

Who Controls Salvation? (White vs Bryson)

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Calvinism

By Dr. James White

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Announcer. Our moderator tonight is Greg Koukl, Director of Stand to Reason. Hopefully in upcoming debates we can convince him to be a participant, not just the moderator, and Greg will be giving us all the instructions and outline for the debate this evening. Will you please welcome Greg Koukl.

Greg Koukl. Thank you, David. Our debate tonight has a particular topic: who does what in salvation? And we have two debaters that will take opposite sides on this issue, the first George Bryson, Director of Calvary Chapel Church Planting Mission, an outreach to Russia and the former Soviet Union. George is the author of "The Five Points of Calvinism Weighed and Found Wanting." So I guess you know what side of the issue he is on that one. That was Word for Today publishers. On my right, James White, he's Director of Alpha and Omega Ministries, a Christian apologetics organization. He is also adjunct professor at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. He is author of "The God Who Justifies," Bethany House, "The Potter's Freedom," Calvary Press, and "God's Sovereign Grace."

Now I want to describe the format here so you all understand what you're in for and what the rules are this evening. We are going to start with 20 minute opening remarks and James White will be starting those remarks followed by a seven minute cross-examination and then a 10 minute rebuttal by each side. This is about an hour and a quarter for you guys so we're going to take a break and David will come up and dismiss you for a 10-15 minute break so you can mob the tables back there. Stand to Reason is immediately out that door and just to your right. Then we will come back for another 10 minute series of closing arguments from each side. Then another cross-examination for seven minutes, and then 10 minute rebuttal and closing comments. That will be about an hour. Now David will come up after that and we'll have Pastor Stan come and have a closing prayer but that won't be the end of our evening, it's an opportunity for those of you who have to get kids or just want to move on, that will be the end of the body of debate and you can go back to the tables there in the back at Stand to Reason etc. on your way out. But for those hard-core, we have an additional time afterwards of question and answer and you will have an opportunity to write down questions yourself and some material that's been handed to you, and we will have about another half hour or so of questions and answers from the audience, that is the questions you write out we'll queue

the challenges on either side here. So if you want to stay for that, we invite you to do so and that will be the end of the evening.

Now here are the rules for tonight and both the audience has rules and the participants. On the audience side, please restrain yourself. I know some of you might have favorites represented here but we'd appreciate it if there were no loud outbursts from the audience. That's distracting, frankly, from the exchange and it limits your speaker's time. So please don't applaud for your favorite speaker. He doesn't have enough time as it is, all right? You can applaud when they come up and when they go down, that is, when they sit down, I should say.

Also, you should have received a handout with room for your name and address and phone number and that kind of thing. If you fill it out, then you can be contacted in the future on upcoming debates etc. There's a place in the back there, a booth called Patriarch's Path that you can hand that in or maybe some of the ushers or somebody associated with the church can direct you back there, hand it in and they'll make sure to get in touch with you directly for events in the future. And on the back of that form that you've received, this is the place to write down any questions that you may have for either participant; you can direct your question to one or the other and during the Q&A session a question will be directed to one person and then the other, and each will have a chance to give a follow-up remark on individual questions. So there will be equal number of questions directed at each participant.

Okay, those are the rules for you guys and the rules for the debaters and I'm going to be fairly strict about the rules and the time just so things move along squarely, but from my understanding of both gentlemen I don't think there will be any difficulty here. First, the 20 minute opening remarks and seven minute cross-exam, the 10 minute rebuttal, I'll have a time card for your benefit so you can see how much time that you have left. I'll say "Time" when the time is up. I expect you to wrap up your point very quickly if you're not already done yet, and if it takes more than 15 seconds or so, I'll call "Time" again and even if you're not finished, you'll have to stop after that, okay? And as far as the cross-examination goes, the purpose of a cross-examination is for one person to ask the question and the other person to answer it so I'm going to ask you to stay on your questions and on your answers, and if you stray too much I'll remind you to get back on the path and get back on the course if that's a problem. Finally, please wait for me to timer before you begin so I'll make sure that everything is ready and you and I are both ready there. Everybody understand? Okay, good.

We're all, each participant is in his corner. When I call your name, come out talking and may the best idea win. James White will be first.

James White. It is indeed a pleasure to be with you this evening. I thank you very much for making the effort to be out and to engage this extremely important subject this evening. That subject that brings us together is not a new one nor is it a simple topic, in fact, we face the danger of overloading the brief time that we have with too many topics and too many verses, but to help focus our thinking this evening we should keep in mind

the fundamental point of tonight's debate as I see it. Is God's grace alone sufficient to save or is God's grace dependent either by nature or God's choice upon the cooperation of the will of man? Theologians identify these two positions as on the one hand monergism, the belief that there is one power, one force, that brings about regeneration, the new spiritual life, the born again believer, and synergism, the belief that two forces, God's grace and man's will, cooperate in harmony with one another to bring about spiritual life. Today, the large portion of Evangelicalism has adopted a synergistic position over against the Reformed position which, by God's grace, I shall seek to explain and defend this evening which emphasizes the ability and power of God's grace based upon the sovereignty of God's will and the deadness of man and sin, that this was central in the great work of God we call the Reformation which took place in the 16th century. In fact, the debate that we have tonight took place more or less in writing between Martin Luther and Desiderius Erasmus right at the beginning of the Reformation.

Erasmus saw that the Reformers subjected the creaturely will of man the divine will of God, and he wrote a book defending the concept of free will. Luther replied with his famous work, "The Bondage of the Will." Note Luther's words to his opponent, "Moreover I give you hearty praise and commendation on this further account, that you alone in contrast to all others have attacked the real thing that is the essential issue. You have not wearied me with those extraneous issues about the papacy, purgatory, indulgences and such like trifles rather than issues, in respect of which almost all today have sought my blood though without success. You and you alone have seen the hinge on which all turns and aimed for the vital spot." Now mark Luther's words well. He recognized that Erasmus had seen the true issue regarding the Reformation's emphasis upon the freedom of God's grace. Luther and those who followed after him saw that if God's grace is in any way made dependent upon the will of man, then it is not truly a divine grace and salvation can never be solely to the glory of God, it is always man's desire to insert himself into the process, to get to himself some portion of the glory for his salvation, but the Reformers would have none of it. But of course, the Reformers were simply men, frail and liable to error. The true strength of the Reform position is not its historical pedigree but is instead based in the close exegesis of the biblical text.

This makes this evening's very short encounter decidedly difficult, for in-depth exegesis is not done in 30 second sound bites, so it is my hope to encourage you, the listeners of this debate, to use this evening as a starting point, a platform from which to engage in the joyous duty of in-depth biblical study on the issues that will be addressed this evening. I shall do my best to present a biblical argument tonight and I hope the conversation will remain in the biblical text rather than wandering about in endless philosophical conundrums that leave the biblical revelation in the background. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom and his word is truth; with these fundamentals in mind, allow me to state my thesis and provide a brief biblical defense.

I believe God saves. He saves completely and fully. Salvation is a divine act intended to bring glory to God's grace and God's grace alone. God saves freely without any compulsion, without any coercion. The freedom and sovereignty of God combined with the consistent biblical teaching concerning man's deadness in sin would require salvation

to be free and unmerited even if we did not have the abundant biblical testimony to God's electing grace. That is what the Bible teaches about God's sovereign and eternal decree together with its consistent emphasis upon the inability of the natural man to do what is right in God's sight, would lead us to believe the gospel must be monergistic even if we did not have the plain biblical teaching stating that it is. But when you combine all three biblical teachings, the case is overwhelming and undeniable. Man's role in salvation is simple: he is the one who is undeservedly and, in fact, contrary to his deserts saved by God. He is the dead Lazarus in the grave unable to offer the first bit of assistance but Jesus Christ requires no assistance from the dead Lazarus in the grave anyway. When the divinely powerful Son of God says, "Lazarus, come forth," will any dare to say that the Son of God can fail? Can his command be made void? No. And that is why I unashamedly believe in the doctrines of grace for the Bible teaches me my Savior Jesus Christ saves perfectly.

Hopefully the fact of God's utter and complete sovereignty over all his creation is not a matter of dispute in this debate. How that sovereignty works out must be, of course, but the fact of his kingly authority over his creation is so plainly stated in scripture no theologian that even pretends to be biblical could possibly question it. The psalmist tells us the Lord does whatever pleases him in the heavens and on the earth and the seas and in all their depths. The fact that man does not have this power and ability is noted as well, and man's impotence is contrasted with God's power. The psalmist noted this where in the 33rd Psalm we read, "The LORD nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation." The prophets repeat this refrain often, emphasizing this same divine sovereignty over human affairs. "Even from eternity I am He, And there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?" Isaiah 43:13.

God acts freely. Man cannot change God's actions. Such words, of course, are never uttered of men. Men do not act thereby revising and reversing God's action. Sovereignty is surely a one-way street. Even the pagan king Nebuchadnezzar recognized this truth and he said in Daniel 4:35, "All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?'" This is the foundation, then, of the key passages of scripture which plainly teach the sovereignty of God in electing and predestining a specific people unto salvation. Romans 8 and 9; Ephesians 1; John 6; these all have as their necessary foundation a commitment to the utter freedom of God to do with his creation in accordance with his holy will.

The religions of men are all built upon man controlling God's power through sacraments, ordinances, works and merit. Christianity is God freely saving not with reference to conditions fulfilled or works performed but solely on the basis of grace. We are told this sovereign God has a purpose in all that he has done with special reference to his work of salvation. Paul expressed it in the highest terms but listen carefully to the flow of his teaching as he expressed it to the Ephesians paying close attention to the pronouns in Ephesians 1 which reads, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ, just as He

chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, so that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption through Jesus Christ to Himself, in accordance to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, which He freely gave to us in the Beloved One in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of his grace, which he poured out upon us. In Him also we were called, having been predestined in accordance with the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will." Paul is clear in his teaching. God has predestined not a plan but a specific people from eternity itself. The God who works all things after the counsel of his will, not after the counsel of man's will expressed in some kind of mystical foreseeing of man's actions, elects or predestines a people unto salvation and he does so for one reason, so that his glorious grace would indeed be glorified. God saves in accordance solely and only with the good pleasure of his will. All other factors, including the actions of men, are excluded.

This truth is repeated by the same apostle in Romans when we read in chapters 8 and 9, "we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew also He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and whom He foreknew, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. What can we say in response to these things? Since God is for us, who can possibly be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how shall He not also together with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies." Then in chapter 9 we read, "And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac; for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or evil, so that God's purpose according to election would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, 'The older will serve the younger.' Just as it is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.' What shall we say then? There is no injustice with God, is there? May it never be! For He says to Moses," and this is literally the rendering, "'I will mercy whom I mercy, and I will compassion whom I compassion.'" So then it does not depend on the one willing or the one running, but on the God mercying. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, 'This is the reason I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth.' So then He mercies whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires. You will say to me then, 'Why does He yet find fault? For who is able to resist His will?' But on the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the one who molded it, 'Why did you make me like this,' will it? Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use? What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction? And He did so to make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He prepared beforehand for glory." We literally could not even begin to address the riches of these passages this evening but their testimony is plain and clear: God sovereignly predestines a specific people into salvation while justly demonstrating his wrath upon others. The

main problem sinners have is not that the Bible is not clear on these topics, it is that we don't like the description of ourselves as pots formed at the pleasure of the potter, vessels to be used to demonstrate either his wrath or his glorious grace as he sees fit, not as we see fit.

But as time is fleeting, let me try to address the flip-side of divine sovereignty, so to speak, the ever-present element of all of man's religions, the philosophical spine of every form of non-Reformed theology, the concept of libertarian free will. Please note I said libertarian free will. Calvinists believe in the biblical presentation of man's will. The Bible teaches that man makes free and responsible decisions based upon his nature as a fallen creature. He is culpable for those decisions and he is not forced against his desires to make decisions but since man is fallen, as Jesus taught, he is a slave of sin. Slaves are not free, such seems an obvious truth but for many today it must be stated forcefully. Men are dead in sin, incapable of doing what is good in God's sight. Paul put it this way in Romans 8:7-8, "because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

The same apostle taught that we are dead in our trespasses and sins until God in his mercy raises us up. This is why Paul speaks of all of salvation as a gift, including the ability to exercise saving faith in such passages as Ephesians 2:8-9 and Philippians 1:29. We do not have the time to get in all the passages that could be cited on this topic; we should focus upon one of the clearest and most forceful, one which ties together all the themes of God's utter sovereignty, man's inability and Christ's power to save without the assistance of the creature, and that is John 6:37-44. Here the Lord Jesus addresses men who are the very epitome of seekers. They have followed him across the lake. They like what they have been hearing from him and yet by the time Jesus finishes speaking to these men, he has only the confused apostles left. The message of divine sovereignty and human inability has never been popular then or today, but listen as the Lord Jesus presented a plain, clear, and I truly believe, irrefutable sermon on the doctrines of grace. He said, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me will not hunger and he who believes in Me will never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me and the one who comes to Me, I will certainly not cast out. For I have come down from heaven not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me, I lose nothing but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life and I Myself will raise them up on the last day." Then verse 44, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."

In the few moments we have left, please think with me about what the Lord here teaches us. Note that he tells us that the men who were seeking him were unbelievers. He explains their unbelief not in terms of their wills but in terms of God's actions in eternity past. John 6:37 defies every single non-Reformed interpretation I have ever seen offered.

