

VERSES THAT THE CALVINISTS WILL NOT TOUCH

A PAPER EXCERPTED

FROM DAVE HUNT'S WHAT LOVE IS THIS?

BY

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MATTHEW 5:16

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

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WHAT LOVE IS THIS?

VERSES THAT THE CALVINISTS WILL NOT TOUCH

INTRODUCTION

The Bible, [God's providentially preserved Word], repeatedly presents a God who so loves the whole world that He sent His Son that "the *world* through him might be saved" (John 3:16; 1 John 4:14), who "will have *all men* to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:4) and who "is not willing that *any* should perish" (2 Peter 3:9). The Bible repeatedly presents Christ as the One "who gave himself a ransom for *all*" (1 Timothy 2:6), who is "the Saviour of *all men*, specially of those that believe" (1 Timothy 4:10), and Whose death provided a propitiation "for the sins of the *whole world*" (1 John 2:2). Christ calls unto *all* who are spiritually thirsty, hungry and weary of their sin's heavy load, "come unto me and I will give you rest," living water, the bread of life, eternal life. That invitation has touched the hearts of the thirsty, hungry, weary and heavy laden for two thousand years. **YET** Calvinism attempts to make all such promises apply only to a select few.

In addition, the Bible [does] contain many difficult passages. [However] logic isn't going to solve them. The Bible is one book and every passage must be interpreted in the **CONTEXT** of the whole. For example, Jehovah's Witnesses cite "My Father is greater than I" to "prove" that Christ is not God. It sounds so logical from that one verse. **BUT** when we take all of Scripture we realize that Christ, who said, "I and my Father are one...before Abraham was, I AM, etc.," *is* God from eternity past, co-equal and co-existent with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Likewise, we must compare scripture with scripture (the Bible is its own best interpreter) as we are doing in order to understand passages about Election, enduring vessels of wrath such as Pharaoh, hating Esau but loving Jacob, dead in sins, and so forth....

SOVEREIGNTY AND SALVATION

Although we could not demand that God save us from the penalty His law prescribes for sin, and although He is in no way obligated to provide salvation for anyone, the Bible repeatedly makes it clear that God's purpose is for all mankind to be saved: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth . . . Christ Jesus . . . gave himself a ransom for all . . ." (1 Timothy 2:4-6). "Whosoever believeth in him . . . whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely" (John 3: 16; Revelation 22: 17) sounds like a genuine *offer* that can be accepted or rejected.

It is equally clear that everyone is not saved. How is that possible if the sovereign God truly wants all to be saved, as the offer of salvation seems to imply? Could a sovereign God who "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Ephesians 1:11) merely express His will in an offer that man could by his will accept or reject?

Why not? Surely a command is stronger than an offer, yet the Ten Commandments which God gave from Mount Sinai to Moses and has written in every human conscience are broken continually by man's self-will. God's sovereignty would no more be undermined if some accepted the offer of salvation and others rejected it than for billions of humans continually to disobey the Ten Commandments.

The word "whosoever" is defined in Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary as "whoever; whatever person: an emphatic form." There are no alternate meanings-it always means whoever or whatever person. The word is so universally understood that no one could possibly misinterpret it. **Yet** Calvinism requires that in certain places "whosoever" actually means "the elect." In those places where "the elect" is substituted for "whosoever," there is nothing in the text or context that would even suggest such a change. The only reason that such a reinterpretation could be imposed would be to defend Calvinism, which would otherwise collapse if the normal meaning for "whosoever" were allowed.

The word "whosoever" is found 183 times in 163 verses in the Bible, beginning with "whosoever slayeth Cain" (Genesis 4: 15) and ending with "whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely" (Revelation 22: 17). The meaning is just as unequivocal in the Bible as the dictionary presents it. "Whosoever" clearly means everyone without exception. It is found in warnings ("whosoever eateth leavened bread" - Exodus 12: 15) and in promises of reward ("whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief- 1 Chronicles 11 :6). Among the scores of other examples are "whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle" (Jeremiah 19:3) and "whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered" (Joel 2:32).

Not once in its 183 appearances in the Bible is there any reason to imagine that the word "whosoever" means anything except "whosoever"! But in those places where salvation is offered to whosoever will believe and receive Christ, the Calvinist insists that the exact same Hebrew or Greek word changes its meaning to the "elect." The best-known Bible verse, spoken by Christ to Nicodemus a sincere seeker, promises eternal life to "whosoever believeth in him" (John 3: 16). Christ's last recorded words in the Bible are, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things . . . the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22: 16-17). There is nothing in these passages or in any other context to suggest that Christ offers salvation to anyone less than "whosoever."

The doctrine of Unconditional Election-in contrast to Scripture-declares that this offer, which seems to be to *whosoever will*, is effective only for a select few. Although like all others the Calvinist “elect” are by nature supposedly incapable of responding to the gospel, they out of all mankind have been unconditionally elected to salvation. **In the Bible, however, God repeatedly seems to offer repentance to all who will respond and salvation to all who will believe.**

If salvation is not genuinely offered to all, why did Christ command His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15)? Is that not giving a false impression both to His disciples and to all who would read their account of Christ’s teachings in the four Gospels? Taking our Lord’s words at face value, it must have seemed to those who heard Him that He repeatedly offered salvation to all whoever would believe and receive Him “*He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life*” (John 5:24); “*If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink*” (7:37); *I am the door...by me if any man entre in, he shall be saved* (John 10:7), and so forth.

ILLUSTRATING A POINT

The God of the Bible declares repeatedly throughout His Word that He is not willing that anyone should perish but wills for “all men to be saved” (1 Timothy 2:4). Continually, and in the most urgent and solemn language possible, He calls upon all men to repent and to believe in His Son as the Saviour of all men. Christ holds out His nail-pierced hands and pleads, “Come unto me, *all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*” (Matthew 11:28). This is a promise which *all* who labour and are heavy laden have every reason to believe is extended to *them*.

Taking what the Bible says [literally], one would come to the conclusion that just as “*all have sinned*” (Romans 3:23), so *all* are offered deliverance from sin and its penalty through the gospel. **To claim that “all” means only a select group called the elect does violence to the plain meaning of language and impugns the character of God; and it does this in order to force upon the Word of God a system of religion which cannot be derived from it.** I have likened Calvinism to the following scenario:

If I should hold a rope 30 feet above a man at the bottom of a well and plead with him earnestly to take hold of it so that I could pull him out, wouldn't he think that I was mocking him? And if, in addition, I berate him for not grabbing the rope, would he not begin to wish he could grab me by the throat? And how could I maintain to any reasonable persons that I really wanted to bring the man up out of the well but he was the one who wasn't willing? So how can God really want to save those to whom He doesn't extend irresistible grace, that being the only means whereby they can believe the Gospel?

In a radio discussion with me, James White countered that it wasn't a matter of someone getting hold of a rope: the man at the bottom of the well was dead and couldn't grab it. The point of the illustration, however, had nothing to do with grabbing a rope. No illustration is perfect. **Salvation is not by any effort on our part at all, nor do we hang onto Christ to be saved. He keeps us secure in His hand.**

The point of the illustration was that the rope was being held so high above the man in the well as to make it obvious that the professed rescuer wasn't sincere in his pleading and had no intention of pulling the man from the well. The would-be rescuer, of course, is not obligated to save the man below him. But if he does not desire to save him, why does he mock him by declaring that he wants to rescue him? Why does he chide the man at the bottom of the well for failing to grab the rope while continuing to hold it far beyond his reach?

The sincerity of the offer by the supposed rescuer was the issue and the point of the imperfect illustration. And so it is with our Lord's offer of salvation in the Bible: Calvinism turns it into an offer which unquestionably, on the face of it, seems to be extended to all but really isn't, because of a disclaimer in fine print which can't be seen by the ordinary eye.

Nor does it help to picture the man at the bottom of the well as dead. In that case, the supposed rescuer is pretending to call to a corpse that he knows cannot hear him. Furthermore, if the man at the top has the power to go into the well to raise the dead man to life and take him out to safety but doesn't do so, how could he be sincere in his offer if he doesn't do what he promises?

Such is the God of Calvinism: He pleads with men to repent, He sends forth His servants to preach a gospel that seems to offer salvation to every person, and He chides and damns those who do not believe-but at the same time He does not give to them the essential faith without which they cannot respond to His pleadings. In fact, He has from eternity past irrevocably damned them eternally to the lake of fire. Such insincerity cannot be explained away by the example of the potter and clay. The fact that the potter can do with

the clay what he pleases does not excuse the potter from promising perfection to each lump of clay and then discarding many, if not most, onto the rubbish heap.

Biblically, there is no question that God sovereignly has the right to save whom He will, and no one could complain. But His sovereignty is only one facet of His Being. We are repeatedly told that God is love (i.e., love is the very essence of His character) and that He is merciful to all-exactly what we would expect of Him. We surely would not expect the "Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort" (2 Corinthians 1:3) to withhold mercy from any who so desperately need it-much less that He would take pleasure in doing so. Surely God is being misrepresented by those who limit His love and mercy and grace to a select few.

BIBLICAL MERCY, KINDNESS AND GRACE

Numerous scriptures contradict the theory that God would withhold mercy from anyone - scriptures which refute the very heart of Calvinism. We are reminded that God is "...ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness" (Nehemiah 9:17). Of the good and righteous man, the Bible says, "he is ever [always to all] merciful" (Psalms 37:26). Surely the very "gracious and merciful God" (Nehemiah 9:31) would be no less than always merciful to all. But Calvinism limits God's grace and mercy to a select few called the elect. Such a God has a lower standard of mercy than He expects of us.

