

by Wayne Goff

**First and foremost**, the Bible does **not** teach *inherited depravity*, whether it is total (Calvin) or partial (Arminius). Romans 5:12 plainly states *“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—”*

I do believe that one can **become** depraved through a long time practice of sin (Eph. 2:2-3), but nobody is *born* depraved in any sense of the word! Jesus said, *“...unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven”* (Matt. 18:3). We are encouraged to *“become as little children”*! Thus we rightly conclude that little children are innocent and free from sin.

**Second**, the Bible does **not** teach that certain men are *unconditionally* chosen for salvation (Calvin), nor does it teach that God chose people for salvation based on His ability to *foreknow* the future (Arminius). 2 Peter 3:9 states, *“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”* While the Calvinist cannot deal with this concept, an Arminian might tend to agree with the verse while still affirming God’s foreknowledge of all the saved. However, keep in mind that **foreknowledge** is not the same as being **foreordained**! Man’s free will is not affected by foreknowledge; and God has not foreordained (compelled) some to be saved against their will. God’s will is that ALL MEN repent and be saved. If He **chose** to foreknow *who* those people were, wouldn’t it be logical that He could also *prevent* all the rebellious from being born?!

What God **did** *foreknow* and *predestine* is the **“kind”** of person that would be saved, Romans 8:29. He determined that His children should be *“conformed to the image of His Son”*! Thus, men choose to believe, repent, confess and be baptized in order to be forgiven of their sins, and arise to walk in a new life in the likeness of Jesus Christ!

**Third**, the idea that Christ died only for the “elect” (Calvin) is absolutely abhorrent and contrary to 2 Peter 3:9, but we must **clarify** the statement that “Jesus bore the sin of everyone who ever lived” (Arminius). 1 Peter 2:24 says that Jesus *“...bore our sins in His own body on the tree,”* but that applies to those who have accepted the terms of His salvation — *“that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness...”* Thus, I believe the *potential* for all men’s salvation was made possible on the cross — Jesus died for all men — but all men must **choose** to be saved. Arminius would agree with that statement, but would *disagree* on the terms of salvation, including baptism for the remission of sins.

**Fourth**, the Bible absolutely agrees with the statement that God’s grace can be resisted so as to reject salvation in Christ. Titus 2:11-12 says, *“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age.”* God’s grace has *appeared* to all men, but it teaches them the **conditions** of salvation — deny ungodliness and lust, while living righteous lives. Man must choose to do good and to shun the evil. Those who choose to reject this are lost in sin, John 3:17.

**Fifth**, the Bible also teaches that a man can fall from grace and lose his salvation. *“You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace”* (Gal. 5:4). Not only is it a possibility, but the apostle Paul affirmed that some Galatian Christians had already done it!

If falling from grace is impossible, then why did Paul lead with the Corinthians *“not to receive the grace of God in vain”* (2 Cor. 6:1). So Mr. Arminius was right again on this point.

### So What?

It is *important* for us to know what the Bible teaches on the subjects of salvation, election, foreknowledge, foreordination, etc. Those who do not *abide* in the doctrine of Christ do not have God (2 Jn. 9)! That reason alone should be sufficient for every one of us to study God’s Word diligently. Thus, I am neither Calvinist nor Arminian, but simply *“Christian”* (Acts 11:26).