

REFORMED THEOLOGY

Dr. Adrian Rogers

Bellevue Baptist exists for the purpose of magnifying Jesus through worship, the Word and then moving believers in Jesus to maturity in ministry. Then, last of all, making Jesus known to our neighbors and the nations. So, that's what we're going to talk a little bit about. My life is wrapped around a verse that you know...**Matthew 28**, beginning in **verse 18**: "And Jesus came unto them and spake to them saying, 'All power is given unto Me, in heaven and in earth, go ye therefore and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world.'" And my life, since Jesus saved me as a teenage boy at about fifteen years of age, has been to share the gospel, to be a soul-winner, to get people saved.

Now, what is "reformed theology?" Do I believe in reformed theology? Or am I a "Calvinist?" I don't call myself a Calvinist. I believe some of the things that Calvin believed. But, I don't think we have to call ourselves "Arminian" or "Calvinistic," or even "Baptist" for that matter. As a matter of fact, the name "Baptist" was given to us to ridicule us, to make fun of us. The name first of all was Anabaptist, which means "rebaptizers." They said, "Oh, those old bunches of folks want to immerse you after you get saved...that bunch of rebaptizers...those Anabaptists." And then after awhile they dropped the prefix "ana" and just said, "Those old baptists..." It's really not a name the Baptists chose...it's sort of nickname, sort of like calling a fat man "skinny", or a bald man "curly"...it was a name given in ridicule.

But I'm not interested really in a name given to a theology or being called a "Calvinist" or a "Baptist" or whatever – I **am** committed to what the Bible teaches and you know if we have any "Baptist doctrine" we need to get rid of it. If we have any "Presbyterian doctrine" or "Methodist doctrine" we need to get rid of it. We need to see what the Bible teaches and just zero in on the Word of God.

I want to say at the outset that I believe in the sovereignty of God. If a man doesn't believe in the sovereignty of God, he's a sheer fool. I believe not a blade of grass moves without God's permission. I believe He knows the name of every star. He put them all there. He is ALMIGHTY! I believe that. I believe in foreordination. I believe in predestination. I believe in calling. I believe in election. I believe in all of that. Why do I believe that? Because I can read the Bible! Anybody who can read the Bible has to believe in all that, because it's all there...black print on white paper. And you can just sit down and read that. So, I have no difficulty with that.

But I want to talk to you about Calvinism in its extreme form and tell you why I'm not a five-point Calvinist. Now, there are five points in historic, extreme Calvinism. Some call it "hyper-Calvinism".

There are five points and they spell TULIP. That's a little memory device and the T stands for "total depravity." That means we are just about as bad as we can get. TOTAL DEPRAVITY (to be depraved means to be evil). The U stands for "unconditional election." That is, salvation begins in the heart and mind of God and it is without any conditions whatsoever. God determines it...UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION. God just simply elects some individuals to be saved. The next thing is the L which is "limited atonement." These people believe that Jesus did not die for all. He died for the elect. So the atonement is limited to the elect...LIMITED ATONEMENT. The I stands for "irresistible grace". If God is going to save you, there's nothing you can do about it. His Holy Spirit is going to zap you and you're a goner, because that is irresistible. There's no way that you could resist the Holy Spirit of God. So, if you're one of the elect, you're going to be saved and there's nothing you can do about it. And if you're not one of the elect, there's nothing you can do about that either. So that is IRRISISTIBLE GRACE. And then, the last, the P stands for "perseverance of the saints." Once you're saved, then you persevere and you go on to Heaven...PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

Now, that's TULIP. You know, every road has two ditches. On one side I think is "hyper Calvinism" and on the other side is Arminianism. Arminius taught that you could be saved and lose your salvation, so rather than TULIP it was DAISY... "He loves me, He loves me not..." Either way, you don't have to wreck the car in either ditch. You just stay on the road that is the Bible road.

Now, I want to tell you tonight why I am not a five point Calvinist. And let's take first TOTAL DEPRAVITY. I believe a man is a sinner. I believe he's a sinner by birth...a sinner by choice...a sinner by nature...a sinner under condemnation...a sinner deserving hell – totally depraved. But I do not believe what some reformed theologians believe and some hyper- Calvinists believe, and that is that a man in that condition cannot hear God until he's first regenerated.

