans 9:19-21)

Mankind lives under the Sovereignty of God.

This does not mean...

- Man is not a free agent (free agent vs. free will)
 - Self determination to act freely within the character of man
- Man is held without excuse
- Man is independent of God

Two Views of the Salvation Event

GOD IN ETERNITY PAST

He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight (Ephesians 1:4)

God Looks forward in time (foreknowledge) and see that you choose Him. Based on what He sees you will do in the future He chooses you. (Romans 8:28-30)

I REPENT

Sola gratia does not mean that God has accomplished *most* of the work for our salvation, but there remains a little bit that we need to contribute. God's grace does not bring us into a state which enables a neutral human response. To do so would put human works in the driver's seat, since our salvation would then ultimately depend on human action.

GOD IN ETERNITY PAST

He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight (Ephesians 1:4)

God knows all men deserves hell. Yet according of His sovereignty will He demonstrates His Mercy by calling some out of that destiny, though none deserves to be saved. It is done according to His good pleasure. (Ephesians 1:5)

I REPENT

Solo Gratia (By Grace Alone)



Understanding Election

Definition:

God's sovereign choosing of those who would become the recipients of the blessings obtained through grace. Before the creation of the universe, God made a sovereign choice based upon His own glory as to which of the sinful race He desired to be saved from an eternal punishment which they all deserved. His choice was "*for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will-- to the praise of his glorious grace*" (Ephesians 1:5-6)

3 Questions that Need to be Asked to Understand Election

- What is the preeminent nature of God?
- What actually happened in the Garden?
- What did Christ actually achieve on the Cross?

1. What is the preeminent nature of God?

God in His essence is preeminently HOLY. God is a Holy God
Liberal theology holds that God is preeminently LOVE. That God is a God of love.

"For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy." Leviticus 11:44

"There is none holy like the Lord" 1 Samuel 2:2

"And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" Revelations 4:8

- ✦ Holiness is a comparative term comparing God to something He created.
- ✦ Holiness is the basis of all of God's other attributes.

2. What Actually Happened in the Garden

- Did the sin of Adam affect all men?
- Did Adam's sin cause us to be spiritually dead?
- Did Adam's sin merely wound us spiritually?

Ephesians 2:1,2 "*And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience*"

Colossians 2:13 *“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,”*

2 Corinthians 4:3 *“And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.”*

1 Corinthians 1:18 *“For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”*

1 John 3:14 *“We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.”*

John 15: 5 *“I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”*

John 6:44 *“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.”*

Romans 8:1 *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.”*

Adam is our **federal head**, in that, he represents all mankind. The sin that he introduced affected all men and creation. It caused the spiritual death of mankind, so that we are unable to do anything to please God, satisfy His Holiness, or make spiritual decisions that affect our eternity, without His enabling.

1 Corinthians 15:22 ***“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.”***

3. What Actually Happened on the Cross?

DID....

- Jesus simply make salvation available to everyone

OR DID....

- Jesus achieve my personal salvation

John 6:37-39 *“All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.”*

John 17:9, 20-21 *“I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. ... 20 “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”*

John 10:14-15 *“I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.”*

Romans 8:32-33 *“He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.”*

What are the Two Views of Election?

Foreknowledge

Romans 8: 29, 30 "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."

His Glory

Ephesians 1:4 "For he chose us . . . to be holy and blameless in his sight."

Ephesians 2:10 "good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do"

Romans 8:29, "he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son"

Ephesians 1:11, 12, "In him we were also chosen, . . . in order that we . . . might be for the praise of his glory."

1 Peter 2:9, "But you are a chosen people, . . . that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

Ephesians 1:3-6 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved."

Truths about Election

Election does not obliterate human responsibility.

Each person is held responsible before Almighty God as to what they will do with his Son. "*There are unsaved people alive today, who, though elect, are now lost and will not be saved until they believe.*" Ephesians 2:3.

Election is necessary because we are totally depraved sinners.

In other words, we would not choose God unless he first chose us. It can only be achieved by the working of God's grace in sending the Holy Spirit to enable us to seek Him.