The Apostle James points out the hypocrisy of saying to someone who is "naked, and destitute of daily food . . . be ye warmed and filled" and then failing to meet his need (James 2:15-16). The God who inspired James to write those words, however, according to Calvinism, tells a lost and perishing world, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," but neglects to elect the perishing to the salvation He seemingly offers. Such a God sees those who are worse than physically naked and destitute and, far more serious than failing to meet their temporal needs, He fails to rescue the perishing from an eternal hell, even though He could in His omnipotence and sovereignty do so. Is this really the God of the Bible, or a God that Calvin borrowed from Augustine? The psalmist rejoices that God is "plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon him" (Psalms 86:5)

and that "his tender mercies are over all his works" (Psalms 145:9). The Calvinist, however, without any warrant from Scripture, changes the "all" to mean "all of the elect." Christ exhorts us, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:36). If we took Calvinism at face value, being merciful as our Father in heaven is merciful would allow us to neglect helping multitudes and to claim that so doing reveals how merciful we are!

Jesus illustrates the mercy of His Father in many ways. He tells us that after crying out, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18: 13), the publican was mercifully justified. Paul refers to "the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort" (2 Corinthians 1:3). Would the very "Father of mercies" be any less merciful *to all* than He expects mankind to be? "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7).

These scriptures and scores more in the same vein, which could be quoted and ought to be familiar to every Christian, tell us that God's mercy is infinite and over all His works, extending to all mankind without discrimination. To arrive at any other conclusion one is required to select a few Bible verses, apply to common words a special meaning that doesn't fit the rest of Scripture, and ignore scores of verses telling us of the abundance of God ' s mercies and grace freely offered to all.

The psalmist says, " I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever . . . " (Psalms 89:1). The Calvinist would rightly say that the psalmist was one of the elect, with which we would agree, and that it is His elect who praise Him for His mercies. That is true. But it is also true that God's mercies are unto all who call upon Him. Indeed, the very glory of God is in His mercy to all mankind. When Moses asked, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory," God declared what Calvin himself quotes from Exodus 34:7 concerning His mercy, grace, longsuffering, and goodness.

It is indisputable that God has the right to limit His mercy. However, we are so clearly told in so many passages of Scripture and in so many ways that God *does not* limit His mercy but extends it to all. One is forced to reject Calvinism on this basis if on no other, for it contradicts the very character of God which is consistently displayed throughout Scripture from Genesis to Revelation.

In response to my statement that the logical outcome of Calvinism is that God does not care if billions perish, many Calvinists have objected strenuously. **Yet** they say God could save everyone if He so desired. Then the God of Calvinism doesn't care that billions perish. If He did care, then He would rescue them by causing them to believe through Irresistible Grace. On the other hand, the non-Calvinist believes that God has given man the power to make a genuine choice. He offers salvation to all without discrimination, but He cannot make anyone believe for that would violate their free will, destroying their ability to love and to truly serve God. Thus those who will spend eternity in the lake of fire are there because of their own choice, not because of God's choice.

Whether or not God loves all, is merciful upon all, and provides salvation for all to accept or to reject, is the real issue....

A SIMPLE EXEGESIS

The fact that foreknowledge pertains to something about those whom God then elects or predestines to some favor or blessing is clear from the passages above. The Greek *kata* carries the meaning of homogeneity or harmony. Thus God's election / predestination was in agreement, or harmony, with something He foreknew about those whom He predestined to partake of the declared blessings. What could that have been? Surely the most obvious possibility would be that God foreknew who would repent and believe the gospel and on that basis He predestined them to something unique: "to be conformed to the image of his Son" and "unto obedience." Apparently departing from his oft-professed Calvinism, Spurgeon declared:

Mark, then, with care, that **OUR CONFORMITY TO CHRIST IS THE SACRED OBJECT OF PREDESTINATION** The Lord in boundless grace has resolved that a company whom no man can number ... shall be restored to His image, in the particular form in which His Eternal Son displays it . . . the likeness of the Lord from Heaven. [Emphasis in original]¹

¹In spite of his staunch support for Calvinism at times, what Spurgeon said at other times undermined it. As though he had forgotten about irresistible grace, he argued:

We are not saved against our will. Nor...is the will taken away. For God does not come and convert the intelligent free agent into a machine.... But we do hold and teach that though the will of man is not ignored...the work of the Spirit...is to change the human will, and so make men willing....

Now, Brethren, how is your heart and my heart changed in any matter? Why, the instrument generally is *persuasion*. A friend sets before us a truth we did not know before. He pleads with us. Puts it in a new light and then we say, "Now, I see that," and our hearts are changed towards the thing.... The Spirit makes a revelation of the Truth of God to the soul, whereby it sees things in a different light from what it ever did before. And then the will cheerfully bows that neck which once was stiff as iron and wears the yoke which once it despised....

Yet, mark, the will is not gone.... If you are *willing*, depend upon it that God is willing. Soul, if you are anxious after Christ, He is more anxious after you. ...Let your willingness to come to Christ be a hopeful sign and symptom.

In order to escape this straightforward interpretation, the Calvinist must establish another meaning for foreknow/foreknowledge that fits his theory. Generally this attempt has taken two forms. Most try to maintain that foreknow / foreknowledge, instead of meaning to know in advance, means to determine in advance, or to foreordain. Piper writes, "he [God] foreknows - that is, elects - a people for himself" Others suggest that it means to love beforehand. There are, however, several reasons why neither of these stratagems will work.

Various Calvinist authors argue that "foreknowledge. . ." is "the equivalent of a determined counsel . . . God's omniscient wisdom and intention . . . God's prerogative to 'choose beforehand.'" MacArthur writes:

. . . God's foreknowledge, therefore, is not a reference to His omniscient foresight but to His foreordination. God does indeed foresee who is going to be a believer, but the faith He foresees is the faith He Himself creates. It's not that He merely sees what will happen in the future; rather He ordains it. The Bible clearly teaches that God sovereignly chooses people to believe in Him.

Piper quotes C.E.B. Cranfield, who refers to the foreknowledge of Romans 8:29 as "that special taking knowledge of a person which is God's electing grace. . ." Piper then comments that "foreknowledge is virtually the same as election He foreknows - that is, elects - a people for himself"

On the contrary, Peter very clearly distinguishes counsel or determination as well as election from foreknowledge: ..him [Christ], being delivered by the determinate [*horizo*] counsel [*boule*] and foreknowledge [*proginosko*] of God . . . (Acts 2:23). If these are the same, then Peter is saying nonsensically that Christ was "delivered by the foreknowledge and foreknowledge, . . ." or by "the determined counsel and determined counsel. . ." of God. Paul likewise makes a clear distinction: "For whom he [God] did foreknow, he also [kai] did predestinate. . ." The Greek kai denotes a differentiation, thus making it abundantly clear that foreknowledge could not be the same as predestination, or Paul, as already pointed out, would be redundantly saying, "whom he did predestinate he also did predestinate. . ."

This inspired statement by Peter on the Day of Pentecost concerning Christ's betrayal and crucifixion provides important insight into God's outworking of His eternal plan. It clearly reveals that even in declaring future events through His prophets and accomplishing them in history according to His will, God takes into account what He by His foreknowledge knows will be the actions and reactions of men. He did not cause Judas

He ended the sermon with, "It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy. Yet - 'whosoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely.'

to betray Christ, nor did He cause the Jews to reject Him or the Romans to crucify Him. However, He did arrange that these particular individuals who would act in that manner were on the scene at the right time to fulfill His will through their willing ignorance and/or evil.

To foreknow is simply to know in advance and can't legitimately be turned into anything else. Clearly, to know in advance is not the same as to determine or ordain. If it were, we would again have a redundancy: whom God foreordained He predestined. Foreknowledge would have been reduced to a meaningless repetition. Why even mention it unless it has special significance?

If God simply elected / predestined certain ones because He elected / predestined them, there would be no reason to mention foreknowledge at all. On the contrary, no other interpretation fits. Clearly what God foreknew would be the response of certain persons to the gospel was the *reason* for electing/predestining them to the blessings reserved for the redeemed.

THE MEANING OF FOREKNOWLEDGE IS CLEAR

In fact, that foreknowledge means nothing more nor less than to know beforehand is clear not only in the particular scriptures above, but it can be derived from other places where the same Greek words are used in the New Testament. For example, at his trial before King Agrippa, in referring to Jewish leaders of his acquaintance who he says “knew me from the beginning [i.e., before that day]” (Acts 26:4, 5), Paul uses the same word, *proginosko*, translated at Romans 8:29 “for whom he did *foreknow*.” Again in his second epistle Peter uses the same word in a different context but with the identical meanings: “ye know [*proginosko*] these things before...” (2 Peter 3:17).

"Foreknowledge" and "foreknow" are never used in the way the Calvinist would like to persuade us they could be. We simply can't find a verse anywhere that uses "foreknowledge" in any other way than to express the fact of knowing in advance.

The second attempt to change the meaning to fit Calvinism points to the way sexual intercourse is expressed in the Old Testament: “Adam knew [*yada*] his wife” (Genesis 4:1), “Cain knew [*yada*] his wife” (verse 17), etc. From that usage of "know," the attempt is made to show some relationship between the Hebrew *yada* and the Greek *proginosko* and then to suggest that “whom God foreknew” actually means “whom God loved beforehand.” Again it won't work.

Yada is used for “knowing” in a variety of ways, most often for general knowledge. Only in that generic sense would it be related to *proginosko*, which also has to do with knowledge. While *yada* is at times used to denote a special relationship—“I did know thee in the wilderness (Hosea 13:5), “You only have I known of all the families of the earth” (Amos

3:2)-never does it mean to know in advance, whereas that is the principle meaning of *proginosko* and *prognosis*. There is, therefore, no relationship between these words which would be of any help in supporting Calvinism.

Furthermore, to “know” one’s wife in a sexual way could not be before the fact, nor does God “know” man in that manner. Therefore, the attempt to link love with foreknowledge through *yada* in order to give the meaning “foreloved” won’t work. **That strained effort, however, reveals the lengths to which the Calvinist is both forced and willing to go to protect his theory.**

WHY NOT ACCEPT THE SIMPLEST MEANING?

