

## Chapter Ten

# Managed Cooperation Theology Technicals

Christianity has historically been more technical than I believe Jesus intended it to be.

### Divine Sovereignty

Divine sovereignty means that the only one true and living God of the Universe holds all authority and all control of all ultimate power in the universe. This would include life, death, and all that is required to sustain the universe. All christian theologies accept this idea. However, that is where the agreement ends.

Calvinistic type theology suggests that God retains all control of His sovereignty, including decisions about who He will bring to Heaven, and who He will send to Hell. Arminianism suggests God retains all control of His sovereignty but appoints some people to Heaven based on whether or not they, with God's Spirit, believe and love God. Managed Cooperation Theology suggests that God delegates some of His sovereignty to men. He delegates sovereignty over their own lives in order for them to choose to love or not love Him. And, based on their choice, God judges, and takes to Heaven those who love Him, and banishes to Hell those who do not. It is the job of angels loyal to God to influence men toward Jesus, away from the spiritual border between good and evil. This is to avoid them being lukewarm (Rev. 3:16). It is the job of demonic angels to influence men toward Satan, away from the spiritual border between good and evil.

### Implications of God Not Delegating Sovereignty

One difference in theologies involves the question of who is accountable and responsible for man's actions. Is man accountable and responsible, or is God accountable and responsible? If God has not given man sovereignty over our own lives, then He is accountable for our actions, and responsible for our choices. Here is an example that shows the truth of this idea. If you, as a parent, allow your toddler to run out into the street and he is injured, who is accountable and responsible; the child or the parent? Everyone would say the parent; because the parent is sovereign over the child, and they are therefore accountable before the law, and morally responsible for the child. Everyone accepts this idea as being morally right, correct and proper.

However, if the child is actually eighteen years old, runs across the street and gets hit by a car; none would hold the parent accountable at law, nor responsible for injuries sustained, because now the child is grown up and is sovereign over his own person. It is the same between God and man.

It seems clear to me that God has ordained a Heaven and a Hell, and we are all going to one place or the other. If God has not delegated sovereignty to man, then God chooses where we will go. In the case of Calvinism, the criteria of how He chooses is unknown; in the case of Arminianism, how He chooses is based on grace and faith. But then it also follows; if God

retains sovereignty, he also retains accountability and responsibility for man and man's actions; just like the parents of the toddler. And; if God is sovereign, accountable and responsible for man's actions, why is God sending men to Hell for that which God is sovereign over, accountable for, and for which He is responsible? It is morally wrong for God to do such a thing. Just like it would be morally wrong for the parents of the toddler to not be accountable and responsible for the child's injuries.

The implications with respect to our relationship to God are that when He holds us accountable to Heaven and Hell, it means He has also given us sovereignty just like the eighteen year old.

This means God has not retained sovereignty; but given sovereignty, accountability, and responsibility to mankind. If that's the case, then God sees man as sovereign over his own life, accountable for his own choices and actions, and responsible for what God asks of him. Therefore God can rightly send man to Heaven because the man has chosen to allow himself to see God, be forgiven, and come to love God. That is the blessing. And, conversely, He can rightly send man to Hell because man has *not* chosen to allow himself to see God, be forgiven, and come to love God. That is the curse. This cursed man's own choices, for which he is accountable, gets him to Hell just like the murderer; rightly, gets the death penalty for his crime.

The theological point which Calvinists and Arminians miss, I believe, is God delegating sovereignty to mankind over his own life. This delegation of sovereignty is the authority which makes man accountable and responsible to God's larger program which encompasses more than just what goes on in the person's own life; namely Heaven and Hell, and life and death.

If God does not delegate sovereignty, then sending men to Hell when God is responsible for their actions, is unloving; just like it would be to hold the toddler accountable. And if there is anything that God is; its loving. And since God is loving, God must have delegated personal

sovereignty to man. This makes man accountable and responsible for his own actions.

For what, does God hold man accountable and responsible? Only one thing; being open minded enough to cooperate with godly men to learn about God and His mercy, grace, and love. Then God steps-in to convict of sin, righteousness and judgement. Thus God and man work together such that man comes to love God.

But what if you believe that God has not delegated sovereignty to men but retains it? That means you probably see God as accountable and responsible for producing love in people; Its not a joint effort. In that case, People's responsibility is just to do as instructed and modeled by Jesus; that is, make disciples. That's what christians are doing all over the country and world; trying to make disciples. We are failing at it. That's why christianity is in such a pitiful state. Arminians and Calvinists alike have missed the point. *Loving God* is the point. Making disciples is a result not a cause. *Loving God* is the cause.

