

## Lesson 5

**THE DECREE (PLAN)**

- I. DEFINITION: “God from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeable ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established” (Westminster Confession of Faith III-I).
- II. TERMINOLOGY
- A. Omniscience: A knowledge of all things actual and possible.
- B. Decree (Plan): God’s one eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His own will, whereby for His own glory He has unconditionally foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. NOTE. Such words in the Bible as counsel, will and purpose refer to the divine decree. Often the word “foreordination” is used theologically to speak of the preplanning of all events and the destiny of people.
- C. Election: An active word whereby God picks out certain individuals among the mass of sinful humanity for himself according to the good pleasure of His will.
1. Different Types Of Election
    - a. Election of Christ ( 1 Pet. 2:6)
    - b. Election of Israel (Isa. 45:4 )
    - c. Election of the Apostle Paul (Acts 9:15)
    - d. Election of angels (1 Tim. 5:21)
    - e. Election of certain individuals (Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13)
    - f. Election that is negative (John 6:70)
  2. Different Terminology Having The Same Meaning As Election
    - a. Appointed (John 15:16)
    - b. Ordained (Acts 13:48)
    - c. Choose (Eph. 1:4)
  3. Views On Election
    - a. God elects on the basis of human merit – foreseen good works (liberals). OBJECTION: Salvation is not by good works (Eph. 2:8-9).
    - b. God elects on the basis of foreseen faith (free willers). OBJECTION: 1) Foreknowledge is a loving relationship not prescience; 2) Faith is an act and therefore a work of man; yet salvation is not of works because faith is a gift (Phil. 1:29); 3) Election according to foreknowledge would not change the number of people who would be saved – the number is the same.
    - c. God elected one individual, Christ, and elects the church corporately on the basis of a person’s faith in Christ. God elects the church in Christ and all who trust in Christ are among the elect (1 Pet. 2:6; Eph. 1:4) (Barth, Shank, Pinnock). OBJECTION: 1) It is clearly stated that salvation took place before the foundation of the world not in time (Eph. 1:4); 2) Acts 13:48 makes it clear that individuals are elected; 3) There are verses which speak of elect individuals (2 John 1; Rom. 16:13).
    - d. God elects people to service not salvation. OBJECTION: 2 Thess. 2:13 definitely states the election of individuals.
- D. Predestination: An active word indicating a predetermining of the destiny of the elect and looks to the end of God’s choices—the glorification of the saint (Eph. 1:5,11;

Rom. 8:29-30). The word “predestination” is used only of the destiny of the elect and is based on the plan of God (Rom. 8:28).

- E. Foreknowledge: An active word to indicate a loving relationship, based on the deliberate judgment of God in the eternal plan, which God sustains with certain individuals, which results in His choice of them for salvation. “Foreknowledge” is only used of persons not events.
  - 1. Definition: Biblical: A loving relationship which God sustains to certain individuals by choosing them. Theological: A prior knowledge of actual things, involving a conscious relationship and certainty. Philosophical: A knowledge of a thing before in happens.
  - 2. Scripture: Amos 3:2; 1 Cor. 8:3; Gal. 4:9; Acts 2:23; 26:5; Rom. 8:29; 11:2; 1 Pet. 1:2).
  - 3. Relation to the Plan: God’s foreknowledge is based upon His plan (Rom. 8:28 and 29-30) - purpose (plan) comes before foreknowledge. Foreknowledge implies certainty. The proper logical order is omniscience, foreordination, foreknowledge, election, predestination.
- F. Purpose: This is an active word to show that the entire program of man’s salvation is a planned program (Rom. 1:3; Rom. 3:25; Eph. 1:9; Rom. 8:28; Rom. 9:11; Eph. 1:11; 3:11; 2 Tim. 1:9).
- G. Preterition: A passive word which indicates God passed by some people, not electing these to salvation. This is a theological word.
- H. Retribution or Reprobation: A passive word which means the sinner receives his deserved results and in this case the deserved result is eternal judgment. This is a theological word.
- I. Perdition: This word means a judgment for all sinners in hell.
- J. Comprehending Predestination and Election
  - 1. Stating Election
    - a. The Bible student must state the doctrine of election as the Scriptures present it without going beyond, and yet, still including all that the Scriptures do say.
    - b. The subject of election, while difficult, is still Biblical, and one cannot teach too many books of The Bible without understanding this doctrine.
    - c. When a person approaches this subject, he must take a large dose of intellectual humility. No one has all the answers!
  - 2. Getting the Proper Viewpoint:
    - a. When approaching election, one must look at it as God does, not forming a doctrine from reasoning or logic. If one looks at this subject as he thinks it should be, then he will never get the Scriptural viewpoint about it.
    - b. One must come to the Scriptures with an objective attitude, desiring to know what God says about election. A person must never come to the Scriptures with preconceived ideas and force them upon the text. The task of the Bible student is not to say how or why, but what does the Bible teach.
    - c. One must never fit God into his own mold. Man has a tendency and desire to define God according to what he thinks God should be rather than taking at face -value what God says He is.
    - d. A person must first see God as He is, then he won’t have such a problem in seeing what He does.
    - e. No Christian is obligated to defend God’s honor. He is God from everlasting to everlasting. His honor is never at stake.
  - 3. Maintaining Balance: The problem is maintaining a proper balance between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. An improper balance on either aspect is many times fatal to Christian experience (cf. Luke 22:22; Matt. 11:27-30; in. 6:37; Phil. 2:12,12).
  - 4. Infinite and Finite