Jesus said, "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me." Note a few things. First, the Father is sovereign in the matter of election. He gives a specific people to the Son and as verse 39 tells us, this took place in eternity past. He has that right and since he then entrusts their full and complete salvation to the Son, their number must be known and their identity fixed. Next, all who are given by the Father come to the Son. Not some. Not just those who choose to do so. Everyone. The determining factor is the Father's action, period. Further, and this is vitally important, the simple grammar of the passage tells us that the giving precedes the coming. Why is this vital? Because many systems attempt to short-circuit this biblical teaching by saying that God chooses those that he foresees will choose him. This passage turns that idea on its head, making the choosing of God that which results in the choosing of man.

This is the only basis upon which we can then understand the second half of verse 37, the one who comes to him he will never cast out. Who comes to him? Those given to him by the Father. Keep this in mind. Next, why will the Son not cast out those who come to him? Because he is accomplishing perfectly the will of the Father for him. And what is that will? That he lose none of those who have been given to him but raise them up at the last day. How can this be said if, in fact, salvation is synergistic? This passage screams monergism for Christ is able to do what the Father wills for him to do without the shadow of the possibility of failure. So we see that when he speaks to the one who looks on Jesus and believes in him receiving eternal life, the one looking and believing is the one who has first been given to the Son by the Father.

And finally this brings us to verse 44, a passage which along with those we saw in Romans 9, denies libertarian free will in the strongest of terms. Jesus says that no man is able to come to him. Do we believe his words? Do we accept them? Or do we allow our traditions to override his teaching? If Jesus stopped there all would be lost, but he didn't stop there. He said no one is able to come to him lest the Father who sent him draws them and he will raise those who are thusly drawn up on the last day. Who does the Father draw to the Son? Those he has given to him, of course, which is why all who are given come to the Son as we saw in verse 37. The Father draws his elect to the Son. They as a result of this divine act, are coming, believing, and looking upon the Son in faith. Please note: all who are drawn are raised up. Many try to avoid the way of this passage by fleeing to a different context and saying that all men are thusly drawn. This is not the case at all. Those who are drawn in John 6:44 are those given by the Father to the Son.

The end of this tremendous chapter of John 6 gives us a picture of the choice we must make this evening. After Jesus speaks the necessity of vital living union with him as the only source of life, he repeats his teaching about man's inability in these words from verse 65, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father." In the next verse, his would-be seeker-friendly disciples walk away from him. They are not interested in the only source of life nor in being dependent upon God; there is always another show in town and they go to find it.

What about us this evening? The truth of God's sovereignty, the freedom of his grace, the dependence of man upon the sovereign will of the Father, all of these are truths that strike

directly at common traditions in Evangelicalism. I have had the blessed opportunity of introducing many precious Christians to the doctrines of grace over the years. I have seen those truths shatter the way they looked at God and themselves only to then see the truth produce a scripturally-based, God-centered focus that has become their most precious possession. It is truly my prayer this evening that God will grant us that supernatural desire to be subservient solely to the God-breathed scriptures, to believe only and always that which the Bible teaches, and it is my prayer that we will join with Paul when he wrote in 2 Timothy 1:9 that God "has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity." Amen.

Thank you very much.

Moderator. Thank you, James White. Now George Bryson will have 20 minutes for his opening remarks.

George Bryson. Good evening. It's also a great pleasure and honor for me to be here and I want to thank KFSH, KKLK, and all the sponsors. It is an honor to be here and I hope and I pray that no matter what is said and how many disagreements are made, that all of us understand that the Christian life is to be lived to the glory of God. What we believe and what we do ought to be always to honor, to please him in every way. And what I'd like to do tonight is really share with you some truths of scripture that I think do bring honor to him in contrast to some truths that I think no matter how well intended do not glorify the Lord. It is very difficult, if not impossible, for me to see how some of those things taught in Calvinism with regard to the topic we're going to discuss really can bring honor and glory to him. The first thing I really want to try to accomplish in keeping with the discussion tonight is answer the question: who is the Savior? The second question, maybe a two-part question: what does the Savior do and what is salvation? And I think by answering that second question we'll answer the third as well.

But first of all, I want to make it really clear. No matter what you may think, no matter what you may have heard, there are some of us who are not Calvinists who are monergists, and in fact, I think the vast majority of Evangelicals are monergists and let me say that if you can answer the question this way, the answer to the question who does what in salvation, if you can say it is God and God alone, only God, no one else, you are a monergist. In Isaiah 43:11 the Lord said to Israel, "I am the Lord and besides Me there is no savior." Never was. Never will be. In Hosea 13:4, the Lord said to Israel, "I am the LORD your God and you shall know no God but Me for there is no savior besides Me." Never has been. Never will be. In 1 Timothy 4:1, Paul tells Timothy, he says, "We trust in the living God who is the Savior of all men, especially for those who believe." Since there is only one Savior, only one canon does save. Since only God is our Savior, it follows that only one God can and does save.

There are no, and let me underline this word, there are no other saviors and there are no co-saviors. Now if you run into anybody, if you meet somebody in your everyday life or at school, a professor, another student, a friend, a coworker, who tells you there are some

co-saviors or some other saviors besides the one and only true God, you have met a synergist. But if you in your interactions with people, in your conversations with people, if they confess and truly believe that there is only one God who saves, no one else and he needs no assistance, no one else contributes or participates in the saving work, then they are monergists. This is pure monergism. It meets the definition of the very term. Most of you know the word "monergism" comes from two words, mono meaning one, and energy or work. Only one does the work of salvation.

Now if I were to say to somebody who wasn't a Christian even that said, "I believe there is only one God. One God and one God alone," but he didn't agree with me about all of the other great truths that we believe are important and even essential for salvation, could I then say to him, "Just because you don't agree with monergism or monotheism as I do, that you're not a monotheist"? No, if meets the definition, if he meets the requirement of what it is a monotheist has to believe we should recognize, we shouldn't try to find differences that don't exist. We should actually try to find agreement where it does exist.

Now I'm convinced that Calvinists have tried to hijack this term so that, in a sense, it becomes a kind of intimidating term. Nobody wants to think of themselves as a synergist. I mean, for goodness sakes, no one can read the Bible and think that anyone else helps God save. Only God can and does save and he doesn't have any co-saviors and there are no other saviors. We all know that but if you can get somebody to think that what they believe is synergism, you get them to question their views in a way that I think is unfair and just simply not true. So it's important for us to recognize tonight you may have a variety of views here, you may be wrong on a lot of things, you may be right on a lot of things, but if you only believe there is one God and you know if you believe there is only one God who saves, then you're a monergist. Don't let anybody take that away from you.

Now before moving on to the "what" in the who does what in salvation question, something very very very important should be understood. The difference between Calvinists and non-Calvinists and, by the way, just on this note so there's no misunderstanding, I believe Calvinists are just as sincere and just as devoted as non-Calvinists are. I think that there are many wonderful Calvinist Christians as there are many wonderful non-Calvinist Christians. I believe the difference we have between us is important and ought to be discussed and I rejoice at this opportunity, but I don't think of Calvinists as the enemy of the cross of Christ as much as I disagree with Calvinism. But the difference between Calvinists and non-Calvinists Evangelicals with regard to salvation cannot be arrived at by asking the question who does the saving in salvation, and it may seem for just a moment that I'm going to depart from our topic but I'm not because it's all wrapped up together here, I want you to know if you're going to really arrive at the question of who does what in salvation and the difference between Calvinism and non-Calvinism, you have to ask the question who does what in damnation and this is all part of a package. According to Calvin and I want to quote. Now some of you have never read the "Institutes" of Calvin, never read Calvin's commentaries, and I wish so much that I could have something back here for you to see so that you could see the quotes for yourself. I have talked to many many Calvinists over the years who have never read the "Institutes" and I recommend that you do read them. If you haven't, you

should. But if I had this ability for you to see the quotes I think it would have a little more impact.

So I just want you to trust me that I'm quoting accurately. I have a sheet out at our table in the foyer that you can read and check out these references for yourself, but if, for goodness sakes, if you don't believe me that I'm accurately quoting Calvin in context, just get the "Institutes" for yourself. There's plenty of different versions. There's actually an electronic version you can get. But Calvin said and I quote, "The first man fell," the first man fell, "because the Lord deemed it appropriate or meet that he should." Calvin also taught and I quote, "God not only foresaw that Adam would fall but also ordained that he should. He sins," says Calvin, "because God ordained." Again quoting Calvin, "God not only foresaw the fall of the first man and in him the ruin of his posterity but also at his own pleasure arranged it." And by the way, if you're thinking, "What does damnation have to do with salvation?" Read the "Institutes" and find out for yourself. They cannot be separated. For Calvin and I quote him again, "there is no reality in the free will attributed to man inasmuch as God decreed the fall and therefore must have in some wise way already biased Adam's will. It was not left in neutral equilibrium," said Calvin, "nor was his future ever in suspense or uncertainty. It was certain that sooner or later that Adam would fall into evil." Again in the words of John Calvin, "All are not created on equal terms but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation, and accordingly as each have been created," says Calvin, "for one or other of those ends, we say that he has been predestined to life or death."

Now if you don't like what I'm saying, take this up with Calvin. Calvin asks and I quote, "How is it that the fall of Adam involves so many nations with their infant children in eternal death without remedy unless it seemed so appropriate or so right or so meet to God? That decree," Calvin said, "I admit is dreadful and yet it is impossible to deny that God foreknew what the end of man was to be before he made him, foreknew because he had so ordained by his decree." In his exact words, listen to how Calvin reasoned. He said, "There is no random power, no agency or motion in the creatures who are governed by the secret counsel of God, that nothing happens but what he has knowingly and willingly decreed. The counsels and wills of men," said Calvin, "are so governed by God as to move in exactly the course which he has destined."

He also said in reference to Romans 9, a favorite passage of most Calvinists that I know, says this, "If we cannot assign any reason for his bestowing mercy on his people but just so that it pleases him, neither can we have any reason for his reprobating others but his will. When God is said to visit in mercy or harden whom he will, men are reminded that they are not to seek for any cause beyond his will." Calvin also said, "Those whom God passes by he reprobates and that for no other cause than he is pleased to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestines to his children." Calvin also said, "Since the arrangement of all things is in the hand of God, since to him belongs the disposal of life and death, he arranges all things by his sovereign counsel in such a way that individuals are born who are doomed from the womb to certain death and are to glorify him by their destruction."

Now we're very concerned, all of us, about pleasing God and about what pleases him, where does he derive his pleasure, how does he derive his pleasure. We're all concerned and ought to be concerned about God's glory. What is to his glory? How can we live our lives to glorify him? But we have to ask this question: was Calvin right? Does it really please God? Calvinists constantly quote the passage that God doesn't delight in the destruction of anyone and yet they tell us that Calvin taught the truth here when he said God is just as pleased with the destruction of those who are damned, and is the one who damns them, and is pleased that he did, and is glorified by doing it.

And my final quote from Calvin at least for now, he says this, "Life and death are acts of the divine will rather than foreknowledge. If God merely foresaw human events and did not also arrange and dispose of them at his pleasure, there might be room for agitating the question how far this foreknowledge amounts to necessity. But since he foresees the things which are to happen simply because he has decreed that they are so to happen, it is vain," says Calvin, "to debate about foreknowledge while it is clear that all events take place by his sovereign appointment." Now if that's what you believe, you're a Calvinist. If you do not believe that, you are not a Calvinist. I have no right, to be honest with you, to call myself an Arminian. I happen to know what the remonstrance is, I happen to know what James Arminian believed and taught, and it would be unfair to me to call myself an Arminian if I disagree with him on their distinctives. You have no right to call yourself a Calvinist if you disagree with Calvin on his distinctives, the things that made him stand apart and stand alone in some cases on certain issues. In fact, I agree, I'm sure, with my very able debating opponent here that so many of the people today who call themselves modern Calvinists are not Calvinists at all and they have no right to that term, and I've encouraged them to stop calling themselves that. If you don't agree with Calvin, don't call yourself a Calvinist. Now I'm not saying you have to agree with Calvin on every detail but on the main points that which sets him apart sets his theology apart and you should agree with him, and if you agree with what I just read, you're a Calvinist, if you don't, you're not.

Now as to what, as to the "what" in who does what in salvation question, God and God alone regenerates the spiritually dead. In Ephesians 2:4-5 we read that, "God who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)." God and God alone justifies the ungodly. In Romans 4:3-5 we read, "What does Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt, but to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness." Now God and God alone redeems, just as God and God alone regenerates, God and God alone justifies, God and God alone redeems the lost. In Colossians 1:12-14 we read that he delivered us. Nobody else. "He delivered us from the power of darkness and conveys us into the kingdom of the Son of His love in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."

It is God, the Spirit's power alone that can and does raise the spiritually dead. It is God the Son alone who died as a substitute, a sacrifice and satisfaction for our sins. It is God

the Son alone who shed his precious blood on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. Again, everything of a truly saving nature God and God alone does. Call me a synergist if you will, but that is a distortion of the meaning of synergism. I recognize no other saviors and no co-saviors.

God uses now, we all recognize this, even our Calvinist brothers and sisters recognize this, God uses the saved to reach the lost through proclamation of the message of salvation contained in the gospel. Romans 10:13-17, Paul says or ask or at first proclaims that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. It's that simple. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. We don't have to worry about somebody being elect or not being elect. All we need to concern ourselves about is getting people to call on the name of the Lord because if they do that, they're going to be saved, and if they don't do that, they won't be saved. But then you ask the question, such a vital question, and it's not a question about election, it's a question about faith. He says, "How can they call on Him in whom they have not believed?" I think most of us would agree they can't, never have and never will. They can't call on him if they don't believe in him but how can they believe in him if they've never heard about him? Well, I happen to believe, I'm one of those who believe that you can't believe in somebody if you've never heard about him.

