

More Arminian Error

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 08 March 2011 08:22

Our ministry regularly receives mail and emails shouting that we are wrong. We are wrong, they say, because we teach predestination and election. Invariably, those who shout the loudest are Arminians. Few of these people apply genuine criticism, but just... shout. They ignore Biblical facts and ignore proper means of discussion. That is, they want only to split their spleens, regardless of truth. So we spend little time replying as they wish. (For links to our other articles on Arminianism, see end of this article).

Below, we reproduce several emails sent to us by someone who is obviously very angry. He rejects predestination, which is plainly taught in scripture. We will not give his name, because we do not wish to embarrass him... he has no idea what scripture truly says, probably because he hates the idea of God being sovereign, and has a poor grasp of what God says. He looks at the 'face value' of scripture, when anyone who does so can be very deluded by wrongly-interpret texts.

People examine the Hebrew and Greek for a reason! Not just to vaunt knowledge – but to get to the very core of what God actually says. Whereas, Arminians want to be literal when they wish, and emotional when they wish, depending on their whim! In particular they misinterpret texts such as John 3:16. It is clear to me where this man is simply copying someone else's argument, which is most of the time (I know because I found the sources he used, on the Internet!). It is also clear to me that he argues not for truth, but against God's plan of salvation. In places, I have corrected his use of English to help the reader, but this does not detract from his arguments.

Because his emails are rather rambling and long, **my replies to this person are shown in bold italics in the text** His initial complaint regarded our article, A-089, 'Election and Whosoever'. Please check it out, because it is fully scriptural.

"Although the article was written by a Mr Napier, it is included in your site and shows your belief in this teaching; it is promoted and on your website, therefore, you hold to the same teaching. The author also tries to make out his views just happened to be the same as Calvin and a fortunate coincidence, when the fact is he is 100% in acceptance of a heresy-filled Calvinistic

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teaching.”

This accusation is far too broad to be useful. But, I take it he is referring to Calvin’s work on salvation. Yes, I generally concur with what Calvin says on salvation. I also assume the writer is referring to the so-called ‘Five Points of Calvinism’, which are not his points at all, but firstly came from Arminius. And yes, if we put something on our website from ourselves, we believe it – what else does the writer expect?

Yes, I said that what I wrote coincided with the teachings of Calvin. If Calvin said something from scripture, then I believe it and teach it. Simple as that. Doing this does not make me a ‘Calvinist’! If I tell you I read and accept the geography of Africa written by an African, does it mean I am therefore an African? The writer cannot understand that I can quote someone and yet not be his follower! Rather, I believe my stance is scriptural – to follow, or agree with, whatever a man says if it is of God. This is a matter covered by Paul.

“THIS IS JUST A SMALL SAMPLE OF EVIDENCE TO PROVE THE HERESY OF THIS AUTHOR AND BY ASSOCIATION YOUR PROMOTION OF IT ON YOUR WEBSITE AND YOUR TEACHING OF IT.”

Notice the use of capitals? This is usually done to emphasis someone’s anger, and is supposed to ‘prove’ the argument! But, all it does is to show me the writer’s unwillingness to listen and a willingness to simply shout. I don’t need capital letters to persuade me, just hard facts from scripture. In this email he does not show me anything scriptural, only misinterpretations.

“Some background on my own views now might help to see where I am coming from. I hold to a Preterist view of fulfilment in the past of certain scriptures and in a First Century context. BEAR IN MIND I AM NOT HYPER-PRETERIST which is completely false and not true preterism. See Preterism index 100% heresy-free site run by Dee De Warren for more information.”

This is helpful. I suggest the reader looks at my own article on Preterism, a Roman Catholic heresy designed to explain-away certain Bible texts that show Rome to be the Whore of Revelation. It was invented to side-track Christians into thinking God was not

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condemning Rome, but some other regime. The regimes found in the First Century are just one example of this deliberate distortion of history and prophecy. There are many other Preterist views saying different things. It is interesting that whilst such folks insist they are Preterists, they also insist they are not themselves hyper-Preterist... but claim that all who believe in what Calvin said are always 'hyper' Calvinists! These people protesteth too much, to amend a quote from Shakespeare!

"I completely reject all Futurist interpretations on aspects like the Antichrist, 7year tribulation and the Future fulfilment of some leader/Antichrist figure to come, secret rapture, mark of the beast, microchip, etc.

PLAIN AND SIMPLY -YOU ARE WRONG!!!"

I am not sure what he is talking about here... is his argument against me, or against someone else? He has not read my material on these topics! He is mixing his 'argument' with that of millennialists... and we are not millennialist! Sorry to burst his bubble! His statement is completely irrelevant to what he is complaining about.

