

*WitnessKit Bible
Study: Bible Doctrines
As a System of Thought*

Class 4:
The Sovereignty Of
God—what It Is And
What It Is Not

Jeremiah 32:17, 37b-41

Jeremiah prayed: “Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for Thee.”

The LORD answered: “I will bring them back to this place and make them dwell in safety. And they shall be My people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me always, for their own good, and for the good of their children after them.

Jeremiah 32:17, 37b-41

And I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good;

and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me.

And I will rejoice over them to do them good,
and I will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul.”

We need to understand the meaning of God's Sovereignty for our own lives

Truths about God's Sovereignty

By understanding these truths.

1. God's Sovereignty is not determinism.
2. God's Sovereignty holds authority over life and death.
3. God's Sovereignty makes demands upon us.

Sometimes

People take a deterministic view of God's kingly authority because His power attributes are so great. His power attributes are very important to understand and trust. They are a great help toward confidence in prayer.

His perfectly righteous character is the immutable foundation for everything—even more foundational than His power.

His power attributes are marvelous and comforting BECAUSE His character is perfect and filled with steadfast love.

There is a framework for Bible Doctrine that can be misused.

The Calvinist schematic called TULIP can be taken to the extreme of determinism. It is important NOT to do that. Determinism is false.

I believe the TULIP format is inadequate and wrong because it balances everything in theology from God's power rather than from His character.

However, this format is tremendously important to many Christians who are sincere in their faith and who have tried hard to understand theology. So I am NOT criticizing them.

The Need for a Framework Based on the Bible

I believe many people accept the TULIP framework because they have not heard a theologically sound presentation of any other framework. They may believe other frameworks are only based on tradition rather than the Bible.

Even though verses can be found which appear to support each point of TULIP, many other verses contradict them. We will cover some verses that say things that are different from TULIP.

Semantic Difficulties

Even people who accept TULIP do not necessarily have determinism in mind. I don't think we should assume they mean determinism by the word "Calvinism," or the word "reformed."

This is not an easy area of study, because it involves finite human understanding reaching toward God's infinite understanding. So we need to be gentle with each other about these issues.

For Instance



Dr. Francis Schaeffer considered himself a Calvinist, but not a determinist.

Much of modern scholarship in theology focuses on reformed or Calvinist theology, and very little focuses on Baptist theology. The Baptist focus is on outreach rather than depth of understanding. Of course, outreach is vital. But understanding theology is vital, too.

For Instance

Baptists who care about depth are prone to accept Calvinist scholarship without understanding the problems with a deterministic viewpoint—a critically important distinction.

So I want to give an admittedly and historically Baptist understanding of the issues, while attempting to be balanced in what I say. Historically, Baptists did not consider themselves either Calvinists or Arminians, but simply Bible-believing Christians.

Pride of Learning

- An attitude of pride and an assumption that opposing views are based on ignorance can create a spirit of partisanship rather than brotherly kindness. So we need to be on guard about such an attitude, **even while we are doing the important work of standing up for truth.**
- One side of the issue can accuse the other side of either minimizing God's power or His love—and they can each be pointing out **a real difficulty** with human attempts to codify God's word.

So we will look at the 5 points of Calvinism

And then we will see some concepts in the Bible that take a different approach. The 5 points of Calvinism are often outlined using the acronym T.U.L.I.P.

TULIP

T = Total Depravity of Human Beings

U = Unconditional Election by God

L = Limited Atonement of Jesus Christ

I = Irresistible Grace of God

P = Perseverance of the Elect

TULIP: What it stands for

Total depravity of human beings—that humans are so fallen they cannot make a free choice toward God.

(Total Depravity does not mean that everyone is violently wicked, but just means the limitation mentioned.)

This point is misleading because it clouds the issue with a connotation of extreme wickedness, and because it ignores the fact that the Holy Spirit draws everyone toward God.

TULIP: What it stands for

Using the term *Total depravity of human beings* is similar to calling the Scriptures “myth” –with myth defined to include both true and false religious texts—and pretending that nomenclature is not an attack on the Scriptures’ credibility.

Total depravity’s power to convince, within the logic of *TULIP*, is as much by its connotation as by its definition. The next slide will explain.

TULIP: What it stands for

The connotation of total depravity is to be totally deserving of hell—just like Hitler. And the logic of TULIP hangs from that nail.

If you are witnessing to someone who is a nice person, they are going to be totally unconvinced that you have told the truth about their depravity. We have written within our hearts that God is a God of Justice—and that means He does not see everyone on the same moral plane as Hitler. The Bible agrees. He judges by our deeds.

TULIP: What it stands for



The problem is not that people are totally depraved and totally deserving of eternal suffering in hell, but that on our own we cannot become perfect enough to deserve eternity in God's home.

Justice says the punishment should not exceed the wrong done. Eternity away from God will have appropriate levels of paying for one's sins. God will judge according to human deeds.—But it takes something much more difficult to actually become GOOD enough for heaven.



God saves by Grace.

God judges by Deeds.

TULIP

The more serious problem with the idea of *Total depravity* is that it ignores this fact: The Holy Spirit draws everyone toward God. Jesus is the light that enlightens every human—John chapter 1. God wants all to come to repentance—2 Peter 3:9.