So he asks another question that puts the pressure on us a little bit, takes this issue of a privilege and makes it a responsibility. He says, "How can they hear unless somebody preach and how will they preach unless they're sent?" So he says, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God." All we need to concern ourselves about is whether or not these people have put their faith in Jesus Christ or not. Faith alone, in Christ alone. And it's a little odd for me to be telling people in the Reformed community that we ought to pay really close attention to Sole Fide, faith alone, in Christ alone. Faith is the soul, the necessary sufficient condition of salvation. No one will ever be saved apart from faith. Now faith itself doesn't save anybody, we'll talk about that in a moment.

God requires of the lost they believe in Jesus Christ if the lost are to become saved, then what I hear often not just from Calvinists, of course, but from Arminians, "You're making it too simple." But I don't want to make it anymore complicated than God does. There was a desperate man, a suicidal man who thought death was preferable to life and do you know what he asked Paul and Silas? He said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Now they had an opportunity there to give him a lot of theology or a list of do's and don'ts but do you know what? Do you know what Paul answered? What today would be called easy-believism or cheap grace. But folks, I want to remind you of something and I'm not a rocket scientist but if it's cheap it ain't grace. If you paid a cheap price for something that's free, you paid too much, not too little. It's free to us. Now it cost a great deal but he paid the price, not us. He said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." In Ephesians 2:8-9, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works lest anyone boast." But underline "through faith." It's by grace but it's through faith. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes," said the Apostle Paul. In 1 John 5:11-13 we read, "this is the testimony, that God has given us

eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life."

There's obviously much more that could be said on this subject but, folks, we're saved by grace, we're saved through faith. That's not synergism. Faith is by definition according to Paul, not a work. Just because God has a requirement, a condition on the lost so they can become saved doesn't make it a contribution.

Moderator. Time.

George Bryson. We'll come back to that later. Thank you. God bless you.

Moderator. Thank you, George Bryson. All right, now we're going to have our first cross-exam time and I forgot to mention earlier that one of the liberties the questioner has in asking his question is if he feels the question has been answered adequately, he can interrupt and say that's adequate and move on to another question. So I just want the audience to know that. We've already talked to the debaters about that. I just don't want you to think they're rude when they interrupt and say, okay, that's adequate, and move on to the next one.

We will start our seven minute cross-examination with George Bryson at the podium and James White will be seated answering the questions.

Bryson. It's clear from my reading James that Calvin taught that God decreed that Adam would fall and that the decree was the cause of Adam's first sin, not even talking about all the other sins of Adam and the rest of us but just the first fall. Now how does God avoid the accusation or charge of being the author of sin if he is the ultimate primary cause of that sin?

White. Well, first of all, the Scriptures are very very clear that God is the one who works all things after the counsel of his will, so I'll gladly embrace what Calvin said there and, secondly, Calvinists have always emphasized the fact that God had both decreed the ends as well as the means. There are things called secondary causes. He decrees, for example, the existence of the will of man and the actions of that will of man he then holds man accountable for because man acts upon the desires of his heart. And we could get into many examples of that in the Scriptures but when you say how can he avoid being charged with sin. A. Every action that he takes has a holy and just cause with the end the glorification of his grace. And B., every Christian theistic system has to answer this same question, the Calvinist says that he has good and sufficient reasons for the creation taking the form that it did over against those who would for other reasons either deny that God knew that Adam was going to fall such as an open theism, or in other forms of Christian theism that posit maybe no particular reason or that God then responded to Adam's fall, whatever it might be. But the Reformed says, no, there was an ultimate purpose and that God's purpose is worked out not only in Adam's fall but in every other instance whether it

be the selling of Joseph into slavery, Jesus' crucifixion, specific biblical examples are used there.

Bryson. Yes. Can I follow-up on that question then, the second part of the same question really. It seems to me, if I understand Calvin correctly and I've read everything on this subject at least that he said, I think, he is saying and he said that God's decree is what caused Adam to do what Adam did in the primary sense. So whatever the secondary reasons are, the overarching influence and direction or overarching influence is God's choice so that the primary person or being that is responsible, I'm not talking about culpable in the sense that we hold men culpable, but the primary reason that Adam fell or sinned is God. Not the secondary. Am I understanding him correctly and would you agree with that, that the real ultimate reason man fell. Because the first man, as you know, wasn't a sinner so he didn't sin because he was a sinner, he sinned according to Calvin because God caused him to. Or am I wrong?

White. When you use that term causation, I want everyone to understand that there is no situation here where Adam is going, "Oh no, I want to be good. I want to be good." And there's a divine gun to his back. Adam did what he did because he desired to do so. The woman said, "Take and eat. It was good to his eyes and he did so." The Bible doesn't tell us what filled his heart at that time but the fact of the matter is, if we are to believe Ephesians 1:11 that God is the one who works all things after the counsel of his will, if we are to believe that Jesus is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the earth, which has to do with his salvific work, there can be no salvific work if there is no need for salvation, if we are to believe Acts 4, that what happened in the death of Christ was also what God's hand foreordained should take place, then obviously in each one of these situations, and this is why the compatibilist, you have God acting and God's purpose and intention is always perfect and good, and then you also have man acting and in all those situations other than Adam's their desire is evil, Adam's became evil in that act. But to say, use terms like primary and secondary, again, I prefer biblical language and the biblical language is in Ephesians 1:11, my God is the one who works all things after the counsel of his will and he does so to the glory of his grace.

Bryson. Fair enough. Is our time...?

Moderator. Yes, you have 2 minutes and 40 seconds.

Bryson. Okay, just a shorter question I hop here. There is clearly a difference between the Reformed community and the non-Reformed Evangelical community on the role of faith. It seems to me that faith is viewed pre-regeneration as a work by Calvinists, if it could indeed exist at all. But the real issue is here do you see faith as a condition compatible with the idea of faith as a consequence?

White. I think, yeah, I do know exactly what you're saying. I've, you know, we've debated this in the CI journal and I've also read your work on this and I think the primary fundamental difference that we have both is our view as to whether man is capable of exercising saving faith in an unregenerate state, which I do not believe that he is capable

of doing. And secondly, the role of what you would identify as a condition, that is much of your work focuses upon what you feel are inconsistencies in the ordo salutis, the order of salvation from the Reformed perspective. I think that there is some confusion in the presentation that I have read on that subject and, that is, you seem to feel that if from a Reformed perspective when regeneration takes place, that faith inevitably follows from it, that that means that we can no longer proclaim what you were just talking about, Sola Fide, that faith is the condition of salvation, and my response to that would be that I don't believe that the use of the term "condition" there is consistent either with what we're saying or with the biblical revelation because certainly there is no one who is saved outside of faith. There is no question about that, but the question is: is the unregenerate sinner capable of doing that until God works a miracle in that individual's life? I would argue on the basis of Romans 8:7-8 that it is impossible to do what is pleasing in God's sight while we are still yet in the flesh. We must be born again. We must be made a new creature before we can do what is pleasing to God. Then all those things, including faith and repentance, I don't have any problems calling them conditions as long as they are not conditioned upon the autonomy of the human will. If it is then made that this is part of what God does within us, then I can understand that term "condition."

Moderator. 20 seconds.

White. ...that term "condition" is used as an autonomous action of the will.

Moderator. Okay, thank you. And now we will have seven minutes for James White to cross-examine George Bryson.

White. Thank you very much. Mr. Bryson, you just made a number of comments concerning monergism and synergism. In your work you wrote the following words under a subtitle that says "No Choice." "By placing faith after regeneration, the Calvinist is removing from the lost the only way God has provided for them to avail themselves of the grace of God." What do you mean by "avail themselves of the grace of God"?

Bryson. Belief.

White. Belief.

Bryson. Belief.

White. Okay, so by believing you avail yourself of the grace of God?

Bryson. It is the answer to the question that the suicidal jailer was given. He said, "What must I do?" He could have said, "What must I do to avail myself of salvation of the grace of God?" And they answered him, "You must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ you will be saved." Faith is that condition. It is what God requires. All throughout the New Testament God requires it. Now even though he requires it, I understand you don't believe we're able to meet the requirement but he still requires it.

White. Is that grace available to every single person equally?

Bryson. Well, it depends on what you mean by equally. I'm not sure anything in life is equal in any sense but I do believe that grace, the grace that saves appears to all men and that God has a saving interest in all men and that God does things on behalf of the lost so that the lost can become saved.

White. So in the case of those who are saved there was a cooperation of their act of faith and grace that was offered that does not take place in the life of the unsaved person?

Bryson. I would say that the unbeliever has to become a believer but he isn't made a believer and he isn't made to believe.

White. Okay, but the person who is not saved, the person, let's say there was a person sitting in this audience this evening, the gospel is all around them, grace has been extended to them in that way but they die unsaved. Is it because the grace of God failed or because there was not a joining of the grace of God with the action of their will?

Bryson. It's because grace was not received, as Calvin has said, by faith.

White. Okay, so do you understand that from a Reformed perspective when we speak of monergism, we are identifying what you just said as synergism. We're not saying that you believe that there are other saviors, do you understand the difference in the definition?

Bryson. Yeah, that's like saying to a monotheist you disagree with me on some issues but because you don't agree with me on other issues I'm going to call you a polytheist. A polytheist believes in more than one god. A monotheist believes in one God. A monergist believes that only God does the saving and if there are other saviors or co-saviors it's no longer monergism. So you have what you accuse us of is simply inaccurate by definition.

White. So it is your position then that even if you just indicated that you do have God's grace and the necessity of a work that joins with it, that's not synergism because you believe there's only one savior.

Bryson. Well, you said work. I didn't say work.

White. Okay, action, belief.

Bryson. You see, this is the problem, fleshed out the problem, Calvinism actually defines faith as a work and Paul defines faith as not a work. By definition it is something else.

White. Okay, how about an action? Would that be....

Bryson. I would say it's the activity of reception as Machen said.

White. Okay. In your system, do you believe that God has exhaustive knowledge of the future?

Bryson. I believe, yes, he has exhaustive knowledge of the future.

White. Did he have that knowledge when he created?

Bryson. Yes, he did.

White. Then he knew when he created that Adam was going to fall?

Bryson. Absolutely.

White. Did he have a purpose in creating knowing that Adam was going to fall?

Bryson. Absolutely.

White. Isn't that what Calvin was saying in your quotations when he said that?

Bryson. Absolutely not.

White. How do you see the difference?

Bryson. The difference is a decree is, and even by Calvinist terms, what makes something happen, causes it to happen. Knowledge of something doesn't cause anything to happen. Calvinists say God knows the future because he decrees it. I would say God's decrees and God's foreknowledge are a part of the totality of his absoluteness. His is absolutely all-knowing and he's in total control of the universe in his sovereignty but the fact that God loves me doesn't make me do all the things I do. The fact that God knows something about someone doesn't make them do it. In other words, knowledge is not prescriptive.

White. How did God have knowledge of what was going to take place in time if it was not the result of his decree? Did he take in, does in your perspective, does the future simply exist and God knows it or does the future exist because God has decreed it?

Bryson. Well, by definition God knows the future because God knows everything. If the future is a part of what is everything, then God knows it. That's what omniscience means. He knows it because he knows everything, always has, always will, there are no surprises to him.

White. But the shape of the future, then, how did that come into existence? Is that the result of what?

Bryson. Well, if you understand sovereignty, there's a lot of reasons things come into existence the way they do. One of those things is God gave man volition, as you

acknowledge, and man made some dumb decisions and there are consequences for those decisions but they are not outside the control or sovereign control of God.

White. So they're not outside the sovereign control of God. So when God said that Cyrus would let the Jewish people go long before Cyrus was born, was Cyrus free in that matter? Could he have chosen not to do so?

Bryson. Well, first of all, you've got to make two distinctions. Because God doesn't force everything that happens to happen doesn't mean he doesn't force some things to happen that happen. So there are some people, so you can easily, you can easily see Scripture is where God not only foretells something that's going to take place but actually makes it happen. But for example, to give you an example, God could predict and God knows about every rape and murder and child molestation that's going to happen tomorrow but God is not responsible for that, doesn't influence it, and it doesn't happen by his decree.

White. Well, very quickly, if God knew about all those things before he created...

Moderator. 20 seconds.

White. ...did he not have a purpose in creating knowing those things would happen?

Bryson. Yeah, but God created but he didn't create people doing those things and his creation doesn't include a necessity for the people to do them.

White. But if he created and knew without fail it was going to happen, did he create with no purpose in that happening?

Bryson. First of all, those are mixed questions.

Moderator. Time is up, gentlemen.

Bryson. Mixed questions, but the first point is that the fact that he knows something doesn't cause it to happen. The fact that he causes some things to happen is different than the fact that he causes or the assertion that he causes all things that happen. Your position actually makes God indirectly, and I don't mean to be offensive, it makes him a divine rapist in that he causes all the rapes, and I am saying that he does not do that, that his sovereign control is of a different nature.

Moderator. Thank you, gentlemen.

Now we'll have a 10 minute rebuttal from each participant and James White will open that. James.

James White. It is a difficult topic to address this evening. There are many things to be spoken of. I hope we can stay within the context of Scripture. I think it's extremely

important and I think the last cross-examination period began to bring out some of the important things.