"The Calvinist methodology of interpreting Jacob and Esau as a representation of how individuals are chosen then is a decontextualized over-stretching of the analogy, and thus fundamentally flawed. The context of the chapter plainly dictates that the analogies demonstrate the choosing of one group over the other according to God's eternal purpose in Christ."

This, and what follows, is clearly not the wording of the writer of the email! He has copied it extensively from someone else. Calvin did not use 'methodology' on these texts – he just examined scripture and said what God said! If Calvin had any kind of 'methodology', it was to read scripture and teach what it said. Just like us. That Calvin says something similar is godly coincidence!

Our belief concerning Jacob and Esau is direct from scripture, so how can it be 'de-contextualised', or 'over-stretching the analogy'? The text has nothing to do with choosing a 'group' but individuals. The texts refer to individual sons – Jacob and Esau! This is repeated in Romans 9:13 "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

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In verse 15 we are told that “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy”... this is a reference to individual salvation, not to whole groups! This is further emphasised by mention of Pharaoh, not the whole of Egypt (verse 17), and this explains the meaning of verse 18. No doubt the email writer also hates verse 21, too. And ALL who are saved by grace alone are gathered together as a people, but not as a nation, as verse 24 proves.

The final verse in the Romans chapter says that “whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed”. This is reference to an individual, not a group. It is obvious that the writer is unfamiliar with correct textual examination and so is quoting and arguing blindly. Or, rather, he is not a critic, for he is not using true critical analysis. Simply quoting someone who says the same things is NOT true criticism. That is why I say my views coincide with those of Calvin... I do not blindly quote him.

And, to spoil the view of me held by the writer – when I was saved in my teenage years, I preached and taught Arminianistically! It took many years for it to dawn on me that I was wrong. What proved it to me? scripture alone! At that time I had no notion of Calvin, and had merely heard his name. I had read nothing at all by him. So, how can I be accused of being a ‘Calvinist’ when my views came direct from scripture? Hence, my views ‘coincide’ with Calvin’s, and happily so.

“Possible Objections by Calvinists

(All of this section is quoted from someone else!)

Some Calvinists may object that Jacob and Esau were individuals, and thus would most naturally be expected to represent individuals. This objection falls short for a few reasons:

1.) As I pointed out... the figures of Isaac and Ishmael were used explicitly in Galatians 4:21-31 to convey the two covenants (and the members thereof).

So? They are two separate issues and two separate texts!

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2.) The original word of promise cited in Romans 9 even refers to the children as nations (i.e. representative heads of two people groups),

Yes – but only after teaching that each person is saved individually. See above.

And the Lord said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger." (Genesis 25:23)

Again – so? It was a different situation and teaching.

They were the corporate heads of the nations of Israel and the Ishmaelites, and analogously represent the children of the flesh under the old covenant, and the children of promise under the new.

This is a classic "If-Then" form of argumentation. That is, IF my first conclusions are correct, then so are my conclusions that follow afterwards! This is not good enough. One text refers to nations. The other concerns individuals accepted by God. There is no real connection between the two concepts.

A second objection is that what applies to a group must apply to all of its members as well, so if a group is specifically chosen, then every individual in that group must be specifically chosen. This is what is known as "fallacy of composition," assuming that what applies to a group must necessarily apply to all of its members."

***This paragraph is odd – what on earth is he trying to say? It is indeed a fallacy – so why bring it up in the first place? God chooses individuals to salvation, and together they form the 'Church'. He does not choose whole groups, just as He did not accept the unfait
hful
ews to salvation, only those who had faith.***

So far we have seen how badly taught the email writer is. He continues with another email, again displaying ignorance of proper textual interpretation (see my articles on this topic).

“What about the invited guests to the banquet - they are present already at the banquet - ie allowed to enter the banquet. Then there were some who were found not wearing the proper apparel for the banquet and thrown out - so this proves you can be elected and then lose it. And what about the guests thrown out and everyone was then invited to the banquet as the chosen or selected ones were thrown out.”

I am always amazed at how much bad teaching Arminians can imbibe from their Romanised masters! The writer is saying we can be saved one moment and lost the next, thus completely destroying the words of Christ Himself, Who said that He could not lose even one who had been given to Him by the Father! But, this is of no consequence to Arminians, who just ignore texts that do not fit their false beliefs.

What does the parable of the wedding tell us. I don't mean with an Arminian spin, but in truth? (Read my Bible study, Matthew 22), Note why Jesus used Parables – it was usually to cause unbelievers to be confused, a penalty for their unbelief!