It certainly requires no special understanding to accept that these scriptures mean (1) that God in His omniscience has foreknown from eternity past who, when convicted of sin and drawn by His Holy Spirit, would willingly respond to the gospel; and (2) that on the basis of that foreknowledge He predestined, or elected, those particular persons to special blessings: “...to be conformed to the image of his Son...unto obedience....” Paul gives the same thought elsewhere and adds another blessing: “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” (Ephesians 1:4). Dave Breese writes, “We also notice that election in Scripture is not unto salvation, but ‘unto obedience....’ [In] Romans chapter 8...predestination is based upon the foreknowledge of God and its object is not salvation but conformity to the image of Christ.

Unquestionably, the lost could be saved from eternal doom without granting them sonship and perfection and the other blessings God has graciously and lovingly planned for the redeemed. Both Paul and Peter are encouraging Christians with what God has in store for those who believe the gospel. As Paul points out elsewhere, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit...” (1 Corinthians 2:9-10).

Furthermore, not only is predestination/election never said to be unto salvation, but Paul carefully separates predestination from salvation whether in its call, justification or glorification: “whom he did predestinate, them he *also* [*kai*] called...them he *also* [*kai*] justified...them he *also* [*kai*] glorified” (Romans 8:30). **The Greek kai shows that a distinction is being made: predestination is not the same as calling, justification or glorification.** Hobbs comments, “Predestination...simply means that God has predetermined that those who

respond affirmatively to His call...will be justified...and furthermore will be glorified. All of this is ‘according to His purpose’....” **The plain meaning of the text is clear.**

There is a further problem with the Calvinist interpretation of “foreknowledge”: because it rejects knowing what man would do (i.e., repent and believe the gospel), it can involve nothing more than God knowing what He would do. What is the point in saying that God foreknew what He had predestined?

Furthermore, such a statement would not only be a redundancy but nonsense. God’s predestination, purposes and actions must be from everlasting just as He [H]imself is. Therefore it would be impossible for God to “foreknow” what He purposed to do because His purposes have always existed. As James said, “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world [*aion*] (Acts 15:18). The Greek *aion*, rather, carries the meaning of “from all eternity.”

Ironically, Rob Zins accuses non-Calvinists of teaching that “there was a time when God knew not [what man would do].... However, it is our contention that God knows all things because He wills all things.” **On the contrary**, we charge God with no ignorance of any kind. **Rather** we affirm that from eternity past God has known all that would happen in the universe and in the minds and affairs of men-but *not* because He “wills all things.” **Furthermore**, God’s foreknowledge of what He [H]imself would do would be nonsense.

Piper insists that “God does not foreknow the free decisions of people to believe in him because there aren’t any such free decisions to know.” We’re back to man as a puppet again, with God pulling the strings, an essential part of Calvinism. But without free choice man would not be a morally responsible being nor could he love God, know God’s love, receive the gift of salvation or have meaningful communion with God or worship Him. Here is Spurgeon again in another of those un-Calvinistic statements: “Shall we never be able to drive into men’s minds the truth that **predestination and free agency are both facts?**”

Although, as we have just seen, it violates the clear distinction demanded by *kai*, White writes, “In other words, the *foreknowledge* of God is based upon His decree, plan, or purpose which expresses His will, and not upon some foreseen act of *positive volition* on the part of man.” Such a conclusion is not only unbiblical but assaults reason. There is no point in saying that God knows His eternal decrees. And for God to foreknow them would

be impossible. Since His decrees have always been and thus were never future to Him, there is no way in which He could foreknow them, i.e., know what they would be before they were decreed.

Neither could one say that God, because He knew in advance that He had decreed to save certain persons, therefore saved them. Foreknowledge is very clearly the *reason* given for election and predestination, and God knowing in advance what He would do could never be the *reason* for His doing it.

The most **straightforward** interpretation of these scriptures is that knowing in advance who would believe the gospel, God made certain that those individuals heard the gospel, and He predestined them to partake of the many blessings He planned to bestow on the redeemed throughout eternity. That certainly would be the reasonable and legitimate conclusion to be derived from the **clear language** expressed in these passages. Why go to such great lengths to find another meaning except to support **a theory?**

A CLOSER LOOK AT ELECTION

The words “predestinate” and “predestinated” are used only four times in Scripture. The first three have already been considered. The fourth will be dealt with later. Election has a similar meaning, and the words “elect,” “elected,” “election” and “elect’s” are together used twenty-seven times in the Bible.

The objects of God’s election/predestination are called the elect. The word “elect” (*bachiy* in Hebrew, *eklektos* in Greek) is used in a variety of ways. It refers to the Messiah (Isaiah 42:1; 1 Peter 2:6), to Israel or Jews (Isaiah 45:4; 65:9, 22; Matthew 24:31; Mark 13:27), to the church (Romans 8:33; Colossians 3:12; Titus 1:1), to both Israel and the church (Matthew 24:24; Mark 13:22; Luke 18:7), to angels (1 Timothy 5:21), and to a lady (2 John 1, 13).

These verses cover every mention of the word “elect” throughout the entire Bible. As can be seen, *not once* is that word used to designate a special class of persons whom God has marked out for salvation and whom alone He loves. **Contradicting Scripture**, a minister of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America writes, “Thus it cannot be that God loves everyone. Since God’s love is sovereign and therefore always a saving love, only those who experience the salvation of the Lord can be the objects of His love.” Again we must ask, *what love is this?*

Calvin taught in his *Institutes* that God loves only the elect and that He has determined to save them and them alone. Such an idea flies in the face of the literally scores of verses telling us that God loves all mankind, that His mercy extends to all, and that He desires all to be saved. Let us consider in more detail those passages where election is found, in order to see whether or not they support the Calvinist's view of Unconditional Election.

THE FIVE PERTINENT SCRIPTURES

As we have seen above, the word "elect" is found four times in the Old Testament: once referring to the Messiah (Isaiah 42:1) and three times referring to Israel (Isaiah 45:4; 65:9, 22). None of these is pertinent to our inquiry. In the New Testament the word "elect" is found seventeen times, the word "election" six times, the word "elect's" three times, and the word "elected" once.

Eliminating the one reference to angels, the one reference to Christ [H]imself, the three references which could be both to Israel and the church, the three to a lady, four to those Jews who have been preserved through the Great Tribulation and survived Armageddon, and the six which are simply a name for believers in Christ, we are left with five which pertain to the general subject of election.

These five verses which we shall consider are as follows:

...that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.... (Romans 9:11)

...there is a remnant according to the election of grace. (Romans 11:5)

Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.... (1 Thessalonians 1:4)

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. (1 Peter 1:2)

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure.... (2 Peter 1:10)

THESE SCRIPTURES PRESENT US WITH THE FOLLOWING TRUTHS: 1) God works a definite purpose through election; 2) election involves not all mankind but a "remnant"; 3) election is according to God's grace; 4) election is "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father"; and 5) some

responsibility rests upon the elect to make their “election sure.” If election is to salvation by Irresistible Grace without any intelligent or moral choice on man’s part, it would be impossible to be sure of one’s election. But if election is to service and blessing, Peter is reinforcing in different words Paul’s exhortation to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Ephesians 4:1-6).

NOWHERE IN SCRIPTURE IS ELECTION UNTO SALVATION BUT ALWAYS TO BLESSING AND SERVICE.

Thus to make one’s election sure is to fulfill the responsibility that comes with election, not to somehow be sure that one is among the elect and thus eternally saved. Marvin R. Vincent, an authority on biblical languages explains, “*Ekloge*, election [is] used of God’s selection of men or agencies for special missions or attainments.... [Nowhere] in the New Testament is there any warrant for the revolting doctrine that God predestined a definite number of mankind to eternal life, and the rest to eternal destruction.”

SALVATION IS FOR ALL

Here are some of the many verses (with key words and phrases *italicized*) which make up the overwhelming testimony that God (exactly as we would expect of the One who *is love* and the Father of mercies) loves everyone with infinite love, desiring that all should be saved. He does not want anyone to perish and has made the death of Christ propitiatory for the sins of all mankind if they will only believe and receive the gift of eternal life in Christ:

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us *all*. (Isaiah 53:6)

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of *the world*. (John 1:29)

...even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that *whosoever believeth* in him should not perish, but have eternal life.... For God so loved *the world*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever believeth* in him...for God sent not his Son into *the world* to condemn *the world*; but that *the world* through him might be saved. *He that believeth* on him is not condemned.... *He that believeth* on the Son hath everlasting life: and *he that believeth not* the Son shall not see life.... (John 3:14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 36)

If *any man* thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. (John 7:37)

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 1:16)

Christ died for *the ungodly*. (Romans 5:6)

But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith...might be given to *them that believe*. (Galatians 3:22)

For the wages of sin is death; but the *gift of God* is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

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

Who will have *all men* to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:4)

Who gave himself a ransom *for all*.... (1 Timothy 2:6)

We trust in the living God, who is the *Saviour of all men*, specially of those that *believe*. (1 Timothy 4:10)

That he by the grace of God should taste death *for every man*. (Hebrews 2:9)

The Lord is...not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.... And if *any man* sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and *not for ours only; but also for the sins of the whole world*. (1 John 1:9-2:1-2)

The Father sent the Son to be the *Saviour of the world*. (1 John 4:14)

Do only the elect go astray like lost sheep? Do only the elect thirst? Are only the elect ungodly and sinners? Are only the elect “under sin”? Obviously not. As surely as all men are sinners, so surely is salvation available to all men through faith in Jesus Christ.

Taken at face value, these verses, and many more like them, seem to state in unambiguous language that Christ was sent to be “the Saviour of the world,” that His death was “a ransom for all” and that He is therefore “the Saviour of all men” if they will but believe. John Owen [1616-1683], a leading theologian of the Congregational churches in England, speaks for most Calvinists when he attempts to counter such scriptures in support of limited atonement with the following commentary upon 1 Timothy 1:15, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”:

Now, if you will ask who these sinners are towards whom he hath this gracious

intent and purpose, himself tells you, Matthew 20.28, that he came to “give his life a ransom for *many*,” in other places called *us* believers distinguished from the world: for he “gave himself for *our* sins, that he might deliver *us* from this present evil world...” Galatians 1:4.... Ephesians v.25-27, “He loved the church, and gave himself for *it*...” Titus ii. 14, “He gave himself for *us*, that he might redeem *us* from all iniquity...” for through him “we have access into the grace wherein we stand,” Romans v. 5:2, etc.