We make disciples because we love God; not making disciples to show that we love God. I believe christianity is going downhill because the theology supports making disciples but *supports less* the idea of loving God as a reason for existence. However, if man is accountable and responsible to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and your neighbor as yourself; it would give an entirely new focus to christianity. The goal of making disciples would be replaced by the goal of loving God and neighbor. This is exactly what Managed Cooperation Theology is trying to say.

If Arminian theologians could see their way clear to believe that God has delegated some of his sovereignty to man, then it becomes man's primary job to cooperate to love God as the foremost commandment says. Then, secondarily we make disciples because we love God. He made disciples because He loved the Father, and was directed by Him to do so. Then making disciples comes as a result of loving God and our neighbor as ourselves.

## God Shares His sovereignty

God sharing His sovereignty means that God has chosen to release part of his control to man. He has relinquished some authority. It means that God does not exercise all control over an individual man's life. He has given some of it up to the individual. The part He has retained is authority over life and death, and authority to judge who goes to Heaven and who goes to Hell. The part He has given to man is the ability to make choices over ones own life while we live. We see it every day.

You and I make decisions and form opinions every day concerning our life. What we shall eat, what we shall wear for the day; and which direction we will turn our car; to go where we want the car to go. And if we turn the car in the wrong direction, we may end up dead. But that is the price of being able to make one's own decisions, and thus being sovereign over ones own life. Everyone accepts the responsibilities of the natural life as evidenced by every day living. Everyone also accepts the accountability of living life every day although many try to get out from under some responsibilities. We can also see that our decisions and opinions carry us closer or further away from God.

On Sunday morning, we may choose to go to church, or we may choose to recreate at the race track. Some may sleep-in to recover from a hangover. People who don't know God usually choose to please themselves. They don't see why they shouldn't. The point is each makes their own decision. No one tells you, or them, as adults, what to do. Neither does God. God only asks this or that. God gives powerful incentives but men still get to choose.

As I have explained in an earlier chapter, man must be able to make decisions such that he can make a decision to love God. That fulfills the Central Purpose for the Creation. The positive side for God is He gets some people who will love Him forever. The negative side for God is many people will not choose to put themselves in a position to love Him.

## Man's Sovereignty Carries Authority, Accountability and Responsibility

Since God has given man sovereignty over his own life, God will influence, but not control, what a man does with his life. That is the way we like it. That is the way God likes it. The gifting of sovereignty to mankind; has authority, accountability, and responsibility connected to it.

The **authority** inherent in the gifted sovereignty, is to be capable of making decisions which are required to love, or not love God and others. God is love, and in order for men to love God, and men to appreciate God's love to us, He must have given us the capability to love. However the gift of sovereignty has a down side for God; many people will not choose to allow themselves to become acquainted with God and His goodness.

This is the down side of sovereignty; its accountability. We are all **accountable** to God for faithfully loving Him (the great commandment). If we do, He takes us to Heaven; if we don't, He sends men to Hell. I don't mean to make this sound like God is judging like a king despot. The truth is He bends over backwards to persuade people to trust and love Him. These are very heavy influences but it is not overriding control.

The **responsibility** inherent in the gifted sovereignty is that the natural man is asked to cooperate with godly men to become acquainted with God. People start out in life biased in their thinking. That is, their thinking does not include God because they are separated from Him. However, if a person *allows* himself to become acquainted with God, and *cooperates* with Him to some degree, over some period of time, the Holy Spirit, will demonstrate the reality of God to him. Because He wishes that none should perish but that all will come to repentance (II Peter 3:9).

The additional responsibility is that if you *don't* allow yourself to become acquainted with God, and you *don't* cooperate with Him over time, you will not be exposed to His mercy, grace and love. Since you didn't allow the

godly input, you remain ignorant of God's mercy, grace and love. Therefore, you miss out on seeing the "goodness" of God. If you don't see the goodness of God, you are left with your original point of view of a world that does not involve God; that is, the world of "evil." It is only by the contrast between the "goodness" of God and the "evil" of the world, that the Holy Spirit can show you the perspective that God is "good." Thus, you will have no perspective about the truth of God which tells you that He is worthy to be loved. That means you are willingly ignorant; and you will not come to love God. At the judgement, the reward for not loving God is banishment away from God forever. How extremely sad to miss out on Heaven and go to Hell because a man is unwilling to become acquainted with the God who loves him. If there was ever an applicable "it serves you right" situation, that's it.

### God's Priority - Love or Power?

The issue here is what is more important to God; His love or His power (sovereignty)? Which does He value more? This is the fundamental difference between Calvinistic type theology and Managed Cooperation Theology.