The whole parable is about the general calling and the specific individual salvation. We are to preach to every man – but God has only chosen or elected a few. Thus many are called but few are chosen. (Matthew 22:14... the Pharisees did not like this and “took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk”. Just like Arminians). Many preachers send out an adapted Gospel message, and think that mere numbers are equal to salvation. Here the king told his servants to get guests to the wedding, but one came as he was, thinking his disrespect was acceptable. He was thrown out in disgrace.

Many who think they are saved – such as true Arminians – are not, and will one day be judged by God and cast into eternal damnation. They are not elect! Salvation is strictly controlled by God and no-one unelected will enter Heaven. Tares are almost indistinguishable from wheat until they are both almost fully ripe! So, the idea that the feast ‘proves’ a man can lose his salvation is nonsense. The writer should take time to learn genuine theology.

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"I came across an article about arminianism and its teaching and decided to look into it's claims.

No – what he means is that he is using it like a stick to beat us! He has no interest in what we say, only in what Arminian heresy says.

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

NOT FOR OUR SINS ONLY, ALSO FOR THE WHOLE WORLD.

This verse destroys the argument of Christ only dying for the elect. The sins of the Apostles/us AND all the world.- NOT just some predestined elect."

Very bad conclusions! Typically, Arminians cloud the issue of the meaning of 'world' and 'whole world', by only giving an interpretation that cannot apply to the text in question!

This text by John is written to "My little children", not a term used of all the Jews, but of all who are saved. It is similar to the way Paul refers to those he has led to salvation. John is talking to those who are saved, and thus "keep his commandments": "hereby know we that we are in him". The phrase "(the sins of) the whole world" is another way of saying "the sins of all who are likewise elect". Thus, the full statement is 'And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not just ours, but also for all others who are elect'.

How do I know this? Because the same kind of language is used in, say, John 3:16, another text that Arminians love to mangle"! It can be decisively proved that the 'world' in both texts, kosmos, can have one of many interpretations, including those who are elect. But, Arminians do not like this interpretation, so they ignore it! And to suggest that the 'whole' world is literally elected, or even 'could be' (an impossible theological situation) is absurd.

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“If Calvinism is correct, then how can you reconcile God's desire for all men to repent if He only predestinates certain of them to salvation? Calvinism makes no sense at all.”

This is a good example of the Biblical illiteracy of Arminians. The call is general, but election is specific. The call is put out and the elect will respond from amongst them. Thus, preachers have to preach the Gospel generally even though God knows who will be saved. This is God's prerogative, and we have no right to question it, nor can we possibly get an answer to the question “Why?” The facts of predestination and election, and the fact of God rejecting most people, is right there in scripture! How can Arminians simply ignore them? They can do it because they are unsaved, tares to be recognised and cast out when they are fully grown! This has nothing to do with Calvinism, but with unbelief and rejection of scripture.

“Calvin was a heretic who taught that God predestines men to salvation. Calvin taught “selective salvation” (or “unconditional election”) where God selects who will be saved and who will not. These are Satanic heresies. Calvin also taught “irresistible grace” (the lie that God forces a person to be saved).”

Just saying Calvin is heretic does not make it true! You must try harder than that! What the writer rails against is biblical text. Calvin did not invent it! Irresistible grace is also a biblical fact. But, it is warped thinking to say God ‘forces’ us to be saved. It does not work that way, and the writer implies his own unsaved state by saying it. God regenerates the dead spirit of a man, who is then able to hear God speaking to him via preaching, the Bible, and so on. Even when the thought of his death frightens the man so affected, he nevertheless warms to Christ until salvation is his. He is never forced, even if, in God's plan, his salvation is sure and fixed.

“Calvinism is NOT a Bible doctrine, but a system of human philosophy (humanism) appealing to the proud mind. ***It is Arminianism that is humanistic, not scripture. It is why genuine Christians oppose Arminianism – because it teaches works as a means to salvation – that is, humanism!***

Calvinism goes into the realm of human philosophy. Consider first that what we are discussing is called “Calvin-ISM.” It is only the opinions of one man.

This is a very silly and juvenile argument, if we can call it an ‘argument’ at all. We can likewise write Arminian-ISM - the opinion of only one man! But, I will not say that, because Arminianism is not the movement of one man, but of his followers. It seems the email writer is unaware that Arminius held Calvin's

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theology in the highest esteem! He said:

“After the reading of scripture, I strenuously inculcate, and more than any other... I recommend that the Commentaries of Calvin be read... For I affirm that in the interpretation of scriptures Calvin is incomparable, and that his Commentaries are more to be valued than anything that is handed down to us in the writings of the Fathers... so much so that I concede to him a certain spirit of prophecy in which he stands distinguished above others, almost indeed above all” (Though he added that, as with all human writings, we should approach with caution).