- a. We may not be able to grasp completely this marvelous doctrine of election, but we can believe it, rejoice in it and live by it.
  - b. The problem of sovereignty and will is a paradox or antinomy to the human, finite mind, but its no problem at all to God, and we will never completely understand it until we go to be with our Lord.
  - c. The Bible is full of paradoxes which the human mind cannot fully comprehend. Yet we believe these paradoxes because we are God's chosen children, who have been born again and now have divine understanding. We know them to be true because we have experienced them in our lives. Some of these paradoxes are: 1) the hypostatic union; 2) Jesus Christ who is true humanity and undiminished deity united in one person forever; 3) the resurrection; 4) the Trinity; 5) miracles, etc. We do not understand in detail these concepts but we accept them because God's Word teaches them.
5. Christian Experience
- a. This is one of the most blessed doctrines all Scripture and if properly understood will change your whole Christian experience.
  - b. This doctrine will not cause you to be less zealous or active for Christ. If anything it will make you more careful, obedient, confident, etc.
  - c. This doctrine will make the Lord's presence very real in your life.
  - d. This doctrine will stimulate your prayer life because it will make you utterly dependent on God for results.
  - e. This doctrine will give you a new perspective of the God you love.
  - f. This doctrine will cause you to relate all Scripture back to the person of God.
  - g. This doctrine will give you the boldness to stand against all opposing forces of Christianity because you will realize that you are a favored child of God in His infinite plan for this world.
  - h. This doctrine is the basis for all true humility.
  - i. This doctrine will cause the child of God to want to be obedient and place himself under the sovereign control of God.
  - j. This doctrine will increase your evangelistic zeal and cause you to want to be an effective witness.
  - k. This doctrine will prepare the believer for the trials of Life (2 Tim. 2:10).
  - l. This doctrine will elicit praise of the believer to the glory of God (Rom. 11:33-36).
  - m. This doctrine will teach one the meaning of true worship.
  - n. This doctrine takes the pressure off one to produce numbers of souls and teaches him to be faithful.
  - o. This doctrine will open up in a new understanding and perspective in almost every chapter of Scripture.

### III. NATURE OF THE DECREE

- A. There is one Decree but many parts.
- B. Every detail is included in the Decrees. Nothing is left out.
- C. The Decree includes means as well as ends.
- D. God's plan can never be thwarted. Since God is God, His sovereignty can never be thwarted.
- E. God's decree differs at times with His desires. God has obligated Himself to carry out His plan. He is not willing that people perish but in His plan certain ones perish and certain ones are saved. Otherwise God is not omnipotent and is unable to carry out His plan.

### IV. PURPOSE OF THE DECREE

- A. The ultimate purpose of the decree is to glorify God (Eph. 1:6; 12,14).