I would like to submit that if you assert that God created with full and complete knowledge of everything that was going to happen in time, you need to then give some reason as to how God has that kind of knowledge. That knowledge either comes from the fact that the future just simply happens to exist the way it existed and why then God would be glorified through that I do not know, or you're going to have to accept the fact that the future exists because God in some way, shape or form, is the Creator of all things, has something to do with the shape of that future as he himself claims over and over again in the book of Isaiah. He is the one who identifies the fact that he is the one true God to the fact that he is the Creator of all things, he's eternal, and he demonstrates that all other gods are false by challenging them to do two things: tell us the future and tell us the past and why it happened. God can tell us those things. God can tell us the why of every single evil act that has ever taken place and I would submit to you that if you feel that you need to protect God and God's decree by saying, "Well, He knew it was going to happen but His knowledge of it had nothing to do with the decree," you've got yourself a major problem here because now you have evil happening for no purpose, for no good, with no end in sight, and that is a philosophy of despair.

When we talk about what was just said, that God is a rapist, well, if God created knowing that every act of rape was going to take place and he did so anyway without any purpose, how is that better than saying that God created this entire universe knowing that evil would exist but knowing that he would triumph over it, he would make a demonstration of his victory over it in the person of Jesus Christ, he would redeem every element of it to his own glory and grace. How is that a greater thing?

The Scriptures are very clear. So far we have not heard any discussion of Ephesians 1:11 which I've repeated more than once, that God works all things after the counsel of his will. We have not heard any response to the biblical sovereignty of God that says that not only does God do what he pleases in the heavens but he also does so amongst the children of men. And then the result of all this, the very clear teaching that, yes, God certainly did decree some of the things that there has been some offense taken this evening. For example, there was a quotation of an individual from John Calvin, of course, saying that, "Well, you know, there's these people and God creates them for His own purposes to punish them." Yeah, we read Romans 9:17 and in divine revelation God says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up." And what was the purpose? "That My name, My power might be made known through all the earth."

I think maybe one of our problems is where does that rank on our priority list? Where does it rank on our priority list that God's power, that God's name and, in fact, to use the terms of Romans 9, God's wrath against sin be made known to all men? It's a biblical priority and if we allow our hearts to be formed by the biblical revelation, then we will recognize the need for God to reveal these things and he has done so in how he works in this world and he says to Pharaoh, "I raised you up." Now what did he do to Pharaoh? He destroyed his land, then he destroyed the man, and people are like, "Oh, that's not fair!"

Brothers and sisters, think with me for just a moment. The first moment that Pharaoh sinned, would God have been just to bring his wrath and punishment upon him at that very time? Well, of course he would have. And Pharaoh had sinned thousands and thousands of times in thought and deed. He was a stench in the nose of a holy God and yet God's wrath did not come upon him. God chose to use him, to use him in such a way as to bring honor and glory to himself. He could have destroyed him instantly but he did not, and that's where we object because even though he was, in Paul's words, a vessel of wrath prepared for destruction, we still see in him a picture of ourselves and we go, "Look, I don't like this idea that God is the potter and I am the clay. I want to be able to say that I'm the fine china. I don't want to be the everyday dishes. I want to be the one to tell God what He's going to do with me."

And it is very humbling to have happen in our hearts what happened to Isaiah in Isaiah 6 when he saw the Lord sitting upon his throne, and here the holiest man in Israel is undone, he is disassembled. He says, "I am a man of unclean lips. I live amongst a people of unclean lips. He immediately sees who he truly is. It's like Job when God finally appears to Job. Job gets an interview with God and what's his response? "I place my hands upon my mouth. I have spoken presumptuously." We need an interview with God. We need to see ourselves as he sees us and we need to see him as he is, and only the Holy Spirit of God can grant that vision of the holy God to us. And when we receive it, it crushes our pride.

But then and only then can we begin to understand with Joseph when he says, "My brothers, I know you sold me into slavery. I know you threw me into that pit, but my brothers, don't you understand, you meant it for evil but God meant it for good." The same action, the very same action, the intentions of their hearts evil, the intention of God's heart good. Same action, two different intentions.

Isaiah 10, God brings Assyria down against Israel. "I'm going to punish an evil people." And then God says, "After they're done plundering, I'm going to punish the Assyrians." God takes a people, he brings them down for his own purposes against Israel and then he punishes them for the intentions of their hearts.

Then when the church prays in Acts 4:27-28, they confess what happened to Jesus in nailing the sinless Son of God to the tree was a part of God's sovereign decree, his hand prepared beforehand that it would take place. But did that release Herod or Pilate or the Romans or the Jews from their sinfulness? In no way. One action, on the man's part you have the Jewish leaders who are simply stewing in their hatred of Christ, and in the very same action you have the greatest act that God has ever undertaken to bring glory to himself in the offering of the sinless Son of God upon the tree. One action, on the part of man evil intentions, on the part of God always goodness and holiness. That's the biblical teaching.

Why is this so important? Well, I'll tell you. Some of you know that I've had the opportunity by God's grace of engaging many of the leading Roman Catholic apologists in debate across this nation, more than 30 of them so far. Rome's gospel does not bring

peace because Rome's gospel does not have a perfect Savior. Rome is synergistic to its core. God's grace is said to be there to be offered but there has to be this joining together. And please remember John 6, John 6 tells us that the Lord Jesus, the will of the Father for him is that he lose none of those that are given to him. How could the Lord Jesus fulfill that will, my friend, if there has to be this joining together? Whatever term you want to use, there has to be this joining together. If Christ is dependent upon our cooperation, how can he fulfill the Father's will to be the perfect Savior? He can do so because he's the one who stood outside of Lazarus' tomb and when he said, "Lazarus, come forth," life came into that body and he came out of that tomb, and if you're here tonight knowing Jesus Christ, he did the same thing for you. Thank you.

Moderator. Thank you, James White, and now George Bryson for his 10 minute rebuttal.

George Bryson. I don't mean to be disrespectful but I want to point something out here that is necessary. Calvinism is not the gospel. I'm not saying that Calvinists don't preach the gospel. I'm not saying Calvinists don't believe the gospel. I'm saying Calvinism is not the gospel as it is often claimed to be. The gospel of Jesus Christ is about Jesus Christ, about who he is, about what he did. It's about his death, burial and resurrection and we haven't defined and explained throughout Scripture 1 Corinthians 15 was partly written to explain the gospel in all its implications about not only justification but ultimately glorification. Calvinism is not the gospel. Don't confuse the two. It's about him and about what he did.

Now I can honestly say based on what I believe is the teaching of Scripture, if you're here tonight and you do not know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, Christ died for you and that he rose again from the dead, and you by faith can receive him and his grace which saves to the uttermost. Now if I were a Calvinist tonight, I could not say that. I could say if you're a believer here tonight, as a believer you've evidenced your election therefore Christ died for you. But if you're not a Calvinist, I would have no hope for you. But I'm glad that I can stand up here tonight and tell you that if you don't know Christ tonight, you can. You can be introduced to him because of what he did for you, because of who he is, because of what he accomplished. You can know God in a personal way and for those of you who are Calvinists here tonight, you cannot honestly look a man in the face that you don't know or don't know is a believer and say to him, "Christ died for you."

I've had people actually ask me, as you know, some of you know I'm a missionary in Russia and the gospel isn't as familiar to people there as it is here and people ask me, "How can you know for sure that Christ loved me? You're telling me that He loves me, how can you know?" And I can tell them about the cross of Christ because I know what Christ did for them, not just for me. So the gospel isn't just for us, it's for them. It's for us to take to them.

Now in John 20:31, we discover that the miracles of our Lord were recorded so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in his name. God provides salvation through Christ on the cross. We know that.

In 1 John 4:10 we read, "And this is love, not that we loved Him but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Now I can agree with the Calvinist that Christ died for us, us believers, and I can accept all of the "us" and "me" passages of Scripture but the Calvinist has to deny by definition all of those passages like 1 John 2:2 where it says, "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only but for also the whole world." What's good about a gospel in which Christ didn't die for you? It isn't a gospel to you at all. It isn't good news. It reaffirms the despairing convictions people already have.

In Colossians 1:14 we read that, "In Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." In 1 Peter 1:28 we read that we were "not redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ." And let me suggest to you that the blood of Christ is precious for all. Whether people reject what he did for them is beside the point. The point is his blood is precious. It's valuable. It has worth. And in Calvinism it is worthless to all but the elect. It has no value.

He was manifest, we're told, for you who through him believe in God and raised him up from the dead and gave him glory so that your faith and hope were in God. God also offers salvation to the lost through his saved servants, we know that in the gospel. On condition that the lost believe in Jesus Christ, I doubt there's a person here even if you are a Calvinist, if somebody were to ask you this question, "What must I do to be saved," would you say, "Well, there's nothing you can do. Sorry, Charlie, unless you're elect. And since I don't know who's elect, I can't tell you for sure. Since I don't know who you are, I'll go ahead and tell you that, well, this is what you've got to do to be saved but maybe you can't do it because you're not elect." A Calvinist wouldn't do that so they have to look somebody straight in the face and tell them, "Christ died for you anyway or maybe He died for you."

Evangelistic effort of the saved does not make the Evangelist a co-savior because what we offer people is from God, it was provided for him, it's offered by him, and they have to simply receive or accept it by faith. Although God requires of the unsaved person that they must believe in Christ on a condition of salvation so that they can become a saved person, this does not make him before or after salvation a co-savior in his salvation. It's like saying, and I know this troubles some people when I say this, Calvinists have done something like this, they say here's a gift but if you have to accept that that makes you a co-giver of the gift. No, receiving the gift makes you a receiver of the gift. It doesn't make you a co-giver of the gift.

Being saved by God who saves by grace through faith does not make you a co-savior. Again, God saves by grace through faith. That's not in dispute. God only saves by grace. That is not in dispute. God only saves by grace through faith. That's not in dispute. And although God and God alone saves the lost, only God can and does. The lost man, the lost woman, must believe in Jesus Christ in order to become a saved man or a saved woman. If, if Scripture is true, faith makes all the difference and is the only difference from the human side of the salvation equation, as Calvin himself taught, that makes any difference

at all. He who believes in him is not condemned but he who does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

God and God alone does enable the lost to believe, as is evident in a comparison of John 6:44 and John 12:32. The problem is posed in 6:44, "No one can come to the Son unless the Father enables him." It can't be done unless the Father draws him. But John, we were told this is irrelevant, but we're told in the gospel of John 12:32 Jesus said, "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men to Myself." I suggest the problem man has in not being able is solved by God and what he does to make it possible for us to come to him. "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men to Myself."

God provides reasons for believing as is evident in John 7:38. Even the people that I know, many of my Calvinist friends say God is not interested and never was and never will be. To those people, his opponents, his enemies, Jesus said, "If you do not believe Me, if I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me, but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me and I in Him." God does not force the unbeliever to believe, we know that, or force the unbeliever to become a believer. God does not believe for the unbeliever or through the unbeliever as Calvinism reduces it to.

I want to end with this quote from John Calvin, and as most of you know, I'm not his biggest fan, but Calvin said something and got it right on one commentary, Ephesians 2:8-10, I'm sure he got it right in other places but here he was especially on the mark and rebukes Calvinism in the process. He says Paul the apostle in reference to Ephesians 2:8-10, asserts the salvation of the Ephesians was entirely the work, the free work of God, but that they obtained this grace by faith. On the one side, we must look, Paul said, at, according to Calvin, at God. At the other side, we must look at men. God declares that he owes us nothing so that salvation is not a reward or recompense but mere grace.

Now it may be asked how can we receive the salvation offered by the hand of God, Calvin said. He answered, "I reply by faith." That's how. Hence he concludes that there is nothing of our own if on the part of God is grace alone, and if we bring nothing but faith which strips us of all praise, it follows that salvation is not on us. And the great Calvinist Machen said this, "Faith consists not in doing something but in receiving something, and faith is no more than an activity of reception contributing nothing to that which it receives." Thus saving a lost man is God's job alone, believing in God is man's job alone. Thank you.

Moderator. So we'll start with George Bryson. We'll open here with 10 minutes of closing arguments.

George Bryson. Picking up where we left off before and I won't stay there, I promise, but James 1:13 says that God does not tempt any man, can't be tempted himself. Every good gift comes down from the Father of lights where there is no shadow of turning, so everything good comes from God. If it's not from God or if it's not good, it doesn't come

from him at least in the same way these other things that we would consider not good come from him, and the implication I believe of Calvinism is that sin and every horrible thing that ever happened can be linked to God in a direct sense that makes God responsible.

Now if the Calvinist says to me God isn't responsible, on that level I agree with him. If he says to me that God isn't the author of sin, on that level I agree with him, but I think the implications of Calvinism actually clearly state and I think what Calvin taught led people in that direction and that's why some Calvinists take Calvin further than what people like I'm sure James White is comfortable with. There are some people who go further than what mainstream Calvinists go but I think they do so on the basis of what Calvin himself taught. So this is very very important. God is good and only good directly comes from God so that he is only responsible for that which is good. Now clearly God is sovereign and in control of everything but it's important for us to understand what God himself says about his relationship to goodness.

Now Calvinism says and must say that God does not, never has, and never will love millions and millions of people who live on this planet with a saving love. Now Calvinists are divided over whether or not God loves people at all, most Calvinists that I know say in some sense at least he does but not in a redemptive sense. But according to Calvinism, God may not love you. It's possible that some of you here tonight don't know Christ in a person way. He may not love you. But if you are a believer, you need to understand that he may not love with a saving love the person sitting next to you, or your mother or father, or a brother or sister, or your children. He may not love the people you work with. Calvinism says and must say that God does not, never has, and never will have a saving or redemptive interest in millions of people who live on this planet, who have lived on this planet. According to Calvinism, God may not have a saving or redemptive interest in the person sitting next to you. Just may not. You don't know.