TULIP

It is true that God sometimes stops drawing people toward Him, in response to their rejection of Him—such as Esau as described in Hebrews 12:15-17. God was deeply offended that Esau exchanged his spiritual heritage for a bowl of beans. He quit drawing Esau toward Himself and allowed Esau to go his own way, to Esau's sorrow.

TULIP

Because God's patience has its limits, we must be diligent to respond to the Holy Spirit when we sense His efforts to draw us toward God.

“Seek the LORD while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near.”—Isaiah 55:6

And we should pray for our friends and acquaintances who have not sought Him, that He would continue to draw them toward Himself.

Part 2 of TULIP

Unconditional election—the idea that God predestines people for heaven and hell without conditions related to their choices.

(This one is wrong. It confuses CHOICE with WORKS. The Bible is clear that our works cannot achieve God's righteousness, and we have to have His righteousness to have heaven. Our choices are real. Our part is to exercise faith in response to His grace, and we have that real choice. He GIVES us that real choice.)

Part 2 of TULIP

Unconditional election—the idea that God predestines people for heaven and hell without conditions related to their choices.

This is the part of TULIP that is deterministic. It also means that if it were true, no one could know whether he was elect or not, because his own decisions would have nothing to do with it. But 1 John 5:13 implies that God wants us to **KNOW** when we have eternal life.

Part 2 of TULIP

God motivated the Apostle John to write these things to let us know.

A good God wants us to know when we are right with Him and when we are not,

because He wants us to seek and find Him if we are not right with Him,

and He wants us to be full of confident faith if we are right with Him.

He cares about us.

Part 3 of TULIP

Limited atonement of Christ—that Jesus died only for the elect—(this one is absolutely wrong—many verses insist that Jesus died for all.)

The usual explanation is that the Bible only speaks of all the elect when it discusses the atonement. However, the next verses show otherwise, and 2 Peter 2:1 shows conclusively that the atonement was for those who are lost.

Christ Died for All.

I Timothy 4:10 ¹⁰ For to this *end* we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is *the* Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. (NKJV)

God makes salvation available for all and effective for those who believe. That means that Christ died for all. There are 2 categories in this verse, and Christ died for everyone in both categories.

Externals are insignificant, but the heart is vital. God sees the heart.

Christ Died for All.

1 Peter 3:18 ¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, (NKJV)

Hebrews 7:26-27²⁶ For such a High Priest was fitting for us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; ²⁷ who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. (NKJV)

Christ Died for All—even for those who deny Him.

I John 2:2 ² And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world. (NKJV)

II Peter 2:1 ¹ But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying **the Lord who bought them,** *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. (NKJV)

Notice here that those who are lost are also bought or redeemed by the blood of Jesus. The rest of the chapter confirms that Peter is talking about people who were lost and separated from God.

Part 4 of TULIP

Irrresistible grace—that God’s grace cannot be resisted by human will. (This idea involves a misunderstanding of the process of belief. It also contradicts God’s impartiality. There is no partiality with God.) Luke 7:30 reports that the *scribes and Pharisees rejected God’s purpose for themselves*, refusing to repent at the preaching of John the Baptist. If it was God’s purpose to save them, and they refused to repent, they definitely resisted His grace.

Salvation is by Grace through Faith

- So that no one can boast before another human or before God. We are equal before God in terms of worth, and He is not partial in judgment. He is perfectly just in judgment.
- Grace is equally available because we are equals. We are not allowed to boast because we are equals before God. The person who has found God is equal before God in value with the one who has not. Jesus expressed that value by dying for both. Ephesians chapter 2 goes into detail about these matters.

Salvation is by Grace through Faith

- Our choices—to seek God or run from Him, to repent or to harden our hearts—these choices are real and they matter for eternity. But such choices have no room for boasting. We can accept His grace or reject it. He cares about our choice, but He does not make it for us.
- If someone hardens his heart to the point that God stops drawing him toward Himself, then that person cannot choose God's grace.
- So it is important not to delay.

TULIP

Perseverance of the elect—that the chosen people will stay true to God—This one is correct.

Hebrews 6 indicates that people cannot become saved and lost and saved again. Ephesians indicates that we are sealed with the Holy Spirit at salvation. Hebrews 12 gives God's promise that He will NEVER forsake us.

The parable of the Sower and the seeds tells us that a level of understanding is required and that salvation is more than mental assent. People have to grow “spiritual roots.”

God's Omniscience

- Election or predestination is also taught in the Bible. God's Omniscience is involved in that. He knows everything about us, from the moment we were woven together in the womb.
- Every day of anyone's life is in His book of that life. He knows every decision we will make and every possible decision we could make that we do not. He knows every pressure we face and our level of being able to handle pressure.

God's Omniscience

- He knows our level of understanding and every thought we think. But *knowing* and *causing* are not the same thing. He knows ahead of time who will seek Him and who will repent and who will believe. He allows pressures into our lives to motivate us to seek Him.
- He is also the One with the authority to say “It’s over. Time to face Me.”
- So His election of those who seek and repent and believe is a complicated matter with many factors in His plans. Add to that the importance of our witness in persuading others, and the fact that we can choose to quench His Spirit.

God's Omniscience

- When you consider the infinite number of possibilities, and God's desire for all to come to repentance, you can see that election is an extremely complicated problem from God's point of view, given that our choices are real.
- And God sees all the generations from the beginning. He is concerned with the salvation of every individual—and their children, grandchildren, great grandchildren.....