They say it's like speaking to a dead man. The dead man has to have life before he can hear. And so, some people get themselves in the position of saying that somebody is regenerated before he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, that's getting it backwards. They say, "Well, a dead man cannot hear." Of course, a dead man can hear. When Adam sinned, was he dead in trespasses and sin? Of course, he was. He was dead in trespasses and sin. "In the day that ye eat thereof, ye shall surely die." God came walking in the Garden and God said, "Adam, where art thou?" Of course, Adam could hear.

The problem comes when we talk about death. They say, "Well, what can a dead man do?" Well, a dead man can do a lot of things. You need to understand what "death" is in the Bible. There are three kinds of death mentioned in the Bible. For example, *Luke 16* talks about a rich man who died and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and he said, "Father Abraham, send Lazarus that he might dip his finger in water and cool my tongue for I am tormented in this flame." He was dead, but he was not annihilated. He was still conscious.

Again, you could read in **1 Timothy 5:6**, and the Bible speaks there of a woman who is living in sin, and the Bible says that “she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she lives.” Now, she might be walking around the city of Memphis tonight...she’s dead, but she can certainly hear, she can certainly talk, she can certainly feel, she can certainly think. See, death in the Bible is not annihilation. The Bible never calls you a corpse. This body is just what you live in. You always will have consciousness.

Then the Bible speaks of the “second death.” In **Revelation 20:14**...the second death. That is when a person dies and goes to hell...but the Bible says there “in hell they have no rest day or night.” So, in hell, there is the “second death.” What I’m trying to say is this...Sometime people will say to me, “Well, how on earth could a dead man hear before he’s first given life?” Of course, the dead can hear and understand. Unsaved people can know truth. Turn to **Romans 1** for just a moment and look in **verse 19**... if this gets too deep and you say, “What difference does this make?” Well, just listen anyway! Alright, let’s begin in **verse 18**. God speaks of His wrath. “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness...(the word “hold” here means literally “that hold back the truth...that smother or stifle the truth”) because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them.” Now, he’s not talking here about regenerated people. He’s talking about sheer, raw pagans...God has shown Himself unto them. “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen...” Now these are dead people he’s talking about...spiritually dead...pagans...“the invisible of Him”...that is God’s spiritual nature...“are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”

Some hyper-Calvinists have gone so far as to say, “Well, man has to be regenerated before he can even believe because if God didn’t give him life, what could a dead man do?” No, a dead man can hear. A dead man can know God. A dead man can resist the truth. I didn’t say he’s saved, “but when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God.” They know who God is. They are without excuse. You must believe first in order to be saved! The Bible makes that so clear. **Romans 5:1**: “Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God.” Faith first! **John 1:12**: “As many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.”

So, I believe that man is depraved. I don’t believe that any man can come to God except God enable him to come. I don’t believe that we seek God. God seeks us. I don’t believe that we could have faith unless God gave it to us. I don’t believe that we could repent unless God granted us repentance. But, I reject with all of the unction, function and emotion of my soul that a man is regenerated before he believes. That’s just totally contrary to Scripture!

Now, you can’t come unless the Lord draws you. That’s very clear. I base my whole ministry on that. That’s why before I preach I get on my knees, I have a place where I kneel every Sunday, and I say, “Oh God, open hearts, open understandings,” because Jesus said in **John 6:44**, “No man can come unto Me except the Father that hath sent Me draw

him.” But you know, He does draw them and how many does He draw? Or does he just draw the “elect”? **John 1:9**: “Christ is that light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” He’s the light that lights **every man...every person** has that light.

Man is totally depraved, but he can hear God even if he’s a raw pagan like **Romans 1**. So, therefore I reject the hyper-Calvinist view of total depravity.

