



## BIBLICAL TRAINING CENTER

April 29, 2018

# Election, Predestination, Security and Assurance

Shawn Nelson

## 1. Did I choose God, or did He choose me?

### God's Sovereignty vs. Human Responsibility

#### God's Sovereignty:

- God controls **all things**.
- Westminster Confession: "God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel **of His own will**, freely, and unchangeably **ordain** whatever comes to pass" (chapter III).

#### Human Responsibility:

- Man has **free choice** or "the ability to do otherwise."
- Each person's destiny depends on **what they do** with Christ.

### God's Sovereignty

#### Bible says God is in control over the entire universe (including all human events).

- Job 42:2 —**you can do all things**, and that no purpose of yours **can be thwarted**.
- Psalm 135:6 —**Whatever the LORD pleases, he does**, in heaven and on earth...
- Proverbs 21:1 —The king's heart is... in the hand of the LORD; **he turns it wherever he will**.

#### Bible uses words like "election," "predestination" and "appoint."

- **God elected/chose some for salvation** – eklektos (ἐκλεκτός): **chosen**, selected, picked out, **elect**
  - Matthew 24:22 - for the **sake of the elect** those days will be cut short.
  - Mark 13:27 - he will send out the angels and **gather his elect**

- Romans 8:33 - Who shall bring any charge against **God's elect**?
- **God appointed some for salvation** – tasso (τάσσω): determine, fix, appoint
  - Acts 13:48—and **as many as were appointed** to eternal life believed.
- **God predestined people for salvation** – prooridzo (προορίζω): **predestine**, predetermine, decide beforehand, foreordain
  - Romans 8:29-30—whom he foreknew he also **predestined** to be conformed to the image of his Son ... **whom he predestined he also called** ... justified ... glorified.
  - Ephesians 1:5 - he **predestined us for adoption** to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will
  - Ephesians 1:11 - In him we have obtained an inheritance, **having been predestined** according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will

## Human Responsibility

### People are held responsible for their moral choices.

- Genesis 3:13 —Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that **you have done?**”
- Genesis 3:17 —And to Adam [God] said, “Because **you have listened to the voice of your wife** and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground...” [i.e., **he was culpable; held accountable**]
- Joshua 24:15 —**choose this day** whom you will serve... but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”
- Revelation 20:11-15 – **Lake of Fire** [i.e., all moral creatures **held accountable** for acts]

### God desires all people to be saved.

- Matthew 23:37 —“...**How often** would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and **you were not willing!**
- 2 Peter 3:9—The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, **not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.**
- 1 Timothy 2:4—[God] **desires all people to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

### God invites all to believe, chose and obey Him.

- John 7:37—On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “**If anyone thirsts**, let him come to me and drink.”

### Bema seat rewards imply human responsibility.

- 1 Corinthians 3:13–14—each one’s work will become manifest, for **the Day** will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he **will receive a reward**.

### There are real warnings to not fall away from faith.

- James 5:19–20—My brothers, **if anyone among you wanders from the truth** and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.
- 1 Timothy 1:19—[hold] faith and a good conscience. By rejecting this, some have **made shipwreck of their faith**.
- Hebrews 3:14,15—For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end... Today if you (Christians) hear his voice **do not harden your hearts...**

## Sometimes both in SAME verse!

### We see God’s sovereignty and human responsibility in same verses.

- John 6:37 —All that **the Father gives me** will come to me, and **whoever comes to me** I will never cast out.
- Acts 13:48 —And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were **appointed** to eternal life **believed**.
- Acts 2:23 —this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite **plan and foreknowledge of God**, you **crucified and killed** by the hands of lawless men. [i.e., they were **being held responsible** for their moral actions]

## A Solution to Problem

### Historically people have looked to the “order of salvation” (*ordo salutis*).

- Many have tried to order the events of salvation from passages like: Romans 8:29–30—For those whom he **foreknew** he also **predestined** to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also **called**, and those whom he called he also **justified**, and those whom he justified he also **glorified**.