John chapter 6

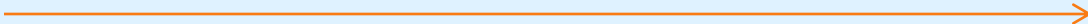
Some of these issues are delineated by Jesus Christ in John chapter 6. A side column will point out the issues as we read the chapter. That comparison will show us some big questions and some important answers.

John 6:26-59: Right after the feeding of the 5000.

²⁶ Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. ²⁷ Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." ²⁸ Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" ²⁹ **Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."**

Comment:
Faith is necessary before works are effective. The first and foremost "work" is to seek God, find Messiah, and believe the truth.

Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? ³¹ Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, *'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'*"



³² Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but **My Father** gives you the true bread from heaven.

Here I think we see an unspoken question: *"Are you the Prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:17-19) to whom we must listen?"*

Is the miracle of the loaves and fishes a sign like manna in Moses' time?

For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

³⁴ Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always."

³⁵ And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe.

³⁷ All that the Father gives Me **will** come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

Jesus' answer is that He is more than a Prophet—He is the bread of life. He is the essential necessary thing for eternal life.

We also see real human choice in these verses, and the involvement of God's drawing.

³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

³⁹ **This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.**

⁴⁰ And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Here we see that **God's will** is **point 5 of TULIP**—that those who are saved will remain true and not be lost again. God's good and perfect will shall prevail for those who receive His Holy Spirit. Ephesians describes it as being **sealed** with His Holy Spirit.

41 The Jews (leaders) then complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." 42 And they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

43 Jesus therefore answered and said to them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. 44 **No one can come to Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.** 45 It is written in the prophets, '*And they shall all be taught by God.*' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me.

If we truly seek God, we will find Messiah.

This passage sounds like "irresistible grace," so the verses that disprove that interpretation are important.

What it really says is that we have to have God's drawing to be able to find Him. It does not say there are limits on whom He draws, but implies a limit on time of being drawn.

"Seek the LORD while He may be found. Call on Him while He is near." Isaiah 55:6-7.

If a person is concerned about
these matters,

That is a good indication that the Holy Spirit is drawing him toward God and Christ.

A fear of “not being in the elect” is absolutely the wrong response to this information. Instead, the right response is to seek God in prayer and keep trying to understand these matters.

This chapter is a great one to keep mulling over. New insights will arrive.

Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. ⁵⁰ This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and **the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.**”

Complex

Metaphor:
Receiving
Jesus & the
Holy Spirit
through the
atoning
sacrifice of
Jesus Christ
is like
receiving
eternal life as
food.

Unlimited

atonement—
for the life of
the world.

⁵² The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this *Man* give us *His* flesh to eat?" ⁵³ Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.

⁵⁶ He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood **abides in Me, and I in him.** ⁵⁷ As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. ⁵⁸ This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."

The complexity of the metaphor meant the listeners had to search for its meaning.

The Key to the Meaning—
ABIDING IN
JESUS AND
HAVING His
Holy Spirit
abiding in you.

⁵⁹ These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum. ⁶⁰ Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this*, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?" ⁶¹ When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you? ⁶² *What* then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? ⁶³ **It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.** The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life. ⁶⁴ But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.

The metaphor required His own followers to seek for the meaning.

The metaphor is memorable as well as complex. They could keep on puzzling over it later.

65 And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father." 66 From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. 67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" 68 But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."^[12] John 6:59-69 (NKJV)

This sounds like deterministic predestination—but NO! It simply emphasizes the importance of responding to God's drawing at the time He is drawing, rather than hardening the heart.

What is Determinism?

Determinism is the idea that all human decisions are pre-set.

In the secular form, determinism assumes our genes and environment pre-set all our decisions, so that human choices are just illusions.

In the religious form, determinism assumes that God (or Fate) is behind the scenes, causing people to make all the decisions He wants them to make.

What is Determinism?

The Bible affirms that God is all-powerful, and that He knows ahead of time every decision we will make or could make, and that He knows those same things for everyone. He even knows all the ways we could react to every possible path or event—infinity raised to the infinity power of possibilities.

The Bible is clear that our decisions are NOT ILLUSION. They are real.

We are the ones who make them and we are responsible for them.

Is God's Will Deterministic?

The Bible teaches that God HAS a good and perfect will, which we should strive to find and follow,
and that He has a permissive will regarding decisions He does NOT want people to make.
When Jesus prayed the Lord's Prayer, He said, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."
This indicates that God's good and perfect will prevails in heaven, and that the earth becomes a better place as people find that will for their own lives.
How do we find that good and perfect will?

Romans 12:1-2 (NKJV)

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God,

that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service.*

² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

What is required to find God's good and perfect will for your life?

1. Present yourself to Him to serve Him, in holiness and acceptability to Him—in all your life.
2. Remember that this is your reasonable **service**—He gave His Son for you, and He is totally good, so it is reasonable and right to want to serve Him.
3. Do not be conformed to this world.
4. Be transformed by continually renewing your mind (in His word and in prayer).
5. Then you will be able to prove His good and acceptable and perfect will for your life.

Notice that this is an ongoing process.

We can start from where we are and seek for His good and perfect will starting now, even if we have not been on that path before.

A Passage that dispels the idea of determinism. Jesus is speaking...

- 28 For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." 29 And when all the people heard *Him*, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. 30 **But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him. ...**
- Luke 7:28-35 (NKJV) These Pharisees and lawyers chose AGAINST God's good and perfect will for themselves. If God's will were determinism, they could not have done so.