- B. One must believe that all things harmonize in the plan of God to glorify Him better than any other plan.
- C. We, as humans, can only see a small part of God's plan, but we must understand that God is in control of all things if we are to have a normal Christian experience.
- D. Points to Ponder:
  - 1. Arminians often say that one can: 1). Thwart the will of God by not praying for all men to be saved; the result being that all men are not saved; 2). Thwart the will of God by not being sanctified.
  - 2. Objection: All men are not saved; all men are not sanctified. What happened? Couldn't God carry out His plan? If He can't then He must be less than God?
  - 3. Answer: Either God's will has been thwarted or this could not happen because God is sovereign. We must harmonize the desire of God and the will (plan) of God.
  - 4. Correct View: God's plan includes both those things, which God desires, and those things which God does not desire. God's desire is what He would like it to be (revealed will) but His plan includes everything.
  - 5. Problem: If God is sovereign, why can't He fulfill His desires? Answer: God could if He chose to do so, but God has been limited by His own plan. He does not choose to fulfill all His desires, so that He may carry out His plan.

## V. DECREE AND GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

- A. Definition of Sovereignty: God's absolute control of and authority over anything or anybody with no limitations. God is either sovereign or He is not God! There is no law of any kind or description anywhere in the universe that can coerce or force God to do anything that He does not please to do.
- B. Scriptures on Sovereignty
  - 1. God Has a Plan: Acts 15:13; Eph. 3:11; Isa. 46:9, 10; Matt. 25:34,41; Eph. 1:4; 2 Tim. 1:9; Acts 2:23; Acts 4:27-28.
  - 2. God Will Certainly Carry His Plan Out: Num. 23:19; Isa. 14:24; Psa. 10:4; Jer. 4:28; James 1:17; Psa. 119:89; Mal. 3:6; Prov. 19:21; Deut. 32:39; Psa. 135:6; Dan. 4:35; Eph. 1:11; Isa. 14:24, 27; Psa. 115:3; Isa. 55:11; Rom. 9:20-21; Psa. 139:16; Rom. 8:29; Job 14:5; Jer. 15:2; Acts 2:47; Acts 13:48; 1 Cor. 4:7; Luke. 22:22.
  - 3. God Cannot Do Anything That Contradicts His Nature (therefore His plan is perfect, just and good): Psa. 145:17; Gen. 18:25; Psa. 145:9; Isa. 45:19; Deut. 32:4; Psa. 33:4-5.
  - 4. God's Plan is All Inclusive: Nahum 1:3; Matt. 5:45; Job 12:15; Amos 4:7; Job 5:10; Acts 14:17; Matt. 6:26; Isa. 40:12; Matt. 10:29; Luke. 12:7; Psa. 104:21,29; Psa. 145:15-16; Psa. 147:9; Psa. 47:7; Job 38:41; Dan. 4:17; Dan. 2:21; Psa. 33:10; Hab. 1:6; Phil. 2:13; Isa. 10:15; Prov. 16:4; 1 Cor. 4:7; Ex. 14:4, 7; 2 Sam. 21:1,3; 2 Sam. 10:15; 2 Sam. 16:11-12; 2 Sam. 12:11; 1 Sam. 16:14; 1 Sam. 2:25; 1 Kings 22:23; 1 Kings 12:15; Jud. 9:23; Rev. 17:17; John 12:40; Isa. 53:10; Isa. 10:5,15; Jud. 4; 1 Chron. 5:22; Matt. 26:31; Eph. 1:11-12; 2 Pet. 2:12.
  - 5. Scriptures on the Will of Man: John 8:34; Rom. 6:21; 2 Tim. 2:26; 2 Pet. 2:19; Prov. 5:22; Acts. 8:23; Rom. 7:15; Matt. 7:23; Psa. 76:10; John 6:44; John. 15:16; 2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Cor. 1:26; John 6:65; Rom. 11:4; Rom. 5:10; John 1:13; John 17:12; Eph. 1:11; Acts. 13:48; James. 1:18.
  - 6. Scriptures on Election: John 1:13; 6:44; 17:2; 6:65; 15:16; Acts 13:48; Acts 16:14; Rom. 9:11; 1 Cor. 1:26; Eph. 1:11; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:4.
  - 7. God Reigns: 1 Chron. 16:31; 2 Chron. 20:6.