Calvinism suggests God's sovereignty is more important than His love. Arminianism suggests His sovereignty is more important than love also. This relationship is seen in the question, "How does a sovereign God administer His love? The answer can be seen in the way Calvinists say that God deals with the unsaved. The Westminster Confession says:

"The rest of mankind (the unsaved), God was pleased (glad?), according to the unsearchable counsel of His will (sovereignty), whereby He extends or withholds mercy as He pleases (loves or not loves), for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures (sending to Hell brings glory?), to pass by (preterition), and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin (couldn't do otherwise without the "touch"), to the praise of His glorious justice."<sup>1</sup>

There is no glory in sending people to everlasting misery just because they lived. The Westminster statement assumes that sinners have a choice to be sinners (Mark 16:16). But Calvinist's cannot assume choice because of the Calvinistic foreordination of sinners to Hell; which preempts the scripture which implies choice. But since they assume it anyway, it means Hell bound sinners have no choice at all. They didn't have any choice because they were foreordained to Hell before they were born. God's foreordination means they could not do else except be a sinner. Therefore, God made them sinners; not just people who sin and don't ask forgiveness.

Is this loving on God's part? No; because God sent people to Hell that He could have saved. This line of reasoning demonstrates why sovereignty must be subservient to love. Because, if sovereignty is not loving, it is unlovingly dictatorial. God is love, He is not unlovingly dictatorial.

Managed Cooperation Theology suggests God's love is more important to Him than His sovereignty is to Him. This can be seen in the question, "How does a loving God administer His sovereignty?" The following shows, from Scripture, why love is more important than sovereignty.

Demonstrations of God subordinating sovereignty to love. The greatest example is Jesus on the cross. The Father is watching from above, seeing His Son tortured and killed. Jesus could have called down twelve legions of angels, but He did not (Matt.26:53). Jesus while hanging on the cross said, "Father forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing (Luke 23:34)." The Father and Jesus, **not** coming and killing everyone, demonstrates love over sovereignty (Rom. 5:8).

In the Old Testament, Abraham interceded for the cities of Sodom and Gomorah before the Lord (Gen. 18:33-43). Abraham appealed to the Lord's heart not to destroy the righteous with the wicked. The Lord chose mercy over sover-

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1. The Westminster Confession of Faith Study Book, p. 298.

eighty in saving the cities which He was intending to destroy. Thus, God values love over sovereignty.

Demonstrations of God directing man to subordinate his sovereignty to love. God says that the husband is the head over his wife (Eph. 5:23,24). But in the very next verse He also says to love your wives. This shows a request to subordinate headship (sovereignty over) to love. This demonstrates God's personal values of love over sovereignty.

God says love your wives like Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25). The illustration of loving the wife like Christ loved the church, goes back to His act of love on the cross. Again, showing the idea of love over sovereignty.

We can see that love exalted over sovereignty mellows the harshness of dictatorship. Calvinism has shown us that exalting sovereignty over love causes unloving dictatorship. A misrepresentation of the character of God. God is love. Proper representation of God's character is love exalted over sovereignty.

## Foreknowledge and Predestination

Foreknowledge is the idea that God can know what will happen long before it actually takes place in time. Foreknowledge carries with it just knowing what will happen in the future but not necessarily controlling what will happen.

Predestination is the idea that God controls some set of circumstances, before it actually happens, such that a certain outcome will invariably take place as God planned. Predestination carries with it the idea of God knowing what will happen, as well as, controlling what will happen in the future.

Calvinistic type theology would have us believe that the actions of every person in all the world is arbitrarily pre-planned by God to attain a certain outcome which **cannot** be any other outcome (determinism). Determinism is the Calvinistic idea of Predestination.

The Managed Cooperation Theology idea of predestination is that God has invented processes which, when entered into, tend to produce

a certain outcome, but not necessarily so. He does not arbitrarily predestine individuals to any certain destiny. The process tends to move a person in the direction toward God, but it involves the individual person and their interaction with the Holy Spirit and the process. The process involves identifying the negatives of Hell, sin, and death ("Evil"); and Heaven, mercy, grace and love ("Good"); and comparing the two to form a contrast in a persons heart. It is the contrast which the Holy Spirit uses to convict the person concerning sin, righteousness and judgement. The negative aspects of sin and Hell tend to drive people away from sin and Hell, toward God. The positive aspects of God and Heaven tend to draw people toward loving God. It is the double acting mechanism of God's process which predestines people toward Himself. Thus, people starting toward loving God are predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son. And therefore, whom God foreknew, He also predestined, and those He predestined, He also justified, and those He also glorified. Let's look at Romans 8:28-30. The writer is talking about God working in our lives.

"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

I believe this is saying that God makes sure that whatever happens to a person, even if it is negative, that God will ultimately make that circumstance come out for good. An example might be learning some important lesson through an accident which otherwise would not have been learned. Perhaps a business failure causes a bankruptcy; through which, the humbled one comes to know the Lord.