More of the Passage

³¹ And the Lord said, "To what then shall I liken the men of this generation, and what are they like? ³² They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying: 'We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not weep.' ³³ For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' ³⁴ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' ³⁵ But wisdom is justified by all her children." [Luke 7:28-35 \(NKJV\)](#)

Who wanted to be the puppet masters?

These Pharisees and lawyers wanted to be the puppet masters over John the Baptist and over Jesus. In making that choice, they rejected God's good and perfect will for themselves.

So this means that God's Sovereignty demands accepting His right to BE OUR GOD by our own choice.

We must present ourselves to Him to serve Him. Because He is totally good, His good and perfect will for us is the BEST POSSIBLE CHOICE.

Luke 19:12-27 A Parable of Jesus

¹² Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. ¹³ So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' ¹⁴ But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this *man* to reign over us.'

Luke 19:12-27

- ¹⁵ And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.
- ¹⁶ Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' ¹⁷ And he said to him, 'Well *done*, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.'

Luke 19:12-27

- ¹⁸ And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' ¹⁹ Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'
- ²⁰ Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. ²¹ For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.'
- ²² And he said to him, 'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, *you* wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow.'

Luke 19:12-27

- ²³ Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?
- ²⁴ And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give *it* to him who has ten minas.'
- ²⁵ (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.')
- ²⁶ For I say to you, that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.
- ²⁷ But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay *them* before me.' “ (NKJV)

God's Sovereignty in the Parable: The nobleman stands for God/Messiah.

The servants are the people who serve Him.

Those who perished were those did not want God to reign over them.

This parable only “works” for a God who is totally good.

His judgment is righteous because refusing to allow God who is totally GOOD to rule over your life is equal to choosing evil. Eternal destiny is an effect of that decision.

Persuasion But Not Force

Because God's sovereignty is not determinism and we are not puppets on strings, He can use persuasion but not force to bring us into His righteousness and to fit us for heaven. (This is a character issue rather than a power issue—God's impartiality requires that our choices be real.)

How did Jesus describe the persuasion He was using to bring Saul of Tarsus to repentance, in Acts 26:14?

Persuasion But Not Force



He described it as goads—painful motivations toward the course God wanted Saul to take. Sometimes God uses strong forms of persuasion.

We can see in the case of Saul, that God went to extremes to bring Saul into belief.

Persuasion But Not Force

¹⁴ And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? *It is hard for you to kick against the goads.*' ¹⁵ So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ¹⁶ But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. Acts 26:14-16 (NKJV)

Before that Miraculous Event

God had been working to draw Saul toward Himself. An earlier reference shows what Stephen's witness to Saul involved. Stephen suffered and Stephen prayed.

I Believe Prayer Makes a Difference in God's Persistence.

Acts 7:54-60. ⁵⁴ When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him [Stephen] with *their* teeth. ⁵⁵ But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, ⁵⁶ and said, "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

I Believe Prayer Makes a Difference in God's Persistence.

⁵⁷ Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; ⁵⁸ and they cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him*. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

⁵⁹ And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."
⁶⁰ Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep. (NKJV)

I Believe Prayer Makes a Difference in God's Persistence.

- God was very persistent in spite of Saul's rejection—even sending Jesus to Saul in a blinding light to speak directly to him.
- I believe God answered Stephen's prayer of forgiveness by being so persistent with Saul.
- The whole world has benefited because of Saul's eventual salvation.
- We **SHOULD** pray for our friends who have rejected God—petitioning God to be **PERSISTENT**.

God Is Omniscient

God is not limited by time. He knows the end from the beginning. He knows all things.

This means that He knows every decision a person will make before he or she makes it. His election is conditioned upon our real decisions, which He knows in advance. His good and perfect will for each person includes their salvation—but many choose wrongly and go through the wide gate that leads to destruction, which He permits them to choose.

This is a simplified answer.

God continually deals with an infinite number of factors regarding each human being. So our best description of what is going on is only approximate.

We need to understand the meaning of God's Sovereignty for our own lives

Truths about God's Sovereignty

By understanding these truths.

1. God's Sovereignty is not determinism.
2. **God's Sovereignty holds authority over life and death.**
3. God's Sovereignty makes demands upon us.

Authority over Life and Death

One of the Ten Commandments is “Thou shalt not murder.” This commandment is a statement that human beings do NOT have authority over life and death. Why is God correct to restrict such authority to Himself?

“As the heavens are higher than the earth, His ways are higher than our ways.”—Isaiah 55:6-11

He is the only One who is completely good and completely wise. He is the One seeking for all to come to repentance.

Authority over Life and Death



We are all equal before Him, His creatures, beset with many frailties. We are all valuable—created in His image, with eternal souls.

He is the only One wise enough to know the best course of action for each human being, with the purpose of giving eternal life to each one who will receive it. He is the only One whose understanding is infinite.

What does eternal destiny have to do with this issue?

Premature death could prevent someone from finding the path to heaven.

For those who already have salvation, premature death would remove their witness for others who need it.

What does eternal destiny have to do with this issue?

Eternal destiny for all persons whose lives interact with a particular life—this requires infinite understanding to choose properly.

Only God has that much wisdom. He gave the example of Jesus raising the dead at every funeral He attended. It is our job to choose life every time—even the hard cases.

Our temporary suffering produces a far more eternal weight of glory—sometimes for us and sometimes even for others.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

- ¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day.
- ¹⁷ For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸ while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal. (NKJV)

Authority over Life and Death



We are all equal before Him, His creatures, beset with many frailties. We are all valuable—created in His image, with eternal souls.