Jacobus Arminius.

Quoted from his letter to Egbertsz, May 3rd, 1607. (Even an enemy of God can acknowledge truth!)

John Calvin taught heresy when he taught that God chooses people to be saved. There is NOT one Scripture in the entire Word of God which teaches that God chooses anyone to be saved. ***“But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation...” (Thessalonians 2:13). Perhaps the email writer bought a Bible with some pages removed? Has he got this text I wonder? “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him...” (Ephesians 1:11)***

The Bible teaches that all believers were predestined
(The Bible does not use ‘predestined’, but ‘predestinated’)

to "be conformed to the image of His Son," NOT predestined to salvation ("For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" -Romans 8:29). This is exactly what Spurgeon taught In contrast, Calvinism DOES teach predestination unto salvation.

The writer again shows ignorance by not understanding the difference between foreknowledge and forordaining. As for Spurgeon... wrong again. In his sermon at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens, 6th March, 1859, Spurgeon opened with a reading from Romans 8:30...”whom he did predestinate, them he also called”. One of his first words after the reading were “How then am I to know whether I am predestinated by God unto eternal life or not?” Odd words for a preacher if he did not believe in predestination, eh? He goes on to speak of this predestination.

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It is also true that whilst God calls and predestinates a man to salvation, the man who is called must respond. Spurgeon says they are not "inconsistent and contradictory" (From his autobiography). It is also a fact that Arminians tend to say we do not accept human responsibility to respond. But, we do! What we do NOT accept is that human responses are the cause of salvation. The human response of acceptance, which is prompted by an acknowledgement of the truth, is because that is how God ordained it in predestination! If it were anything, even a trace, of our own activity, then we are saved by 'works', and not by grace, as scripture teaches. This is why our 'acceptance' is an acknowledgement and not an human choice as such.

So, both Calvin and Spurgeon teach predestination. It seems the email writer is not very careful in his chosen information. And, even if both Calvin and Spurgeon did not believe it, it would make no difference whatever, because what I believe is God's word, not man's word. If a man coincides with God's word, then that is fine!

"Why would God command ALL men to repent if only certain men have been chosen for salvation. There really is NO debate concerning Arminianism, Calvinism, and Hyper-Calvinism if you simply take the word of God at face value...they're all messed up! The Bible is so clear on all these matters. There are problems with all three views. Arminianism is wrong to teach that a person can lose salvation.

Romans 5:15 declares that eternal life is a "FREE GIFT." A gift CANNOT be taken back if it is freely given. Salvation is God's gift to man, paid for by the blood of Jesus (Romans 6:23; Colossians 1:14). Calvinism and Hyper-Calvinism teach "limited atonement" and "selective salvation," which are both Satanic lies. 1st John 2:2 couldn't be any clearer, "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Calvinism is unbiblical heresy!!!"

Notice the treble exclamation marks at the end of this quote from our writer? It is another example of trying to force his views on us as supposed facts. He must be really angry.

The ALL men who must repent literally means what it says. It especially applies to the elect, but it also applies to everyone who is ever born, not that their pride would allow it. John the Baptist called for all of Israel to repent, because God demands it. The vilest of sinners must repent, even if they die in their shame and sin. This is because God is our king and Creator, He deserves the repentance and obedience of all men, even if many

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will never be saved. Argue with God on that one, not me!

I think what the writer means by 'taking the word of God at face value', is to believe blindly as he does. He is ignorant of how to interpret and of the real meanings of texts, so he denies the truth to others by hiding behind the idea of 'face value', which is no value at all.

Scripture must be read as it is, with nuances, Hebraisms and Greek idioms, and properly-given meanings of words. The words must be interpreted not according to how we think they are, but as they truly are, according to the Greek and Hebrew.

On the other hand, the writer (probably quoting someone else) contradicts his own arguments by saying that salvation is indeed a free gift! Which it is. But, it is only given to the elect, not to all people.

“The Truth of the Matter

John Calvin was a heretic! ***How many more times must the writer repeat this accusation?*** Yes, it is true that a person cannot be saved unless God the Holy Spirit is working in their heart, but the Bible plainly teaches that it's the Holy Spirit's task to convict THE WORLD ***(interpreted as 'the elect'...)***

of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Yes, God knew in advance (before the world began) who would one day trust Him, and He predestinated them to be conformed TO THE IMAGE OF HIS SON, but NOT to salvation. God NEVER chooses anyone to be saved. He did predestinate them before the world began, but only because He saw that those people would one day choose of their own free will to be saved.

