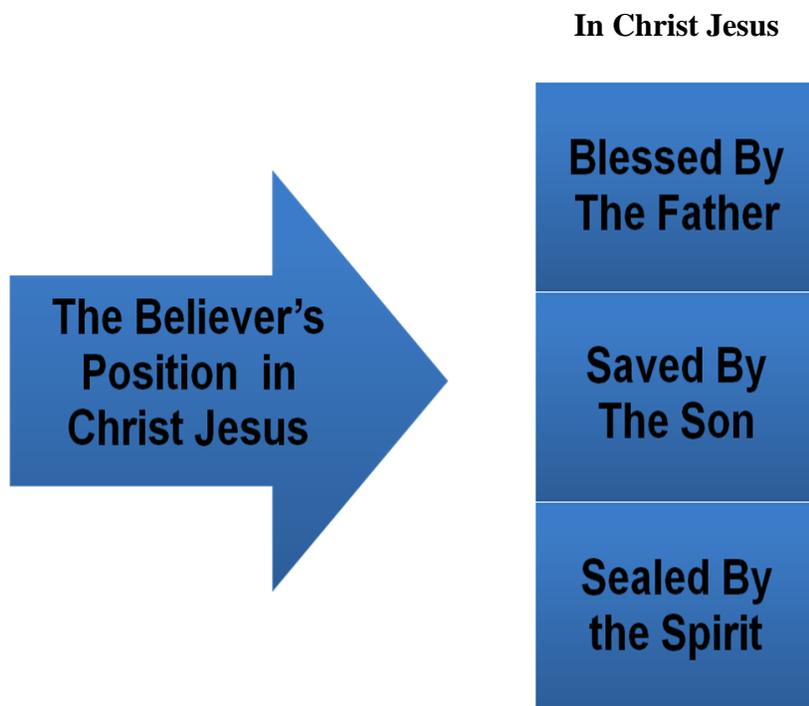


**Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow:
The Doctrine of Election and Human Responsibility
Ephesians 1:1-14**

In the plan of salvation:

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| I. <u>We have been blessed by the Father.</u> | 1:1-6 |
| 1) He has blessed us with a commission. | 1:1-2 |
| 2) He has blessed us in election. | 1:3-4 |
| 3) He has blessed us in separation. | 1:4 |
| 4) He has blessed us with affection. | 1:4 |
| 5) He has blessed us with adoption. | 1:5 |
| 6) He has blessed us with union. | 1:6 |
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| II. <u>We have been saved by the Son.</u> | 1:7-12 |
| 1) We have redemption. | 1:7-8 |
| 2) We have revelation. | 1:9-10 |
| 3) We have riches. | 1:11-12 |
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| III. <u>We have been sealed by the Spirit.</u> | 1:13-14 |
| 1) We have God's protection. | 1:13 |
| 2) We have God's down payment. | 1:14 |
| 3) We have God's possession. | 1:14 |
| 4) We have God's promise. | 1:14 |



**Baptist Faith and Message 2000
God's Purpose of Grace (Article V)**

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end...

Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6, 12, 17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.

Five Points of Calvinism (The T.U.L.I.P.)

The Doctrines	An Explanation
Total Depravity (or inability)	As a result of Adam's fall into sin, the entire human race is born with a sin nature; all of humanity is dead in trespasses and sin. Man is unable to save himself or turn to God without the enablement of the Spirit.
Unconditional Election	Because man is dead in sin, he is unable to initiate a response to God; therefore, in eternity past God elected certain people to salvation. Election and predestination are unconditional; they are not based on man's response or foreseen faith.
Limited Atonement (or Particular Redemption)	Because God determined that certain ones should be saved as a result of God's unconditional election. He determines that Christ should die for the elect. All whom God has elected and Christ has died for will be saved.
Irresistible Grace (or Effectual Calling)	Those whom God elected and Christ died for, God draws to Himself through irresistible grace. God enables man to willingly come to Him. When God calls, man responds.
Perseverance of the Saints (or the Savior)	The particular ones God has elected and drawn to Himself through the Holy Spirit will persevere in faith. None whom God has elected will be lost; they are eternally secure.

**Resolving the Issue:
Embracing the Tension and Mystery**

I believe God predestines and elects persons to salvation but does so in such a way as to do no violence to our freewill and personal responsibility to repent of sin and believe the gospel. There is both tension and mystery to this doctrine as there is in our understanding of the Bible's inspiration and the doctrine of the person of Christ. Salvation is of the Lord. Any person who flees to Jesus for salvation will be saved. I believe both. I embrace both.

