

Reformed Theology Q+A

1. In the end, what difference does [our theology] make?

Recommended Resources:

- Why Theology Matters?

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/video/why-theology-matters.html>

- Why we need Theology?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gp5BfC61pt8&list=PL02vAR3r0zSVIfeSnrqL98TuLyenaSyn5&index=5>

- Why Theology Matters?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pdgF96dcF0&list=PL02vAR3r0zSVIfeSnrqL98TuLyenaSyn5&index=6>

2. What is the opposite of Reformed Theology? (Dennis)

3. What about those who believe they are saved, but weren't elected? Does that mean, then, that those not predestined are doomed? (Jake)

Bible Passages:

- Romans 9
- Ephesians 2:1-9

4. Augustine of Hippo, the 1st Christian theologian to teach the concept of inherited guilt known as “reatus”, now as “total depravity” also taught that every infant child is born eternally damned lacking any residual ability to respond to God. Please address this concept of truth with the regards to free choice and predestination in the event of an untimely death of an infant. (Dennis)

Bible Passages:

- 2 Samuel 12:23
- Romans 1:18-32

Recommended Resources:

- **What about babies that die?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KaiGy-EJKsE&list=PL02vAR3r0zSVIfeSnrqL98TuLyenaSyn5>

5. So if family members aren't saved - and God hasn't chosen them – there isn't any chance of being saved? What about people in church for years and years – and they never accept God. Is there no chance then if they weren't pre-chosen? (Jake)

Recommended Resources:

What if my children are not elect?

<https://credohouse.org/blog/what-if-my-children-are-not-elect>

6. Are those who have died without Christ truly lost? (Dennis)

- **Lost = translated from hebrew OT word “dama”(Isaiah 6:5) or the greek NT word “apollymi” (ex:Luke 19:10) literally means that which will perish or be destroyed.**
- **Will those who die without saving in Christ perish? Scripture clearly teaches the answer is yes. For example, John 3:16-18. Those who believe in Christ are given eternal life, those do not believe in Christ perish.**

Bible Passages:

- **Matthew 18:6-9**
- **Matthew 25:31-46**

7. If our salvation is predestined, can we lose our salvation? Can we renounce our salvation? (Jake)

Bible Passages:

- John 10:27-29
- Romans 8:30
- Philippians 1:6
- Jude 1:24
- 1 John 2:19-25

Recommended Resources:

- Can a born-again Christian lose their salvation?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8AJ9cYbhgvQ&t=396s>

8. If our salvation is predestined, what about doubt? (Dennis)

Bible Passages:

- 1 John 5:13

Recommended Resources:

- What if I doubt my salvation? What should I do?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAB8ijxhnoI>

- Can I have 100% assurance of salvation?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9Os-uNXsA0>

9. I accepted Jesus as an adult, why do I keep doing some sin over and over again (like Paul wrote about) and we are to struggle with our salvation so why do I keep going back to some sin again and again (pornography, alcoholism, etc.)?(Jake)

Bible Passages:

- Romans 1:24-25 (ex: Genesis 3:1-6)
- Matthew 5:27-30
- Psalm 119:11

Recommended Resources:

- Three steps to fighting porn addiction:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WK5gM6YAFE&list=PL02vAR3r0zSVIfeSnrqL98TuLyeNaSyn5&index=4>
- How to fight Addiction in a Pornographic Culture
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMEdy_rtp7o
- Why do I keep sinning?
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXKZcQFL0Z4>

10. If we cannot lose our salvation, why does God not do away with sin? (Dennis)

Bible Passages:

- Genesis 50:20 (theme behind the story of Joseph)
- Romans 8:28

Recommended Resources:

- Does sin have a necessary place in God's plan for the Universe?
<https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/does-sin-have-a-necessary-place-in-gods-plan-for-the-universe>

11. Since, God created us capable of sin knowing we would sin, doesn't that make Him the ultimate cause of sin? (Dennis)

Bible Passages:

- James 1:13

Recommended Resources:

- Did God create sin?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_IDDPhWYC0&t=225s

12. How do missionaries fit into this doctrine? (Jake)

Bible Passages:

- Matthew 28:18-20

- Romans 1:16, Romans 10:13-15

Recommended Resources:

- Divine Sovereignty: The Fuel for Death Defying Missions

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InkNcMnsfv8>

- Five Surprising Motivations for Missions

<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/five-surprising-motivations-for-missions>

Other Questions:

- Does God elect people who will never hear the Gospel? He certainly knows them and knows whether they will never hear? Does Romans 1:20 cover that situation?
- What we know is that no one can be saved apart from hearing the Gospel preached. (Romans 10:13-17)
- So all who are saved hear the Gospel and respond in faith. Therefore, part of God's Sovereign work to save those that He has chosen is to orchestrate how they will hear the Gospel. Consider the back-story to how you have come to hear the Gospel if you are a believer. That was part of God's saving work for you.
- For those who live and die and never hear the Gospel, here's some things we need to understand. First, God is right in all He does (Psalm 145:17), nothing He does is unjust or unfair. Second, no human being is innocent (Romans 1:20). Third, we do not know who they are part of the elect that are currently not loving and following Jesus. Fourth, we do know that there are those that Jesus will save and bring them into His flock from among those that have not yet come to faith (John 10:16).
- As we consider that there are still over 2 billion people on the planet right now who haven't heard the Gospel. Our response should be to leverage our lives to either go or send missionaries to proclaim the Gospel where He is not yet known. We do not know who is elect from all nations, we just know God desires to call people to Himself from

all nations and has called us to carry out His mission to the ends of the earth (Matthew 28:29 “Go and make disciples among all nations...”)

Recommended Resources:

- What happens to those who never hear the Gospel?

<https://radical.net/sermon/what-happens-to-people-who-never-hear-the-gospel/>

- In the “Prodigal Son” is this a picture of the cross? I want it to be, but I’m having trouble with the “suffering” of the older son. How does that suffering correlate with Jesus’ suffering?

Luke 15:11-32

- The parable of the prodigal son is more about the love and mercy of the Father rather than a picture of the cross. The prodigal son in one sense represents all of us because we naturally rebel against God and seek to find our satisfaction in life apart from God the Father rather than with Him.
- The son then squanders his inheritance and finds that all the pleasures of the world have left him abandoned and ultimately dissatisfied. Although our experience of the destructiveness of our sin may vary in this life, if anyone comes to saving faith in Christ, it is because they have become convinced that it is better to be with God than anything else.
- The climactic point is the return of the son. Despite the son’s treachery toward the father, the Father having been on the lookout for His Son, sees Him and runs to Him showering Him with unconditional love.
- The response of the older son is actually meant to challenge those who are self-righteous, which can also be us. We see those that have committed great sins come to faith in Christ and receive forgiveness and we get jealous. The older brother’s “suffering” was essentially self-inflicted in the same way that self-righteous bitterness in response to the grace of the Father towards sinners negatively affects us but is self-afflicted.
- So in conclusion, this parable does point us to the person and work of Christ to save sinners by grace through faith in Christ, but it is not itself an illustration of what Christ did on the cross.

Recommended Resources:

- What is the meaning of the Parable of the Prodigal Son?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVKb6fGiFf8>

- How can we recognize [reformed theology] on the radio or in publications?
 - unless the topic is regarding particular doctrinal distinctives or if a person explicitly mentions they’re reformed or calvinist, you probably won’t be able to tell., good reformed theology written or preached will just sound like looking at the Word of God and intentionally seeking to extract the meaning of the text itself for the glory of God, the good of God’s people and for the sake of the lost.
 - we don’t want to create an exclusive camp of input. It is good for us to listen and read to people outside of the reformed “tribe”, as long as it’s biblically faithful.

Reformed media/Authors/Speakers you may know:

- Truth for Life with Alistair Begg
- Tim Keller
- Francis Chan
- David Platt
- Joni Eareckson Tada
- John Macarthur
- John Piper
- Charles Spurgeon
- The Gospel Coalition
- Desiring God

• What does orthodox mean, as in Jewish Orthodox, Greek Orthodox?

- It literally means according to what is believed to be the traditional understanding of something. The thing we ultimately hold up as the standard of orthodoxy as Christians is the Word of God. It has been established and sustained over millennia, and we can look at the original language in order to discern what it is the scripture is actually saying, which guides us in how should understand and apply it.

Since our salvation has been predestined, why did Jesus have to die – aren't our sins forgiven already?