The other aspect is that when something negative happens, it tends to make you move toward the opposite behavior; that is, toward good, toward God. Perhaps after driving unsafely, you have an accident which says you need to drive more carefully.

But this verse is also the sets the stage for verse 29. Since God causes all things to work

together for good, then it follows that all things work together for good with respect to becoming conformed to the image of Christ. This is what vs. 29 says, in effect.

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”

Whom He foreknew, the church; He also predestined to become conformed; that is, He also set about to make the church like the image of the Son, and so He called, justified, and glorified.

This means that God looked down the corridor of time, and was able to see the need for a system to help people, according to His love, to be conformed to the image of His Son. A system which would help them turn from “evil” to “good.”

And these, who would listen, would be guided to become conformed to the image of His Son; because God causes all things to work together for good. Sometimes He does it overtly, and sometimes He does it by automatic processes.

By automatic processes I mean, It is the inventing of a system, before the foundation of the world, which would naturally work, like gravity, to draw people to God and the Lord Jesus Christ. The nature of God’s system “predestines” people to be conformed to the image of His Son. Since it is God’s system, it is God’s doing; it is God’s way of predestining people to Heaven.

Seen in this way, predestination becomes a natural outgrowth of the goodness of God. God knows that once a man opens himself to the goodness, mercy, grace and love of God, that he will naturally gravitate toward the goodness, mercy, grace and love. Goodness, mercy, grace, love and Heaven is desirable by people. That is the predestining action of God’s attributes. However, people must be exposed to God’s attributes in order to see them and His goodness.

That’s why men must be open to learning about God in the first place.

Conversely, man shies away from trouble, pain, sorrow and Hell. In some sense, people are predestined away from Hell, trouble, pain and sorrow because it is not desirable. Therefore, when they see both “good” versus “evil,” they choose “good.” After seeing both, God’s goodness is the obvious choice. If one does not allow himself to see the goodness of God, he never comes in contact with the attractiveness of God.

In this sense, God is **not** making a conscious choice of who goes to Heaven and who goes to Hell; the system of good and evil causes men to *want* the goodness of God. Thus, men are “predestined,” or attracted to God, like a magnet attracts steel. In the end, it is the goodness, mercy, grace and love of God that “attracts” people.

Conversely, it is the undesirableness of trouble, pain and sorrow that “repels” people away from evil toward goodness. I agree that evil has some aspects of pleasure but only for a short time, and when the pleasure part is over; the pain of the consequences set in.

The larger picture of evil, having negatives which push people away from evil, and the goodness of God drawing people toward Him, I believe, is the scriptural meaning of predestination as presented in Romans 8:28-30.

If we look closely at Ephesians 1:4-5, it says nearly the same thing as Romans 8:29-30.

“. . . just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.”

Paul is not talking about individuals in a group here but he is talking about the whole group. The whole group is an “us.” He includes himself in the group. Thus, it is a corporate choice he is talking about. The subject is the church being holy and blameless

He goes on to give the purpose for the choosing of the group, namely that we, the group, should be holy and blameless. He says that with the same idea in mind as he expressed

in Rom. 8:29; that we should be conformed to the image of God's son. We are holy and blameless because of God's mercy, grace and love which attracts us to God.

This is further seen in verse 5. "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will." He is reiterating that predestination is through Jesus who represents turning from evil and turning toward the mercy, grace and love of God. The system that God invented is how men are "predestined" to being conformed to the image of Christ.

I can understand why some people could get the idea that God arbitrarily chooses individuals to Heaven, as is the Calvinist claim. But the rest of the bible teaches that man chooses to listen to God and godly witness. And, because man chooses to listen, the goodness of God, and the evil of the world act upon him. Thus, his experience and conviction of the Holy Spirit, via God's system conforms him to the image of Christ.

Foreknowledge and predestination are involved but not, I believe, in the Calvinist sense. That is, not in the sense of sending an individual to Heaven or Hell.

Foreknowledge is involved in the sense of God seeing the need for an automatic mechanism to help conform people to the image of Christ.

Predestination is the unfortunate term used to describe God's automatic mechanism to conform people to the image of His Son. Maybe, someone can come up with a better term.

## **The Nature of Original Sin**

Before we talk about original sin, we must define sin, and talk about Adam and Eve's situation. Sin is the thought patterns of an individual which are different from God's thought patterns. Thought patterns are the opinions, decisions, motivating factors, which God or man has, for his or our use, to move us to action. God's thought patterns are formed on the basis of perfect character and infinite knowledge. Man's thought patterns are formed on the basis of

imperfect character and finite knowledge. The difference between the two thought patterns is sinful thinking which causes sinful action. For example: God says, I will supply food for you. Man says, I have no money, to eat, I must steal some food; so he does.