According to Calvinism, the people that God does not, never will love with a saving love could be your parents again, it could be your children, it could be a brother, a sister, or even your spouse. It's possible. And according to Calvinism, many of the people that God has called and commanded Christians to love, I think we all agree that there's a commandment, a mandate for us to love our neighbor and our enemies. The people he's called us to love, he doesn't love with a saving love. According to Calvinism, many of the people God called and commanded us to love, he doesn't love. Calvinism says and must say that God does not, never has, and never will do anything of a saving nature for millions and millions of people on this planet. Now I know there are some Calvinists that say there are some benefits that come from the cross of Christ for the non-Christian, perhaps it's because the non-Christian lives next to a Christian and the Christian is nicer than another non-Christian would be, but there's no saving benefits, there is no saving value in what Christ did on the cross according to Calvinism. According to Calvinism, Christ may not have died for your parents. Think about that. He may not have died for your brothers and sisters, people you're earnestly praying for. He may not have died for your wife or for your husband or the person sitting next to you. According to Calvinism,

the precious blood of Christ may not have any saving value to you, your parents, your sisters, your brothers, your spouse, or the person sitting next to you.

The Calvinist R. C. Sproul explains, and again I don't often agree with R. C. Sproul but I will say that sometimes he got it right and this is one of those times. He says and I quote, "It was certainly loving of God to predestine the salvation of his people, those the Bible calls the elect or chosen ones. It is the non-elect that are the problem. If some people are not elected unto salvation then it would seem that God is not all that loving toward them. For them it seems that it would have been more loving of God not to have allowed them to be born." And R. C. Sproul concedes that indeed may be the case. Again R. C. Sproul as a Calvinist concedes that the Calvinist view of predestination seems to cast a shadow on the very heart of human freedom. If God has decided our destinies from all eternity which strongly suggest, he says, not me here, but he says strongly suggests that our free choices are but charades, empty exercises in placating and predetermined placating, it is as though God wrote the script for us in concrete, says Sproul, and we are merely carrying out his scenario.

The Calvinist Thomas Shreiner says the scandal, the scandal of the Calvinist system is that ultimately the logical problem posed cannot be resolved. The final resolution, he says, to the problem of human responsibility and divine justice is beyond our ability to understand.

Now concerning the words of Christ in John 3:16 that most of us consider very precious and very powerful in which our Savior said that, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," the Calvinist John Gill explains all the individuals in the world are not loved by God in such a manner.

I think it's so important that we discuss this issue because I think the love of God is challenged here. We are telling people or we're at least believing the people he says he loves, that he's told us to tell he loves, that he doesn't love them and the cross of Christ is at stake here. And I think if we can take the cross of Christ and the blood of Christ that was shed and make it worthless to millions of untold numbers of people, then we've done a great disservice to the cross of Christ.

In his book titled "The God Who Loves," John MacArthur explains it this way. "God's love for the elect is infinite, eternal; such love is clearly not directed toward all of mankind indiscriminately but is bestowed uniquely and individually on those whom God chose in eternity past." And despite the fact that many Calvinists, including I believe James White, despite the fact they say that they believe man is morally and spiritually responsible for his sin and his eternal damnation, even if God has no saving interest or love in them and has not done anything to save them, Calvinism as a system says otherwise.

John Feinberg says this. "If Calvinists are right about divine sovereignty, there seems to be little room for human freedom. If human freedom goes, so does human moral responsibility for sins." Worst of all he says, "If Calvinists are right," and he's a Calvinist,

"If Calvinists are right then it appears that God decides that there will be sin and evil in our world maybe even brings about that there is such evil." And yet according to Calvinists, is not morally responsible. We are.

Now contrast Calvin and Calvinism with Scripture. 1 Timothy 2:4 we read that God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. In 2 Peter 3:9 the Lord is longsuffering not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. In 1 Timothy we read that there is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all to be justified in due time. 1 John 2:2 we read again he's the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world. Christ suffered death, we read in the Hebrews, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, we're told. And finally, I'll close with these verses in John 3:16 and 18 and, if we could and again I don't mean to be insulting here, but if we could take our Calvinist-colored glasses off just for a moment and read this passage. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved, and he who believes in the Son is not condemned but he who does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

If you didn't know about Calvin, if you hadn't heard Calvin's teachings, how would you understand these verses? Who would you apply to them? Could you say with I think the writers of Scripture, that God not only loved us and sent Christ to die for us but he loves them and he sent Christ to die for them? Thank you.

Moderator. And now James White.

James White. We were just told that this is about the cross of Christ and it is. It is very much about the cross of Christ. We just heard much said about how he may not have died for this person or that person. I hope we all understand that the other side that is being offered is that Christ died for every single person and that means that it was his intention to save them and he failed over and over and over again, that the sinless Son of God went to the cross of Calvary with the intention of saving the soul of every single person, the Father in heaven decrees their salvation, the Son dies to secure it, the Spirit comes to apply it, but the decree of the Triune God is frustrated and destroyed by the almighty will of the creature. That is the other side.

It is very easy to say, "Oh, what if He didn't die for this person?" God doesn't tell us, God doesn't give us these special glasses that we can put on that make the elect glow green. It would make the evangelism process much easier, it would make pastoring a lot easier, but we aren't told and that's why it is a Calvinist ministry that is at every single one of the General Conferences the Mormon Church in Salt Lake City, which is where I'll be next Saturday, because, you see, I don't have to know who the elect are, I proclaim the gospel to everybody and I don't have to shave off the rough edges of it because God by his Spirit makes that gospel come alive in the heart of his elect people. And there is no power in

heaven or on earth that can stop the Holy Spirit from applying that gospel to his people and that's why I'll be up there for my 33rd time this coming weekend.

Moderator. Please hold your applause until the end.

James White. It is about the cross. We just heard 1 Timothy 2:4 cited but if you read 1 Timothy 2 in its context, it says that Jesus Christ is the one mediator between God and men. It has already identified that it's talking about kinds of men in the preceding context, we're talking about kings and rulers and those in authority, but let me ask a question: does Jesus Christ mediate for every single individual? If he does so, does he not fail for all of those who end up in hell? Or are we going to say that the Son can appear before the Father and offer his blood in behalf of John Brown and the Father decrees his salvation, the Spirit comes to apply it, but John Brown is able by the power of his will to make the death of Christ ineffective on his behalf? That's the only other possible way of looking at this.

The book of Hebrews does say that Jesus Christ tasted death for all but it defines that when it then goes on to say how does he taste death and what's the result of his death. We're told in Hebrews 7 that he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near unto God by him. Why? Since he ever lives to make intercession for them. That act of intercession is not some separate action. It is not some other thing aside from his death. Those for whom he dies he intercedes. Those for whom he intercedes are only those for whom he died. And he is able to save every single one of those for whom he intercedes.

Isn't that what John 6 said? We haven't heard any response of John 6:37. We haven't heard any response of Ephesians 1, Romans 8 and 9. We've heard no responses at all to any of those things, instead we see 1 Timothy 2:4 which in context would either lead us to believing that we have to hold to Universalism or that Christ can fail in his task. We hear 2 Peter 3:9 which if you read it in its context is talking about the elect. Follow the pronouns. It's right there. It's right in front of all of us.

We've seen it said that, "Well, in John 6:44 we need to understand you need to go over to John 12:32." There's a problem with that. You see, if you run over to John 12:32 which is a different context, it's talking about the Greeks who have come to Christ, that's what "all men" is about, Jews and Gentiles. But not only that, if you say that all men are drawn by the Father to the Son, there's a little bit of a problem because John 6:44 says everyone who is drawn is also raised up. "No one can come to Me lest the Father who sent Me draws him and I will raise him up at the last day." To be raised up at the last day is to be given eternal life. So if all men individually are drawn by the Father to the Son, then the Son will raise up all men at the last day and we are now a Universalist, there is no hell, there is no eternal punishment. I don't think that's the position being taken and so I would like to ask Mr. Bryson to explain to us how it is that John 6:44 says that all who are drawn by the Father are raised up by the Son? If all are drawn, then does that mean that all will, in fact, experience salvation?

I think the biblical perspective is very plainly stated by the Apostle Luke when in Acts he records the evangelistic work of the church. I evangelize in all sorts of difficult situations. I've stood in the bottom of a creek bed in Denver, Colorado during World Youth Day when the pope was in town as hundreds of thousands of pilgrims walked from one state park to another and passed out tracts to folks. Now that's not exactly being in a friendly environment and I have found over and over again the words of Luke in Acts 13:48 to be true, "When the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord and as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed."

Why do you sit here this evening as a believer? Are you smarter than non-believers? More intelligent? More spiritual? Better parents? No. My friends, someday when the eternal state has been brought in, the judgment is completed and there is around the throne of God myriads of myriads bowing in worship of God, enthralled in their love for God, and over here you have those who are experiencing his punishment who stand upon the parapets of hell screaming their hatred at God, knowing there's nothing more they can do to hurt him, which may be one of the greatest pains of hell, there is going to be exactly one thing that separates those two groups. It's a five letter word called grace. It's not because we're more intelligent. It's not because we're more spiritual. It's because God in his grace appointed us to eternal life, Acts 13:48. Not all the Gentiles believed. Not all the Jews believed. What was the difference? Those who were appointed to eternal life believed.

That faith that they had was a gift of God. Philippians 1, there's a little passage that sort of goes by a lot of us because it's talking about suffering and I'm not sure that all of us really want to focus upon that subject very often but in Philippians 1:29 we are told, "It has been granted to you not only to believe in His name but to suffer for Him." And we look at the "suffer" and that's where our attention goes, but notice what it says, "It has been granted to you not only to believe in Him." Granted to you. Is that granted to everyone? If we say, "Well, yes, it's been granted to everyone but, you see, we have to do something." I'm not talking about works. I'm not talking about adding merit. The whole discussion of monergism and synergism has always been whether you believe that there is one power that results in spiritual life or there needs to be a cooperation of powers that results in spiritual life, and what we're being told tonight is, "Well, there's this condition of faith and that means spiritually dead men and women are seemingly able to do what is pleasing to God." Let me ask you a question: is it pleasing to God to believe and repent? Obviously the answer would be, yes, it is. In Romans 8:7-8 we are told that those who are in the flesh are not able to please God, they are not able to be submitted to his law. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. So is it being asserted that while still in the flesh you can do what is pleasing in God's sight, that is, exercise saving faith and repentance which are likened to gifts all through the New Testament, and then as a result you become a born again person? That may be very common, that may be the only way you've ever heard of it, but how, then, do you explain Romans 8:7-8? How do you explain the description of faith as the gift of God?

It is about the cross of Christ because I believe in the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ. That is a Reformed concept. It is a Reformed concept to believe that Jesus Christ

substitutionarily takes the place of his people upon the cross of Calvary, that he dies in their place, that he bears in his own body upon the cross their sins. I believe that and that's why, as I said at the very beginning, my Savior is a perfect Savior. Thank you very much.

Moderator. Thank you, James White. And now we'll have a seven minute cross-exam for each participant and, James, you'll start this session.

James White. It feels like I was just here. Mr. Bryson, I would like to ask you in light of what I just said concerning John 6:44, "All the Father gives Me will come to Me," I'm sorry, "No one is able to come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him and I will raise him up at the last day." Is it your position that the one who is raised up at the last day in John 6:44 is different than the one who's drawn?

George Bryson. It is my position that there are two things required: you must come to him, that's one, and to come to him you must be drawn. It's my position that Scripture clearly in John 6:44 and all of that context and you're talking a lot about we need to look at things in context, if you take all of that in connection there are two things that happen: one, you have to see, and another you have to believe if you go on earlier in that very chapter. But the point here is that you cannot come, you are not able to come unless he draws you, but being able to come and actually coming to him in faith are not exactly the same thing. He enables you to come and if you come to him and are drawn, and you can't come to him unless you're drawn, then he will raise you up but he doesn't raise people up unless they come to him, but the ability to come he gives. But making you able to come doesn't make you come.

White. Okay, verse 44 says, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him and I will raise him up on the last day." Are you saying those two "him's" are different people?

Bryson. No, I'm saying those two people there, that one person does two things: one, he comes to him but he comes to him only because he is able to do so.

White. Where do you get that from verse 44, though?

Bryson. 44. Two things, "No one can come to Me," come to me, that's the one thing. The other thing he says is that that person who comes to him has to be enabled by the Father drawing him. No one can unless he's enabled. So he has to come to him and he has to be drawn but if, if he is drawn and doesn't come to him, then, in fact, he will not be raised up at the last day just as it earlier says he must see and believe.

White. So there is, so you believe that the "him" the two "him's" here are different because if you just said you can be drawn and not raised up?

Bryson. No. I'm capable as one person of doing more than one thing and God is capable of doing something while I'm doing something, and what he does here is enable me to

come and what I do is come. I come in faith. As a matter of fact, let me just say that even Calvin suggested that coming is a metaphor for believing.

White. No, there's no question about that but where does the word "enable" appear in verse 44?

Bryson. "Can come." In fact, I remember in your book you point this out.

White. No one is, no one is able to come, that's true.

Bryson. That's right.

White. But it does not say that he is enabled. It says "unless the Father who sent Me draws him and I will raise him up at the last day." The drawing results in being...

Bryson. No, that is not what it says. It says that "no one can come to Me," and almost all Calvinist commentaries say the "can" is enabling. It is not inevitable that you will come, it's an enabling.