- **Some might start with predestination:**  
Predestination → Election → Calling → Regeneration → Faith → Repentance → Justification
- **Others start with foreknowledge** (God sees those who would chose him):  
Foreknowledge → Election → Faith/Repentance → Justification → Regeneration

**Problem: these orderings involve time; but God is outside of time.**

- God is **simple in essence** (no parts) and outside of time.
- There's **no contradiction** in saying that in God's mind foreknowledge, predestination, election, justification, etc. **are all at once (they're all simultaneous).**
- **Formally stated:** There is **no chronological** or **logical priority** of election and foreknowledge. As a simple being, all of God's attributes are with his indivisible essence. Whatever God knows, he **determines**. And whatever he determines, he **knows**. We should speak of God as **knowingly determining** and **determinately knowing** from **all eternity** everything that happens, including all free acts. (Norm Geisler)

## Conclusion

**Did I choose God, or did He choose me?**

**Answer:** It was a simultaneous act in God!

## 2. Can I Lose My Salvation?

There's a strong case for believing that a person who is **truly born-again** (regenerated) **cannot** lose their salvation. Somebody who falls away (e.g., Judas) was **never born-again** to begin with (1 John 2:9). In other words, if a person "falls away" they did not ever have the new nature, were not in the body of Christ, did not have the Holy Spirit, etc. This follows from the Bible's description of the securing work of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Source of Evidence:** the **securing work** of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

### Securing Work of the Father

**Nothing can snatch us from the Father's hand.**

- John 10:28–30—I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand..."

**There does not seem to be any broken links in God's chain of salvation.**

- God the Father's plans **cannot be thwarted** (Isa. 14:24)
- Thus the chain of salvation for a person **cannot be broken** (Rom. 8:29-30).
- The ones the Father foreknew, predestined, called and justified **are the same ones** he brings to glorification in the future. None are lost in the process.
- **True believers are secure** because the Father has chosen them to salvation from eternity past (Eph. 1:4-5).
- We have a **clear statement** that those who fall away were **never truly believers** to begin with (1 John 2:19).

## Securing Work of the Son

**Effective work is implied in ministry of son.**

- The Son has **redeemed** the believer (Eph. 1:7), **removed God's wrath** from the believer (Rom. 3:25), **justified** the believer (Ro. 5:1), provided **forgiveness** (Col. 2:13) and **sanctified** the believer (1 Cor. 1:2).

**Part of his current ministry as high priest is that he regularly prays for each Christian.**

- Hebrews 7:25—"He is able to **save to the uttermost** those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them."
- With Jesus interceding for us, we're secure. (His prayers are **always answered!**).
- **Jesus' prayer in John 17** illustrates the preventive nature of his praying: He prayed that we might be (1) kept from the evil one (v. 15); (2) sanctified (v. 17); (3) united (v. 21); (4) be in heaven with Him (v. 24); (5) and behold His glory (v. 24).
- Christ is called **our advocate** (1 John 2:1).

**Jesus said he would not lose any real believer.**

- "John 6:38–40—For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that **I should lose nothing** of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and **I will raise him up** on the last day."

**Eternal life begins immediately.**

- To have the son is to **have life now** (John 3:15-16, 36; 4:14; 5:24; 6:40, 47; 1 John 5:11-13)

## Securing Work of the Holy Spirit

### The Holy Spirit has already given the Christian a new nature

- Titus 3:5—he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the **washing of regeneration** and renewal of the Holy Spirit

### The believer has been transferred.

- At salvation, the Holy Spirit places the believer **into the body of Christ** (1 Cor. 12:13)
- The believer is **transferred from Satan’s kingdom** to Jesus’ kingdom (Col. 1:13; Phil. 3:20).
- The believe is **adopted into God’s family** (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5).
- The believer is transferred from **darkness to light**. (Eph. 5:8)
- There are no verses that even hint these transfers can be undone.

### Believers have been sealed by the Holy Spirit

- Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30 indicate that at the **moment of believing** in Jesus Christ for salvation, we are **permanently "sealed"** by the Holy Spirit: "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were **sealed with the promised Holy Spirit**, who is **the guarantee of our inheritance** until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."
- The indwelling Holy Spirit guarantees we'll make it to heaven.

## Verses Used to Show Loss of Salvation

**Hebrews 6:4-6** – “For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then **have fallen away**, to restore them again to repentance...”

- **Response:** See v. 9; he’s **not talking about truly saved**: “Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation.”

**John 15:2** – “Every branch in me that does not bear fruit **he takes away**, and every branch that does bear fruit **he prunes**, that it may bear more fruit.”

- **Response:** Could be discipline, pruning to lift for growth or loss of reward.

