

## I BOW!

The Calvinist emphasizes God's electing love while the Arminian emphasizes that God loves the whole world. Does God desire that everyone be saved or just the elect? Can sovereign election be harmonized with universal love? I contend that both are true, but in ways that are past finding out.

This "tension" is reflected in the following quotes. Note that quoting someone does not mean I fully embrace their views but only that I think they are making a thoughtful point regarding the biblical "tensions" in view.

"One of the deep concerns that has prompted me to write this book is a growing trend I have noticed – particularly among people committed to the biblical truth of God's sovereignty and divine election. Some of them flatly deny that God in any sense loves those whom He has not chosen for salvation." – **John MacArthur**: THE LOVE OF GOD, p. 12.

"There are some who flatly deny that such invitations constitute any sincere offer of mercy to the non-elect. As far as they are concerned, the very word *offer* smacks of Arminianism ... They deny that God's pleadings with the reprobate reflect any real desire on God's part to see the wicked turn from their sins. To them, suggesting that God could have such an unfulfilled 'desire' is a direct attack on divine sovereignty." – **John MacArthur**: THE LOVE OF GOD, p. 108

"Yet if I seem to dwell on this issue, it is because I want to acknowledge that it poses a perplexing difficulty for other aspects of God's revealed truth. Let us honestly admit that on the face of it, the universal love of God is hard to reconcile with the doctrine of election." – **John MacArthur**: THE LOVE OF GOD, p. 110

"Yet if Calvinism be true, these pleadings [i.e. Ezekiel 33:11] are a sham. The elect don't need them, and the non-elect can't heed them." – **Dave Hunt**: WHAT LOVE IS THIS?, p. 289

"My sincere and earnest desire in writing this book has been to defend God's character against the libel that denies His love for all and insists that He does not make salvation available to all because He does not want all to be saved." – **Dave Hunt**: WHAT LOVE IS THIS?, p. 414

"Our concept of God and His attributes should rightly color our whole theology. Calvinists tend to identify holiness as the foremost attribute of God. Arminians (and liberals) tend to focus upon the love of God as

primary. Even though I, too, taught one of those positions for many years, I now wonder why we must emphasize any attribute of God as more important than another.” -**C. Gordon Olson**: BEYOND CALVINISM AND ARMINIANISM – p. 10

### **Deuteronomy 7:7-8 (NKJV)**

The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because ....but **because the Lord loves you...**

### **John 3:16 (NKJV)**

For **God so loved the world** that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes** in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

### **Ephesians 5:25 (NKJV)**

Husbands, love your wives, just as **Christ also loved the church** and gave Himself for her,

“The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell ... O love of God, how rich and pure! How measureless and strong! It shall forevermore endure – the saints’ and angels’ song.”– **Frederick M. Lehman**

Consistency is essential to proper thinking. However, a problem often emerges regarding the antinomies of Scripture, especially in regard to the biblical tensions concerning God’s sovereignty (Calvinism emphasis) and human responsibility (Arminian emphasis).

This challenge becomes especially apparent when we discuss the role of prayer and the reality of God’s love. Neatly sewn systems are, at that point, shown to have some “loose” ends. Wisdom, at this point, bows in humility before the awesomeness of God! I worship a God so GREAT I don’t have Him all figured out! I bow!