

# CALVINISTS, ARMINIANS, AND PAUL

## A RIGHTLY DIVIDED LOOK AT AN ENDLESS DEBATE

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." ~  
*Colossians 2:8*

### 1. Our Approach

- a. This is one of many wrong division debates: OT or NT, signs, mode of baptism.
- b. Don't let yourself be pigeon holed into one or the other: Calvinist or Arminian
- c. Our understanding comes from the word of God rightly divided – 2 Tim 2:7, 15
- d. Paul is our apostle, and the doctrine of grace is taught in his epistles – Eph 3:2
- e. This would have historically gotten you excommunication, torture, or worse.
- f. Only recently has religious freedom combined with access to Bible knowledge

### 2. History of the Controversy

- a. Determinism is a philosophical topic outside the Bible not unique to Christians
- b. Free will or Fate was discussed by philosophers (Plato, Epicurus, Stoics, etc.)
- c. Augustine introduced Greek philosophy into Christianity, and allegorized the Bible
- d. Calvin references Augustine in almost every chapter of his Institutes.
- e. Arminius was trained Calvinist in Geneva: neither one could rightly divide.
- f. Philosophy mixed with the gospel of confused Christianity is dangerous.
- g. Bible words are hijacked: elect, predestination, calling, grace, "before the world"

### 3. Paul's Reaction to the Controversy

- a. The controversy was already on the table in Acts 17:18, Paul ignored it. 2Tim 2:23
- b. He warns Corinth (near Athens) about the wisdom of the world - 1 Cor 1:19-20
- c. His response is to preach Christ crucified to them – 1 Cor 1:21-24, 3:18-19
- d. He warns the Colossians against philosophy and vain deceit – Col 2:6-8
- e. Free will debates distract from the gospel; points to systems rather than a Savior
- f. Calvin said that his doctrine of election is the assurance of salvation
- g. The Articles of Remonstrance used John 3:16, and 3:36 for the gospel!

### 4. Asking the Right Questions – A Practical Approach

- a. How is a soul saved? – Eph 1:13, what is the gospel? → 1 Cor 15:1-4
- b. What was before the world ordained to our glory? - 1 Cor 2:6-8
- c. What is the mystery of Christ? – Eph 3:6, Col 1:27, Rom 11:25
- d. It is not people, but a purpose in a mystery of Christ: Eph 1:11, 3:8-12
- e. We are called according to his purpose (the mystery) – Rom 8:28, 2 Tim 1:9
- f. People are sinners needing the grace of God that appeared to all men- Titus 2:11
- g. We must believe the gospel, then we must do good works Rom 4:25, Titus 2:8-9