

DR. NORMAN GEISLER

CHOSEN
But Free



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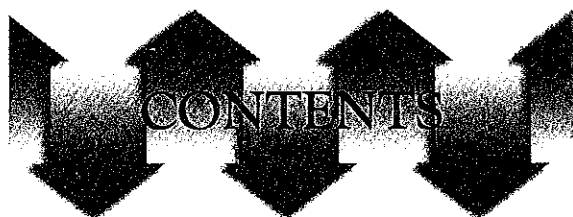
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THREE VIEWS ON SOVEREIGNTY AND RESPONSIBILITY

The three basic views we will examine are represented respectively by extreme Calvinists, moderate Calvinists, and modern Arminians (Wesleyans).¹⁰ First, a look at extreme Calvinism.

Extreme Calvinism: predetermination is *independent of foreknowledge*

Statement of the extreme Calvinist view

According to this view, God's predetermination is done *independent of His* foreknowledge of human free acts. God operates with such unapproachable sovereignty that His choices are made with total disregard for the choices of mortal men. Strong Puritan Calvinist William Ames asserts:

There is no foreknowledge which is prerequisite or presupposed for the decree of predestination besides that simple intelligence which relates to all things, since it depends upon no cause, reason, or outward condition, but proceeds purely from the will of him who predestines.

What is more, according to Ames, God determines to save whomever He wishes regardless of whether they choose to believe or not. In fact, God gives the faith to believe to whomever He wills. Without this God-given faith they could not and would not believe. In fact, fallen human beings are so dead in sin that God must first regenerate them before they can even believe. Dead men do not believe anything; they are dead!¹¹

There is an important corollary to this view. If free choices were not considered at all when God made the list of the elect, then irresistible grace on the unwilling follows. That is, man would have no say in his own salvation. Accordingly, the fact that all men do not choose to love, worship, and serve God will make no difference whatsoever to God. He will simply "doublewhammy" those He chooses with His irresistible power and force them into His kingdom against their will (see chapter 5).

¹⁰What is popularly known as "Arminianism" today is really Wesleyan (following John Wesley) and not what Jacobus Arminius and his immediate followers held (see chapter 6).

¹¹William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, trans. and ed. John D. Eusden (Durham, N.C.: The Labyrinth Press, 1983), 153.