This is unvarnished humanism and works! If God chose according to the will of man, then it is obvious that the will of man is greater than God's will. It is also true that it would be of works, and not of grace... and scripture tells us much about this as a heresy. The writer again proves his ignorance of how to interpret, by saying that to be conformed to the image of his son does NOT equal salvation! But, it does! Man has never, ever had free will. Such is a fallacy spread by humanism and Arminianism, a Romish invention. (See my articles on free will).

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“God NEVER forces anyone to be saved, nor does God ever choose anyone to be saved. It is easy to go astray in one's doctrines if we fail to realize that God lives in eternity where there is NO time. Thus, there is NO chronology in God's world, only man's. This is why Revelation speaks of “the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world.”

I do not know what the point of this statement is. It is true that God lives in eternity and not in time. Yes, the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world. What exactly is the point?? And it is also true that God does not force anyone to be saved (see comments above on this). But, God DOES choose who will be saved. He says so in His word. Again, I ask – what is the point of the writer in this paragraph? Maybe he cut-and-pasted quotes wrongly?

“Many believers do NOT understand the doctrines of Arminius. Let me clarify my statement by saying that Arminius came much closer to being correct than Calvin did, BUT BOTH MEN TAUGHT HERESY. Why look to dead men for our doctrines when the Living Holy Spirit is available to teach of us in the word of God.”

Here we go again – calling men heretics without giving proof. And, yet again, I say that I do not teach what ‘dead men’ teach, but only what God says in His word. So, what is the problem? Calvin taught as he was led by the Spirit. Arminius on the other hand, taught the Roman Catholic anti-Reformation invention he devised.

“Now one of the main assumptions of Calvinism is that God holds people accountable for things over which they have no control. He condemns people not for doing anything wrong, but for simply having a sinful nature, a nature that He himself gave them at birth, a decision of which they had no control over. This naturally calls into question God's judicial nature. Under Calvinism God is not just “in human terms”. Indeed I have heard Calvinists use this very phrase. Now when we preach the gospel, we're preaching to humans, are we not? So when a Calvinist preaches the gospel in human terms, without hypocrisy, he has to say that God is unjust; that God imputes sin to those who didn't do anything wrong. It's like one who is prejudice “in human terms”. A prejudice person judges others unjustly based on race or ethnic background or the like. Calvinists basically think that God is like that.”

The above is another quote by the writer – I know because it contains language structure he does not use himself! And it is wrong. It is true that men are condemned for their sinful nature, unless they are saved. But, He did not give them that nature – it was foisted

on men by Eve's, then Adam's, sins.

This is not so obscure. If a mother has a particular disease, it can be passed on to her newly conceived baby. Many familial diseases pass on generation to generation in this way. Sin is like that. It is conceived with us. God's justice is not our concern – only God can know how and why He is just. Ultimately it comes down to this – God said! Indeed, this was the title of my very first sermon after salvation! And guess what – listeners sniggered! So, nothing much has changed, eh? God imputes sin to people, because that is what they are – sinful at conception. Whatever God does is just and sound. We cannot ever accuse him of being unjust... unless we are so blinded as to speak rashly and stupidly, knowing God will punish such blasphemy!

God chooses who will be saved, and He chooses who will be damned. That is because He is the Potter. Argue against it if you will – but it makes no difference to God's power and mind. And, if you maintain He is unjust, even up to your death, you will be able to tell Him so when you stand before His judgment seat... before you go to enter your eternal punishment.

“Calvinistic Heresies of Election

Concerning election, one of the heresies of Calvinism is that God doesn't want all men to be saved but rather only wishes a variety of men be saved, as He has chosen in puppet-like fashion. According to their doctrines, when they preach the gospel they cannot say that "God loves you and wants you to have eternal life". In fact under Calvinism they should say, "God may hate you and may have predestined you to eternal damnation and there's nothing that can be done about it." For example Mark Driscoll cofounder of the Acts 29 Calvinist organization speaking for God says, "God looks down and says 'I hate you, you are my enemy, and I will crush you' Funny how the Bible commands us to love our enemies without prejudice while Calvinists view that same God as hating people prejudicially. Indeed under Calvinism God prejudges people before they are even born. Not surprising how Calvinists often turn out, given their concepts of God.”