Now, let’s move to the second thing. I also reject the hyper-Calvinist view of UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION. Now, when God gives us salvation, there are no strings attached. God doesn’t say, “I’ll save you if you will perform good works” or whatever. It comes out of the grace of God. It is to the praise of the glory of His grace. Sometimes people talk about sovereign grace like they just discovered the term. Friend, God is sovereign and we’re saved by grace. Anyone who doesn’t believe that has been baptized seven times in ignorance. We are saved by the sovereign grace of God...but never interpret unconditional election as the fact that if we have faith that is something we **do** for salvation. That’s playing with words. That is really ridiculous.

God puts no conditions, but there’s always a condition from humans...from **our** viewpoint. And that condition is faith. You’ve got to believe. Again, **John 1:12**: “He came to His own and His own received Him not, but as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God.” If I were to give you these keys and say, “You have the car that goes with them,” and then I said, “It’s just a gift...unconditionally”...you’d **still** have to receive it. If you didn’t receive it, it would do you no good at all. Man does have a condition in order to be saved...**Acts 16:31**: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.”

Now, if you say that only certain people are elect and only certain people, therefore, can be saved, you take all the “whosoever’s” in the Bible and make them a lot of mumbo jumbo. The Bible is full of “whosoever will.” Turn to **Matthew 23**. This is the story of Jesus on His way to Jerusalem... the crowds are there and they’re casting their palm branches and their garments in front of Him and saying “Hail Him! Hail Him!” Soon they’re going to be saying, “Nail Him! Nail Him!” They’re going to be crucifying Him and Jesus knows what’s about to transpire and begins to weep great salty tears. Jesus begins to lament over Jerusalem and this is what He says in **verse 37**: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that kills the prophets and stones them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.”

Now, friend, if they **could not** rather than they **would not**, this is the biggest charade in history. Jesus is weeping salty tears, and He said, “I would, but you would not.” That’s not unconditional election. The idea that a child is born into this world in the city of Memphis today, having done neither good nor evil, and that child does not have one-half of one chance to go to heaven...that child is going to hell because that child is not one of the elect...I totally, totally reject that with every bit of my being that there’s a child born in this city anytime any day where God says that there is no opportunity...none whatsoever...there are only certain ones who are unconditionally elected. Jesus said, “I would have, but you

would not.”

We’re going to tighten the focus a little bit more. Here’s the third thing...and that is LIMITED ATONEMENT... the idea that Jesus died for only some people. I want to give you a verse right now that gives the hyper-Calvinist fits. I want you to turn to **1 John 2:1-2**: “My little children, these things I write unto you that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” He’s talking about the Lord Jesus who pleads our case before the Father. And now, notice **verse 2**: “And He is the propitiation for our sins.” Now, that’s a big word that simply means that He is “satisfaction” for our sins that is the Lord Jesus who paid our sin debt and satisfied the righteous demands of the Law. He is the propitiation for our sins. Now watch this...“And not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.” I believe that Jesus died for the whole world. I can’t help but believe that. There’s no other way to say what black print means on white paper.

What will a hyper-Calvinist say about this verse? Well, he’ll say “Oh, the whole world of the **elect**.” And he’ll put a little codicil down there. He’ll write something in that’s not there. “Well, the whole world of the elect.” He’s not talking about the elect when he says the whole world. By the way, any text taken out of its context is a pretext...you know that, don’t you?

Alright, what kind of a “world” is he talking about? **Verse 16**: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father but of the world.” He’s not talking about the world of the elect. He’s talking about an ungodly world. And he’s saying that Jesus died for that ungodly world! And he’s not talking about Jesus dying for the elect only. He says that He is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only...not just for the “chosen frozen”...He is the propitiation for the whole world.

Now, I could not pick up my Bible and read it...if there were no other verse in the Bible but this one, I could not be a hyper-Calvinist...I could not be a five-point Calvinist, let me put it that way.

Let me give you another verse. Turn to **2 Peter 2:1**. Peter here is talking about apostates and if you know anything about apostates you know they’re on their road to hell. They deny the Lord. Look if you will at **2 Peter 2:1**: “But there were false prophets also among the people even as there shall be false teachers among you who privately bring in damnable heresies even denying the Lord that bought them,” “**The Lord that bought them.**” They were bought with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, they are heretics! They are bringing damnable heresies, going to hell but bought with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ!