White. Could you name one that confuses ability with enablement?

Bryson. Ability and enablement is the same.

White. You mention my own book. I never said anything about enable. I said no man has the ability.

Bryson. Ability and enablement unless you have a different definition, when somebody is able to do something or if somebody has been unable to do something and they are now able to do it.

White. Okay, you said that between these two "him's" you have to come. Who comes to Christ according to John 6:37?

Bryson, Well, only those who are enabled come to him and those that the Father has given to him.

White. Okay, all...I didn't understand that. According to verse 37, "all the Father gives Me will come to Me," who is given by the Father to the Son?

Bryson. Those who believe. Not unbelievers but believers. Would you agree with that?

White. So God gives those that he foresees will believe to the Son?

Bryson. Well, of course, he foresees everything but I'm not saying he gives him to the Son because he foresees. The fact that God...God enables people to do something but they still must do it. He enables us to believe but we still must believe.

White. Didn't you just say that coming is a metaphor for believing?

Bryson. Exactly.

White. And isn't the giving of the Father here what results in their coming to Christ?

Bryson. No, that is not. Coming to Christ is putting your faith in him.

White. I understand that but just on a simple grammatical level, which action in verse 37 comes first, the giving of the Father to the Son or the coming to Christ?

Bryson. Well, I don't think there is a chronological order. I think there's two things that are true. Only those, only those that the Father gives to the Son come to the Father but only those who believe does the Father give to the Son. Now the other choice, the other option is to say that he gives unbelievers to the Son, and if you want to say that I'm happy with that.

White. No, I'm just, I'm just...you don't believe that there is any temporal priority here between the Father giving and the people coming, "all that the Father gives Me will come to Me."

Bryson. That's right.

White. All that I give \$10 to will buy books at Stand to Reason.

Bryson. No.

White. What action comes first?

Bryson. Well, what I am saying here and I think it speaks for itself, that those who he enables to come do come. Those who believe in him he gives to the Son. If you want to say the opposite that he gives unbelievers to the Son you can say it, but all the questioning on this isn't going to change that.

White. You had said earlier that the Calvinist position is that Christ's blood is worthless to all but the elect.

Bryson. I'm saying that's the Calvinist position, yes.

White. [unintelligible]

Bryson. Oh, except in a common perhaps some side benefits. That's what I've heard Calvinists say.

White. Is it not your understanding that, in fact, the Reformed position is that it was Christ's intention to redeem his people upon the cross?

Bryson. That's right, which would be the equivalent of what I've said.

White. Except that the idea of...well, that would be a response. So it is your idea that worthlessness follows from lack of intention of saving someone?

Bryson. No, it's totally separate issues here. Worthlessness is a relative issue in this context because if...

Moderator. 30 seconds.

Bryson. ...Christ died for me there's value, there's value to me in his death. If he did not die for me, there is no value to me in his death.

White. What value is there in the death of Christ on behalf of every person who will end up in hell?

Bryson. The value is intrinsic to his death for that person. If a person rejects....

White. What does it accomplish?

Bryson. If I give you, if I were to give, let me explain, if I were to give you or offer you some money and you didn't take it, if I were to give you money and you didn't take it, it would still have value. But if I gave you blank, if I offered you blank money...

Moderator. Time.

Bryson. ...it wouldn't be any good.

Moderator. Thank you, gentlemen, and thanks for the plug, Jim. And now George Bryson will have seven minutes of cross-examination of James White.

George Bryson. I don't want to beat a dead horse but I would like to get this clear. Do you believe that the Father gives to the Son unbelievers?

James White. Of course not. No, the ones mentioned in John 6:37 are the elect of God. "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me." God gives a specific people to the Son and as a result every single one of them will come to Christ.

Bryson. But which is the order? We're talking about temporal order here. Does he give the unbeliever to the Son as an unbeliever or irrelevant to his faith?

White. Well, you're confusing two categories here, using the term "unbeliever." Before I was born, I guess you could call me an unbeliever. I'm talking about the elect here. The

elect experience faith as it is given to them as described in Philippians 1:29 at a particular point in time in their life. But they are given as a people by the Father to the Son and the result of their being given is that we infallibly come to Christ.

Bryson. So if I'm right, I still understand you using your logic, that these people who are unbelievers are given past in eternity or present, they are given to the Son irrelevant of their faith or unrelated to their faith.

White. The elect are chosen according to Ephesians 1 based upon God's own purpose and grace, not upon a foreseen faith or fulfillment of condition on their part.

Bryson. Now these are elect unbelievers.

White. Well, every single person of the elect, sir, is described in Ephesians 2 as being a child of wrath until that glorious point in time when God regenerates them and draws them.

Bryson. So he gives them, these children of wrath, he gives the children of wrath, the unbelievers, the spiritually dead, the totally depraved, he gives them to the Son.

White. The elect are given something before they even exist, yes.

Bryson. Okay, that's all I wanted to know. Made it very clear. I wanted to make a comment and get a response to it. As I understand sovereignty, sovereignty tells us what God can do. God can do everything he so desires so as he pleases. Now we all of us agree God can't make a square circle, or he can't build a rock so heavy he can't lift it. These are silly assertions. But we all believe sovereignty is about what God can do. Could God, and I'm not saying as Calvinists, I'm not asking you to make a false confession here, but could God require a man to believe and retain his sovereignty as a condition of salvation?

White. The command to believe and repent is universal.

Bryson. Okay, but that's a command he can't keep or a condition he can't meet. I'm talking about can he...could God, let me restate it then because I need to clarify. Is it possible for the sovereign God... I will admit, first of all, that God could require nothing, he could choose to save people without faith, my question is, is he able to retain his sovereignty and require an unregenerate man to believe in order so that he can become regenerate or does he lose his sovereignty in doing that?

White. ...this in the context of the Bible and biblical terminology because you just referred to an unregenerate man, that smacks of asking if he could create a rock too heavy that he couldn't lift because what you're asking me is could God sovereignly choose to make spiritually dead men perform spiritually good actions. I suppose he could but then no one would be saved. So I don't...

Bryson. So he could...you're supposing he could...

White. I suppose he could but then there would be no salvation.

Bryson. So you're saying that it's not possible for a sovereign God to make an unregenerate man able to believe without making him believe...

White. Well, since he's spiritually dead and the Bible, and you're continuing to use biblical terminology, the Bible says those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Bryson. Okay, so I got your answer. He can't do it. All right, next question. Could God, could God, if he chose, save conditionally if he wanted to do so, if he wanted to make a requirement? Maybe you've answered that. I'll move on. Is it possible in your way of thinking that receiving a gift does not make the person who receives that gift a co-giver? And I'm talking about volitionally receiving. We both know that I can give somebody something that they can have without taking it, but if I require somebody to take something that I offer them, does that make them a co-giver of the gift I give them?

White. It's never been my argument that that is what non-Reformed perspective does, so I wouldn't agree fully that does not make you a co-giver. That's never been an argument that I and I don't believe Calvinists make of it.

Bryson. But you've suggested that I believe that I'm a co-savior.

White. If you make God's grace dependent upon the cooperation of your unregenerated will so that the grace fails outside of the addition of your autonomous actions, yes.

Bryson. Okay, now I'm hearing it, God does, we know, what pleases him. Does he, is he pleased with all of the terrible, awful, atrocious things that happen on this planet?

White. Well, God says that he works all things after the counsel of his will, all to the praise, to the glory of his grace, so fundamentally in the most overarching situation, you have to, if that's what you're asking about, if you're asking about individual acts and you're saying should you go and tell a rapist that God is pleased with him, you're confusing two completely different categories. You're using one where the law impacts the individual in his life, and then the other is does God have an overarching purpose to all things. Those cannot be compared with one another. God's wrath comes upon sin because and that, and another word that is also used is his displeasure. So if you're...

Moderator. 30 seconds.

White. ...saying is God pleased in what he is doing in this world and what he's going to accomplish in this world, yes, he is.

Bryson. No, I'm asking is he pleased in what we're doing which he decreed we would do.

White. Well, again, just as in Genesis 50, Isaiah 10, Acts 4, as I've mentioned many times, compatibilism teaches us that within the one action you have the perfect will of God. His intention is holy and just and in the....

Moderator. Time.

White. ...intention of the human being you've got sinful actions.

Moderator. Thank you, gentlemen. And now our 10 minutes of closing comments. We had 10 minutes of closing arguments, now we'll have 10 minutes of closing comments and George Bryson will open and then James White will close.

George Bryson. What I'd like to leave you with is this thought, that as Christians without the guidance of Reformed or Calvinist theology, sincere, devoted, just desiring from your heart to understand what is true about God, what God in his word says to us about us and about the non-Christians around us, could you honestly say that you would come to the Reformed or Calvinist conclusion? Could you say or would you say when you read John 3:16 that God so loved the world that he only implied the elect of the world? I would agree with James White that "world" doesn't always mean everybody in the world but when you're reading John 3:16, don't you get the sense that God is clearly telling us how he feels about not just us but about them?

One of the things that I'm concerned about here and I know Calvinists protest when I say this, but I am concerned that we will lose concern for those that he's concerned about, we will not care about those he doesn't care about, and we will not love those that he loves. Now if he doesn't love them, has no saving interest in them, I'm not saying Calvinists won't evangelize. I think sometimes they do in spite of their Calvinism. In fact, I think lots of Calvinists check their Calvinism in the mission field. They simply want to see the lost saved so they do what they have to do, they do what the Bible says ought to be done. But if you're reading John 3:16 or 1 Peter 3:9 or 1 Timothy 2:4, do you really get the sense that God doesn't love all of those people out there?

Now I know people say this is so simplistic and somebody once accused my lovely wife of being so, she said, "You know, the problem with you guys is you're so red letter bound. You're just so hung up on the red letter." Well, you know, I don't think it's just the red letter, I think it's all of what God says. It's clear. Folks, when I used to live in Oregon, we had what we called ungreeting signs. These were signs that invited people to every state but Oregon. They wanted to be the last ones in. Most of them were Californians like myself that had moved up there and before the rain ran them out, they wanted to be the only ones in the state. Well, somehow I think this has happened to Christians because of theological persuasions and theological convictions. It's not from Scripture we get this but we got in by simply believing. We put our faith in Jesus Christ. We trusted in him and what he did for us. We trusted in who he was and what he did because we all agree that salvation is about him and about what he did for us, and the only thing he asks of us, he doesn't ask much, you've got to admit, he asks us to believe.

I feel so sad for those that think of faith as works. I have seen people try to work their way to heaven. We all know people who do. We know religions that are all about works and trying to get to heaven by your good deeds. But faith, what is faith but simply trusting in him? It's the opposite of work. It's recognizing the work he did for us. But so much of what Scripture says says he did it for them. He did it for us, of course, before we were saved and he's done it for them while they are unsaved.

But again, ideas have consequences. Now people can say, "I believe that God intended for many if not most of the people on the planet to go to hell. That's all He ever wanted for them. He designed and desired for them to be damned for all eternity unconditionally but I still want to reach them, I still want to tell them about the glorious gospel." But isn't it just a major tease? If we go out and tell the people that God loves them, in fact, maybe this isn't true in your Reformed church if you go to a Reformed church, but I have a friend who became a Reformed pastor and he instructed his Sunday school teachers not to tell the children that Jesus loved them anymore, and it wasn't because he didn't love children, it's because he wasn't sure Jesus loved them because some of those children were going to grow up and not become Christians. So he couldn't be certain. He didn't want to lie or misrepresent God so he had to refrain. Now, of course, not all Calvinists will do that but I want you to think about the consequences, either he loves us all or he doesn't love all of us, and if he doesn't love all of us how are we to view those people?

There's a lot at stake here and I know my Calvinist friend would agree with me. There's a lot at stake here. I suggest if God doesn't love them and you want to be like God, you want to have his passion, his heart, you want to have his mind, you want to be moved by his will, if it's his will not to save them, if Christ did not so love them that he sent Christ to die for them, or he loved them but not to the extent that he would send his Son to die on the cross on their behalf, then you're not going to relate to them I think as you ought to. You can't have the heart of God and go out and just passionately reach out for the lost if he doesn't care about them. You're going to reflect his values, his views, his purposes.

And remember, it's just as much his purpose to damn the damned as it is to save the saved, and no matter what kind of philosophical fancy footwork you do, it still all comes out to this: God, according to Calvin, according to Calvinism, planned and purposed from all eternity for no reason that anyone knows, Calvin never knew and never claimed to know, unrelated to man himself, God decided to save some and to damn others. And actually, Calvin, I'm not going to say this but Calvin said basically, he used some very pejorative terms, he said, "Listen, you believe God as Spurgeon did, if you believe God saves some and the others damn themselves, you're stupid." He thought this was insane. If you really think that God doesn't have the same control, hasn't determined essentially in the same way the destiny of the lost for the same reason merely because it pleased him, then you misunderstand everything. If you don't accept unconditional reprobation, unconditional damnation, then you don't understand Calvin taught unconditional election. They're just, as everybody uses the term today, they're just a flipside of the same coin.

Now what kind of message are we communicating? What kind of gospel are we believing? What I have suggested in my book is that Calvinists don't even believe there is

a gospel for much if not most of the world. How can you tell somebody honestly with a straight face that there is good news? You see, the good news is you're dead and you can be alive, you're lost and you can be found, you're blind and you can see. Do you live in a world filled with hate but God loves you, that's the good news. The news of Calvinism is maybe, maybe God loves you and maybe he doesn't. Maybe there's hope in your despair. Maybe you can go to heaven and then maybe you can't. And it's certain you can't if you're not elect, we just don't happen to know who it is that is elect and who it is that isn't.