## VI. LOGICAL ORDER OF THE DECREE (See Chart)

## VII. PROBLEM PASSAGES ON THE DECREE

### A. 1 Tim. 2:4: “Who wants (wills) all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.”

1. Modified Calvinist: They take the word “wants” (*thelo*) to mean the emotional will of God and not his decretive will. Many times in the New Testament *Thelo* means a wish or desire and is not as strong a word as *boulomai* which speaks of God’s sovereign, unchangeable will. POINT: Thus emotionally God wishes all mankind to be saved, but since it is in His plan that not all will be saved, His decretive will (*boulomai*) is that will which shall come to pass. A distinction must be made between what God wills and what God desires.
2. Calvinist
  - a. Meaning of “want”
    - (1) In this context of 1 Tim. 2:4, God will have no more to be saved than He will have “come unto the knowledge of the truth.” Therefore the context favors God’s decretive will, not emotional will.
    - (2) *Thelo* is used in many other scriptures to refer to God’s decretive will (John. 1:13; John. 17:24; Rom. 9:18; Phil. 2:13; 1 Pet. 3:17). POINT: The same *thelo* which indicates that God desires that all men be saved is the same *thelo* which He exercises to harden whom He will (Rom. 9:13). The Old Testament speaks of the fact that all of God’s desires come to pass (Job. 23:13; Psa. 132:13-14) so why can’t they come to pass in 2 Tim. 2:4? CONCLUSION: The *thelo* here will come to pass. The reason the weaker word for will is used here is because the “will” of God is not the stress of the passage; rather the stress is upon prayer for all classes of men, vv. 1-2, and upon the one mediator between God and men, namely Christ, v. 5.
  - b. Meaning of “All”
    - (1). The Arminian (freewillier) takes the “all” as absolute and believes that it is God’s will for all mankind to be saved but they aren’t saved—because they refuse to believe by an act of their own will. OBJECTIONS: If the Arminian position is correct then the following facts are true: (a) God fails His own purpose and is therefore not sovereign and if not sovereign He is not God. If it is God’s will that all men should be saved, why aren’t all-men saved? Has God failed his purpose? Thus the Arminian is forced to make the “will” refer to His emotional will, not decretive will. (b) If it is God’s sovereign will that all men be saved, then all men will be saved, and this verse teaches universalism. Thus we have no need for the cross or the preaching of the gospel for all men will be ultimately saved.
    - (2). “All” in context is to be understood in its relative sense and to be given a limited meaning. “All”, therefore, refers to mankind in a relative sense. The prayer of 2 Tim. 2:1 is to be made for all men of all sorts, ranks, authority, etc. (cf. Jer. 29:1-2). It is God’s will to save all sorts of individuals from among mankind.
    - (3). “All” occurs about 500 times in the New Testament and is used in a restricted (relative) sense approximately 80% of the time (cf. Rom. 5:18).
    - (4). Conclusion: Obviously we must give a limited meaning to the word “all” if it is to be intelligibly understood.

C. **2 Pet. 3:9: The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone (any) to perish, but everyone(all) to come to repentance.**