- even as those who are predestined, we are still sinners who have broken God's law. (Romans 3:23) deserving the just punishment of death for our sin (Romans 6:23)
- there is no forgiveness of sin without the shedding of blood (Hebrews 9:22). God cannot forgive our sins if they are not atoned for in some way through something (animal sacrifices under Old Covenant) or someone (Christ in the New covenant).
- Therefore, Jesus had to die or else no one could be forgiven of their sin. Jesus' death was necessary for God's Sovereign plan of saving the elect to be possible.
- If God had just forgiven us without atoning for our sins in Christ, He would have compromised His justice. The person and work of Christ is the only way God's justice could be upheld and yet sinners like us could be forgiven and justified before God. (Romans 3:26)

Recommended Resources:

• Just and the Justifier

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHpYeERpZf8>

- Forgive me but I keep thinking of the analogy of killing my "good" son because my other kids are "bad".
- Just to clarify, God didn't kill Jesus for the primary reason that people, like us are bad, although we as sinful people, saved by grace, are certainly benefactors of it. God sent His own Son primarily because sending Christ to die was the best way for God to be glorified (John 17:4). We are not the center of God's plan, His glory or what scripture often refers to as "the sake of [His] name" is. But, praise God that His work to save us is part of that (Psalm 106:8).

- Also, if this question is more coming from a place of feeling that it was somehow cruel of God to do that to Jesus, which has been described by some as the “Divine Child Abuse” argument, which has been used by some to distort the Biblical truth concerning Christ’s penal substitutionary atonement. But the easiest rebuttal to that idea is to look at the attitude of Christ Himself throughout His life, death and resurrection. Over and over again, what we see is the sense of love mutually exchanged between the Father and the Son (John 15:9-10), of the Father always being with Christ (John 8:29), and that Jesus’ ultimate joy even in going to the cross was to be united with His Father (John 14:28; Hebrews 12:2). So, not only was the death of Christ necessary for us to be saved, but it also was part of the Father’s plan to accomplish the good of His Son (Philippians 2:5-8)

Bible Passages:

- Ephesians 1:3-6
- Psalm 106:1-8

Recommended Resources:

- For the Sake of God’s Name

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/for-the-sake-of-gods-name/>

- **What about Romans 14:11, does that contradict predestination/limited atonement?**

- In this passage, Paul is actually quoting Isaiah 45, which is essentially a vision of how one day, the reign of God will be fully established on earth. However, this passage isn’t painting a picture of universalism, that everyone bowing their knee and confessing Jesus is Lord is saved. It is a picture of Christ’s established Lordship where all, including His enemies/opponents will surrender and recognize His authority, but this does not mean those people are saved, it simply means they cannot help but surrender to the demonstrated Lordship of Christ that will be revealed to them when Jesus returns. Even Satan and His demons know and recognize the authority of Christ (Luke 8:26-33; James 2:19), but they don’t love Him and are certainly not saved.

Bible Passages:

- Philippians 2:5-8

Recommended Resources:

- What does it mean and when will it happen that every knee shall bow?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/every-knee-shall-bow.html>

- **Doesn’t predestination imply a “clockwork” universe, interesting to us but boring to God?**

- I think it’s important to first consider that God is not pleased/entertained in the same ways we have culturally come to be. Therefore, it does not require suspense, surprise or unknown actions of any kind to please God. Nor is His purpose in creating us have anything to do with His entertainment, but His glory.

- Genesis 1:31= God had created everything and everything was working like “clockwork” according to God’s intended design and God recognized that it was “very good”, it pleased Him and He was satisfied with it. God is totally satisfied by the process of glorification that He has been working from Creation until now that will eventually carry on into eternity. God’s Sovereignty does not make His creation boring to Him, it would seem His Sovereignty is what makes it good and guarantees that it pleases Him.
- Is a fair differentiator between Reformed and Arminian theology the understanding of how broken people are?
- Yes, in the sense that Reformed Theology is unique in holding to the Biblical concept of man having no natural bent to seek God themselves (Romans 2), due to being dead in our sin (Ephesians 2) requiring God to bring us to life again and granting us the gift of faith (Ephesians 2:8). There are other things that make Reformed theology distinct from Arminianism in particular. The five points of Calvinism were specifically articulated as a rebuttal to five major points that the Arminian theologians made, called the “Remonstrance” in 1610. Reformed theology is distinct from Arminian theology on all 5 of those major points.