Now doesn't that affect the way you think? I know some of you hold near and dear to your heart the Reformed doctrine. You believe it brings glory to God; it's the manifestation ultimately of his grace and of his goodness. But ask yourself this honestly from the heart, setting aside anything you've ever learned from anybody.

How am I doing? One minute?

If we have been commissioned as most Calvinists I know agree with me, to reach them I think we can only do it when you know about them the way he does, when we care about them the way he does, when we take to them what he did. You see, you can't with a straight face say he did anything for them because you don't know.

Again, you know, if I offered you phony money and that's what preaching the gospel is to a person who can't believe it, can't believe it not because he simply won't believe it according to Calvinism because God ordained that he would not believe it, decreed that he would not believe it and ultimately is responsible for his unbelief. As Feinberg said so eloquently, the oddity here is God determines where you're going to go and why you're going to go there and how you're going to get there, makes you do the things you do so that he can judge you to do them, and then blames you for all that he does...

Moderator. Time.

Bryson. ...if indeed Calvinism is true. That's not the God of Scripture. He really does love them as he loves us. That's what it means by God so loved the world. Thank you.

Moderator. Thank you, George. James White will have 10 minutes for his closing comments.

James White. The gospel of Calvinism as it was just described is not, "Well, maybe God doesn't love you." You see, the apostolic proclamation was repent and believe. It wasn't this is what God has done for you. Maybe the problem here is that we're judging the gospel by our emotions and experiences rather than by the infallible, unchanging, inspired word of God.

I've heard no response to John 6, Ephesians 1, Romans 8 and 9, 1 Timothy 2. I've heard no replies. I've heard no exegesis that says, "No, it doesn't actually say that God elects unconditionally." All I've heard is, "Well, if we believe this, then we can't evangelize the way I evangelize." Maybe that tells us something. Maybe we need to stop proclaiming

the gospel, "What will you do with Jesus," and proclaim it the way the Bible presents it, "What will Christ do with you?"

He is the sovereign King and that picture of Jesus standing outside the knobless door from Revelation 3:20 knocking, first of all, Revelation 3:20 is about the church and, secondly, there was no knob on the outside of Lazarus' tomb either and that didn't stop Jesus. I'm sorry, my friends, but I am tired of seeing Jesus presented as a weak beggar. He is a powerful Savior and the gospel is not a suggestion, it is a command. We need to present the gospel the way the apostles did. They turned the world upside down. For some reason the world is turning the church upside down now. Maybe that's why.

You know, the same text of the Bible that says John 3:16 also says this in Joshua 11:20, "For it was the Lord's doing to harden the Hivite's hearts that they should come against Israel in battle in order that they should be devoted to destruction and should receive no mercy but be destroyed just as the Lord commanded Moses." That same text of Scripture, Isaiah 63:17, "O Lord, why do You make us wander from Your ways and harden our heart so that we fear You not?" That's the same inspired text that utters those words in John 3.

I point out that the very same John wrote John 6 and John 10, but I'd like to address John 3 for a moment because, you see, so many of us have heard it repeated so often within a traditional context that sometimes we forget what the text actually says. Do you remember the two verses before that? There we're talking about Moses, "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness," the contrast with the world is that for Israel you had the serpent lifted up and you needed to look at that serpent, and not all Israel did and those who didn't perished. But you see, God shows a much greater love. It's not just for Israel, he shows a love for the whole world in that he gives his Son, but notice something, so many people just read this solely out of tradition and they hear that phrase "whosoever" and go, "See, no election." But many of you know that's not what John 3:16 says. It literally says God gave his Son so that everyone believing, every believing one, everyone believing in Christ would have eternal life. Does everyone do that? Have you ever noticed there's particularity in John 3:16?

If this is just some sort of general love, that there is no special salvific love, that God's heart is going to be broken for all of eternity because he loves that person who's standing on the parapet of hell screaming out in hatred at him just as much as he does those who bow in adoration before him, if God's going to be unhappy through all eternity, then why is it that the passage itself says that the reason of the giving was so that the believing ones would have eternal life? You see, John 3 is consistent with John 6, and John 6 is consistent with John 10, and John 10 is consistent with John 17, and in John 17 in the high priestly prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus said, "I do not pray for the world. I pray for those You've given Me out of the world." The very night of his betrayal as he's going to give his sacrifice, he says, "I don't pray for the world."

You say, "But I don't like to hear that. I don't like to hear what it says in John 10 when he says to the Pharisees, 'My sheep hear My voice, the reason you don't hear Me is because

you're not of My sheep." And we want to turn that upside down. We want to take it, we want to make it backwards and go, "Oh, no, no, I can choose to be His sheep anytime I want to." Can you imagine a shepherd never knows who his flock is because the sheep sort of go, "Well, I'm not sure if I'm going to have him as my shepherd today or not. Maybe I'll go and join that flock." The shepherd chooses his sheep and he then lays down his life in behalf of his sheep.

This is a vital issue. It is a vital issue. When I debate a Mormon scholar this coming Friday in Salt Lake City, it's going to be on the nature of sin. Mormons don't have a biblical doctrine of sin, that's why they don't have a biblical doctrine of grace. Grace to be grace must be free. It cannot be demanded. You cannot say, "Well, God has to show the exact same kind of grace to every single person." Then that's not grace. If the governor of the state exercises the governor's sovereign power to pardon a person on death row, that governor is not then under any moral obligation to pardon everybody on death row. Grace to be God's grace must be absolutely free. It must be based upon God's good purpose and not on anything in us.

That is why when you read that "Golden Chain of Redemption" in Romans 8, every verb there is something God does. God foreknows, that doesn't mean he looks down the corridors of time. That's an active verb. It means he chooses to enter into relationship in love. He foreknows. He predestines. He calls. He justifies. He glorifies. You can't break that chain and that is a gospel of power, that is a gospel that honors God.

My friends, I cannot cause any one of you to lay aside emotions and tradition and simply come to the Scriptures, but I can try to model it for you. If you can hear yourself saying the words in Romans 9 after God says, "I will mercy whom I desire and I will harden whom I desire," you have a choice to make. You can either go, "I don't like that." I've had many a person when I've read that passage that say, "I would never worship a God like that." And my response is, "I know. Until God changes your heart, takes out a heart of stone and gives you a heart of flesh, you never will." You never will.

My friend, if you're a believer and God has taken out your heart of stone and given you a heart of flesh, I hope you can't hear your own echoed words in what follows after that when you will say to me, "Then who still finds fault, for who can resist His will? Who are you, O man, to answer back to God?" And there's the answer to tonight's debate. God is God and I am not, as Stephen Curtis Chapman is saying these days. I love that, God is God and I am not. God is God and I am man and that is the most fundamental observation we can have this evening. God is sovereign, I am not. I have been formed by his sovereign power. He has the right over me and the amazing thing, folks, is not that he ever chooses to show his wrath because if you know your heart, you deserve it, the amazing thing about election is that he took a sinner like me and saved me. That is the glory of the gospel.

Moderator. I have 10 questions here, two minutes and one minute in terms of response, maximum 30 minutes here for the rest of the evening, folks, and I'm going to direct the first question at James White and, James, you'll have two minutes, as I mentioned, and

then if you choose to use the full two, and then, George, you'll have a minute if you'd like to respond. You don't need to respond if you don't want to. You can pass on it if you'd like but those are the limits at least.

To James White. If the Bible verse is true which states we love him because he first loved us, then how is it love if it's by compulsion?

James White. Well, that is an excellent question because it really exemplifies one of the greatest problems in understanding the Reformed perspective. When we use the term "compulsion" we would have to, in essence, understand, again to use the metaphor of Lazarus' resurrection, that Jesus compelled him to come out of the grave. I don't think that's what most people are understanding when they use that term "compulsion." They're trying to object that, well, if you're forcing someone to do something against their will. Well, the biblical analogy is he takes out a heart of stone and gives us a heart of flesh. Now if you want to call that compulsion, I will leave you to your choice of terms. That sounds to me like a very major spiritual overhaul of an individual changing them from being a God-hater to being a God-lover, and I wouldn't use the term "compulsion" because that also means there's been a change, that is, the old creature is done away with, there is this new creation in Christ Jesus and that new creation in Christ Jesus by nature loves God and desires to cling to Christ. So that term "compulsion" I think ignores the deadness of man in sin and the radical nature of regeneration itself which requires that total change of heart.

Moderator. George, would you like to respond?

George Bryson. I would just say that on one level I agree with R. C. Sproul. The problem with Calvinism isn't who God loves and the response that comes from that love, it's those he doesn't love or doesn't love savingly because we all agree that we love him because he first loved us, where we disagree is that we all love him because he loved us. In other words, we can't love him back unless he doesn't love us first, but the Calvinist says you have no control over loving him back because he makes you love him back by changing you into, by your nature, a lover of God.

Moderator. This question for George Bryson. Ephesians 2:8 and Philippians 1:29 state that faith is a gift from God. Can you believe in Christ before he gives you faith?

George Bryson. Well, first of all, Ephesians 2:8-10, that whole section there is greatly disputed. Now I've always heard from the time I was a new Christian on that every scholar, New Testament Greek scholar, by the way, I don't think you have to understand New Testament Greek because I think the New Testament Greek scholars, men like James White, have done a good job of putting what's in Greek in English so we can all understand it. But I think Greek scholars, like English scholars, are very divided on that and in my new book, "The Gospel of Calvinism," if I can put a cheap plug in, I go over and quote all of the well-known, well-respected Greek scholars who totally disagree that faith there is asserted as a gift.

So I believe everything, the breath you breathe is a gift from God in one sense, but in the sense that the Calvinist does, I don't think that is taught there. I think the gift is salvation. Grace is the way we're saved and God saves by grace but he also saves by grace through faith, and as Calvin said, it is the means by which we receive the gift, not the gift itself.

Moderator. Would you like to respond to that, James?

James White. Yeah, I think that leaves Philippians 1:29 unanswered which very clearly does say that it has been granted to us to believe. And Ephesians 2, the word "faith" most definitely is one of those things that is tied up in that one phrase "and that not of ourselves." The grace, the salvation, the entirety of the preceding phrase is tied up in that singular term, tuta, and I really think that that goes back to what you saw earlier in Ephesians 2 when he said when we were enemies to God, when we were at enmity with him, even when we were going the other direction, but God who is rich in mercy. It is God who initiates and it is God who accomplishes and he never fails to bring to salvation the person that he initiates that work in.

Moderator. Okay, this to James. Where did evil come from?

James White. A theodicy in two minutes. As was mentioned earlier in the debate, first of all, I don't believe evil is a substance or a thing, it is a disharmony, a rebellion within the creation of God and so it cannot exist before God creates. Secondly, it is God's purpose if we do accept what the Bible says concerning his working all things after the counsel of his will to bring glory to himself by what he has done in his creation, therefore everyone either has to understand that evil has a role in God's plan as it does in Genesis 50, Isaiah 10, Acts 4, or you have to adopt what I think is a completely untenable position and that is that either evil took God by surprise or God knew evil was going to exist but chose to create anyways without having a purpose for its existence which renders all acts of evil meaningless. I don't know why anyone would want to hold either one of those positions other than, "Well, I don't want God to have to answer for bringing good out of evil." Well, I'm very thankful to say God has brought good out of evil not only in the life of Joseph or in the situation of Israel but in the greatest act of saving activity that God ever did and that is in the cross of Jesus Christ. What the Roman soldiers did, what the Jewish leaders did, what Pilate did, what Herod did, were evil acts and yet we this evening can have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ only because in God's sovereign decree those evil acts took place. So I am very thankful that my God is big enough to be pure and just and holy in all of his motivations and yet to have a universe where evil exists but it is destroyed by the work of Jesus Christ.

Moderator. George, would you like to respond to that?

George Bryson. Yes, there's a very big difference between making God the author of sin and saying that God can use sin. God has used sin. He uses evil but God's not the author of moral evil because he's not an immoral being. He is ontologically incapable. By nature he can't be the author of sin. So the problem with Calvinism is that it makes God not by affirmation, even the Westminster Confession clearly states and most Confessions,

Calvinist Confessions, deny that God is the author of sin. But it's not what they affirm that concerns me, it's what they explain. Once they explain their position, it implies that God is the author of sin and then when you get finally to that implication, what they say it's a mystery, we've introduced it but you're not allowed to talk about it.

Moderator. Okay, George, a question here for you. Is faith a gift from God or an act on our part?

George Bryson. Well, I would agree again with Machen and even in the Calvinist comment or Calvin's comment in Ephesians 2 through 8 that it is a means by which to receive a gift. It's not a work, it's by definition something else. So it's an act in the sense, I would agree with Paul, for example, and Silas when the man said, "What must I do," they didn't say don't do anything, they said believe. So I believe that you must believe to receive and, again, even Calvinists argue that the decision we make, the coming to Christ, the choice that we make for Christ and we talked about that a lot, is another way of talking about believing in him but believing is not a work. So it's not a gift in the Calvinist sense of a gift. The breath I breathe is a gift but not in the Calvinist sense. The Calvinist says, in effect, I know James White doesn't like this but Calvinists say, in effect, that God believes in and through you that ultimately he is the believer, not you. I mean, he makes you a believer by giving you a believing nature but he really is the believer, not you, and I am saying that salvation is God's job, believing is our responsibility. Don't make God responsible for what he makes you responsible for. God is sovereign. Accept your responsibility and believe.