1. Arminian and Modified Calvinist: They refer the “any” and “all” to all mankind without exception. The Arminian believes that it is not God’s will for any to perish whatsoever. The modified Calvinist makes a distinction between God’s decretive will and His emotional will; that it is not God’s desire that any perish but in His hidden plan some do perish and nothing is outside of God’s plan.
2. Calvinist.
  - a. The word “willing” is the Greek word *boulomai* which speaks of God’s sovereign will (cf. Matt. 11:27; Luke 10:22).
  - b. The context of this verse is very important. The “any” and “all” after the “you” of the same verse refers back to “dear friends” (3:1, 8). The “you” refers to the believers at that time. The “any” and “all” refer to the elect of God who are yet to be called to repentance (cf. 2 Tim. 2:10). In other words this verse teaches security as well as the surety that God will send back His son a second time as He has promised.
  - c. Peter was an apostle to the Jews (Gal. 2:9). This epistle as well as the first epistle of Peter was written to Jewish believers (1 Pet. 1:1). Indirectly Peter is telling them that not only is God longsuffering to “you” (Jewish believers, at least primarily), but He is not willing that anyone of you should perish (the elect that are yet to believe), for He wills that all (both Jew and Gentile, cf. John 11:51,52) should come to repentance.
3. Third Possible Interpretation of 2 Pet. 3:9: It is possible that this verse does not refer to salvation at all. The context is about false teachers who here denying the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Apparently some of the Christians had fallen prey to this false teaching. Thus God is longsuffering towards those who had fallen into apostasy, not willing, that any should perish (perish in the sense of holding to this false teaching) but that all should come to repentance (that this Christians should repent of this false teaching).
4. Conclusion: Theologically this passage would not favor the Arminian position. If God is not willing that any should perish, why do some perish? Couldn’t God carry out His plan? If He couldn’t carry out His own plan, He is less than a man. A sovereign God must carry out His will or He is not God.

VIII. THEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AND THE DECREE

A. The Problem of Foreknowledge

1. Need for This Study: For centuries false teachers have perverted God’s foreknowledge in order to set aside His unconditional election unto eternal life. When the subject of divine foreknowledge is expounded, the enemy sends along some man to argue that election is based upon foreknowledge of God (because God knew that certain ones would believe) He accordingly, elected them unto salvation. But such a statement is radically strong. It repudiates the truth of total depravity, for it argues that there is something good in some men. It takes away the independence of God, for it makes His decrees, namely election and predestination, rest upon what He discovers in the creature. POINT: Many sincere Christians have been and are confused on this matter—hence the need to make known what the Word of God says about God’s foreknowledge.
2. Definition: Foreknowledge is an active word indicating a loving relationship which God sustains with certain individuals, based on the deliberate decree

of God in His eternal plan, which results in His choice of them for salvation. It is a sovereign distinguishing love.

3. Viewpoints:
  - a. Arminians (freewillers): They take the word “foreknowledge” as foresight or prescience and relate it to the concept of omniscience (all knowing). They say that because God knows all, He looked down the corridors of time and saw how men would believe and elected them on that basis.
  - b. OBJECTIONS:
    - (1). Freewillers do not take the literal meaning of the Greek word “foreknowledge,” which is to know experientially beforehand.
    - (2). Freewillers equate foreknowledge and omniscience, which is theologically and Biblically incorrect.
    - (3). The freewiller viewpoint makes the whole plan of God dependent upon the actions of men. In fact, the Arminian makes God less than a man when he says that God looked down the corridors of time and saw how men would believe and elected them on that basis.
  - c. Calvinist (Sovereignty): They take “foreknowledge” to be part of the eternal decree of God, which is Biblical. The proper theological order is omniscience, foreordination and knowledge.
4. Foreknowledge Considered From the Original Languages:
  - a. The Greek
    - (1). The word “foreknowledge” is *proginosko* (verb form) and *proginosis* (noun form) in the Greek.
    - (2). *Pro* means before and *ginosko* means an active or experiential knowledge.
    - (3). In 1 Cor. 8:3 *ginosko* means an active experimental love. God could not be using this in a passive way. Again the same idea is seen in Gal. 4:9. In both of these cases the word “to know” or *ginosko* indicates a selective love that is exercising knowledge with selective love. Thus *proginosko* denotes a selective knowledge beforehand. And *proginosis* acknowledges a special relationship. (Acts. 2:23; 26:5; Rom. 3:29; 11:2; 1 Pet. 1:2, 20)
  - b. The Hebrew
    - (1). In Amos 3:2 the word “known” (*zyadah*) refers to more than just passive knowledge or God wouldn’t be God. Did God only know about the nation Israel and none of the other nations? Of course not! Because He is omniscient He knew all about the other nations. Therefore the words “you only have I known” show a close intimate relationship and is almost synonymous for the idea of selection.
    - (2). Hosea 13:5 again indicates an intimate relationship.
    - (3). Used also of the sex act in the Old Testament (Adam knew Eve.)
  - c. Conclusion: The Biblical meaning behind the word “foreknowledge” is a loving relationship which God sustains to certain individuals because of His decree.
5. Foreknowledge Considered Theologically: “In the text it will be found that God is working according to His own purpose, and that this purpose includes all that comes to pass; therefore, foreknowledge in God, as presented in Scriptures, must be contemplated, not as mere preview of events that Blind fate might engender or that are supposed to arise in the will of men or angels, but as a program incorporated in the decree of God respecting all things.” (Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. III, p. 158).
6. Biblical Usage of Foreknowledge:

