

# Whose Doing Is It? God's or Man's

---

Church History and Differing Theologies - 2

July 11, 2010

---

- I. Preparatory Information
  - A. **Romans 11:33-36** . . . Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! [34] For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? [35] Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? [36] For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.
  - B. Review:
    1. Ultimate Goal Of This Teaching
      - a. To encourage you to look at the entire Bible – both Old and New Testaments – when searching out what God is like, how God deals with us, and what God says about specific topics or issues.
      - b. To show you the beauty of God's Word by demonstrating that when taken as a whole rather than selected or favored parts, it brings to light the unity between seemingly contradictory topics and issues even when that unity remains partly shrouded in mystery.
    2. Three Layers of Theology in Our Day
      - a. The **Foundational Layer**: The Basic Theology or Tenets of the Faith which all Christians hold to – either knowingly or unknowingly. These are sufficiently expressed by the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed.
      - b. The **Primary Layer** – built on top of the **Foundational Layer**:
        - (1) Calvinism, or Reformed Theology
        - (2) Arminianism, or The Theology of Free Will
      - c. The **Secondary Layer** – built on top of the **Foundational Layer** and one **Primary Theology** or on selected parts of both of the **Primary Theologies**.
        - (1) Dispensationalism
        - (2) Covenant Theology
        - (3) Eternal Security as it is taught today.
  - C. Last Sunday, we looked at the Foundational Theology of the Church and the first of the two Primary Theologies of our day. Today, we will look at the second Primary Theology and the Secondary Layer of Theology.

## II. Two Primary Theologies Prominent in the Protestant Church Today

### A. Calvinism – finished last week

### B. Arminianism / **Free Will** (Jacobus Arminius, 1560–1609)

1. Arminius came after Calvin and stood up for Free Will as a God-given grace to all humanity, and as an ability which God expected all humanity to exercise.
2. Seven major points of Arminianism
  - a. We are naturally unable to make any effort towards salvation.
    - (1) However, God graciously enables us to respond to the gospel of salvation.
    - (2) Before being enabled to respond to the gospel, we are only able to reject God and His salvation.
    - (3) After being enabled to respond to the gospel – by God drawing us to himself, the Holy Spirit convicting us, and the Word of God bearing its fruit in us, we can respond or reject God's call to salvation.
  - b. We possess free will – which enables us to accept or reject salvation.
    - (1) Free will is a provision or gift of God's grace.
    - (2) However, because of Adam's sin, free will is unable to begin or to perfect any true spiritual good without the intervention and assistance of God's grace. In this respect, God's grace goes before, accompanies, and follows after our responding to the gospel of salvation.
  - c. Salvation is a gift from God and made possible only by God's grace. In no way can salvation be earned or merited by human effort.
    - (1) There is nothing we can do to the good to bring about salvation or contribute to the work of salvation.
    - (2) Free will does not enable us or entitle us to gain salvation apart from repentance and faith on our part and grace on God's part.
  - d. God's election of the believer is conditional on repentance and faith in the sacrifice and Lordship of Jesus Christ. Therefore, anyone who responds to the gospel in faith, repentance, and the pursuit of sanctification is considered one of the elect.
  - e. Christ's atonement is unlimited and universal – it was made on behalf of all people for all time.
  - f. God allows us to resist and even totally reject His grace (i.e., His gracious work of drawing us to Himself, convicting us of sin, righteousness and judgement to come, and the gospel of salvation).

- g. Believers are able to resist sin, yet they still retain the freedom of will, and therefore the possibility of falling from grace through persistent, unrepented sin. Therefore, eternal security is conditional in that all believers have full assurance of salvation with the condition that they remain in Christ. Salvation is conditioned on persevering in the faith. Apostasy (turning from Christ) is only committed through a deliberate, willful rejection of Christ's teaching, will, and Lordship so as to return to a life of sin and die in that sinful condition.

C. Arminianism is a combination, or a working together of **God's doing and Man's doing**.

### III. Three Secondary Theologies Prominent in the Protestant Church Today

A. These three **Secondary Layers** of theology are often mixed together and layered on top of either Calvinism or Arminianism. For example:

1. You can find Calvinists who are Dispensationalists and who hold a fairly strong position on God's covenants with man throughout history.
2. And there are many Arminians who believe in Eternal Security as it is taught today while holding a dispensational view of history, which means they view God's covenants – at least with Israel – as important parts of the way God has interacted with His people and mankind in general.

B. Dispensationalism

1. Dispensationalism is rooted in the writings of John Darby (1800-1882) and the Brethren Movement, and made popular in the United States by C.I. Scofield (1843-1921), and D.L. Moody (1837-1899).
2. Dispensationalists fit dispensationalism on top of their foundational theology and primary theology – which is why there are Calvinists and Arminians who hold a dispensational view of scripture.
3. Dispensationalism looks at scripture and God's dealings with man through the lense of a series of chronologically successive dispensations (a specific arrangement or system by which something is dispensed). Their **unique understandings** include the idea that:
  - a. God has dealt with man and will continue to deal with man in different ways from Adam through the time when His Eternal Kingdom is establish in the new heavens and new earth. Therefore, each dispensation as distinct from all the other dispensations in three primary ways:

- (1) First, each dispensation has a particular way in which God administers His rule. In other words, each dispensation is characterized by a ruling method unique to that dispensation.
  - (2) Second, each dispensation includes a particular responsibility for man whereby we are responsible to obey God in accordance with God's method of rule during that dispensation.
  - (3) Third, in each dispensation, God gives us sufficient revelation to understand His method of rule and our responsibility in response to His rule. Therefore, each new dispensation includes new revelation from God.
- b. Israel and the Church are two distinct groups of God's people – separate and yet along side each other in that both are the people of God.
  - c. Israel – as a nation – will be redeemed and restored to God and the Promised Land before the second coming of Christ.
4. Most Dispensationalists hold to Seven Dispensations
    - a. Age of Innocence – Genesis 1-3 (Adam and Eve)
    - b. Age of Conscience – Genesis 3-8 (Each man did what was right in his own eyes)
    - c. Age of Human Government – Genesis 9-Exodus 20
    - d. Age of Law – Exodus 20-Acts 1
    - e. Age of Grace (Church Age) – Acts 2-Revelation 20
    - f. Kingdom or Millennial Age – Revelation 20:4-6
    - g. Eternal Age – Revelation 21-22
  5. Dispensationalists **go both ways** – either **all God's doing** if their primary theology is Calvinism, or **a combination of God's doing and man's doing** if their primary theology is Arminianism.

#### IV. Conclusion