Recommended Resources:

- [Watershed Differences between Calvinists and Arminians](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ldlp-4OOG0)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ldlp-4OOG0>
- Can you explain Hebrews 6 pertaining to absolute salvation (perseverance of the saints)?
- I would highly recommend checking out the recommended resources below which give a clear and concise answer, more so than I believe I could. But the basic principal is that warning passages like Hebrews 6 are passages God gives us that He uses to keep us in the faith. Oftentimes people apply these passages in a way that ignores the many other biblical passages that clearly present God’s work to sustain His saints to the end, however, to do that is to pit scripture against each other instead of truly considering the full counsel of scripture as an infallible, non-contradictory whole.
- We need to be careful not to make theological conclusions based on one or a few texts of scripture alone in a way that forces us to dismiss or unfaithfully interpret another text in order to reach our conclusion. God’s Word presents us with many truths that understandably to our finite minds and culturally influenced ways of thinking, seem paradoxical. However, when seemingly paradoxical concepts are clearly revealed in scripture as we consider the whole counsel of scripture, as believers of God’s Word, our aim is to embrace the whole truth of God
- Specifically regarding perseverance of the saints, we see this presented in how those who are called and saved are glorified by God without exception (ex: Romans 8:28-30), and that we are warned as believers to be careful and given warnings about “drifting away” Hebrews 2:1-4. Yet we are also taught that those who do fall away from the faith prove that they never truly have genuine saving faith (1 John 2:19). Two realities are clearly taught in scripture. That God is Sovereign over all things and human beings have total responsibility for their lives and will be held accountable to

God's law (Romans 3:19) and we cannot blame for our sin (James 1:13). To us philosophically, these seem to be contradictory, yet the Biblical authors clearly teach these things not as contradictions, but as two realities that the Christian is meant to understand and hold to. They are like two different vantage points on the same issue of the Christian life, not contradicting each other, but leading us to consider all the angles that are helpful for us to live the Christian life as God intended it.

- When it comes to how certain Biblical concepts work together, (like God's Sovereignty and human responsibility) Scripture does not give us a clear answer as to how they coexist without contradicting each other, so Biblically it remains somewhat a mystery in this life. Which then leads us to trust in God's goodness and how that is expressed by giving us everything we need to know in order to live as Christ has called us to live. God's Word doesn't answer all our questions, but in God's perfect wisdom, He has answered all the ones we need in order to rightly know and relate to Him in this life (2 Timothy 3:17; 2 Peter 1:3).

Recommended Resources:

- What about Hebrews 6?

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/what-about-hebrews/>

- Can you lose your salvation? If not, what about the warning passages?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DvX4z9ZeMq8>

- Did God offer the desire to sin to Satan?? Like Judas. If God has absolute sovereignty over everything and created everything good and those to be saved are predestined, please explain the pre-existence of evil in the garden of Eden?
- Scripture gives no clear explanation of where "pre-existent evil" came from or the origin of Satan's sinfulness before Creation. We cannot give an answer to that question without going into extra-biblical speculation, which I personally am not willing to do because I believe it tends to distract us from what's most important and is far too easy to then misrepresent God.
- Because a clear answer is not in the Bible, it must not be essential for us to be able to live as followers of Christ because scripture gives us all we need to know for godly living (2 Peter 1:3). So, in the meantime it's one of those things where we need to accept that God has left it a mystery because in reality, we don't need to know it to do what He's called us to do. There are a number of things He has made known to us that we need to focus on. (for example: the pursuit of holiness, carrying out God's mission, etc.)
- However, when it comes to the reality of evil, some things we do know are that evil does not come from God, because it is in no way part of His character (Psalm 92:15), and He does not lead any one to sin (James 1:13). Also, we know that all things (including the reality of evil in our world) work to accomplish what is good or "best" for God's people. So although it's strange for us to consider, according to God's perfect knowledge and wisdom, somehow the existence of evil in our world better accomplishes the purposes of God's glorification and our good than if it never did.

Recommended Resources:

If God is Sovereign is He responsible for evil?

<https://www.gty.org/library/articles/A189/is-god-responsible-for-evil>

- Why is God not the Author of Evil, if it exists for His glory?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dkXC_00O_hQ&t=300s

- Where did Satan's first desire for evil come from?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECPLhe3UQo>

- Where did Satan come from?

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/satan-come-from/>

Is atonement the same as propitiation?

Although there are some ways in which they overlap as two things that were accomplished on the cross of Christ, they are different in that they emphasize different aspects of what Jesus accomplished.

- Atonement is all about compensating or righting the wrong we have done in sin. Jesus' death on the cross, the shedding of His blood made up for our sinfulness.
- Propitiation is how the justice/wrath of God against sin is satisfied or appeased. On the cross the wrath of God against sin was poured out on Jesus in our place satisfying God's standard of justice on our behalf.

Both of these are necessary for salvation to be possible for us in Christ, but they are distinct from each other.

Bible Passages:

- Romans 3:23-26
- Hebrews 9:12
- 1 John 4:10

Recommended Resources:

- Atonement Explained

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_OIRWGLdnw

- Propitiation Unpacked

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGYKVt1LMUU>