How could a person therefore believe in a limited atonement? What’s the first verse you probably learned? **John 3:16**: “For God so loved the **elect**?” No? “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that if the **elect** would believe on Him?” begotten Son that **whosoever** believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

No, I don't believe in limited atonement, and I'll tell you why. While we're in **2 Peter**, go to chapter **3 verse 9**. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." It's not God's will that any man go to hell. God's will is not always done. Did you get the idea that because God is sovereign that God's will is always done? Do you think rape is God's will? Do you think sodomy is God's will? Do you think blasphemy is God's will? No, God gave man a will. God Himself is not willing that any should perish, but God gave man a will and some do perish but the love of God will follow that man to that hell with tears if he goes.

Now here's the way hyper-Calvinist explains it. Here's a farmer, he has a swimming hole on his farm. He puts up a sign that says "NO SWIMMING UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES – PRIVATE PROPERTY – STAY OUT!" Three boys come in and begin to swim. They get out in the middle and they're drowning. He drives by on his tractor, looks over there and there are the three boys. Do they deserve to drown? Yes. Is he obligated to save them? No. Did he put up the sign? Yes. Is he unjust if he lets them drown (I'm talking about hyper-Calvinism, now)? No. No, he's not unjust. He said "Don't do it." They did it. They chose. Could he be blamed if they drowned? No, so if he wants to, he can be perfectly just by riding right past on his tractor.

But suppose he says, "Oh, I'm going to have mercy on the boy in the blue trunks," so he throws him a line. After all, he doesn't have to have mercy on any of them. So he just decides that he's just going to choose "that one." What if he just chooses "that one" and says to the other two, "You can drown. You deserve to drown. I choose that one," and he throws that one a line because he is "elect" and he's the one that is saved.

Someone says, "Now, see, that's consistent with the nature of God. God's still perfectly just if He does that." That's not consistent with the nature of God because not only is God just...God is love. God is love. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish..." Do you think that God, a God of love, would not choose to save all three of those boys?

Now, suppose the farmer throws a line to all three boys? And two of them say, "No thank you, I think I can make it to shore." He says, "No, take the line." They say, "I'm going to do it myself." And they perish. Now does that mean that his love was not real and ineffectual? Not at all!

Look if you will in **John 1:29**. John the Baptist saw the Lord Jesus Christ coming and he said, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the **elect**." No! "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the **world**." Do you know what motivated the Apostle Paul? Do you know what made Paul the greatest missionary-soul-winner that ever lived? It wasn't hyper-Calvinism. I'll tell you what it was. Turn to **2 Corinthians 5:13**. Now, they said that Paul was crazy. They said, "Paul, you're out of your mind. You're beside yourself." And he says, "Whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we

be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constrained us because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead.” How many did Jesus die for? **ALL!** All the dead! “If One died for all, then were all dead that He that died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves but unto Him that died for them and rose again.” What Paul is saying is “This is what motivates me...I’m not crazy...they were all dead...and Jesus died for ALL.” He died for all. And if you don’t say that Jesus died you might as well say with the same logic that all were not dead. That in Adam all did not die. But the Bible says that in Adam all died, even so in Christ are all made alive.” Friend, the hyper-Calvinist will say, “If you say that Jesus’ death was for all and all don’t get saved, then that makes His death ineffectual...it means He’s not sovereign.”

I want to ask you a question. When God fed the children of Israel with manna in the wilderness, do you think all the manna was eaten? Do you think some of it lay on the ground and didn’t get picked up? Of course! Did that mean God didn’t do it or that God was not showing love and mercy just because some manna was not taken? If God offers His love and His love is not received, that doesn’t mean God has failed, that means man has failed. God is love!

I reject their belief of limited atonement because of these Scriptures that are so clear and so plain. He is the propitiation for our sin and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

Then IRRESISTIBLE GRACE...you’re going to get saved, no matter what...God’s going to catch you...God’s going to zap you, and you’re going to be saved. You cannot resist the Holy Spirit of God. Turn to *Acts 7* for a moment. Here’s Stephen who is being stoned to death because of the message he preached and he says to them in *verse 51*: “Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears...ye do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did, so do you.” Now, tell me that the Holy Spirit can’t be resisted. Stephen said He could. “You do always resist the Holy Ghost.” Sure the Holy Spirit can be resisted.