All mankind including, Adam and Eve, have finite knowledge and imperfect character. This means men have far less knowledge than God. And, it means men have imperfect character. Apart from God, man doesn't even know the meaning of perfect character. But here we are anyway.

God shared His sovereignty with us to the extent that we could be our own persons just like He is His own person (s). He has created us this way because He wants us to have relationship with Him. That is, to be capable of loving Him. The difference between God's infinite knowledge and Man's finite knowledge; and, God's perfect character and Man's imperfect character; is the difference between God and God's created beings. We are similar to Him but not like Him.

God created man, Adam and Eve, in His own image. This means we have some of His attributes. We have the capacity to choose, reason, learn and create in order to have the capacity to love Him. Inherent in these attributes is the instinctive desire for sovereignty over one's own life. Its the same kind of sovereignty the God possesses but ours is only over our own life. His is over everything; including life and death.

God is ultimately sovereign; that is, He relates all other things to Himself.<sup>2</sup> He forms opinions and makes decisions based on His perfect character and infinite knowledge. Everything He does is in harmony with Himself.<sup>3</sup> He forms opinions and makes decisions about the creation, the sum of which, describe His nature.

Since He is sovereign over the creation, His nature defines the perfect nature (i.e., the standard of perfection). This means that any nature not in harmony with His nature is imperfect, different, incongruent or, in religious words, "sin-

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2. Is.40:1-31; I Tim.6:15; Rev.11:17; Understanding Man, pp.35-36.

3. Ibid, p. 35; Ps.50:1-6,12; Job 40:1-14

ful" or "fallen." Ryrie quotes Buswell, "Sin may be defined ultimately as anything in the creature which does not express, or which is contrary to, the holy character of the creator."<sup>4</sup> But here is the problem.

Man also forms opinions and makes decisions about the creation. Only his character is flawed and knowledge finite at best. And, He doesn't realize he is missing God's perfect character and infinite knowledge. But he just goes right ahead and forms opinions, and makes decisions anyway.

Because man has been separated from God since Adam, man's opinions and decisions are different than God's. Because, they are based on incomplete information and flawed character. These conditions cause man to form opinions and make decisions not in harmony with God's opinions and decisions. This gives men a different point of view which is not shared by God.

This is terrible because the more decisions made and opinions formed not in harmony with God's opinions and point of view, the more blinded man becomes about the truth of God.<sup>5</sup>

In short, man's thought patterns get further and further from God's thought patterns (Rom. 8:5-9). Therefore man's opinions and point of view which describe man's nature becomes different from God's nature (Mark 7:14-21). Thus man has a "fallen" or "sinful" nature when he thinks differently than God over a period of time.

This is one of mankind's basic problems. *Each man believes he can successfully manage his own life without God's help.* In fact, he assumes it. And he doesn't realize that God's knowledge and Spirit are the missing components between his thinking and God's thinking. And therefore, *he* makes decisions about his own life without consulting God, and believes it's normal.

The "fallen" or "sin" nature of man, that so many pastors and writers refer to, is man's capacity to choose, reason and learn combined

with sovereignty over his own life; add to that, finite knowledge and imperfect character, all producing a recipe for thinking and doing one's own thing (Pro. 21:2).

This all means that God made us in His image capable of independent thought and action so we would be capable of loving Him. But along with that, *God decided He would accept the constraint that man would exercise sovereignty over his own life.* That is, man doing His own thing; even if he didn't love God. It is this condition which makes the salvation process so difficult for God and men.

Thus, being *capable* of loving Him is one thing, but *actually choosing* to love or not love Him is quite a different matter.

### Knowing Good and Evil

The definition of "good" is the opinions and decisions of God about life, love and spirituality which define His nature. These are given to us in the Bible.<sup>6</sup>

The definition of "evil" is the opinions, decisions and actions of man. While not all of man's thoughts and actions are "bad," the sum total of man's opinions, decisions and nature is different from God's opinions, decisions and nature.

To actually choose to love God for all eternity, it would be necessary for man to know both "good" and "evil" and still choose to love God.

Without knowing both "good" and "evil," man could not be sure God is telling him the truth. Or for that matter, be sure demons are lying to him.

Experiencing only "good" or only "evil" restricts your contrast of the definition of "good" and "evil". How bad is "evil"? How good is "good"? How good is "evil"? How evil is "good"? Without a contrast, you don't know.

For example: a boy is in the kitchen while mom is cooking. Young Mr. Curious reaches out to feel the hot stove. Mom exclaims, "Don't touch it! It's hot." The boy believes mom and

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4. Basic Theology, page 212.

5. See Eph.4:17-19; Rom.1:20-24; Pro.16:25.

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6. God is love - I John 4:16; Fruit of the Spirit - Gal.5:22-23; The divine nature - II Peter 1:4-8;

withdraws his hand. Without any experience of how hot is the burner, he is susceptible to the question, "what is hot?" He continues to believe for a time.