Owen was a brilliant man beyond the intellect of either Calvin or Luther, **yet** his argument has no substance. The necessity to defend Calvinism seemingly blinds him to the Scriptures and to simple reason. **Obviously**, the multitude of verses which state clearly that God loves all and is merciful to all and that Christ died for all are not nullified by other verses declaring that Christ died for the *church*, that His death was a ransom for *many*, or the assurance that He died for *us*, etc. These passages do not say that Christ died *only* for *many* sinners, *only* for the *church*, *only* for *us*, etc. If that were the case, however, statements such as “For if through the offense of one [Adam] many be dead...by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners” (Romans 5:15, 19), etc. must indicate that death passed not upon everyone nor were all made sinners through Adam’s disobedience, but only a limited few.

Of course, Paul or Peter in writing to the believers would remind them that Christ died for *them*-but that statement does not deny that He died for all. Yet this same argument is offered repeatedly by Calvinists to this day. For example, Piper futilely quotes the same inapplicable verses in which it is said that Christ was “a ransom for many,” that He “bear the sins of many,” and that He “loved the church and gave himself for her,” etc. as “proof” that Christ’s death was not propitiatory for all. By that reasoning Paul wouldn’t have been able to use “you,” “ye,” etc. in writing to the Corinthians because that would mean the benefits of Christ’s death and resurrection were *only* for them. By the same argument, for David to say, “The LORD is my shepherd...” (Psalm 23:1) would mean that this was true only for David. Or when Israel’s prophets wrote, “O God of Israel, the Saviour...their redeemer is strong, the LORD of hosts is his name...” (Isaiah 45:15; Jeremiah 50:34), it meant that God was only the God and redeemer of Israel.

Equally absurd, for Paul to say “the Son of God who loved *me*” would then mean that Christ only loved Paul.

Other arguments which Calvinists employ to put their own spin on the verses quoted above are astonishing. For example, John Piper and his pastoral staff become lost in the tangled wilderness of their own words in attempting to explain 1 Timothy 4:10:

Christ’s death so clearly demonstrates God’s just abhorrence of sin that he is free to

treat the world with mercy without compromising his righteousness. *In this sense* Christ is the savior of *all* men. But he is *especially* the Savior of those who believe. He did not die for all men in the same sense.... The death of Christ actually saves from *all* evil those for whom Christ died “especially.” [Emphasis in original]

Can anyone make sense of their use of “sense”? Christ did not die for all men in the “*same* sense,” yet He is the savior of all men in “*this* sense.” What is *this* sense? Because Christ’s death “demonstrates God’s just abhorrence of sin...” He is able to “treat the world with mercy without compromising his righteousness.” But He doesn’t treat all with mercy because Christ “did not die for all men in the same sense....” We’re lost in an impenetrable fog of “sense.” Neither *this* nor *same sense* are defined, so we can’t make *any sense* out of this nonsense. But it shows again the lengths to which one must go to defend Calvin’s and Augustine’s delusion.

Surely Isaiah is speaking to all of Israel when he says, “all we like sheep have gone astray....” And surely he speaks to all of Israel when he declares that “the iniquity of us all” would be laid upon the coming Messiah. Nor can it be denied that many Israelites who were alive then and have lived since have not been saved but have remained rebels against God. Yet as surely as they went astray so surely did God lay upon Christ the iniquity of them *all*. These and many other scriptures make it clear that the benefit of Christ’s death, burial and resurrection in full payment for the sins of the world is available to be received by whosoever believes the gospel.

In spite of the testimony of Scripture to the contrary, Boettner declares that “Calvinists hold that in the intention and secret plan of God, Christ died for the elect only....” Otherwise, adds Boettner, “If Christ’s death was intended to save all men, then we must say that God was either unable or unwilling to carry out His plans.” He forgets, of course, that **Christ’s death only benefits those who receive Christ** (John 1:12) **and that salvation, being “the gift of God”** (Romans 6:23), **must be willingly received.** As for men being able to oppose God’s plans, is the evil in the world God’s plan? Why, then, are we to pray, “Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”?

CHANGING THE MEANING OF “WORLD”

Instead of acknowledging the statement from Calvin², White selectively quotes Calvin in another mood: “In relation to John 1:29 and 1 John 2:2 the word ‘world’ is viewed as intending to transcend a nationalistic Jewish particularism.” There is nothing anywhere either in John’s gospel or epistle to suggest that odd meaning. Calvinism, however, **MUST** change “world” into all or part of “the elect” in order to maintain itself. What did Calvin really believe, especially at the end of his life? It has been said that he began to have doubts, and the statement quoted from his will-“of the human race”-seems to confirm it. White fails to settle that issue for us.

Calvin is quoted as the authority when it suits today’s Calvinists, and at other times he is ignored. Yet this confusing doctrine, limited atonement, upon which its adherents do not agree among themselves or even with Calvin is still called “Calvinism” by everyone.

A. W. Pink stands firm on what he believes are rational reasons for Limited Atonement: “To say that God the Father has purposed the salvation of all mankind, that God the Son died with the express intention of saving the whole human race, and that God the Holy Spirit is now seeking to win the world to Christ; when...it is apparent that the great majority of our fellow-men are dying in sin, and passing into a hopeless eternity: is to say that God the Father is *disappointed*, that God the Son is *dissatisfied*, and that God the Holy Spirit is *defeated*.”

PINK IS OFFERING HUMAN REASONING THAT IS NEITHER BIBLICAL NOR RATIONAL BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, IS REQUIRED TO SUPPORT CALVINISM.

To maintain this position one would have to say that God was insincere in the hundreds of urgent and passionate pleadings and warnings for Israel to repent and obey Him which are expressed through His prophets throughout the Old Testament. The fact is that Israel as a whole rebelled against Him continually during its entire existence and continues in unbelief and rejection of her Messiah to this day. If such disobedience does not require God to be *disappointed*, *dissatisfied* and *defeated* (emotions that He cannot have), then neither would that be God’s reaction when Gentiles He loves and for whom Christ died reject the salvation He freely and lovingly offers.

We do not deny that the word “world” can have a variety of meanings, but the times

²Calvin wrote, “I humbly seek from God...to be washed and purified by the great Redeemer’s blood, shed for the sins of the human race.”

that it does not mean either the physical world, the ungodly world system, or all mankind are exceedingly rare. Those instances could almost be counted on one hand out of the nearly 240 times “world” is found in the New Testament. **Furthermore, we challenge the Calvinist to point out one verse where “world” explicitly means the elect.** Please, *just one!*

Of the 80 times “world” occurs in 59 verses in John’s gospel, *not once* does it mean “elect.” That meaning has to be read into the text-and there is nothing in the usage to differentiate between those times when the Calvinist says it means “elect” and those times when he doesn’t say so. Vance lists numerous examples from John’s Gospel where “world” could not possibly mean the elect:

The world knew not Christ (1:10). The world hates Christ (7:7). The world’s works are evil (7:7). Unsaved Jews were of this world (8:23). Satan is the prince of this world (12:31; 14:30; 16:11). Christ’s own are distinguished from the world (13:1; 14:19, 22). The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit (14:17). The world hates the disciples (15:18; 14:14) [and many more]....

In arguing for limited atonement, Sproul³ inadvertently proves that the world does not refer to the “elect”...: “He [Jesus] explicitly excludes the non-elect from his great high priestly prayer, ‘I do not pray for the world but for those whom you have given Me’ (John 17:9)....” So not only does the world *never* denote the “elect,” it is unequivocally demeaned and condemned by God.

Each of us must, of course, go by the Bible no matter what John Calvin or Charles Haddon Spurgeon or anyone else taught. The only justification for rejecting the ordinary meaning of “world” and assigning Calvinism’s peculiar connotation (which certainly is nowhere plain from any text), is that Calvinism requires it. Richard Baxter [1615-1691], English author, hymn writer, and preacher; known as one of the foremost spokesmen of

³Elsewhere [R.C.] Sproul spends an entire book rebuking the signers of “Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium” and arguing quite rightly that “Justification by faith alone is essential to the gospel. The gospel is essential to Christianity and to salvation.” He ends the book with this un-Calvinistic quote from John Calvin: **“Let it therefore remain settled...that we are justified by faith alone.”** But Sproul believes there is no faith until regeneration, so the new birth into God’s family as a child of God comes before one has believed the gospel. But if faith in Christ through the gospel is essential to justification and salvation, we have the elect born again as children of God before they are justified or saved.

the Puritan party within the Church of England, argues persuasively:

God telleth us as plain as can be spoken that Christ died for and tasted death for every man...others will deny these plain truths, because they think that [God cannot justly punish those for whom Christ hath paid the penalty]... But doth the Scripture speak...**these opinions of theirs** as plainly as it saith that Christ died for all and every man?

Doth it say as plainly anywhere that He died not for all...? Doth it say anywhere that he died *only* for His Sheep, or His Elect, and exclude the Non-Elect? There is no such word in the Bible...

WHAT ABOUT 1 JOHN 2:2?

Lacking references in the Bible which plainly say that Christ died **only for the elect**, Calvinists somehow have to make those that say He died for all support **their theory**. The scripture, 1 John 2:2, is an unambiguous declaration that Christ is “the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.” Surely “our” must refer to the elect. Therefore “the whole world,” being in contrast to the elect, can only refer to the unsaved and would prove that Christ’s death is propitiatory for all mankind.

To acknowledge what this passage is clearly saying would be the end to Calvinism. How can that conclusion be avoided? Simply by once again adopting the Calvinists’ special meaning for “world.” Piper writes, “The ‘whole world’ refers to the children of God scattered throughout the whole world.” White elaborates a bit further on this **brazen eisegesis** which Calvinists have devised in order to rescue their Limited Atonement theory:

The Reformed understanding is that Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the sins of all the Christians to which John was writing, and not only them, but for all Christians throughout the world, Jew and Gentile, at all times and in all places.