One must admire the quotes from this writer (he is again quoting, so it seems)! I do not care what men say, even if they add ‘Calvinist’; to their title. What matters is what God says in His word. I keep saying it. FACT: God DOES say He hates certain people. God DOES elect some to salvation – the rest go to hell. I do not know what Arminians want us to say... the Bible says what it says. Arminians twist and reject it. And, it is a rather logical, obvious fact that if God chooses who will be saved or lost in eternity, then that is that. God does not and cannot change His mind! And, for mere creatures to question

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God's decisions, is, well, sinful and pointless. Do you disagree with what God does? Then tough, because He says what He says and will not argue about it with sinners.

"Also under Calvinism Christ didn't die for the sins of the world, but only for the sins of the elect. In contrast the Bible says, "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world." 1John 2:2"

There is no 'contrast', only the ineptitude of Arminian thinkers.

"The Calvinistic Heresy of Regeneration

According to the Bible, "to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—". John 1:12b That is, people are not given the right to become children of God until they believe in Christ. Gal 3:26 "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ." But Calvinists have it backwards. Under Calvinism a person cannot believe until he's been born of God. They get the order of faith and regeneration backwards.

Eh? Arminians just blurt out statements like that without once explaining why they say it. All the supposedly opposite arguments taken from scripture are only misinterpreted by Arminians. In a sense they are not worthy of answer, but I now do so for the sake of people who could be duped by them.

Note that the writer has not used a King James Bible to make his Bible quotes. The quote in John says this: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, [even] to them that believe on his name:" The text does NOT say we have the "right" to be saved. In the very next verse we are told that this salvation is not given as a right to us "of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Can it be much clearer than that? And which comes first – our acceptance of salvation, or God's decision to save us? The rest of scripture tells us, categorically, that God chooses first. To deny it is not just absurd, but wicked.

There is also a misconception here, a mis-reading of the text. There is no preposition between the word "him" and "to them", therefore we cannot claim a time lapse between the two. This being so, there is no way we can say one comes before the other. In reality both are given at the same time... the receiving and the power to become sons of God. It

seems the writer is unaware of this linguistic point.

The Galatians text? The preposition, dia, translated as 'by' in the AV, can also translate as 'through', 'in', 'by means of', etc., because the word denotes a channel of an act. However, I prefer the AV translation because 'by' and 'through' can convey different meanings. Again, if we can be saved through our own-generated faith, there is a problem with the rest of scripture, for faith is a gift of God, given only to those who are saved! The faith is "of Jesus Christ" not of ourselves (Romans 3:22). It is a faith given after we believe (Romans 4:5). It is not our righteousness or faith that saves, But God: "Therefore, (it is) of faith, that (it might be) by grace..." (Romans 4:16).

God's gifts are ONLY given to those who are saved, and faith is such a gift: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit... it is the same God which worketh all in all... To another (is given) faith by the same Spirit..." (1 Corinthians 12:4-9). Another text showing us that faith is a consequence of salvation is Galatians 5:22, which teaches that faith is a fruit of the Spirit – and only a saved man can have this Spirit and fruit. Thus, faith does not produce salvation. And, in several texts this faith is called "the faith OF Christ"... it is His, not ours, except by grace and gift. This is repeated in Colossians 2:12, "... through the faith of the operation of God" and not of man. And, wicked men do not have this faith (2 Thessalonians 3:2).

The reason Calvin said we must be born again before we can believe is because it is scriptural.

"Infant Baptism and the Trivialization of Faith"

Now, while some will argue that the heresy of infant baptism is not a part of Calvinism, in fact it was very much a part of Calvin's theology. In fact in Calvin's day Calvinists would put Christians to death who didn't believe in infant baptism. Today many so called "Calvinists" would have been murdered by their own theological forefathers, had they gone back in time for a visit!"

I do not know why this writer keeps alluding to Calvinism when I am not a Calvinist! To repeat – I believe what Calvin says if what he says is consistent with scripture. Thus, I do not believe he was right concerning infant baptism, if this means a baby is deemed saved because he is baptised. I have nothing to answer here!

More Arminian Error

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 08 March 2011 08:22

“Your teaching is backwards in both senses of the word. You are attributing to God sin which is very dangerous, you are preaching another gospel and need to learn the difference between election in different context and the word chose/chosen in different contexts as your basic understanding is chosen=elect. IT DOES NOT!!!!!”

The writer is most odd. Every day I search the scriptures, Biblically and theologically. I am more than aware of the different uses of ‘chosen’! In the case of salvation, to be chosen means to be elected by God to salvation. Simple as that. For the writer to just say “IT DOES NOT” with five exclamation marks is meaningless – the writer must say why it does not.