**1 Corinthians 15:1–2** – “Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—**unless you believed in vain.**”

- **Response:** The “if” is a first class conditional and best translated “since” you hold fast.

**1 John 3:9** – “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him; and **he cannot keep on sinning,** because he has been born of God.”

- **Response:** It’s not speaking about single instance of sin but life characterized by sin and defeat.

**2 Timothy 2:12** – “**if we deny him,** he also will deny us”

- **Response:** It’s not speaking of true believer; true believers would not deny God.

## Conclusion

A strong case can be built for personal assurance and security. But let’s show charity to those who disagree. Yet, even **Chuck Smith** believed a person could lose salvation. Chuck said he did believe **a person could chose** to stop abiding and lose their salvation. But Chuck said he felt secure because **he was never going to choose to stop abiding in Christ.**

## Extra Material

### History of Opinions

#### Early church fathers (2nd/3rd centuries AD)

- Dozens of writings show clearly held to doctrine of **original sin** (we’re all born in state of sin).
- Irenaeus: “...as we are from [Adam], we have inherited his title [of sin]”
- Tertullian: “the **whole human race ... was infected...**”
- Origen: “Every soul that is born into flesh is **soiled by the filth of wickedness** and sin...”
- Felt no need to technically define this yet (especially under persecutions).

#### Pelagius (AD 360- 420)

- God directly creates each soul in womb as good (denied original sin).
- Each person born in same pure state as Adam and can chose good/evil.

- Man has no inclination to sin but is perfectly free (e.g., can keep all Ten Commandments).

### **Augustine (AD 354- 430)**

- Said all humans are born with/in sin.
- Man lost image of God and became so corrupt we **cannot do good at all**—all we can chose is sin.
- People are so corrupt they **will never choose God**.
- God’s election not based on foreknowledge of who would accept him (**none would ever accept**).
- God **must impart irresistible grace** to reveal Christ and strengthen the will for salvation (will is made compliant).
- Thus, a person is **made to believe**.

### **John Calvin (1509-1564)**

- Continuation of Augustinianism 1000 years earlier.
- Followers later developed into T.U.L.I.P. (discussed below)
- Calvin did not believe in limited atonement: “It is no small matter to have the souls perish who were bought by the blood of Christ.”

### **Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609)**

- A reaction against determinism of Calvinism.
- Said God did not impute Adam’s sin to entire human race.
- Each person is guilty for their own sin.
- **Prevenient grace** levels the playing field so all people can choose Jesus or not.
- This grace is extended to all so that anybody can receive salvation if they want it.
- But people can lose their salvation too.

### **Chuck Smith (1927- 2013)**

- **“It is not easy to maintain the unity of the Spirit among us on these matters.** It seems that the sovereignty of God and human responsibility are like two parallel lines that do not seem to intersect within our finite minds... In difficult doctrinal matters, may we have gracious attitudes and humble hearts, desiring most of all to please Him who has called us to serve Him in the body of Christ. **Discussion - YES! Disagreements - YES! Division - NO!”**

### **T.U.L.I.P.**

- **T**otal Depravity
- **U**nconditional Election



- Limited Atonement
- Irresistible Grace
- Perseverance of the Saints

Other terms people talk about:

- **Monergism:** the work is completely done by God; man has NO part in the above.
- **Synergism:** God and man cooperate in the work of salvation.

## Comparison of Views

(Warning: even with this chart people will claim you are misrepresenting them!)

	<b>Arminianism</b>	<b>Moderate Calvinism</b>	<b>Strong Calvinism</b>
<b>Total Depravity</b>	Man born depraved; Prevenient grace is needed.	Totally depravity (extensively); Image of God effaced but not erased. "Man not as bad as could be, but not as good as should be."	Totally depravity (intensively); Image of God (free will) erased.
<b>Unconditional Election</b>	Synergism; Can chose God because of prevenient grace.	Synergism; Can chose God because of prevenient grace.	Monergism (cannot chose God).
<b>Limited Atonement</b>	Christ died for all.	Christ's death unlimited in extent/offer, limited in effect/application. Was provided for all but applied to only those who receive. This was Calvin's view.	Christ died only for the elect.
<b>Irresistible Grace</b>	God's grace is sufficient for all.	Irresistible on the willing.	Irresistible on the unwilling.
<b>Perseverance of the Saints</b>	Believers can have <i>assurance</i> (if they have faith today) but no <i>security</i> (can lose salvation).	Both <i>security</i> (one who is regenerated cannot become unregenerated) and personal <i>assurance</i> (if you yield to Gospel today you are regenerated).	Believers cannot really know if they are elect until the end (heaven). Thus, there is security (all truly saved will persevere) but no personal assurance (will I persevere until the end?).