Non-believers are spiritually dead until the Spirit of God calls them

(Ephesians 2:1-3). Just as Lazarus was dead until Jesus called his name, so unbelievers are dead until the Spirit of God calls them.

The human response to election is within man free Agency

Our choice is free but fallen. Every part of my nature has been affected. I age, I feel pain, I die, and my choice will always be one that falls short of pleasing God spiritually.

The means of election is always through human agency.

That is, God uses other believers to communicate the gospel to the lost. Romans 10:14-17. Therefore, we cannot excuse ourselves from sharing the gospel by saying, "If he's elect, God's going to save him anyway. He doesn't need me to do the job."

Key Verses

Ephesians 1:4-6 *“Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.”*

John 15:16 *“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.”*

Revelation 13:8 *“And all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.”*

Romans 8:28-30 *“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”*

2 Timothy 1:9 *“Who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,”*

Acts 13:48 *“And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.”*

John 6:44 *“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.”*

John 6:37 *“All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.”*

Romans 9:1-33

Romans 8:29-30 *“For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”*

Romans 3:10-18 *“As it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.” “Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.” “The venom of asps is under their lips.” “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.”*

John 17:9 *“I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.”*

Ephesians 1:11 *“In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,”*

John 6:39 *“And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.”*

John 17:24 *“Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.”*

John 17:6 *“I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.”*

2 Peter 1:10 *“Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.”*

Ephesians 2:1-3 *“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.”*

Revelation 17:14 *“They will make war on the Lamb, and the Lamb will conquer them, for he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with him are called and chosen and faithful.”*

The Universalistic Passages

by
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Probably the most plausible defence for Arminianism is found in the universalistic passages in Scripture. Three of the most quoted are: 2 Peter 3:9, "Not wishing [or, KJV, not willing] that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"; 1 Timothy 2:4, [God our Saviour] "who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth"; and 1 Timothy 2:5,6, "...Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all."

In regard to these verses we must keep in mind that, as we have said earlier, God is the absolute sovereign Ruler of heaven and earth, and we are never to think of Him as wishing or striving to do what He knows He will not do. For Him to do otherwise would be for Him to act foolishly. Since Scripture tells us that some men are going to be lost, 2 Peter 3:9 cannot mean that God is earnestly wishing or striving to save all individual men. For if it were His will that every individual of mankind should be saved, then not one soul could be lost. "For who hath resisted his will?" (Rom. 9:19).

These verses simply teach that God is benevolent, and that He does not delight in the sufferings of His creatures any more than a human father delights in the punishment that he sometimes must inflict upon his son. The word "will" is used in different senses in Scripture as in our everyday conversation. It is sometimes used in the sense of "desire" or "purpose." A righteous judge does not will (desire) that anyone should be hanged or sentenced to prison, yet he wills (pronounces sentence) that the guilty person shall be punished. In the same sense and for sufficient reasons a man may will to have a limb removed, or an eye taken out, even though he certainly does not desire it.

Arminians insist that in 2 Peter 3:9 the words "any" and "all" refer to all mankind without exception. But it is important first of all to see to whom those words were addressed. In the first verse of chapter 1, we find that the epistle is addressed not to mankind at large, but to Christians: "...to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us." And in a preceding verse (3:1), Peter had addressed those to whom he was writing as "beloved." And when we look at the verse as a whole, and not merely at the last half, we find that it is not primarily a salvation verse at all, but a second coming verse! It begins by saying that "The Lord is not slacking concerning his promise" [singular]. What promise? Verse 4 tells us: "the promise of his coming." The reference is to His second coming, when He will come for judgment, and the wicked will perish in the lake of fire. The verse has reference to a limited group. It says that the Lord is "long-suffering to us-ward," His elect, many of whom had not yet been regenerated, and who therefore had not yet come to repentance. Hence we may quite properly read verse 9 as follows: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some count slackness, but is long-suffering toward us, not willing that any of us should perish, but that all of us should come to repentance."