Surely the “our” in “he is the propitiation for our sins” refers to *all* Christians, not just John’s contemporaries. It certainly is a true statement for all believers in Christ, and John’s entire epistle, like all of the Bible of which it is a part, is addressed to all believers in all ages. If the “our” thus refers to the elect, then “the whole world,” being in contrast, could only represent those who are lost.

To escape the obvious, White claims that John was only writing to the Christians of

his day and therefore “our” means those who originally read the epistle; and “the whole world” means all other Christians not alive at the time when the epistle was written. Nothing in the text even hints at such a conclusion. Nor would it have been invented had it not been necessary in order to rescue Limited Atonement. Undeniably, John is writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to all Christians everywhere and in all ages.

Piper reasons that “Propitiated sins cannot be punished.... Therefore it is very unlikely that 1 John 2:2 teaches that Jesus is the propitiation of every person in the world....” We have already shown that this argument doesn’t work for at least two reasons: 1) Christ had to pay the penalty for all sin for even one person to be saved; and 2) the benefits of Christ’s death do not come automatically but only to those who believe and receive Him. Were this not the case, then the elect also for whom the Calvinist says Christ did die would be saved without believing and before they were born.

Finally, Piper, following John Owen’s argument, reasons that if Christ is really the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, then unbelief would not keep anyone out of heaven because unbelief, being a sin, would have been propitiated as well. In fact, rejection of Christ “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9), in spite of the conviction of all by the Holy Spirit of “sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8-11), as we have already noted, is the “blasphemy against the Holy Ghost... [which] shall not be forgiven...neither in this world, neither in the world to come (Matthew 12:31-32).

Every Christian, by very definition, has been saved through faith in Christ, and His blood is the propitiation for their sins. This fact is so elementary and essential that one could hardly be a Christian without knowing it. It is therefore absurd to suggest that John is revealing something of importance by declaring that the blood of Christ avails not only for the people alive in his day but for all Christians in all ages. If this is what the Holy Spirit through John intended, why wasn’t it stated clearly? Would the Holy Spirit use “world” to convey the meaning “all Christians in all times everywhere”? Hardly.

WHAT ABOUT THE MEANING OF “THE WHOLE WORLD”?

White quotes the song of the redeemed in Revelation 5:9-10.⁴ Because it says that

⁴Rev. 5:9-10

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; ¹⁰And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Christ has redeemed by His blood men “out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation,” White reasons, “We suggest that this passage, then, sheds significant light upon 1 John 2:2, for it is obvious that the passage in Revelation is not saying that Christ purchased every man from every tribe, tongue, people and nation. Yet, obviously, this is a parallel concept to ‘the world’ in 1 John 2:2.” He then quotes the High Priest Caiaphas (John 11:49-52) that it is expedient “that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.” Surely Caiaphas really *meant* the whole nation, so what is the point?

Sadly, this is one more example of how far Calvinists have to reach: to suggest that a future song in heaven and a statement by Caiaphas about the nation of Israel prove that “world” in 1 John 2:2 really means “all *Christians* throughout the world...”! The song in heaven is by the redeemed, those who make up the “our” in 1 John 2:2. They are redeemed “from” or “out of” every tribe and tongue and people and nation. In fact, White is helping us to see a contrast: John does not say “from” or “out of” the whole world; he clearly says “the whole world.”

Why must White go so far afield? Within this very epistle there are plenty of better comparisons that define “world” for us. In 1 John 3:1 we have the phrase “...the world knoweth us not.” Surely “us” refers to the redeemed and “world” is in contrast to them and cannot possibly mean some other groups of Christians. In 1 John 3:13 we find, “Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.” Again we have the same contrast between the redeemed and the unsaved who hate them, making the meaning of “world” quite clear. In 1 John 4:5-6 we find, “They are of the world...we are of God.” The distinction between the unsaved world and those who are saved-which is maintained consistently throughout the entire epistle-could not be clearer. Again 1 John 5:19 declares, “We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.”

To be consistent with his handling of 1 John 2:2, White must believe that “all Christians throughout the world, Jew and Gentile, at all times and in all places” hate the believers to whom John was writing and lie in wickedness. In fact, nowhere in the entire epistle does “world” mean what he tries to turn it into in 1 John 2:2.

THE CALVINIST HAS A VERY DIFFICULT TIME EXPLAINING AWAY BIBLICAL REFUTATION OF LIMITED ATONEMENT. That may be why White has nothing to say about any of these verses within this epistle which we have just quoted and which leave no doubt concerning what John (and the Holy Spirit inspiring him) meant by “world.” How odd!

There can be no doubt that throughout this epistle the word “world” consistently

means exactly what a reasonable reader would expect: the world of mankind at large in contrast to the body of believers. One cannot claim that “world” in 1 John 2:2 is an exception and has a different meaning from everywhere else in the epistle. We can only conclude that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world and therefore His death was not propitiatory for the elect only but for the sins of all mankind. John says exactly that in so many words: “the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world” (1 John 4:14).

CLEARLY, WITHOUT SPECIAL DEFINITIONS OF WORDS AND MUCH **SCRIPTURE-TWISTING**, THE DOCTRINE OF LIMITED ATONEMENT CRUMBLES AND WITH IT THE REST OF CALVINISM.

JOHN 3:16-17 REVISITED

If there is one Bible verse which every child who ever attended an evangelical Sunday school is sure to know, that verse is John 3:16. What child encountering this verse for the first time without a Calvinist teacher would conclude that “world” did not mean the whole world of mankind but a limited number of individuals chosen by God? The answer is obvious.

Calvin himself, in his commentary on John 3:16, stated that “world” included “all men without exception.” Luther also said it meant “the entire human race.” **BUT** White, realizing that such an admission does away with Limited Atonement manages a desperate end run around John 3:16. [White] suggests that sound exegesis requires “that whosoever believeth on him should not perish” actually means “in order that everyone believing in him should not perish....” That slight twist allows White to suggest that Calvinism’s elect *alone* believe and thus Christ died only for them. Even if that were true, **Calvinism** would still have to explain (in view of its **insistence that men must be born again before God can give them faith**) how belief can precede receiving eternal life....

Like most other apologists for Calvinism, White doesn’t even attempt to deal with the unequivocal statement in John 3:17 “that the world through him might be saved” (to which his explanation of John 3:16 couldn’t possibly apply). Obviously, this further comment by Christ explains the meaning of the entire section (John 3:14-18) pertaining to His death on the cross, making it very clear that **GOD GAVE HIS SON FOR THE SALVATION OF THE ENTIRE WORLD**. Nor does White quote Calvin or anyone else concerning John 3:17. None of the thirteen contributors to *Still Sovereign* touches it.

Of course, White’s interpretation of John 3:16 must agree with his argument ... that

1 John 2:2 couldn't possibly mean "that Christ's death is a satisfaction for the whole world." He justifies that view by the fact that John goes on to tell us "*not to love the world!*" **HOW DOES THE FACT THAT WE ARE NOT TO LOVE THE WORLD PROVE THAT CHRIST DID NOT DIE FOR THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD? OBVIOUSLY, JOHN IS USING "WORLD" IN TWO DIFFERENT WAYS: THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD, AND THE WORLD SYSTEM.**

Recognizing that fact, White rightly declares that in 1 John 2:15 "world" means "the *present evil system*, not the universal population of mankind." (Emphasis in original) White is now caught in a web of his own making. If the fact that "world" in verse 15 means "the present evil system" refutes the belief that in verse 2 it means all the people in the world, why would it not also refute White's view that it means "all Christians throughout the world...at all times and in all places"? There is no way to escape the straightforward meaning: **in 1 John 2:2, "world" simply means all mankind.**

CHRIST DIED FOR ALL

The scriptures which declare that Christ died to save all mankind are so numerous that only a few can be presented. In scriptures such as "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10), "Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6), and "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15), there is no suggestion that only a certain *elect* group among the "lost...ungodly...[and] sinners" is intended. There is simply no qualifier.

Surely the idea that such general language actually specifies a select "elect" would never be imagined without previous **indoctrination** into that particular system of thought. Amazingly, however, White sees in such verses "the particularity that is so vehemently denied by the Arminian."

White argues, "Is it not the message of the Bible that Christ saves sinners? By what warrant do we . . . change the meaning to 'wants to save' . . . ?" We, too, could ask White, "What is the justification for changing 'sinners' to 'some sinners'?" He then quotes Paul's declaration, "I am crucified with Christ . . . the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20), as proof that "sinners" and "ungodly, et al. mean

particular sinners. On the contrary, Paul is giving a *personal* testimony of his own faith in Christ; it cannot be used to place a limitation upon general nouns used elsewhere. Nor does he say, "I alone . . . for me alone." Every person who has the same relationship with Christ as Paul did can make the same statement: "the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me," but that does not mean He doesn't love the world and didn't die for all.

It is only to be expected that at times the inspired writers of Scripture specifically applied what they said to those who were saved: "the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all . . . Christ died for *our* sins . . . that we might be made the righteousness of God in him . . . who gave himself for *our* sins . . . hast redeemed us to God by thy blood" (Isaiah 53:6; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; Revelation 5:9, etc.): That fact does not in any way nullify the many verses which just as clearly say that Christ died for *all*.

Paul could not declare more clearly that Christ's purpose in coming into the world was to save sinners. **That all sinners are not saved is not because Christ did not pay for their sins but because all do not accept that payment.** White argues that because all sinners don't get saved, this verse must therefore mean that the "sinners" Christ came to save could only be the elect among sinners.

To sustain that argument, however, one would have to change the meaning of hundreds of other Bible verses as well. Jesus himself declared, ". . . I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matthew 9: 13). Again, all sinners do not repent, so the Calvinist is compelled to say that Christ only calls *some* sinners to repentance, or else His call is in vain. How could one perceive that meaning in this statement by Christ? Only Calvinists find it there - and only because Calvinism requires it. But it doesn't follow, because even the elect who do repent often fail to do so as thoroughly as they should - so to whatever extent they fail to give full honor and glory and obedience to God, are they not frustrating God's purposes just as surely as the non-elect are said to do by rejecting the gospel?