Remember Jesus said in *Matthew 23:37*... “I would but ye would not...” There’s a classic passage over in *Proverbs 1*. Turn there with me for just a moment. This makes it about as clear as any passage. *Proverbs 1:22*, God is speaking: “How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity and the scorners delight in their scorning and the fools hate knowledge. Turn ye at My reproof. Behold I will pour out My Spirit unto you. I will make known My words unto you, because I have called and ye refused. I’ve stretched My hand and no man regarded, but ye have set at naught all My counsel and would none of My reproof. I also will laugh at your calamity and I will mock when your fear cometh.” Isn’t this plain that He can be resisted? Go on down to *verse 27*: “When your fear cometh as desolation and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you, then shall they call upon Me and I will not answer. They shall seek Me early but they shall not find Me, for that they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord they would none of My counsel. They despised My reproof. Therefore shall they eat the fruit of their own way and be filled with their own devices for the turning away of the simple shall slay them and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. For whoso hearkeneth

unto Me shall dwell safely and shall be quiet from fear of evil.”

Now, it’s so clear that God speaks but God gives man the right to say, “NO!” This is not irresistible grace. Suppose one of you girls has a boyfriend and he begins to pour the sugar in your ear and tell you how much he loves you. But you don’t like him. But he says, “I love you.” And then you get a little nervous. You kind of want to get rid of him, but he keeps following you. And he says, “I love you. I love you very much. I really love you.” Well, you say, “So long.” And he says, “Listen, I love you so much I’m not going to let you go. I’m going to **make** you love me!!” Now friend, coerced love is a contradiction in terms. There’s no such thing as forced love. The idea that God has some irresistible grace...something that when you say, “I don’t want to be saved!” and He says, “Well, you’re going to be saved! I am going to **make** you love me!” No, that’s ridiculous. That’s not love at all! You become a robot! God gives us the privilege of saying “no” so that we can have the delight of saying “yes.”

They call this irresistible grace. Now, if God’s Holy Spirit is irresistible, would you explain to me what the unpardonable sin is? Explain what it is! *Matthew 12:22*: Then was brought unto Him one possessed of the devil, blind and dumb, and He healed him inasmuch as the blind and dumb both spake and saw and all the people were amazed and said, “Is this not the Son of David?” But when the Pharisees heard it said, “This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.” Jesus knew their thoughts and said, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation and every city and house divided against itself shall not stand and if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then shall his kingdom stand?” What Jesus is saying is, I’m not in collusion with the devil...I’m in collision with him. “And if I, by Beelzebub, cast out devils by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore, they shall be your judges.”

The point is God was speaking. The Lord had done a miracle and the Holy Spirit was working, but then Jesus goes on to say (and I’ll fast-forward)... “Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come.”

Now, that’s the most extraneous passage of Scripture I’ve ever seen if people can’t be forgiven anyway. I mean, if they’re not part of the elect...what is the sense of that? What difference would it make if a person blasphemes the Holy Ghost or whether he didn’t if he’s not part of the elect? It makes absolutely no difference whatsoever. There’s no rhyme, no reason, no nothing to that. The so-called unpardonable sin doesn’t make any sense at all if that’s what it’s all about.

The last is PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS. I believe in the eternal security of the believer...just as I believe in election, foreordination and predestination. But I really don’t believe it’s the perseverance of the saints...I believe it’s the perseverance of the Spirit. *Philippians 1:6*: “He who hath begun a good work will perform it until the coming of our

Lord Jesus Christ.”

The hyper-Calvinist says this. He says, “If you claim to be a saint, and at the end of your life have a ‘spiritual blowout,’ you’re going to hell, because you did not persevere.” They believe only the “elect” persevere, so those who are not “elect” don’t persevere. This sounds so much like Arminianism it’s crazy. But that’s what they believe and they’ll tell you that right at the end, if you have a spiritual failure or you do this or that, then you just weren’t one of the elect.