In regard to 1 Timothy 2:4,6 "Who would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth ... who gave himself a ransom for all," is used in various senses. Often times it means, not all men without exception, but all men without distinction-Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, men and women, rich and poor. And in 1 Timothy 2:4-6 it clearly is used in that sense. Through many centuries the Jews had been, with few exceptions, the exclusive recipients of God's saving grace. They had become the most intensely nationalistic and intolerant people in the world. Instead of recognizing their position as that of God's representatives to all the people of the world, they had taken those blessings to themselves. Even the early Christians for a time were inclined to appropriate the mission of the Messiah only to themselves. The salvation of the Gentiles was a mystery that had not been known in other ages, (Eph. 4:6; Col. 1:27). So rigid was the pharisaic exclusivism that the Gentiles were called unclean, common, sinners of the Gentiles, even dogs; and it was not lawful for a Jew to keep company with or have any deals with a Gentile, (John 4:9, Acts 10:28, 11:3). After an orthodox Jew had been out in the marketplace where he had come in contact with Gentiles he was regarded as unclean, (Mark 7:4). After Peter had preached to the Roman Centurion Cornelius and the others who were gathered at

his house, he was severely taken to task by the Church in Jerusalem, and we can almost hear the gasp of wonder when, after Peter told them what had happened, they said, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance to life," (Acts 22:15), that is, not to every individual in the world, but to Jews and Gentiles alike. Used in this sense the word "all" has no reference to individuals, but simply to mankind in general.

When it was said of John the Baptist that "There went out unto him all the country of Judea, and all they of Jerusalem; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins," (Mark 1:5), we know that not every individual did so respond. We read that after Peter and John had healed the lame man at the door of the temple, "all men glorified God for that which was done" (Acts 4:21). Jesus told his disciples that they would be "hated of all men" for His name's sake, (Luke 21:17). And when Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself," (John 12:32), He certainly did not mean that every individual of mankind would be so drawn. What He did mean was that Jews and Gentiles, men of all nations and races, would be drawn to Him. And that is what we see is actually happening.

In 1 Corinthians 15:22 we read, "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." This verse is often quoted by Arminians to prove unlimited or universal atonement. This verse is from Paul's famous resurrection chapter, and the context makes it clear that he is not talking about life in this age, whether physical or spiritual, but about the resurrection life. Christ is the first to enter the resurrection life, then, when He comes, His people also enter into their resurrection life. And what Paul says is that at that time a glorious resurrection life will become a reality, not for all mankind, but for all those who are in Christ. And this point is illustrated by the well known fact that the race fell in Adam, who acted as its federal head and representative. What Paul says in effect this: "For as all born in Adam die, so also all born again in Christ shall be alive." Verse 22, therefore, refers not to something past, nor to something present, but to something future; and it has no special bearing at all on the Calvinistic-Arminian controversy.

Two other verses that also are often quoted in defence of Arminianism are "Behold, I stand at the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me," (Rev. 3:20); and "...he that will [KJV, whosoever will], let him take the water of life freely," (Rev. 22:17). This general invitation is extended to all men. It may be, and often is, the means that the Holy Spirit uses to arouse in certain individuals the desire for salvation as He puts forth His supernatural power to regenerate them. But these verses, taken by themselves, fail to take into consideration the truth that already has been stressed in this article, that fallen man is spiritually dead, and that as such he is as totally unable to respond to the invitation as are the fallen angels or demons. Fallen man is as dead spiritually as Lazarus was dead physically until Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth," and the Pharisee Nicodemus, "Except one be born anew [or, from above], he cannot see the kingdom of God," (John 3:3). And again, He said to the Pharisees, "why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word," (John 8:43). Apart from that divine assistance no one can hear the invitation or put forth the will to come to Christ.

The declaration that Christ died for "all" is made clearer by the song that the redeemed sing before the throne of the Lamb: "Thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation," (Rev. 5:9). Often times the word "all" must be understood to mean all the elect, all His Church, all those whom the Father has given to the Son, as when Christ says, "All that which the Father giveth me shall come to me," (John 6:37), but not all men universally and every man individually. The redeemed host will be made up of men from all classes and conditions of life, of princes and peasants, of rich and poor, bond and free, male and female, Jews and Gentiles, men of all nations and races. That is the true universalism of Scripture.