Repeatedly the Bible states that God desires to rescue and bless all Israel and that her refusal to repent prevents Him from so doing. He sends His prophets day and night to plead with Israel to repent so He won 't have to punish her. It simply cannot reasonably be said that God only wants *some* of Israel to repent. Many other examples could be given of God's desire for man remaining unfulfilled because of man's rejection of His will.

“ALL MEN” MEANS CLASSES OF MEN?

Nothing could be clearer in refuting Limited Atonement than Paul's declaration, "who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). In trying to handle this passage Piper contradicts himself. He confesses that Paul is saying that "God does not delight in the perishing of the impenitent and that he has compassion on all people." Admitting that this sounds like "double talk," he sets out to show that there are " 'two wills' in God . . . that God decrees one state of affairs while also willing and teaching that a different state of affairs should come to pass." This *is* double talk.

White also attempts to get around this passage. He refers to other passages wherein the expression "all men" isn't to be taken literally, such as Ananias's statement to Paul at his conversion, "For thou shalt be his witness unto all men . . . " (Acts 22:15). White insists:

Of course, Paul would not think that these words meant that he would witness of Christ to every single individual human being on the planet. Instead, he would have surely understood this to mean all *kinds* and *races* of men Paul speaks of *kinds* of people in other places as well . . . Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian. slave and freeman

So it is perfectly consistent with the immediate and broader context of Paul's writings to recognize this use of "all men" in a generic fashion.

On the contrary, Paul would never have understood Ananias to mean *kinds* and *races* of men. Then it would mean *all* kinds and races. Japanese? Australian aborigines? Siberian or North American Indians? If that is what Ananias meant, he was a false prophet. There were surely many kinds and races of men to whom Paul never did witness.

What would any of us understand such a statement addressed to ourselves to mean? Not all men everywhere, but all those with whom we would come in contact. But what does White's strained interpretation of a statement by Ananias have to do with Paul's clear declaration that God wants "all men to be saved"?

White argues further that because Paul says prayer is to be made "for all men; for kings and for all that are in authority," he is referring to "classes of men" and that therefore the following phrase, "who will have all men to be saved" actually means "who will have *all classes of men* to be saved." In fact, "kings . . . and all in authority" only refers to one class of men, that is rulers. White is only echoing Calvin here: "For the apostle's meaning here is simply that . . . God regards all men as being equally worthy to share in salvation. But he is speaking of classes and not of individuals, and his only concern is to include princes and foreign nations in this number."

The Calvinist is struggling hard to maintain his theory. Piper grasps at the same straw: "It is possible that careful exegesis of 1 Timothy 2:4 would lead us to believe that 'God's willing all persons to be saved' does not refer to every individual person in the world, but rather to all *sorts* of persons . . ." The "careful exegesis" he suggests would support this idea is never revealed.

Calvinists love to quote Spurgeon for support, but here he accuses them (as we do) of altering the plain meaning of the text. In C.H. Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, volume 26, pages 49-52, the great preacher discusses this passage of Scripture in depth:

What then? Shall we try to put another meaning into the text than that which it fairly bears? I trow not . . . You must, most of you, be acquainted with the general method in which our older Calvinistic friends deal with this text. "All men" say they "that is, some men": as if the Holy Ghost could not have said "some men" if He meant some men. "All men," say they: "that is, some of all sorts of men": as if the Lord could not have said, "All sorts of men" if He had meant that. The Holy Ghost by the apostle has written, "All men," and unquestionably he means all men . . . My love of consistency with my own doctrinal views is not great enough to allow me knowingly to alter a single text of Scripture.

With Spurgeon we ask again, if all *classes* is what the Holy Spirit meant to convey, why was it not stated clearly? The truth is that the Holy Spirit did very clearly declare in unequivocal language that God is not willing for any person to perish - and we are tampering with God's Word by putting a Calvinist interpretation upon it!

"Kings and all that are in authority" are mentioned as special subjects of prayer and the reason is given "that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life . . ." Can anyone seriously imagine that Paul urged prayer for kings and those in authority in order to convey to Timothy (and to us today) that *all classes of men* were meant to be the recipients of the gospel: tradesmen, sheep herders, soldiers, tinkers, tailors, robbers, etc.?

Wouldn't Paul be fearful that unless he specifically mentioned them all, some despised classes such as prostitutes or slaves might be overlooked by Timothy and by us today? No, he would not, and that is why this effort falls short. Christ already told His disciples of all ages to "preach the gospel to every creature"! That Christ means *everyone* every Christian knew then and knows now.

As for 1 Timothy 2:6 ("who gave himself a ransom for all"), White quotes R.K. Wright's reference to "the meticulous demonstration by John Gill that the Arminian exegesis of key passages (such as 2 Peter 3:9 and 1 Timothy 2:4-6) is fallacious." Yet he fails to give us Gill's alleged meticulous refutation.

Concerning 1 Timothy 4: 10 ("who is the Saviour of all men"), here is another scripture which states beyond doubt that Christ died for all, yet White again has nothing to say about it. **He then tells us that Norm Geisler, in his book Chosen But Free, misinterprets John 17:9 because he also misinterprets 1 Timothy 2:46 and 2 Peter 3:9. No explanation.** We are left to guess why we shouldn't understand the "all" in 1 Timothy 2:6 to mean "all," as one would reasonably expect from the context.

CHRIST "TASTED DEATH FOR EVERY MAN"

Hebrews 2:9 ("that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man") is given the by now familiar Calvinist interpretation. Verse 17 is quoted: "made like His brethren . . . a merciful and faithful high priest . . . to make propitiation for the sins of the people." White then "explains":

What "people" is here in view? It is the "many sons" of 2:10, those He "sanctifies" (2:11), "My brethren" (2: 12), "the children God gave Me" (2: 13) In light of this we understand the statement of Hebrews 2:9, "so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone." Another passage often cited without context by Arminians yet defined so plainly in the text.

That is it. One is left to assume that because a few verses following Hebrews 2:9 refer to Christ's brethren given to Him by God through His sacrifice, the phrase "taste death for every man" must therefore mean He tasted death only for the elect. Undoubtedly the entire epistle is addressed to believers, as are all epistles and the entire Bible - though multitudes of unbelievers have come to faith in Christ through reading the Bible. Moreover, the Bible has a great deal to say both to and about the unsaved. Obviously, the Holy Spirit can make reference to unbelievers at any time, explaining to those whom He addresses what God has done and will do to and for unbelievers. In fact, such is often the case throughout Scripture.

Without context? Let us consider the context. Within the immediate context it is clear that even when the writer uses "we" he doesn't always refer only to believers but includes all mankind: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation. . . ?" (Hebrews 2:3). Surely this is addressed to all mankind, not just to the elect, unless the Calvinist is willing to admit that it is possible for the elect to neglect their salvation and thus to be lost. That solemn admonition introduces this entire section of Hebrews 2, which continues in the same vein into Chapters 3 and 4. Readers are given numerous warnings and exhortations to hold fast to the faith and not to harden their hearts lest they perish like

the children of Israel perished in the wilderness through unbelief.

All of Israel was not saved and many perished, so Israel could hardly signify the Calvinist elect. The entire context surrounding Hebrews 2:9 contains some of the strongest verses Arminians cite to prove that one's salvation can be lost including the following:

Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. (Hebrews 3:12)

Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts (Hebrews 3:7-8)

For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end (Hebrews 3:14)

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. (Hebrews 4:1)

. . . they to whom it [the gospel] was first preached entered not in because of unbelief. (Hebrews 4:6)

Oddly enough, in his book written to refute Arminianism and to defend Calvinism, White completely avoids these verses, which make up the entire context of Hebrews 2:9. And he does so in the process of chiding Arminians for avoiding the *context*!

Another important passage among those we cite above and referred to briefly in the last chapter is 2 Peter 2: 1 (“there shall be false teachers . . . , denying the Lord that bought them”). It seems to say that even those who are lost have been ..“bought” with the blood of Christ. Those referred to here by Peter have obviously professed faith in Christ and though within the church were never saved like those to whom Jude refers who have ..crept in unawares, . . . ungodly men . . . ordained to this condemnation" (Jude 4). Yet Peter says that the Lord had bought them. This passage, too, is completely neglected by White, nor is he alone in his silence.

Very few Calvinists have attempted to deal with scriptures such as Hebrews 10:29 and 2 Peter 2: 1. They tell of the destruction upon those who despise the ..blood of the covenant wherewith [they were] sanctified" and ..despise the Lord that bought them" No arguments have been proposed upon which all Calvinists agree, and their efforts have failed. Vance cites most of those who have made such attempts:

Charles Bronson insists that it "approaches blasphemy to say that Christ shed His precious blood for some and then, after all, they perished in Hell." Dabney dismisses both verses because: "The language of Peter, and that of Hebrews . . . may receive

an entirely adequate solution, without teaching that Christ actually ..bought" or "sanctified" any apostate, by saying that the Apostles speak there "ad hominem." But because of the diversity of interpretations put on these verses by Calvinists in their attempt to evade the clear teaching of Scripture, they cannot be disregarded so easily.

Concerning those who were sanctified in Hebrews 10:29, Calvinists try to get around the obvious implications in a variety of ways. Beck claims they were "sanctified, but not saved." Gill maintains that Christ Himself "is said here to be *sanctified*." Owen makes them [mere] "professors...of the gospel," and adds the phrase "in the profession of the gospel" after "sanctified." Other than a few isolated comments, Calvinists are strangely silent (Pink does not comment on this verse [Hebrews 10:29] in his books, *The Sovereignty of God, Sanctification* or his Hebrew commentary) on this passage. The context of the verse, however, is "*if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth*" (Hebrews 10:26) and "*the Lord shall judge his people*" (Hebrews 10:30).