But, oh friend, if it’s the “perseverance of the Spirit” then “He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it.” And so really, I take all five points of TULIP in its extreme form and I just reject that. Let me just say a few words in conclusion and then we’ll answer some questions and look at a few other Scriptures that seem to teach contrary to what we have said.

I want to say that God is sovereign. Do you agree to that? A sovereign is a king. You didn’t vote him in and you won’t vote him out. God is sovereign. Election and predestination are Biblical. Election is based on foreknowledge. Turn to *1 Peter 1:1-2*... “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bythynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God.”

Now, God lives in eternity but we live in time. Don’t get the idea that eternity is just a whole lot more time. We get that sometimes when we sing songs like “Amazing Grace”... “When we’ve been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we’ve no less days to sing God’s praise, than when we first begun.” That’s just poetry, that’s not Bible. Friend, when you get in eternity, time is irrelevant. It does not pertain. We say that God is sovereign, but there are some things God can’t do. For example, God can’t lie. Isn’t that correct?

He cannot lie. I’ll tell you something else God cannot do. God can’t learn anything. How can God learn anything? He knows it all. He knows the beginning and He knows the end and He knows the middle...He knows it all...He sees it all. I mean, if God were to learn something, He would not be omniscient. God knew I was going to scratch my head. He knew that before the world came into existence. Has it ever occurred to you that nothing ever occurs to God? God is God!! He knows the beginning from the end...yet God gave you a will and God has already known what you’re going to do with that will. And because God knows what you’re going to do with that will, you are elect according to the foreknowledge of God.

Now, because God knows it doesn’t mean God has caused it. There was a man named Halley, who studied about a comet. He knew exactly when the comet was going to appear. Now knowing when the comet was going to appear didn’t mean that he made it appear. Halley’s Comet just appeared right on time because he had foreknowledge that the comet would appear...and God’s foreknowledge of my salvation does not mean that God gives me irresistible grace and I’m a part of a special elect group, and that He did not die for the whole

world.

The order is foreknowledge, election and predestination. Election looks backward to foreknowledge. Predestination looks forward to destiny. You see, God saw a street fighting teenage boy in West Palm Beach, that's me, a fifteen year old kid getting into a lot of trouble, skipping school, getting into fights, telling lies, cheating and using bad language. God saw that boy repenting of his sin. He said, "That's one of My elect." God saw him trusting Jesus and He said, "He's one of My elect, and He's going to be like Jesus. It is predestined." "Whom He foreknew, them He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." **1 Peter 1:2**: "We are elect according to the foreknowledge of God."

Now, if you take this kind of doctrine and tell some people, it will make infidels out of them, it will cause them to turn against God altogether. I'll tell you why. Think about little babies that die. How many babies die in the world today? Think about the million and a half little babies that are aborted every year. Well, let me ask you a question. Are the little babies that die that are not part of the elect? Do they go to hell? Do those little babies who didn't know their name, never did any good or evil; some of them were never even born. Do they go to hell? I have a little baby boy in heaven...I'm sure he's there. Listen, I couldn't be sure if I thought he might not be one of the elect. Well, you say, "Adrian, maybe your little boy's not in heaven...maybe he wasn't one of the elect." I don't believe that!

I just got back from India. Do you believe that God bunched all the elect over here in our country? Think about it! Let your mind just begin to work on this. See what this will do to your reasoning. If I believed that it's already settled whether they're going to heaven or hell and there's nothing we can do about it, I wouldn't have gone to India. Very frankly, it was a painful trip.

Turn to **2 Timothy** for just a moment...**2 Timothy 2:9-10**...and by the way, few people have ever suffered as the Apostle Paul suffered. And notice what he says, "Therefore, I endure all things (and you know some of the things he endured...he was in prison, he was beaten, he was stoned, he was left for dead, he was shipwrecked...) I endure all things for the elect's sakes that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." FOR THE ELECT'S SAKES THAT THEY MAY OBTAIN SALVATION... Hey Paul, if they're going to be saved anyway, why don't you just go fishing? I mean, why the shipwrecks, why the beatings, why the floggings, why the jail, why the prison? They're going to be saved anyway! Paul said, "I do it for the elect's sake that they might obtain salvation."