He expressed how highly He values us by dying for us—so that we could be with Him forever.

He is the only One wise enough to know the best course of action for each human being, with the purpose of giving eternal life to each one who will receive it. He is the only One whose understanding is infinite.

Therefore, these are some
Current Issues for God's
authority, because they deal with
life or death decisions.

1. The death penalty
2. Abortion
3. Euthanasia
4. Terrorism

The Bible has a nuanced view of the death penalty.

In chapters 4-6 of Genesis, God had not established the death penalty for murder, but rather had allowed exile or banishment as a punishment. People became worse and worse. In Genesis 6:1-13, God reacted to the violence of human beings against one another in several ways. He said first, that He will not strive with man forever, indicating that He had been using persuasion to stop humans from violence, but that they had rejected His persuasion.

The Bible is pro-life, even regarding the death penalty.



Then He said He would reduce human life-spans on earth—and one can speculate that this would act to persuade humans to be less violent because of an increased awareness of accountability before God. Then He says He will wipe out that generation and start over with the family of Noah.

Then after the flood, God established the death penalty for murder. What does all of this tell about God's view of murder and violence?

It tells us several things.



First of all, that God takes murder very seriously indeed—that it is such a horrendous evil that He would consider wiping out the murderous population.

It is such a serious evil that He would set up a permanent penalty for it—death of the murderer.

It also tells us God is pro-life, even about the death penalty.

The sequence of events leading to the death penalty declaration matches Ezekiel's explanation that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their wicked ways and live—Ezekiel 34:11.

In addition, God's demands for human legal systems involved very strict rules of evidence—perjury on the part of the accusers was severely punished. Multiple witnesses were required to establish facts. God viewed the protection of the innocent-accused as vital within the legal system. He holds human government to “Thou shalt not murder.”

Principles Visible in the Flood Disaster

What do God's decisions, **regarding the flood**, tell you about determinism versus real human choices? Did God override human decisions and make some humans "puppets on strings" to intervene in the time of human cruelty prior to the flood? Did He negate human choice?

No. He allowed wrong choices to continue until only one righteous family was left. Then He intervened drastically. Determinism is not a correct viewpoint. People's choices are real.

The Apostle Peter describes this time when God waited for their repentance as God's Patience.

¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, ¹⁹ by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, ²⁰ who formerly were disobedient, **when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared**, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. ²¹ There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (**not** the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good **conscience** toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 3:18-21. (NKJV)

This is one of those obscure passages that nobody ever preaches from.

It is profound and amazing, though. It says that one of the matters Jesus accomplished during the time between His death and resurrection was preaching or proclaiming truth to the individuals who failed to repent before the flood. He still cared about them.

It also says baptism saves, but NOT physical baptism. Rather it is the cleansing of the conscience through the atonement accomplished by Jesus Christ.

Baptism is a symbol of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, and our heart decision to ask that His atonement cover our sins.

Current Issues: Politics Intersects God's Sovereignty



What does all of this tell you about issues in our current political realm, such as abortion on demand, euthanasia, stem cell research, and government oversight of medical care costs with the potential to ration care?

This tells me that God views all these matters as intensely important, and that He wants us to choose life and to protect life in law.

Current Issues



We should not choose a system that will make euthanasia more attractive and widespread through rationed care.

Free market economics produce the most effective and least costly distributions of products and services. Morality moves us toward those solutions rather than less efficient, more costly statist bureaucracies. The free market makes effective help possible for the poor through prosperity for the many.

God's Authority over Life and Death

Morality demands protection in law for the unborn, as well.

Who has the moral right to decide when human life begins and why?

God. He creates human life. He gives us life individually and we matter to Him.

When does Psalm 139 say life begins?

When God saw the Psalmist's unformed substance, later woven together during gestation. This sounds like conception.

God's Authority over Life and Death

When does Jeremiah 1:5 say that it begins?

Before God formed Jeremiah in the womb.

When does Luke 1:39-45 say that it begins?

Very early pregnancy.

Do you think God takes it lightly when humans make a different judgment about that moment than His judgment?

I believe God is deeply grieved and outraged that people take human life so inconsequentially that they do not seek His wisdom in this matter.

We see a balance in the Scriptures.

People live in within a human system of laws, and those laws are never exactly like God's laws.

The Roman Empire was the system when the New Testament was written, and its laws were violently corrupt. It held power through violent corruption. Eventually, it fell. By God's grace the church survived. Some of that survival occurred because missionaries had already been witnessing to the barbarians—according to St. Augustine in *City of God*.

We see a balance in the Scriptures.

The focus of the New Testament was NOT legal reform of the Roman Empire, but rather, individual transformation. Christians were told to obey human government during that time (within the bounds of morality). They had no voice in government at that time.

Christians were told to witness no matter what the cost.

Now we do have a voice in our government. Having a voice makes a difference.

We see a balance in the Scriptures.

Thus, regarding the life issues of today, we have a responsibility to act within the law for the sake of positive change, and to speak up and to witness.

If enough people took God's word seriously and voted pro-life in the presidential and governor's races and judicial races, and wrote appropriate letters to elected leaders, the laws would change to protect the unborn. The *stare decisis* logjam on legal decisions would change as well, because pro-life judges would be selected.