- a. "To foreknow" is used five times in the New Testament (Rom. 8:29; 11:2; Acts 26:5; 2 Pet. 3:7; 1 Pet. 1:20) and two times by Paul. "Foreknowledge" occurs twice (1 Pet. 1:2; Acts 2:23).
- b. 2 Pet. 3:17: Here the word seems to retain its classical Greek meaning of previous knowledge much like the English connotation of foreknowledge.
- c. Acts 26:5: Here the word involves a previous knowledge but also a personal, vital first hand knowledge of Paul. Paul was not know passively but actively.
- d. Acts 2:23: Here the basic thought is that foreknowledge is connected up with the eternal decree or plan of God. The words "set purposes" and "foreknowledge" are linked up very closely. Thus these are two aspects of one eternal decree. Foreknowledge is related to the decree and shows an active, deliberate knowledge of the Son of God to go to the Cross. The word "foreknowledge" therefore refers to that counsel of God in which after deliberative judgment, the Lord was to be delivered into human hands.
- e. Rom. 11:2: **"God did not reject His people whom He foreknew."** Romans 11 tells us that God has not finished with the nation Israel. Why? They are His chosen people (Amos 3:2). Foreknowledge here is the same in essence as election. Not a passive knowledge, but an active knowledge.
- f. 1 Peter 1:2 and 1:20: **"Who was chosen (foreknown) before the creation of the world."** This is a reference to Jesus Christ. The word "chosen" is the word "foreknowledge" in 1 Pet. 1:2. Was Christ just passively foreknown by the Father? No! It was an active, vital, loving relationship between the Son and the Father through all eternity. It is interesting to note that the translator of 1 Peter, in the King James, translated the word "foreknown" as "foreordained" because he saw the two as basically the same.
- g. Notice in 1 Pet. 1:2 it says that the Christian **"has been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God."** The word "according to" (*kata*) in the Greek means by the norm or standard of. Thus we were elected according to the standard of God's love. "According" may also have the idea of domination because *kata* means down. The election of Christians from the masses of humanity was dominated, controlled or determined by the foreknowledge of God. Possibly it would be correct to translate this as, "Elect according to election," or "Elect according to foreordination," or "Elect according to God's selection," etc. or "elect according to selective love."
- h. Romans 8:29: **"For those God foreknew He also predestined."** It does not say "what" but "those" (people). The New Testament never uses this word in the sense of what a man would do, but what God would do for man. From all eternity the Father foreknew the Christian, and based on that loving, deliberate, personal foreknowledge He chose, and predestinated the Christian. POINT: This foreknowledge is related back to God's purpose and calling (Rom. 8:28). Thus it cannot mean prescience or foresight.
- i. Conclusion: The word "foreknowledge" means to know experientially beforehand. It does not mean a passive mystical knowledge such as prior knowledge or prescience as we would think of it in the English. On the contrary, it is an active, conscious knowledge between the subject and the object. It is a loving relationship which God, the Knower, sustains to the elect, the known, that transcends all eternity. In eternity past, God



the Father knew all the elect personally, vitally and lovingly. POINT: God is not a crystal ball-gazer in that He looks down the corridors of time to see how men will believe and act and then set His plan based on their actions. No! God is God, the Creator, the First cause, the author of salvation. He does all according to His own will and for His own glory. POINT; Foreknowledge always refers to knowing persons, not events and speaks of a loving relationship God sustains to certain individuals.