Now, I know some people who are hyper-Calvinists who are soul-winners. And I know some people who believe as I believe who are **not** soul winners. But I'm going to tell you something else. As a class, **as a class**, the five-pointers are not red-hot soul winners, they're proselytizers. They move in on people who have been won to Jesus in evangelistic services. And by the way, you'll be surprised how many more get "elected" in a red-hot evangelistic service. I said that in a Bible conference one time and a man wrote me a letter and said, "You ought to know better than that...you ought to know that's not when

they're elected." I said, "Of course, I know better than that, you just don't understand 'tongue in cheek' language when you hear it." What I'm saying is this...when we have a passion for souls, we're going to get people saved, and Paul said, "I endure all of these things for the elect's sake."

Turn to the *Book of Ezekiel* for a moment...*Ezekiel 33:8*... "When I say unto the wicked 'oh wicked man, thou shalt surely die,' if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity but his blood will I require at thine hand." Now wait a minute...if he can't go to heaven anyway, how could I be guilty...how could his blood be on my hands just because I didn't warn him? He didn't have a chance to go anyway. The verse doesn't make sense. How could there be an unpardonable sin? It just doesn't make sense. What about the little babies that die? You see, the logical conclusion of this five-point Calvinism is fatalism. Now, I'm not saying that there are no five-point Calvinists that are not soul winners. I know some fine ones who are. I know some fine evangelists who are. I'm saying as a class...I'm talking about as a class...you'll find a smug, satisfied, the elite, the wine and cheese theologian...he likes that. Find the man with a passion for souls. Find the people who're pushing back the frontiers of evangelism. Find the people with the hot heart. Find the people in the inner city sharing Jesus, and you're going to find those same people who have the heartbeat of the Apostle Paul who said, "This I do for the elect's sake that they might obtain salvation." The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Let me give you a verse. Turn to *2 Thessalonians 2*. Here's a verse that these people love to use, so let's look at it, beginning in *verse 13*: "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." Now that looks like some folks are just chosen for salvation. Again, classic... not finishing a verse...not reading the entire verse... "God hath...chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." The ones that are chosen for salvation are the ones that the Holy Spirit of God convicts and they believe the truth.

You see its 180 degrees. It's not that they believe because they're chosen, but they are chosen through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. Its 180 degrees from what people try to twist those verses to mean. The classic verse is in *Romans 9*. Turn there for just a moment. Let's see Isaac and Jacob and Esau. Let's begin in *verse 10*: "And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father, Isaac, for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, 'the elder shall serve the younger.' As it is written, 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.'"

Now someone will say, "There it is, folks." Election...right there in the womb. Neither one has done a thing. God says He's going to save Jacob and He's going to damn Esau. I didn't read that there. It didn't say anything at all about salvation. It says that the elder shall serve the younger. How do you spell salvation? S-E-R-V-E? It doesn't mention

salvation there at all. If you will read this passage of Scripture, God is talking about his dealing with **the nation of Israel**. This is **national**, not personal. He's not talking about personal salvation here and I defy you to show me where it mentions personal salvation, heaven or hell...it does not! It mentions exactly as it happened that the birthright came to the younger. Esau, the mountains of Edom and so forth became subservient to Israel. Well, you say, "What about that part where it says 'as it is written, Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated?'" When did He say that? He didn't say that before the twins were born. He said that 1300 years later. That's a quote from the ***Book of Malachi***. That shows where God laid waste the mountains of Edom because of the sin of these people and when the Bible says that God hated, even there it doesn't mean that God hates as we use the word hates...when we say, "I hate you." Jesus said, "If any man come after Me and hate not father and mother and houses and lands and all that he has, he cannot be My disciple." It means to prefer one against the other. And God deals with the nations of the world! The Jews are God's chosen people! Here, He's talking about nations! Read the whole thing! Paul is explaining the nation Israel.