UNDERSTANDING 2 PETER 3:9

With regard to 2 Peter 3:9, however, White has several references. The first repeats the statement about John Gill's amazing but unrevealed refutation. The next two suggest that the "Reformed view" of this passage may be "a more consistent interpretation" than the one Geisler offers, but he fails to give us this "more consistent interpretation." The next promises that "an exegetical interpretation of the passage" is coming. Next we are told that Geisler fails to give "as meaningful and thorough a discussion" of the passage as "the Reformed exegesis"-yet neither Geisler's nor the "Reformed exegesis" is explained.

Finally, we are given the Calvinistic interpretation of "The Lord is not slack ... but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." White declares that "the passage is not speaking about salvation as its topic." On that basis he summarily rules out the possibility that Peter means what the words he uses so clearly declare.

In fact, the passage speaks of a number of things: the last days; scoffers who would arise ridiculing the idea that Christ would return in judgment; a reminder of the flood that destroyed the world of that day and that the present world will be destroyed by fire; the fact that the Day of Lord will come like a thief; that the entire universe will be dissolved; that we therefore ought to live godly lives; that unstable and unlearned persons twist the meaning of Paul's epistles; and finally there is an exhortation to keep from error and to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"

Since Peter deals with so much in this final chapter of his epistle, there is no reason salvation could not be included. Nor can anyone insist that Peter cannot address both

saved and unsaved in the same verse. If he does not, we have a serious contradiction. The phrase “longsuffering to us-ward” is surely directed to the elect. But it could as well be an editorial expression including all mankind.⁵ If not, the phrase which follows (“not willing that any should perish”) must also apply only to the elect. But the latter can *only* mean all of mankind, since it refers to a perishing which surely does not imperil the elect.

There are only two possibilities: the reference is to 1) perishing under the penalty of sin or escaping that penalty by repenting; or 2) perishing in the fire that will destroy the world or escaping it. Certainly, perishing in the world-destroying fire of God's judgment is no more applicable to the elect than perishing under the penalty of sin. John Owen argued, "See, then, of whom the apostle is here speaking Such as had received 'great and precious promises. . . whom he calls beloved' The text is clear, that it is all and only the elect whom he would not have to perish." Likewise, John Gill writes, "It is not true that God is not willing that any one individual of the human race should perish since he has made and appointed the wicked for the day of evil Nor is it his will that all men...should come to repentance, since he withholds from many both the means and grace of repentance"

On the other hand, John Murray, former Westminster Seminary professor, whom Cornelius Van Til called "a great exegete of the Word of God," declared, "God does not wish that any men should perish. His wish is rather that all should enter upon life eternal by coming to repentance. The language in this part of the verse is so absolute that it is highly unnatural to envisage Peter as meaning merely that God does not wish that any believers should perish...." Writing in the second century, Justin Martyr suggests that God is delaying the Last Judgment because "in His foreknowledge He sees that some will be saved by repentance, some who are, perhaps not yet in existence."

WHAT ABOUT 1 TIMOTHY 4:10?

⁵The only consistent understanding of this verse, 2 Peter 3:9, is that the “us-ward” in the phrase “longsuffering to us-ward” is like an editorial “we” that includes everyone. It is true that in the only other place this expression is found in the New Testament [Ephesians 1:9], it clearly refers to those who are the saved. That fact, however, does not restrict the way it could be used in this particular instance. One use doesn’t make a rule. “Us-ward” introduces the statements about “longsuffering” and “perish,” which could only apply to the world at large.

Peter is referring to the destruction of the universe from which the elect have been delivered. The ungodly are the ones who will perish, and the only consistent understanding of the verse is that God does not want *anyone* to perish, and, as He has done with Israel, is longsuffering in pleading with them and waiting upon them to repent and be saved. This understanding is also consistent with the whole tenor of Scripture, as we are repeatedly reminded.

Though all key passages cannot be covered, some further attention must be given to Paul's declaration that Christ "is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." Surely "those that believe" must be the elect for whom Christ is the Saviour in a *special* way not true of "all men" in general. Thus "all men" can't possibly mean the elect.

White omits reference to this passage, as do other Calvinists.

There are, of course, similar contrasts made elsewhere in Scripture. Paul exhorts prayer "for all men...that we may lead a quite and peaceable life..." (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Surely the "we" who are to pray must be the elect, and the "all men" must be someone else. Again Paul writes, "Let us do good unto all men, especially unto...the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). The elect must be the household of faith, again set in contrast to "all men."

Here also the Calvinist adopts astonishing reasoning in order to escape the plain teaching of Scripture. **Gary North explains that** "Christ is indeed the Saviour of all people prior to the day of judgment." "Saviour" in what way? Calvin is no less **AUDACIOUS** in his claim that **Saviour simply means that Christ shows "kindness" to all men. Where is "Saviour" ever used to signify "kindness"? And what kindness would bless in this life and damn for eternity?**

Calvin adds that by "Saviour" the passage only means, for the non-elect, that Christ "guards and preserves." Pink and Beck declare, somewhat like Calvin, that "Saviour of all men" simply means that Christ is the "Preserver" of all men.

Really? In what way does God "preserve" those whom He has predestined to eternal damnation? And how is Christ "the Saviour of all people prior to the day of judgment"? North doesn't explain, nor can he. And what could be meant by God's "kindness" to those He predestined before their birth to suffer eternally and from whom He withholds the salvation He could give to all? "Kindness" for the fleeting moments of time, then eternal damnation, could hardly be kindness at all! We are offended for our God at such boldness in **rewriting His Word!**

THE OVERWHELMING TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE

Many scriptures have been quoted in which God expresses genuine concern for rebellious Israel, sending His prophets to plead with His people to repent so He will not have to punish them-and there are hundreds more. We have noted Paul's passion for the lost, his willingness even to be accursed if that might rescue his brethren the Jews from hell, a passion also for the salvation of Gentiles which could only have come from the indwelling Holy Spirit. We have seen the Lord Jesus Christ weeping over Jerusalem, identifying himself as Jahweh, the One who has wept over His rebellious children (Isaiah 1:1-9) for centuries.

We have heard Jesus call out to *whosoever* was weary, burdened or thirsty, "Come unto me." We have heard our Lord repeatedly declare that *whosoever* would believe on Him would be saved. And we have seen the many scriptures which, **if the ordinary meaning of words can be accepted**, offer salvation to the whole world and declare that God wants the whole world to be saved, that He gave His Son for the salvation of the whole world, that He is not willing that any should perish and that Christ died for the sins of all.

To annul this plain teaching of Scripture, the Calvinist has boldly changed "world" to mean "elect" in no fewer than twenty scriptures. He has changed "whosoever" and "all" into "elect" at least sixteen times each. In addition, the phrase "every man" has been turned into "elect" six times and "everyone" into "elect" three times. In every instance where these changes have been made there is nothing in **the text** to justify "elect" as the meaning of the word for which it must be substituted. **The change has been made for one reason only: to accommodate Calvinism!** For example, when Christ says He would draw "all men" to himself (John 12:32), the Calvinist must say, "The 'all' plainly refers to all of God's *elect*." *Plainly?* Only if one is a Calvinist.

One would think that the overwhelming testimony of Scripture that God *is love*, that He is ever merciful to all and wants all to come to the knowledge of the truth, would be accepted gratefully and joyfully by all of Christ's true followers, and that this good news would be proclaimed to the world as Christ commanded. Instead, we have seen that in those places where God's desire for the salvation of all mankind is clearly stated, Calvinists still insist that God has chosen to save only a select few. Great effort is made, even calling upon distant verses unrelated to the context of these loving statements, in order to deny what is so clearly affirmed of God's undeserved and unlimited love for all.

WAS CALVIN REALLY THE GREAT EXEGETE?

John Calvin believed and practiced a number of things which many of those who call themselves Calvinists today would consider seriously wrong, if not heresy. **FOR EXAMPLE**, Calvin was a staunch believer in the efficacy of infant baptism to effect forgiveness of sins and to bring the infant into the Kingdom. **WORSE YET**, in spite of his quarrel with the papacy and the Roman system, he taught that being baptized as a baby (or as an adult) by a Roman Catholic priest (which had happened to Calvin as an infant) was efficacious for eternity. The priest could even have been a rank unbeliever and great sinner.

Had he not maintained this Romish false doctrine, Calvin himself would have had to submit to rebaptism [i.e., scriptural baptism], and that was repugnant to him. **HE DERIDED THE ANABAPTISTS⁶ FOR OPPOSING INFANT**

⁶ALL HISTORIC BAPTISTS NEED TO READ WHAT FOLLOWS CAREFULLY. [According to] Milburn Cockrell, the editor of ... [a] Calvinistic Baptist newspaper, ... nothing proves the state of apostasy that most Baptist Churches are in more than “their departure from the doctrine of free and sovereign grace.” **Indeed**, as Dr. Lawrence M. Vance says further, he does not even recognize as a true Baptist church a church which is against Calvinism:

We do not recognize as true churches those who denounce the doctrines of grace as the doctrines of the Devil. We will not grant a letter to nor receive a letter from any such so-called Baptist church. We grant that a church may be weak on sovereign grace and yet retain its church status, but we do not believe that a church which violently and openly opposes sovereign grace can be a true New Testament Baptist Church. [Vance, The Other Side of Calvinism, 16-17]

What an awful position to take by a so-called historic Baptist. Has Brother Cockrell forgotten the facts of history? Based on the facts of history, John Calvin, 1509-1564, was a murderer, a persecutor, a butcherer, and a dictator. He also had precious souls in Geneva, who did not agree with him in every detail of life, either beaten, beheaded, burned at the stake or banished. He was not the only so-called “Christian” reformer to do this. Worst of all, if anything could be worst than what has just been said about Calvin based on the facts of history, **he was a Catholic in his theology**. He followed Augustine and quotes from him over and over again in his immature work, *Institutes of the Christian religion*. This work was written when Calvin was only 26. Calvin, as has already been stated, could not be consistent with the Scriptures concerning his **eisegetical** beliefs. This is also true of Spurgeon, R.C. Sproul and others who have followed the pernicious

BAPTISM. Their valid, biblical reason-that an infant has no understanding of the gospel and has not believed in Christ-**was scorned by Calvin and his wrath and that of the other Reformers came upon them.**

Rather than any natural brilliance, Calvin's arguments reflect a bias toward the sacramentalism he learned as a Roman Catholic from Augustine, which he elaborated upon and thereafter was compelled to defend. **HIS LOGIC OFTEN BETRAYS A SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY. INCREDIBLY,** Calvin argued:

Such in the present day are our Catabaptists, who deny that we are duly baptised, because we were baptised in the Papacy by wicked men and idolaters.... Against these absurdities we shall be sufficiently fortified if we reflect that by baptism we were initiated...into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and, therefore, that baptism is not of man, but of God, by whomsoever it may have been administered [but only so long as they were clergy].