One day, when mom has her back turned, his curiosity about heat overcomes his fuzzy perspective of what "hot" means. So he touches the burner. He is singed and thereby experiences the heat. He now has an appreciation of fingers that don't hurt that he didn't have before. He has had a new experience. Of course he is not willing to sacrifice another finger to find out what "hot" means, because now he knows!

He has gone from a "believer" to a "knower". Before he touched the stove, his curiosity and doubt caused him to question mom's claim. Afterwards, there was no longer any question. Before his burner experience, he doubted mom's word. After his burner experience, he now has hurting fingers contrasted with fingers that don't hurt, which removes his doubt. The contrast tells him that mom was right, and not to touch the stove burner again.

This is the way God will persuade us to love Him forever. He will dispel Satan's question; "hath God said . . . (Gen. 3:1)" forever by allowing us to get "burned" by the experience of our own "wrong thinking" and blessed by accepting God's revealed "right thinking." The contrast between the two tells us we want a Heavenly blessing, and we don't want to get burned; in Hell. This is why God allows sin in the world; to provide a contrast with the goodness of God.

### **Why Adam and Eve Doubted God**

Adam and Eve had the capacity to choose, reason and learn (Gen. 1:26) in order to love or not love God just like we do. However, their situation was a special case. They lived in the Garden of Eden where they had fellowship with God. Their perspective was that of God's perspective; knowing only those options which were God's options. Their thinking only consisted of thought patterns of which God approved. They also had a one-sided perspective; knowing only "good". Because "evil" had not been invented yet. Their sphere of knowl-

edge consisted of only that which God provided for them in the Garden. That which God wanted them to have. That which was "good."

The one thing that Adam and Eve lacked was the contrast between the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3:5-7); they didn't have *enough* truth to conclude that God was right when He said that they would die if they ate from the tree of the Knowledge of good and evil. God couldn't give them a contrast without revealing the knowledge of evil. *This is the whole point; our lack of a "good" / "evil" perspective.* The lesson is that truth only has *significance* as truth, when contrasted with *known* untruth. Consider the little kid who burned his fingers.

Before he burned his fingers, he didn't know the pain associated with hot. He also didn't realize that pain free fingers constitutes "good." But afterward, there would never again be any question about what hot meant. The pain, provided the "evil" side of the contrast. It was the same way with Adam and Eve.

Since they had no contrast, no perspective of known untruth, they weren't sure God was telling them the truth. For a while, they were "believers" of the "good" God revealed, but not "knowers." "Knowing" comes only from having the additional perspective of the "evil." side of the contrast.. Hence, they were vulnerable to Satan's question; "Hath God said, You shall not eat...? (Gen. 3:1)"

Previously, they assumed God was right, but now there was some question. This situation prompted them to examine both sides of this new question in preparation of a decision. They were going to decide whether or not to eat. *This subtle change is the root of man's basic problem; transferring decision making authority from God to self. This is what establishes the need for Lordship (God's management) of our life.* That is, the desire to live the godly life means we must learn from God how to do it.

Pressure on Adam and Eve's decision maker came from wondering what "dieing" might mean. God said, (paraphrase) the same day that you eat you will die. But they lacked information about the consequences of dieing.

And God couldn't tell them what "dieing" meant without revealing the knowledge of the "evil" side of the contrast between good and evil. But without an awareness of the consequences of dieing, not much godly fear would be produced in them. Without godly fear, pressure on their decision-maker (Will) against eating, would be low.

Decision-maker pressure *for* eating the forbidden fruit was moderate to high because satan appealed to their physical senses (lusts). These sensory inputs applied more pressure to the decision-maker because they had previously experienced "good" things to look at (lust of the eyes) and things that "taste good" (lust of the flesh). The assertion that "it was good to make one wise (pride of life)."<sup>7</sup>

Since their lust applied more decision-maker pressure than Godly instruction applied to their decision-maker, they decided to eat.

Before the decision was made, they probably spent time thinking about the lusts. This was their downfall because the mind set on the flesh is spiritual death (Rom. 8:6). That means, when your mind is preoccupied with concerns of the flesh, the world, or the devil, you are *not thinking* about God and the things of the spirit.

They did not have the wisdom<sup>8</sup> necessary to properly run their own lives without God. But they thought they did. *This is man's basic problem then and now: making decisions about life without a Godly perspective.*

If you were a CBS reporter, standing at the entrance to the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were driven out by the cherubim, and you ask them about their decision to eat; they would probably say it was the wrong choice but it seemed like a good idea at the time. Have you ever said that?