“The problem is, that since there is no free choice, what are you hoping to accomplish by being "watchful"? Since God controls everything, and there is no free choice, there is nothing you can do. If you find you are falling into sin, God is in control of that, He will carry out his purpose no matter what you attempt by your own will. At least that's the logical conclusion to Calvinist thought.”

No it is not logical – unless you are an Arminian who has no idea what he is talking about. You misunderstand God, His will and our human responses. And – yes, God will carry out His purpose regardless of anything desired by mankind. To say otherwise is absurd... not because ‘Calvinist thought’ says otherwise, but because scripture does.

“Here's a quote from a Reformed theological source noting Zwingli's theology "Zwingli's understanding of predestination as indistinguishable from providence, logically inclines him to the conclusion that God is the cause of human sin." So the Calvinist holds the illogical position that God is just even though he is the cause of human sin. The puppet model of Calvinism just doesn't fit what the Bible says.”

Firstly, please note that Zwingli was far too engrossed in the ancient philosophers and quoting them (much as you like to quote your favoured theologians), Seneca in particular, whose stoicism influenced Zwingli's idea of predestination and election. And, though he indeed concluded that God was the author of sin, he also absolved God (nice of him!) of personal culpability... something the email writer fails to mention, even though it is part of the very quote he has used!

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However, No matter what Zwingli said, if what he said was not consistent with scripture, it is to be discarded. I can see where you have obtained your scattered information from on the Internet... perhaps you ought to spend some time reflecting on what you have gleaned instead of slavishly copying the various website contents. Zwingli tended towards universalism, which is an aspect of Arminianism. What any theologian says about scripture is of no relevance if what he says is not scriptural!

“There is no application here. Rather the Arminians have the advantage on this point. For they have a purpose for being watchful.”

Nonsense! Playing with words! Christians are commanded to be watchful and to test the spirits. To spitefully suggest otherwise is a superficial reaction to Calvinism.

“Choice is involved both in salvation and sanctification. For why is faith in Christ preached as a necessary condition for salvation if no choice is involved?”

This is a statement or assertion made without showing proof. Faith is NOT a necessary condition for salvation, but is consequent to regeneration and God’s calling to the elect. There is no faith before that because the spirit is dead!

“And why are there rewards for services rendered promised for the believers in the kingdom if there is no choice involved in their service to God?”

The trouble with Arminians is that they jump from one topic to another! ‘Services rendered’ are not connected to the conditions of salvation. Rather, they are services expected by God as part of our earthly Christian sojourn. To suggest that we ‘render’ them is to imply that we choose to do them for our own sakes. Anything we do for God must be out of our heart’s desire to do so (given by the Holy Spirit), not out of obligation – the first is accepted as righteous by God, the latter is not. Any rewards are given by God’s grace, and not simply as a ‘wage’... though God indeed gives rewards for righteous actions.

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As for choice... the choice to do what is good is totally separate from salvation, in which we have no choice. We may only choose to do good AFTER we are saved, and not to obtain salvation itself. After that, we may choose to do good or evil, not because we have free will, but because we are no longer enslaved to Satan and sin, and have a limited range of choices. BEFORE salvation, we had no choice whatever, because we were dead in sins and could only do the will of our 'father' the devil. This is all scriptural fact.

“Repentance from sin, by its very nature requires a person's will to be involved.”

Repentance precedes salvation, and involves the will – but not free will, which is impossible to have! The only reason the man has the will to be saved is that he was firstly regenerated by God. He had to be regenerated because his spirit was dead – and so he was unable to respond in any way to God. Once God regenerated him – made him to be ‘born again’ – the man is able to respond to the call to salvation and repent. The renewal of his spirit enabled him to ‘think straight’ and so use his will for the first time. The email writer is, like so many Arminians, very confused, and cannot think logically in the spiritual sense, mainly because he does not understand what scripture says.

“True that Calvinists can argue that they may think humans more depraved than Arminians. But by doing so they effectively nullify any application to their theology”

This must be profound, because I have no idea what he is talking about!

“Paedobaptism is an application of Calvinism. Babies, who have yet to believe in Christ, are baptized into the faith and reckoned members of the Church apart from faith in Christ. This heresy is NO DIFFERENT than what Paul wrote to the Galatians concerning the heresy of the circumcision. Indeed Calvinism, drawing on Augustine's writings, likens baptism to circumcision, which was done to infants when they were just 8 days old. So this ceremony in which some ceremony is performed on the flesh of an infant is construed as reflecting his righteous status with God, regardless of the faith of the infant.”

Sorry to be so blunt, but I think this fellow gets his theology from the side of a cornflake

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packet. It is true that some Calvinists believe in paedobaptism, but most do not. On this Calvin was incorrect, for circumcision was entry into the nation, not to salvation by faith! No baby can have faith.