We have the potential

To persuade people to vote pro-life. We have the potential to change people's attitudes as they understand the goodness of God. We need to be willing to talk about these issues **in friendly ways** for the purpose of transforming lives.

Most of all, we need to witness about finding eternal life so that lives can be transformed.

I believe the life issues are part of witnessing, because people's consciences have been seared regarding the unborn. That means they need God's forgiveness even more.

When people cannot tell right from wrong

About life and death issues,

They have a difficult time with repentance.

Failure to repent of sins is a barrier to eternal life.

It is like a one-way mirror. If you look from one side of the mirror, you only see a reflection of reality—not what exists on the other side of the glass. If you turn the glass around and look from the other side, you see what is actually there.

Denial of right and wrong over life issues is evidence of blindness to what is really there in the spiritual realm.

Another Issue of Today's World: The mountains of Israel

God's Pro-Life views are really vital to understanding how He sees those mountains. His view of those mountains should influence our loyalties.

Ezekiel chapter 36 describes failure to protect innocent life in law—resulting in nations' being driven out of the mountains of Israel—first the ancient Canaanites, then the northern tribes who adopted the violent idolatry of the Canaanites, and finally regarding people who “bereave the nation of children” in the end times.

That means this principle is important to God at all times.

Protection of human life in law should be a guiding principle in our politics.

When one side of the conflict believes in targeting children as means of waging war, using children as suicide bombers or human shields, that side cannot be supported in their goals. Our nation needs to take this issue seriously and be loyal to the side of the conflict that values human life.

God says those mountains belong to Him, and He wants to give them to Israel. We should not rush toward a human solution to conflict that goes against God's expressed wishes.

Terrorism

- Tactics in warfare—such as targeting humans who are non-combatants—are a violation of God's desire to protect human life. Non-combatants are easy targets—unarmed, unable to defend themselves. Targeting them is proof of holding life as cheap, and of a cowardly approach to warfare.
- Terrorism is a form of mass murder, prohibited by the 10 commandments. It must not be tolerated.

Terrorism

- The side using terrorism must be viewed as illegitimate for using it. Terrorism degrades the conflict in every possible way.
- The leaders who support it prove themselves to be cruel to their own constituents—the same attitude toward life carries over to their attempts to maintain power among their constituents.
- Approving such a tactic acts as an enabler of ruthless cruelty—legitimizing cruelty for power's sake in the eyes of the world.

All these political issues

- Are LIFE issues, and God has something to say about the value of LIFE.
- Because people have drifted away from the Bible, they have lost sight of God's love for human lives. They have lost sight of the infinite value He places on each life. They have lost sight of where the moral lines are or should be in law. The proportion of people in this world is quite high, who have participated in one or another deadly form of devaluing human lives.

Among all these political issues...

- We must consider the need in our world for repentance and restoration.
- We must consider the danger of God's judgment against these evils—the danger of losing His protection over our nations and our world. We are watching the world's stability unravel. We need God's help.
- The same moral blindness that sees abortion as a right sees terrorism as a form of protest.

All these political issues demand that we

- ❑ Consider the need for a renewal of the spirit and the mind through God's principles.
- ❑ Consider the need to avoid being silenced in regard to spiritual matters, and the need for courage to speak up.
- ❑ To be silent in the face of threats to life is a failure.
- ❑ To accept a view of religion that places it behind closed church doors is also a failure. Principles MATTER.

We need to understand the meaning of God's Sovereignty for our own lives

Truths about God's Sovereignty

By understanding these truths.

1. God's Sovereignty is not determinism.
2. God's Sovereignty holds authority over life and death.
3. **God's Sovereignty makes demands upon us.**

Malachi 1:6-14

- ⁶ "A son honors *his* father, And a servant *his* master. If then I am the Father, Where *is* My honor? And if I *am* a Master, Where *is* My reverence? Says the LORD of hosts To you priests who despise My name. Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?' ⁷ " *You* offer defiled food on My altar. But say, 'In what way have we defiled You?' By saying, 'The table of the LORD is contemptible.'

Malachi 1:6-14

- ⁸ And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, *Is it not evil?* And when you offer the lame and sick, *Is it not evil?* Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?" Says the LORD of hosts.
- ⁹ "But now entreat God's favor, That He may be gracious to us. *While* this is being *done* by your hands, Will He accept you favorably?" Says the LORD of hosts. ¹⁰ "Who *is there* even among you who would shut the doors, So that you would not kindle fire *on* My altar in vain?"

Malachi 1:6-14

I have no pleasure in you," Says the LORD of hosts, "Nor will I accept an offering from your hands. ¹¹ For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name *shall be* great among the Gentiles; In every place incense *shall be* offered to My name, And a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the nations," Says the LORD of hosts. ¹² "But you profane it, In that you say, 'The table of the LORD is defiled; And its fruit, its food, *is* contemptible.'

Malachi 1:6-14

- ¹³ You also say, 'Oh, what a weariness!' And you sneer at it," Says the LORD of hosts. "And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand?" Says the LORD. ¹⁴ "But cursed *be* the deceiver Who has in his flock a male, And takes a vow, But sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished—For I *am* a great King," Says the LORD of hosts, "And My name *is to be* feared among the nations. (NKJV)

God's Sovereignty makes demands upon us.

Because God is the greatest King, we should treat Him with even more respect than a human king. We should offer our best to Him, not treating Him as though He is a figment of the imagination whose opinion does not matter.