## Unlimited Atonement

Moderate Calvinists argue that while Christ's atonement is only applied to those who believe, it is provided for all people. Here are the primary passages in support of the view that Christ's atonement has been provided for all people:

- Isaiah 53:6 – On Jesus was laid “the iniquity of us all.” Commenting on this passage even John Calvin said Christ “alone bore the punishment of many, because on him was laid the guilt of the whole world.” (Calvin’s comments on Isa. 53:12)
- Matthew 23:37—Jesus expresses longing to save all Israel: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!”
- 1 Timothy 4:10 – Our hope is “in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe.”
- 2 Peter 2:1 – Non-believers “deny the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves.”
- 2 Peter 3:9 – God “is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”
- 1 John 2:2 – “He [Christ] is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.”
- John 1:29 – Jesus is called “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”
- John 3:16-17 – If limited atonement were true the passage would need to be translated like John Owen translated it: “God so loved his elect throughout the world, that he gave his Son with this intention, that by him believers might be saved” (DDDC, 214).
- 1 Timothy 2:3-4 – God “desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” Spurgeon noted that the text would have to say “some men” if the Holy Spirit meant limited atonement.
- 1 Tim 2:6 – Christ “gave himself a ransom for all men.”

## Personal Assurance Test

In his excellent book on salvation (*Salvation Is Forever*, pp. 177-182), Dr. Robert Gromacki lists twelve things by which one may test his salvation experience.

1. Have you enjoyed spiritual fellowship with God, with Christ, and with fellow believers? (1 Jn. 1:3,4)
2. Do you have a sensitivity to sin? (1 Jn. 1:5-10)
3. Are you basically obedient to the commandments of Scripture? (1 Jn. 2:3-5)
4. What is your attitude toward the world and its values? (1 Jn. 2:15)

5. Do you love Jesus Christ and look forward to his coming? (2Tim. 4:8; 1Jn. 3:2- 3)
6. Do you practice sin less now that you have professed faith in Christ? (1Jn. 3:5, 6)
7. Do you love other believers? (I Jn. 3:14)
8. Have you experienced answered prayer? (1 Jn. 3:22; 5:14, 15)
9. Do you have the inner witness of the Holy Spirit? (Rom. 8:15, 16; 1 Jn. 4:13)
10. Do you have the ability to discern between spiritual truth and error? (Jn. 10:3-5, 27; 1 Jn. 4:16)
11. Do you believe the basic doctrines of the faith? (I Jn. 5:1)
12. Have you experienced persecution for your Christian position? (Jn. 15:18-20; Phil. 1:28)

## Bibliography

- Alcorn, Randy. "Scriptures on Whether True Christians Can Lose Their Salvation." <https://www.epm.org/resources/2004/May/1/scriptures-whether-true-christians-can-lose-their-/> (accessed April 28, 2018).
- Geisler, Norman L. *Systematic Theology: Volume Two: God, Creation*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Bethany House, 2003.
- Gromacki, Robert Glenn. *Salvation Is Forever*. Schaumburg, Ill.: Regular Baptist Press, 2007.
- Horton, Michael Scott, and J Matthew Pinson. *Four Views On Eternal Security*. Counterpoints. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002.
- Smith, Chuck. *Calvinism, Arminianism and the Word of God: a Calvary Chapel Perspective*. Costa Mesa, Calif.: Word for Today, 2006.

---

## Class Schedule

### Help Me Understand Sin and Salvation

- Apr. 8: The Problem & The Solution – Part 1
- Apr. 15: The Problem & The Solution – Part 2
- Apr. 22: Seven Truth and Three Aspects of Salvation
- Apr. 29: Election, Predestination, Security and Assurance
- May 6: The Process of Becoming More Like Jesus

***If you know somebody who would be blessed by this class, feel free to invite them; visitors welcome at any time!***

Where: Sundays second service (10:45AM) in the upstairs chapel building room C-205B