“These examples of putting regeneration and election prior to faith, and this heresy of paedobaptism reflect the Calvinist's trivialization of saving faith. Indeed "faith" to the Calvinist is merely a gift, merely a byproduct of salvation rather than the means to be saved. For the Bible says, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" Rom 5:1

NOT JUST FOR US, BUT FOR THE WHOLE WORLD NOT JUST US. You need to give up preaching your false gospel!!!!”

More strident remarks, with capital letters and only four exclamation marks this time. It would be nice if the capitals and marks were replaced by actual theology. The writer is speaking of 'some' Calvinists, not all. He is certainly wasting his breath on me, because I am not one of those he accuses! My beliefs come from scripture, not from Calvinism, regardless of what the writer accepts or not. Faith is indeed a gift, as scripture says...

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit... to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom....To another faith by the same Spirit...” (1 Corinthians 12:4-9). The writer seems unaware that ‘faith’, pistis, has one of several meanings.

“But before faith came, we were kept under the law...” (Galatians 3:23). Faith comes AFTER regeneration and salvation, and the fruit of the Spirit is only given to those who are saved: “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy (etc)...faith.”

Faith does NOT precede salvation. Rather God regenerates us first (and it is part of salvation): “For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: (it is) the gift of God.” (Ephesians 2:8). Notice that in one fell swoop this text destroys the idea that we can choose salvation. It is a gift. In reality, faith accompanies the call of God to be saved and cannot be distinguished from it... but even that faith is a gift, not earned or caused by our will. Otherwise, it would be ‘of works’.

“Concerning election, one of the heresies of Calvinism is that God doesn't want all men to be saved but rather only wishes a variety of men be saved, as He has chosen in puppet-like fashion. According to their doctrines, when they preach the gospel they cannot say that "God loves you and wants you to have eternal life". In fact under Calvinism they should say, "God may hate you and may have predestined you to eternal damnation and there's nothing that can be done about it." For example Mark Driscoll cofounder of the Acts29 Calvinist organization speaking for God says, "God looks down and says 'I hate you, you are my enemy, and I will crush you' Funny how the Bible commands us to love our enemies without prejudice while Calvinists view that same God as hating people prejudicially. Indeed under Calvinism God prejudges people before they are even born. Not surprising how Calvinists often turn out, given their concepts of God.”

This is a deliberate lie, or at least a misconception. In truth, genuine reformed men preach to all people, to whom he is directed by God, but knows that only some will be saved. He does it because it is commanded by God. The words “God wants you to have eternal life” will be applied by the Spirit to ‘whosoever’ is elect in the listening crowd. That God hates some (see my article on this topic) is a fact spoken by Himself in scripture. But, the Gospel is a message of good news – there is no need to tell a man that God may hate him (unless an individual is identified by the Spirit to receive such a stark message), because those who are elect will always respond, and those who are not will reject the call. It is God Who says He hates certain people – not us! And yet He calls on us mere humans to love our enemies. Both apply.

To say that God prejudges people before they are born is theological nonsense. God chooses who will enter Heaven and those who will enter hell. It is a straightforward decision by deity, not us, and we cannot question Him on the matter – as He Himself says in His word. The end phrase about how Calvinists turn out is rather futile and silly, with no real bearing on reality.

“Also under Calvinism Christ didn't die for the sins of the world, but only for the sins of the elect. In contrast the Bible says, "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.”

This is not just Calvinism – it is found in scripture, plain as day! John 3:16 says exactly that, though Arminians make it say something alien. The “whole world” does not mean everyone without exception. Most uses of the phrase in scripture do not apply to all men

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or the whole world, but to some within it. That Arminians do not accept it is, again, of no consequence, for scripture says what it says. If Arminians - like the email writer - are incapable of interpreting it properly, it is best they remain silent.

So, in final answer to the email writer, I would advise that a man can quote Calvin and not be a Calvinist. Arminius himself quoted Calvin and thought him to be the best theologian of his day! So, was Arminius a Calvinist?

And, just because a man agrees with Calvin in certain points, does not make that man a Calvinist. I can quote a large number of theologians – but it does not make me their follower.

Remember where Arminianism came from – the Roman fold, used as part of the counter-reformation. Even today, these people are a bastion of unbelief, preferring their own humanistic ideals to what God says in His word.

The difficulty of arguing with Arminians is that they never answer a rejoinder with scripture and never form proper arguments, as they flit from one text to another, one objection to another, with no genuine logical steps in between.

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