What was different? (1) They are now out of the Garden and (2), God is gone. They have a contrast between good *and* evil they did not

have before. Like the little kid with burned fingers, they have become "knowers" rather than just "believers". They have a new perspective. There is no longer any question; "Hath God said... You shall not eat from it lest you die?" They now *know* that "dieing," means separation from God and no garden!

They now *know* the definition of "spiritual death"; that is, physical separation from God. Physical death would come later.

### **Man Separated from God**

As you will remember, we left Adam and Eve just outside of the garden. Here they sit, Eve softly weeps. Adam, sitting on a small bundle of personal effects, stares into a rather bleak landscape; miles and miles of nothing . . . No shelter, no way to make one . . . wet and hot . . . so lonely . . . what are we going to eat . . . how could she be so dumb to listen to that snake . . . I wish we had listened to the Lord. Where is He anyway?

As sad as it seems, it was *necessary* for God to physically separate Himself from them and men since. Because man would corrupt the place of God's abode by God having to put up with the disunity of man's different thinking.<sup>9</sup>

Besides, the test of whether man will, or will not love God, needs to be tested in a neutral environment. How neutral would the test be with the Almighty God, and or Satan, breathing down your neck every two minutes (Ex. 19:12-23)?

The test wouldn't be fair to man and wouldn't accomplish God's goals.<sup>10</sup> Thus God had to physically separate Himself from the garden couple.

Now out of the garden, they had a contrast between "good" and "evil." They understood how "good" life was in the Garden, and they also understood how "bad" life is now, out of the Garden. This contrast, which could insure their loyalty to God forever, was useless because they

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7. I John 2:15-16

8. Pro.2:1-5, 6-9, 10-13; Knowledge of truth, administered with the character of God equals wisdom demonstrated. I Corinthians 1:30

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9. See Isaiah 59:1-2, 64:7; Ezekiel 23:18; Amos 3:2-3; Romans 8:7; Hebrews 12:14

10. If God pressured man, then as we saw before, compliance would not be true love.

were separated from Him. This means they were alone, out-of-contact, lost and away from the presence of God. Just like us. They had to experience God by faith; just like godly men do today.

In the absence of God, what would they think about? Naturally, it would be their situation around them. What would their kids think about? The same thing. However, would their kids think about God as much as Adam and Eve, given no contact with God? Probably not. Thus, the idea of God, in succeeding generations, would eventually die out. Scripture bears that out; man became so corrupt God brought on the flood.

If this happened to Adam and Eve, when they previously had perfect character but limited knowledge, then it could happen to others in history.

This means that men born since Adam and Eve also have a *one-sided* perspective. They only have the perspective of “evil.” Because Adam and Eve became separated from God, their children never experienced God. They only have the dubious benefit of their parents stories, thoughts and actions about God as guidelines. Since their parents thoughts are different from Gods thoughts, their own thoughts are even further from God's. This is why you see a moral decline in society as the generations pass.

Whereas Adam and Eve, before the fall, knew only "good" and had fellowship with God; after the fall, generations knew only "evil" (thoughts different from God's) because they were separated from Him. Thus, men born since Adam, if they ever do hear about God, are back in the same situation as the garden couple; in the position of making a decision about God's truth while in the midst of doubt. They are in the midst of doubt because they don't "know" that God is real, they only have heard rumor or theory that God is real. That is the position the natural man is in. This means that the natural man must initially cooperate and listen to some truth about God; in order to obtain truth about God. He must continue to cooperate to believe in faith. It is not until a man believes in faith for

some period of time that God feeds back to him because of his faith; that God is real. The man then goes from being a believer to a “knower.”

The term “Original Sin” is somewhat misleading. It represents a misconception of the Garden situation. It is not the first sin ever committed which is significant. It is the first sin *situation*, with Adam and Eve, which is significant. The significance is that God has shown us what goes on inside a person with respect to our thinking. The significance is that through the Garden couple, God has shown how the contrast between “good” and “evil” is vital to understanding our theology; and therefore, our salvation. *Original sin situation* is more appropriate. For Adam and Eve, in God's presence there was only “good,” out of God's presence there was only “evil.” But out of the Garden, they still had a good / evil perspective, and they “knew” God was real and worshipped Him.

For men after Adam and Eve, we are out of God's presence, and have only an “evil” perspective, because we are out of contact with Him. The only way we have to get a perspective of the “good” of God is by faith. This is why in all dispensations, men come to know God by faith, because there is no other way to come to know Him.

## **The Atonement of Jesus Christ**

Scholars have identified four issues that must be satisfied such that God is satisfied with the atonement of Christ in the course of taking sinners to Heaven. They are Substitution, Redemption, Reconciliation, and Propitiation.