Moderator. James, a rejoinder?

James White. Certainly we do not in any way, shape or form say that God is believing through us and that is a totally invalid assertion that does not follow from what is being said. What has been said and so far Mr. Bryson has not even attempted to respond to this, is that Romans 8:7-8 say those who are in the flesh cannot please God. We know that saving faith is something that is pleasing. Philippians 1:29 says it is something that has been granted to us, both that and our suffering for Christ. And so it is very plain that the issue here is that until regeneration takes place and as long as a person remains a spiritually dead sinner, asking them to do something that is a spiritual activity is, of course, backwards. And we have not heard any responses to the biblical passages, the many of them that have been offered, and the one time we did discuss John 6:44, I would submit that the answer that was given there simply did not flow from the text and was not consistent with the grammar of the text at all.

Moderator. Thank you. Question for James White. What effect does a Calvinist view of God's grace have on evangelism? If God chooses, why evangelize?

James White. Awesome, awesome question. The first missionaries were all Calvinists and there's a reason for that. They believed that God was glorified in their going out and proclaiming the gospel and I'm going to have a hard time making it in two minutes for this one because I've got a whole sermon on this. God is glorified when his truth is

proclaimed. There are many groups today where the mission effort has been greatly minimized because of a denial of Reformed theology. What do I mean? Many people on the mission field are forced to function on the basis of charts and graphs that tell them how allegedly they should be having this rate of growth, or this number of people attending, so on and so forth, it's as if the work of the Holy Spirit can be put on a chart or a graph. The earliest missionaries worked in areas where some of them had to work for 5 or 10 years before God granted them success in seeing their first convert. But that was necessary. Only a few years ago, if you took every one Mormon that left the Mormon church and became a Baptist, 24 Baptists became Mormons. There is a reason for a 24:1 conversion rate amongst these people and it's because you can't hand a Mormon the four spiritual laws and expect them to get saved. It doesn't address them. It's like shooting a .22 at a tank. It takes time. It takes patience and it takes a firm conviction that God is glorified when his truth is proclaimed no matter what the result is and, folks, as we live in an evermore anti-Christian age, we need to get hold of this because if you start judging your evangelistic efforts on the basis of what kind of response you get when you're living in an apostate nation that hates God, you're going to stop evangelizing. God is glorified when his truth is proclaimed. When the apostles did that, it frequently brought them prison and death. We have to get hold of that and realize that and that's why I'm going to be in Salt Lake City this coming Saturday passing out tracts to some of the toughest folks because my God can even save Mormons.

Moderator. And, George, the questions again, what effect does a Calvinist view of God's grace have on evangelism? If God chooses, why evangelize? You have a minute.

George Bryson. Well, first of all, there's a simple little statement that may seem silly but it's true. If something doesn't make a difference, it doesn't make a difference and your evangelism, of course, Calvinists say they want to obey God so they obey God and evangelize or they want to glorify God and so they evangelize, they want to please God so they evangelize, and those are wonderful motives but the effect of evangelism for the Calvinist or anybody else according to Calvinism is nothing. In other words, no person. That number is fixed. The whole thing has been rigged from all eternity. The issue in Calvinism is that from all eternity to all eternity God has determined to save a specific group of people and not save the others, so it isn't going to make a difference. Now they say God ordains the means but even that means is fixed, who is going to evangelize and who isn't. So if you don't, you weren't supposed to. If you do, you are and you can't help it either way though you think you can because it appears you can.

Moderator. Time. Okay, George, a question for you. Can you explain how Jesus was our propitiation, that is, takes away God's wrath, and then God returns his wrath onto some? I think the point is if he's the propitiation for the whole world, how does he then return his wrath on those who he's already propitiated?

George Bryson. Well, it would be like saying that I have enough money to buy the car and this is enough money for you to buy the car if you'll take the money to buy the car, but if you don't take the money to buy the car, you don't have any money to buy the car. The propitiation is for you, the satisfaction is sufficient, the substitution is perfect, there

is nothing more he needed to do. And even Calvinists would agree if it were his design or his purpose, what Christ did would have been adequate but the fact is it wasn't his design or his purpose. That's why, by the way, folks, if any of you were out here, Calvinists who don't believe in limited atonement, I suggest you don't understand Calvinism because if you're an unconditional electionist, you are a limited atonement. I know my colleague here would agree that if you believe Christ saves some, then you have to agree that he didn't die for them. It's a wasted death for them.

Moderator. James, response?

James White. I don't think that really addresses the issue. The issue is if we believe in substitutionary atonement and if we assert that Jesus Christ took the wrath, which is what propitiation means, took the wrath that was due to John Brown and he bore the penalty for all of John Brown's sins in his body upon the tree, then those sins have been propitiated. So upon what basis can John Brown be condemned to hell? What kind of wrath can fall upon him? Some say, well, for unbelief. Unbelief is a sin. It was borne by Jesus Christ so what is the basis of the condemnation? That's why historic Arminians do not believe in substitutionary atonement because they recognize that if substitutionary atonement is true, then Jesus Christ took the place of his elect people and therefore that sacrifice is perfect on their behalf. That's why Arminianism has always rejected that. And so you really can't believe in substitutionary atonement without being Reformed.

Moderator. Thank you, James. This question is for you and the question is: if all men are dead in sin, dead is in quotations here, how is it that some are saved and others are not?

James White. Well, that is, of course, the question of the evening and the answer is either going to be that of the world's religions that basically say the answer is to be found in man, or I believe the answer is found clearly in the pages of Scripture in the goodwill of God. Ephesians 1 tells us that God has elected a people unto himself from eternity based upon the kind intention of his own will, and over and over again in Romans 8, in Romans 9, the works of men are specifically excluded as being the basis of anything to do, in fact, the will of man. It is not the one willing or the one running but God who has mercy is how the inspired Scriptures state this in Romans 9. So don't be confused by one thing. Sometimes people say, well, if you're dead in sin, I know human beings who are extremely active in their rebellion against God. Being dead in sin does not mean that you're not spiritually active, what it means, of course, is that you are separated from the only source of life, that is God, that your nature is completely and totally corrupt, and that individual, as we have seen over and over and over again in Romans 8:7-8, you might say, well, quit quoting it. Well, I haven't heard a response to it yet so I keep offering it. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. And so it cannot be based upon anything that we do. God's grace comes to us based upon his purpose and that is why, as I said, in eternity to come the only difference that will separate those is that one word "grace."

Moderator. Thank you, James, and, George, one minute.

George Bryson. During the break somebody asked me if spiritually dead people can do anything good and I asked him how long he had been a Christian and he said four years. I said, "Well, before that, did you love your mother?" And he said, "Yes." And I said, "Was that good?" And he said, "Yes." And then I said, "Well, I thought bad men can't do good things?" And he said, "Well, that was a sinful love for my mother. I can't do anything good." There's lots of ways in which we can use the word "in the flesh" or even "spiritually dead." I mean, we're all born again as Christians but none of us push the analogy to the point that we had a nine month or any period of time of gestation before we were spiritually born. You can push an analogy too far. All I would say is this, that spiritual death poses no problem to an omnipotent God and that God can enable the spiritually dead to believe; just as he can raise Lazarus from the dead, he can raise us from the dead. He could do it with or without faith.

Moderator. Time. Thank you, George. Here's a question for you. If God cast a vote for someone's salvation and Satan also cast a vote for his damnation and we decide one way, in other words, I guess we cast the deciding vote, who is sovereign?

George Bryson. This is a good lesson in democracy, isn't it? First of all, I don't buy into any of the casting votes. We are saved by grace. Period. No one has ever been saved any other way. Only because of what Christ did for us because he offers us salvation and enables us to accept what he offers. So it is simply this, God's job is to do the saving, man's job is to do the believing. Now call believing, as I just heard a moment ago, works if you want but the Bible distinguishes and differentiates between faith and works and it actually makes faith and grace complementary so that one is the receiving mechanism of the other. God has chosen. He could be gracious without requiring us to believe but he has chosen to give to people who believe, to give eternal life to those who believe. And over and over and over again, and we keep talking about what I haven't responded to, I have not heard much at all about all of those appeals and those demands and those requirements to believe. Hundreds of times in the New Testament we are called upon to believe but called upon to do, according to Calvinism, what we're unable to do, can't do, and maybe God didn't want us to do.

Moderator. James, one minute.

James White. When we all go home this evening we'll see speed limit signs on the road. Some people may get themselves drunk and exceed those speed limit signs. That doesn't mean the speed limit signs are now useless. The Bible commands all men to believe and to repent as a universal command. The fact that we put ourselves in a situation, fallen as we are in Adam, that we are incapable of doing what is pleasing in God's sight does not make the commands themselves useless. Acts 13:48 contradicts what Mr. Bryson just said. It very plainly says those who were appointed to eternal life believe, not that by believing they appointed themselves to eternal life. And when he keeps speaking about how God enables all of us, John 6:65 where he speaks of that enablement, is in the context of Jesus saying in 6:64, "But there are some of you who do not believe." Why do they not believe? Because the Father had not drawn them.

Moderator. Thank you, James. Here's a question for you. What is the role of prayer in the salvation of people?

James White. Excellent question because many people seem to feel that when you pray for the lost you're attempting to in some way, shape or form convince God to be maybe better than he is or more loving than he is. It's an excellent question because when we pray, first of all, who is it that we're changing? Are we changing God? It's very often that we hear people say, "Well, prayer changes things." No, I think prayer changes people. I think prayer changes the person praying. I don't think it changes God. God's already perfect. If God were to change he'd become imperfect, so I don't follow that philosophy whatsoever. Well, who gets changed by prayer? I do. If I'm praying for someone, then obviously I'm going to be much more attuned to opportunities to speak to them, I'm going to ask God to be an instrument of his own grace, the means, as was already pointed out, because we believe God decrees both the ends and the means and it's a great privilege to be used by God to share his gospel with anyone no matter what their response to that gospel is. And so when we are praying for someone, we are not putting ourselves in the position of commanding God as to what he should do, we are instead putting ourselves in the position of being attuned to his Spirit so we may be a perfect instrument in his hand, to be that one that God uses to bring that message. And when he in his sovereign and infinite mercy chooses, at a point in time to bring that person to spiritual life, there is no power on heaven or earth that can stop him from accomplishing that act of grace and that's the only reason why any of us are sitting here this evening who bow to Jesus Christ and believe his word.

Moderator. George, the role of prayer in salvation of people, please.

George Bryson. Well, I would agree, of course, that a major beneficiary of praying for others or other things even, is the person praying but I would also say that God in his sovereignty chooses to use prayer to accomplish his will. He even asks us to pray that his will be done on earth as it is in heaven, hinting that his will isn't done always on earth the way it is in heaven. People here don't always do his will, at least in the sense that he's asking us to pray for, and so he asks us to pray. So we are asked to pray by God in conformity with his will. I would never pray for something that I didn't think God wanted to happen but there are lots of things that I think God wants to happen that aren't happening and I think that we need to pray his heart, and the way we know that, of course, is in accordance with his word. And so I think there are lots of things that change as a result of prayer but these are the things God wants to see happen and unless you say what will be will be, que sera sera, it doesn't matter, I think praying is a powerful force in the universe.

Moderator. Thank you. And the final question, we'll start with George here and that question is this. When Christ said, "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto Me," if all men are drawn, then why won't all be saved?

George Bryson. Well, it goes back to the original assertion I made earlier that it is different being drawn. That's what God does. But it's coming to Christ, that's what we do.

And again, I hate to just beat a dead horse but John Calvin made it very clear that when we see the term "come to Him" we're talking about believing in him. So God draws us to him. What Christ did draws us, makes it possible for us to be saved but doesn't, as James White would say, make our salvation inevitable. So to be drawn is only to bring us to him so we can believe but coming to him, that's our part. We must believe in what he did. He did what needed to be done. He says, "If I be lifted up I'll draw all men." He did what needed to be done. That's what the cross of Christ is all about. That's why we preach Christ and his cross but you still have to respond to that and that's why the Bible says so much about putting your faith in him and his finished work on the cross.

Moderator. Actually still have 60 seconds if you want to use it.

George Bryson. I do.

Moderator. Since it's your last, well, actually 58 seconds now. 57.

George Bryson. I just stopped the clock there for a second. Well, since it is my last word, let me just say since we're on the cross, what a better place to end our discussion. So precious what he did for us. So precious what he did for them. Don't take anything away from, don't rob anyone from what God in the person of Jesus Christ did for them. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. Let us, let us go after them as if they were us. Let's think about them as if we were them. Let's care about them the way we know according to Scripture God cares about them.

Moderator. Thank you. And James, I'll read the question again if you want to go for that for a minute. When Christ said, "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto Me," if all men are drawn then why won't all be saved?

James White. Well, first of all, I would just simply point out that the cross is a stumbling block with Jews, foolishness to Greeks, and does not draw the natural man in any way, shape or form. Secondly, John 12 is talking about Jews and Gentiles. Thirdly, John 6 says, "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me." It is the Father's giving that results in our coming. That is a logical conclusion from the text. Mr. Bryson said, Well, there's no order there. I think we can all see there is order there and in John 6 Jesus does say that all those that are drawn to him by the Father he raises up. There is no way to introduce a distinction into that verse. The drawing of the Father results in a person coming to Jesus Christ in faith and that is based upon the giving of the Father. That is why Jesus Christ is a perfect Savior. That's why he will lose none of those that are given to him because salvation is wholly his work.

Moderator. Well, gentlemen, I want to thank you so much for doing such a fine job and I want to thank the audience for being such a good audience.