Psalms 47:1-2, 6-7

- Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph! ² For the LORD Most High *is* awesome; *He is* a great King over all the earth. ... ⁶ Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! ⁷ For God *is* the King of all the earth; Sing praises with understanding. (NKJV)
- What demands are placed upon us in this Psalm? We are supposed to praise God with understanding—sing praises to Him, clap and shout with the voice of triumph. We are supposed to recognize His protection over us.

How is God's protection of us related to His Sovereignty?

³ He will subdue the peoples under us, And the nations under our feet. ⁴ He will choose our inheritance for us, The excellence of Jacob whom He loves. Selah. **For the shields of the earth *belong* to God; (NKJV)—** He has the power and authority to protect us from enemy nations. He has power and authority to provide an inheritance for us and our families. The shields of the earth belong to Him. He has authority and persuasiveness to work through human events for our protection.

The last 90 years or so

Have been like the time of Noah in terms of widespread human wickedness.

We know from the prophetic Scriptures that the end time will be similarly violent and wicked, and that the righteous will be severely persecuted.

The shields of the earth still belong to God. Only God has the wisdom to know the proper time to end the present era. So our relationship with Him individually and collectively is vital for this world as well as the next.

Portions of Malachi 3:6-4:3

- Return to Me, and I will return to you," Says the LORD of hosts. "But you said, 'In what way shall we return?' ⁸ "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. ⁹ You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, *Even* this whole nation. ¹⁰ Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for

Portions of Malachi 3:6-4:3

- You the windows of heaven And pour out for you *such* blessing That *there will not be room enough to receive it.* ¹¹ "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," Says the LORD of hosts; ¹³ "Your words have been harsh against Me," Says the LORD, "Yet you say, 'What have we spoken against You?'"

Portions of Malachi 3:6-4:3

- ¹⁴ You have said, 'It is useless to serve God; What profit *is it* that we have kept His ordinance, And that we have walked as mourners Before the LORD of hosts? ¹⁵ So now we call the proud blessed, For those who do wickedness are raised up; They even tempt God and go free.' "
- ¹⁶ Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, And the LORD listened and heard *them*;

Portions of Malachi 3:6-4:3

- So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the LORD And who meditate on His name. ¹⁷ "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him." (NKJV)

God's Sovereignty makes demands upon us.

We should offer our tithe to God.

We should faithfully trust Him to make our efforts of value, and we should look to the eternal future rather than depending on the temporary present for the rewards our efforts will receive.

God does reward work for Him in the present, but if He delays, that does not mean He has disregarded our efforts.

This is a practical expression of faith. We grow in faith as we experience His provision.

What promises go with those who respond appropriately to His Sovereignty?

² But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves. ³ You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do *this*, " Says the LORD of hosts. Malachi 4:3 (NKJV)

The rewards will be permanent, and God will make an eternal difference between those who serve Him and those who are wicked.

The rewards

- May not happen in this life. As the world abandons God and abandons “Thou shalt not murder,” the rule of law begins to fall apart.
- Without the rule of law, nobody is safe. Nobody has enough certainty to find any kind of success.
- SO the promises from God may be postponed to eternity if the world falls apart.

As the world loses sight

- ❑ Of the value of human life, it loses sight of the value of the lives of those who call it to repentance.
- ❑ The world, once it disavows “Thou shalt not murder,” will also disavow protection of dissenting voices. Persecution of Christians is growing around the world.
- ❑ The same people who fail to protect dissenting voices may soon find themselves persecuted as well.

Remember the parable of the nobleman and his servants in Luke 19: 12-27?

What demands does this parable place on us?

To be faithful in the responsibilities He has given us, to invest for His kingdom—with time, talents, money, creativity, to serve Him courageously.

- Luke 6:46-49 ⁴⁶ "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say? ⁴⁷ Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: ⁴⁸ He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock.

Luke 6:46-49

49 But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great."

Lordship is a reference to Christ's right to rule. What is the appropriate response to Jesus' lordship?

To do what He says. To hear His sayings and follow them.

What are the results of that decision?

A house that will withstand all the storms of life. An eternal home.

What are we supposed to seek, according to Luke 12:31-32?

³¹ But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. ³² Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Luke 12:31-32 (NKJV)

- We are supposed to seek the kingdom of God.

How does God feel about our seeking His kingdom?

- He is happy to give us the Kingdom—It is His glad choice to give us the kingdom.

Luke 11:9-13

- ⁹ "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹ If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if *he asks* for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" Luke 11:9-13 (NKJV)

Luke 11:9-13

What are we supposed to ask for, as we are asking and seeking and knocking?

- We are supposed to ask for the Holy Spirit!

If we ask for the Holy Spirit in our lives, and God is King, who does that imply is to be our King?

- That God should be King in our own lives.
- How is God's Sovereignty important for prayer?
- To increase our trust in His power and authority to help. His goodness is even more important—so that we are convinced of His good plans for our lives.

Romans 8:1-2

- There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

Micah 7:18

- ¹⁸ Who *is* a God like You, Pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights *in* mercy. ¹⁹ He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea. (NKJV)

Homework

In 3 sets

Homework Class 4 Set 1

- Determinism is the idea that all human decisions are pre-set. In the secular form, determinism assumes our genes and environment pre-set all our decisions, so that human choices are just illusions. In the religious form, determinism assumes that God is behind the scenes, causing people to make all the decisions He wants them to make. While the Bible affirms that God is all-powerful, and that He knows ahead of time every decision we will make or could make, Bible is clear that our decisions are NOT ILLUSION. They are real. We are the ones who make them and we are responsible for them.