Be it that those who baptised us were most ignorant of God and all piety, or were despisers, still they did not baptise us into a fellowship with their ignorance or sacrilege, but into the faith of Jesus Christ, because the name they invoked was not their own but God's.... But if baptism was of God, it certainly included in it the promise of forgiveness of sin, mortification of the flesh, quickening of the Spirit, and communion with Christ.

ways of Calvin as has been shown in this brief paper. Calvin's eisegesis also reminds me of what Peter said in 2 Peter 3:16: "...They that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." Thus Calvin, along with the others who have followed his teachings, has twisted the Scriptures to fit his "own" fallacious theory. Calvin was also a strong supporter of infant baptism as administered by Rome and her unregenerated priests. He also opposed our true historic Baptist position on baptism. This was also true of Martin Luther. Both these men, along with Zwingli, hated our Anabaptist forefathers and proved it by having them put to death by the thousands. Brother Cockrell has turned his back on our Baptist forefathers and in so doing demonstrates a lack of fidelity to our Baptist heritage. Shame on him! No true Baptist can support a man who was a "closet" Catholic and pedobaptist. In addition to all of this, Calvin created a "cult" based upon "his heretical" teachings of the Scriptures. Therefore, how can **true historic Baptists** turn a deaf ear and a blind eye to the abominable teachings of a **PROTESTANT** reformer is beyond me. May the Lord of glory forgive them.

These astonishing statements reflect a sacramentalism which maintains that the physical act of baptism has spiritual power and imparts regeneration. To be baptized by Roman Catholic priests who were not even Christians but held to and promoted a false gospel, was perfectly acceptable to Calvin because they used the name of God when they administered it! Even to be baptized by *despisers* of Christ and God would bring the “promise of forgiveness of sin...”! Why would merely pronouncing the name of God and Christ by unbelievers minister spiritual power? Because they were “part of the ministerial office.”

Thus, for all his legitimate complaints against the papacy, and in spite of being recognized as one of the main figures in the Protestant Reformation, nevertheless, **CALVIN HONORED ROME’S CORRUPT AND UNSAVED PRIESTS AS GOD’S MINISTERS!** And at the same time he condemned those who came out of that Antichrist system through faith in Christ for being subsequently baptized as believers according to God’s holy Word.

In this, Calvin betrays his unbiblical view of clerical dominance over the laity. So high was his regard for a clergy class, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, that he taught that only the clergy could baptize or administer the Lord’s Supper. He justified that unbiblical belief in this manner:

It is here also pertinent to observe, that it is improper for private individuals to take upon themselves the administration of baptism; for it, as well as the dispensation of the Supper, is part of the ministerial office. For Christ did not give command to any man or woman whatever to baptise, but to those whom he had appointed apostles.

THUS Calvin also accepted Rome’s claim that her bishops were the successors of the twelve Apostles and from them her priests received divine authority. And he was a leader of the Reformation? Contrary to what Calvin taught about an exclusive “ministerial office,” our Lord Jesus Christ clearly commanded the original disciples to make disciples and to teach every disciple they won to Him through the gospel to “observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20).

FINDING THE “UNAVAILABLE” EXEGESIS

There is no question that the Calvinist interpretation of John 6:37-45 is contrary to the entire tenor of Scripture. Let us examine it, too, in this specific context. In John 6:65, Jesus uses slightly different language in saying the same thing: “no man can come unto me, except it were given [Greek, datum] unto him of Father.” Note this is not a giving of the sinner to the Son, but a giving to the sinner (given *him*), making it possible for him to come to Christ.

Surely it is justifiable to take what He says in verse 65 as at least a *possible* indication of what Christ meant by the Father drawing: i.e., that the Father *gives* the opportunity to come - and we have an abundance of scripture indicating that this opportunity is given to the whole world through the gospel. We need no more than this simple understanding to refute White's claim that "there is no meaningful non-Reformed exegesis of the passage available." Certainly this is at least a *possible* one.

In fact, we find that the very same Greek word (*datum*) is used for "given" multiple times in the New Testament in a way that allows a distinctly non-Calvinist interpretation of Christ's words here and which is also consistent with the overall biblical emphasis upon God's love and mercy. For example, Paul uses *datum* when he says that God "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:25). Some of the many other places where *datum* is used to indicate something given by God and which men can either receive or reject, obey or disobey, and which involves their cooperation are as follows:

. . . the law was given by Moses . . . (John 1:17). (No one is forced to obey, although there are serious consequences for disobedience.)

. . . [I] would have given thee living water (John 4: 10). (The water would not be forced upon her against her will. She would have to want it and willingly receive it.)

I have given them thy word . . . (John 17: 14). (The disciples had to willingly receive the Word and obedience thereto was by their choice, it wasn't forced upon them.)

. . . the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? (John 18:11). (Jesus pleaded with the Father that if salvation could come to mankind any other way to spare Him this cup. However, He drank it out of obedience to the Father and love for us.)

. . . through the grace given unto me. . . (Romans 12:3; 15: 15; Galatians 2:9, etc.). (Paul uses this expression with this same Greek word a number of times. This is not Calvinism's mythical Irresistible Grace. God's grace was not imposed upon him so that he could not disobey or fail to fulfill all God's will or did not need to cooperate in the fulfillment thereof.)

Surely all of these usages (and others like them) give us ample reason for the very non-Reformed exegesis which White says is not "available." The Father draws the lost to Christ by giving (*datum*) to them the opportunity to believe. The giving of those who believe to the Son is of another nature. And those who are drawn by the Father must, in response to the Father's drawing, "see" Him with the eyes of faith and believe on Him to be saved. The giving of Father to the Son is something else - a special blessing for those who believe.

Christ is saying that we cannot demand salvation but it must be given to us from God. Salvation involves a new birth and no man can regenerate himself into God's family; that privilege can only be given of God and only God has the right to effect it by His Holy Spirit. In all of this, however, there is no rationale for believing that God only grants this for a select few and withholds it from the rest of mankind or that He irresistibly forces it upon anyone.

Christ does not say that the Father forcefully pulls or drags or irresistibly compels anyone to come to Him. In fact, Christ gives every indication that there is definite responsibility on the part of those who are being drawn to believe in Him: "he that believeth on me shall never thirst...ye also have seen me, and believe not" (John 6:35-36); "ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40). Not ye *cannot* because my Father will not allow it, but ye *will not*.

Instead, the Calvinist view of "draw him" renders "come to me" meaningless, absolving the sinner of any responsibility to come, repent or believe. One cannot be held responsible for what one cannot do, and as we have more than amply documented, Calvinism teaches that the sinner is dead and *cannot* respond unless God first of all regenerates him through Irresistible Grace and then causes him to believe. **That idea is clearly an invention to make a theory work.**

Jesus said, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven" (John 6:32). There is no indication of force-feeding. In fact, Christ says, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst...this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life . . . he that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6:35,40,47). He goes on to say, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever. . ." (verse 51).

The metaphor Christ chose of eating and drinking contradicts Calvinism. It is clear from this entire passage that eating and drinking Christ's body and blood is a metaphor for believing on Him, as Schreiner and Ware admit: "To come to Jesus is to satisfy one's hunger and to believe in him is to quench one's thirst." While the Calvinist tries to say that the faith to believe is given by God in order to *cause* the elect to believe, that idea hardly fits the metaphor of eating and drinking. Surely it is the responsibility of the one to

whom the Father gives the "bread of life" to eat it. There is no hint that the bread of life is force fed to the elect through Irresistible Grace without their willingly receiving and eating it.

FINALLY

ANOTHER VERSE MOST CALVINISTS AVOID

The major problem when it comes to John 1:13 is the failure to take into account that it follows verse 12 - and verse 12 follows verse 11: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." It is to this fact that John refers when he begins verse 12 with the word "but." In contrast to those who did not receive Christ, John writes, "*But* as many as received him . . . even to them that believe on his name" is given to become the sons of God. Verse 13 then explains that those who believe and receive Christ cannot give the new birth into God's family to themselves but are born "of God." And is it not repeatedly made clear in Scripture that "the gospel of God" (Romans 1:1) offers the new birth to those who will repent and believe?

This passage offers an insight of great importance in relation to the doctrine of predestination / election: that becoming a child of God through the new birth is a special blessing that would not automatically follow believing the gospel. Men could be saved from eternal hell and be given eternal life without being adopted as children into the family of God. Clearly, being predestined / elected / chosen to be the children of God is not predestination unto salvation but to a special blessing which God has graciously and lovingly made to accompany salvation.

It is no coincidence that most Calvinists avoid John 1:12. No reference is made to it in the 600 pages of the Selected Writings of John Knox, and Pink avoids it in *The Sovereignty of God*. Piper makes two oblique references to it in *The Justification of God*, but without substantive comment. Not one of the thirteen authors in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge and Grace* confronts it. To his credit, White gives it four and one-half pages because Norm Geisler mentions it in his book, *Chosen But Free* (Bethany House, 1999), and White's book was written specifically as a rebuttal to Geisler. White attempts a response to Geisler's statement that "verse 12 [John 1:12] makes it plain that the means by which this new birth is obtained is by [sic] 'all who receive him [Christ] , ..'" Geisler means that verse 12 gives the qualification ("as many as received him . . . who believe on his name") for receiving the new birth mentioned in verse 13, and that the new birth is totally "of God." This is obviously correct.