7. Foreknowledge and Arminianism:

- a. The Position: The Arminian says that God in omniscience looked down the corridors of time and thus foreknew how men would act and events would turn out, and He set His plan on that foreknowledge.
- b. The Problem: The Arminian still must deal with the problem of a sovereign plan. God must be in control or He is not God. If God foreknew how things were going to happen as the Arminian claims, how did He make the events certain? No matter by what means He got His information, God had to set a plan in motion and this plan is certain. Thus a logical Arminian must believe that God is in control of History; thus accept the concept of “fore-ordination.”

B. The Problem of Double-Predestination

1. Introduction: Nowhere in the whole Bible does it directly indicate that there is a double-predestination—that is God’s choice and predestination of the elect to salvation and the choice and predestination of the non-elect to judgment. The Bible does teach the election and predestination of some to salvation, and it may be implied from certain scriptures that the destinies of all men are foreordained. The doctrine of sovereign election carried to its logical conclusion will produce the concept of double-predestination. However scripture is the final authority, not human emotion or reasoning. The emphasis in the Bible is always the election of some to salvation, not the election of some to perdition. POINT: We must always stick close to the emphasis of scripture and not always draw every doctrinal teaching to its logical conclusion. POINT: If one can just stick with the emphasis of scripture, he will avoid many problems. The electing of some for salvation is an active word and the passing by some for salvation is a passive word and God never delights in the judgment of the unsaved. PONT: It seems that the writers of scripture go out of their way to avoid the teaching of double-predestination but are bold in their teaching of God’s sovereign election to salvation.
2. Problem Passages
  - a. Jude 4: “**For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation.**” (KJV). The word “ordained” is too strong a word for the Greek is prographo. This could be translated, “Who for a long time have been marked out (written about) for this judgment.” POINT: It refers to predictive prophecy not God’s decretive will.
  - b. 2 Peter 2:12: The Greek says, “**But these, as natural animals without reason, having been born unto capture and corruption (depravity).**” This merely says that the false teachers were born in corruption but says nothing about double-predestination.
  - c. Rom. 9:22: “**Vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.**” Paul does not say God fitted them and seems to go out of his way to make this point but the context would imply that God was the agent in this act.
  - d. Rom. 9:18: “**Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.**” This is the most difficult verse but it only says God has the right to harden individuals but this is not related to double-predestination.

- e. 2 Thess. 2:10-12 **“They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth.”** This verse says God will work on these to get them to believe a lie and they shall be damned. This is apparently after they have rejected the truth.
  - f. 1 Thess. 5:9 **“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”** The implication here is that some are appointed to wrath (judgment). However Paul may just be using the negative thought to turn them to the fact that they had been appointed by God to salvation.
  - g. Other verses: There are other verses that imply double-predestination but all can be adequately explained (cf. John 9:39; John 12:39-40; Rom. 8:11; Isa. 45:9; Prov. 22:8; Prov. 16:4; Hab. 1:12).
3. Conclusion: The verses above do not directly teach double-predestination but they ought to bring all men to a sober realization that God is sovereign and can do as He pleases with men.
- C. The Problem of Sin (cf. “God Permitted Sin” by Dr. Jack Arnold)
  - D. The Problem of Suffering (cf. “God Allows Suffering” by Dr. Jack Arnold)
  - E. The Problem of Fatalism (cf. “Sovereignty and Responsibility” by Jack Arnold)

## IX. THE ORDO SALUTUS

- A. Introduction: The ordo salutis deals with the lapsarian (fall) question. This question is really academic for God did it all at once but it is interesting to try and put together God’s thoughts logically. There are three positions among Calvinists on the lapsarian question. The Supralapsarian (election before the fall), the Infralapsarian (election after the fall) and the Sublapsarian (election after the fall and God’s provision at the cross).
- B. The Positions:

<u>Supralapsarian</u>	<u>Infralapsarian</u>	<u>Sublapsarian</u>
Elect	Create	Create
Create	Fall	Fall
Fall	Elect	Provision of
Salvation		
Provision of Salvation	Provision of Salvation	Elect
Application of Salvation	Application of Salvation	Application of
Salvation		

- C. Conclusion: A Supralapsarian and Infralapsarian would be strict Calvinists because they would believe in limited atonement. The Supralapsarian would be a modified Calvinist, believing in unlimited atonement for the world but limited in actuality to the elect.