**Finding Biblical Balance:
Theological and Practical Considerations**

1. In our doctrine of salvation, we should start with God and not man. The Bible affirms that *salvation is from the Lord* (Jonah 2:9) and *by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift — not from works, so that no one can boast* (Ephesians 2:8-9). We should be God-centered in all of our theology, especially the doctrine of salvation. The Bible teaches that salvation is God's work.
2. We should affirm the truth both of God's sovereignty and human freewill. "The Abstract of Principles" was the founding confession for The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. It was penned by Basil Manly Jr. in 1859. Manly was a Calvinist, and yet Article IV on Providence reveals a healthy, theological balance in our Baptist forefather. Manly wrote:

"God from eternity decrees or permits all things that come to pass, and perpetually upholds, directs and governs all creatures and all events; yet so as not in any wise to be author or approver of sin nor to destroy *the freewill and responsibility* of intelligent creatures" (*emphasis mine*).

Many Baptists believe the Bible teaches that God predestines and elects persons to salvation, but that He does so in such a way as to do no violence to their freewill and responsibility to repent from sin and believe the Gospel. Is there a tension here? Yes. Is there divine mystery? Absolutely!
3. Recognize that extreme positions on either side of the issue are biblically unbalanced, theologically unhealthy, and practically undesirable.

Theologically, we dare not be seduced into living in a theological ghetto that may espouse a nice, neat doctrinal system, but that does so at the expense of a wholesome and comprehensive theology.

 - Practically, we must not become manipulative and gimmicky in our presentation of the Gospel as if the conversion of the lost depends ultimately, or even primarily, on us. Neither should we be lulled into an antipathy toward personal evangelism and global missions.

- Any theology that does not result in a "hot heart" for the souls of lost persons is a theology not worth having.
 - If the initials J.C. bring first to your mind the name John Calvin rather than Jesus Christ and you fancy yourself more of an evangelist for Calvinism than Christ, then this previous word of concern is particularly for you. Never forget that the greatest theologian who ever lived was also the greatest Christian missionary/evangelist whoever lived. His name is Paul.
4. Act with personal integrity in your ministry when it comes to this issue. Be honest. Fly your theological colors.
 5. Teach the issues to your people, especially your youth.
 - We do our people no favors with a dumbed-down theology in the local church. I believe we should raise the biblical and theological bar in our churches, and we should do so immediately. I believe we should train our people so they mature to the point that we can consider the great theological debates between Augustine and Pelagius, Luther/Calvin and Erasmus, Calvinists and Arminians.
 6. Recognize that our *Baptist Faith and Message 2000* is a well-constructed canopy under which varying perspectives on this issue can peacefully and helpfully co-exist. There is room for Calvinist and non-Calvinist alike.
 - Because of our passionate commitments to the glory of God, the Lordship of Christ, biblical authority, salvation by grace through faith, and the Great Commission, we can and should work in wonderful harmony with each other.
 7. Finally, as a denomination we must devote as much passion and energy to *studying* the Word as we have to *defending* it.

Conclusion

The great Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon was a five-point Calvinist. He was also a passionate evangelist and soul winner. On August 1, 1858, he preached a sermon entitled, "Sovereign Grace and Man's Responsibility." The words of wisdom that flowed from his mouth on that day could only come from a capable pastor/theologian with a shepherd's heart and a love for the lost. We would do well to heed the counsel of this Baptist hero upon whose shoulders we stand today: "I see in one place, God presiding over all in providence; and yet I see and I cannot help seeing, that man acts as he pleases, and that God has left his actions to his own will, in a great measure. Now, if I were to declare that man was so free to act, that there was no precedence of God over his actions, I should be driven very near to Atheism; and if, on the other hand, I declare that God so overrules all things, as that man is not free enough to be responsible, I am driven at once into Antinomianism or fatalism. That God predestines, and that man is responsible, are two things that few can see. . . They are believed to be inconsistent and contradictory; but they are not. It is just the fault of our weak judgment. Two truths cannot be contradictory to each other. If, then, I find taught in one place that everything is fore-ordained, that is true; and if I find in another place that man is responsible for all his actions, that is true; and it is my folly that leads me to imagine that two truths can ever contradict each other. These two truths, I do not believe, can ever be welded into one upon any human anvil, but one they shall be in eternity: they are two lines that

are so nearly parallel, that the mind that shall pursue them farthest, will never discover that they converge... but they do converge, and they will meet somewhere in eternity, close to the throne of God, whence all truth doth spring You ask me to reconcile the two. I answer, they do not want any reconciliation; I never tried to reconcile them to myself, because I could never see a discrepancy ... Both are true; no two truths can be inconsistent with each other; and what you have to do is to believe them both."