Homework Class 4 Set 1

- Thus the Bible teaches that God HAS a good and perfect will, which we should strive to find and follow, and that He has a permissive will regarding decisions He does NOT want people to make. When Jesus prayed the Lord's Prayer, He said, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." What does this tell us about God's will?

Homework Class 4 Set 1

- Romans 12:1-2 indicates that several requirements must be met to find God's good and perfect will. What are those requirements? Please note that "living sacrifice" means staying alive.
- Read Luke 7:29-30. Were the Pharisees and lawyers "puppets" with God in the background pulling their strings, causing them to make their decisions?
- In the next verses, Luke 7:31-35, which group did Jesus describe as TRYING to be the puppet masters? What basic problem does that reveal on the part of those individuals who rejected Him?

Homework Class 4 Set 1

- Read Luke 19:12-27. In this parable, what was the basic problem with those who perished when the nobleman returned?
- Why is it right individually to want God to reign over us?
- How does that decision regarding who is in charge of our lives relate to finding God's good and perfect will for our lives?
- Does this parable indicate that such a decision is related to our eternal destiny?

Homework Class 4 Set 1

- Because God's sovereignty is not determinism and we are not puppets on strings, He can use persuasion but not force to bring us into His righteousness and to fit us for heaven. How did Jesus describe the persuasion He was using to bring Saul of Tarsus to repentance, in Acts 26:14?
- Read Acts 7:54-8:4. What role might Stephen's death and final prayer have played in Saul's repentance?

Homework Class 4 Set 2

- Read Genesis 3:22-24. Who wielded the authority over life and death by restricting human access to the tree of life?
- What gives God the moral right to have authority over life and death?
- One of the Ten Commandments is “Thou shalt not murder.” This commandment is a statement that human beings do NOT have authority over life and death. Why is God correct to restrict such authority to Himself?
- What does eternal destiny have to do with this issue?

Homework Class 4 Set 2

- How did Jesus Christ respond to the death of His friend Lazarus, in John 11:1-45?
- Why did Jesus come to earth, according to John 10:10?
- What reason did God give for the most severe penalty for murder, in Genesis 9:6?
- What does this tell us about human worth in God's sight?

Homework Class 4 Set 2

- In chapters 4-6 of Genesis, God had not established the death penalty for murder, but rather had allowed exile or banishment as a punishment. In Genesis 6:1-13, God reacted to the violence of human beings against one another in several ways. What were they?
- Then after the flood, God established the death penalty for murder. What does all of this tell you about God's view of murder and violence?
- Read Genesis 9:6-7 why did God say to establish the death penalty for murder?
- What does all of this tell you about determinism versus real human choices?
- Did God override human decisions and make some humans "puppets on strings" to intervene in the time of human cruelty prior to the flood? Did He negate human choice?

Homework Class 4 Set 2

- What does all of this tell you about issues in our current political realm, such as abortion on demand, euthanasia, stem cell research, and government oversight of medical care costs with the potential to ration care, and about terrorism.
- Who has the moral right to decide when human life begins?
- When does Psalm 139 say that it begins?
- When does Jeremiah 1:5 say that it begins?
- When does Luke 1:39-45 say that it begins?
- Do you think God takes it lightly when humans make a different judgment about that moment than His judgment?

Homework Class 4 Set 2

- In Job 1:11 and 2:5, what was Satan trying to get Job to do through all his persecution?
- What did that mean to Job's wife, in Job 2:9? What does that tell us about the euthanasia debate?
- During dying, suffering often occurs. How might God's persuasion toward eternal life be involved in the dying process?
- If the euthanasia decision truncates that suffering, given the reality of God's judgment against evil, does it have the potential to create much more suffering in eternity?
- Do we humans have a moral right to decide when to end life?

Homework Class 4 Set 2

- ❑ Does human government have a right to decide when to end life, other than for duly tried and convicted murderers, or in defense during war?
- ❑ Does human government have a duty before God to protect innocent human life? Read Jeremiah 22:3-5, and 19:3-5 and Ezekiel 36:18-19.
- ❑ How important is it to God for us to choose LIFE?
- ❑ Read Proverbs 24:11-12. What responsibility does this passage give us regarding others?
- ❑ What will God do in response to our efforts?
- ❑ How is God described?

Homework Class 4 Set 3

- Read Malachi 1:6-14. What does God's Sovereignty demand in this passage?
- Read Malachi 3:6-4:3. What does God's Sovereignty demand in this passage?
- What promises go with those who respond appropriately to His Sovereignty?
- Read Psalm 47:1-9. What demands are placed upon us in this Psalm?

Homework Class 4 Set 3

- How is God's protection of us related to His Sovereignty?
- Read Luke 19:12-27 again. What demands does this parable place on us?
- Lordship is a reference to Christ's right to rule. In Luke 6:46-49, what is the appropriate response to Jesus' lordship?
- What are the results of that decision?

Homework Class 4 Set 3

- What are we supposed to seek, according to Luke 12:31-32?
- How does God feel about our seeking His kingdom?
- Read Luke 11:9-13. What are we supposed to ask for, as we are asking and seeking and knocking?
- If we ask for the Holy Spirit in our lives, and God is King, who does that imply is to be our King?