*Substitution has the idea Jesus died in the place of the sinner whose sins have been forgiven.*

\* Matt. 26:28 - “for this is My blood of the covenant, which is to be shed on behalf of many for forgiveness of sins.” See also John 3:14-16, 10:11, 14-18; Isaiah 53:11; II Cor. 5:21.

*Redemption has the idea that we were bought with a price; the blood of Jesus.* Our freedom from sin was paid by Him.

\* Eph. 1:7 - “In Him we have redemption

through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.” See also Heb. 9:12; Col. 1:14.

*Reconciliation has the idea that because Jesus paid the price of redemption, the enmity between God and man has gone away.*

\* Rom. 5:10 - “For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” See also II Cor. 5:18.

*Propitiation has the idea that the wrath of God toward saved people for sins committed has been taken out on Jesus on the cross.*

\* Rom. 3:25 - “. . . whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; . . .” See also Heb. 2:17; I Jn. 2:2, 4:10.

### **Unlimited Aspects**

Managed Cooperation Theology is consistent with unlimited atonement in that Christ died for all sinners. He died for all in the sense that “whosoever will” may come. Anyone may come to Jesus who cooperates with God in learning about Him and His plan. And if he cooperates, God will work in his heart to cause love for God.

Managed Cooperation Theology is also consistent with unlimited atonement in that: since Christ was God, the value of His suffering was infinite.

Boettner writes, p.151, “The value of the atonement depends upon, and is measured by, the dignity of the person making it; and since Christ suffered as a divine-human person the value of His suffering was infinite. The Scripture writers tell us plainly that the ‘Lord of Glory’ was crucified, I Cor. 2:8; that wicked men ‘killed the Prince of life,’ Acts 3:15; and that God ‘purchased’ the Church ‘with His own blood,’ Acts 20:28. The atonement, therefore, was infinitely meritorious and might have

saved every member of the human race had that been God’s plan.”

Managed Cooperation Theology is consistent with unlimited atonement in that Christ was a substitutionary sacrifice to satisfy the demands of God’s justice. The decree said, in the day that you eat, you shall surely die (paraphrase of Gen.2:22; 3:3). The infinite atonement of Jesus Christ justified the forgiveness of sins for the whole world.

### **Limited Aspects**

Managed Cooperation Theology suggests the atonement was limited in the sense that the atonement only becomes effectual for the people who cooperate with God. God has provided salvation for everyone, but a natural man’s thinking can only be changed by that individual opening himself to God’s truth not yet known. If he so opens himself; exposure to, belief of and faith in, God’s truth and ways are possible (Lk. 6:46-49). This is how the atonement of Christ becomes effectual for a person.

Managed Cooperation Theology suggests another aspect of limited atonement. That when people come to believe in faith that Christ suffered and died for them personally, for forgiveness of their own personal sins, this comes across as love. This is a major way God communicates that He loves them. The more that a man comes in contact with the atonement, the more real that fact becomes. The movie, “The Passion of Christ” is an example. A Christian cannot see that movie without appreciating Christ’s suffering, and then weeping because He loved us with such a great love.

### **Conditional Eternal Security**

I believe the proper view of salvation is that we have *not* been given salvation at the time of regeneration but only a *conditional promise* of salvation (see footnote at end of Chapter)<sup>11</sup> The Condition is that one must be found faithful until the end of life. (See footnote # 14)

The promise of salvation has been explained

like this. It is like buying a house. When you buy a house, you are commonly known as a home owner. But you are not technically a home owner because you haven't yet finished paying for the house. What you have is a promise that if you finish making payments, you will, in fact, *become* a home owner. And, If we don't make the payments, the bank will repossess the house because we don't own it.

Because of Calvinism, it is commonplace in our spiritual culture; at the time of a profession of faith, to say we have been "saved." But technically, we just have the promise of salvation.

Similarly, if one is not a person of faith at the end of life, God will not take you to Heaven. He does this because Heaven is promised, and is made for, people of faith. No faith means no love for God (Heb. 11:6), which means no Heaven. It defeats the central purpose for the creation<sup>12</sup> to take to Heaven one who does not love God enough to be faithful to the end of life. God wants people to love Him forever.

Thus, the *promise* of Heaven comes at the beginning of the faith walk. Actually receiving Heaven comes at the time of the glorification of the saints; at the end of life.

### **Gain or Loss of Salvation**

The reason God made salvation a conditional promise is that faith is variable. Faith increases and decreases with respect to relationship to Jesus. The more one thinks about God, the greater the relationship, and with that comes increased faith. The less one thinks about God, the lesser the relationship, and with that comes less faith.<sup>13</sup>

Let's say a person responds to the call to be a christian at a Billy Graham Crusade. He makes a confession of sins, and professes belief in Jesus. He starts his walk with God and grows.

Under the promises of Heaven, he will receive Heaven if faithful. But right now, he only has a promise.

This means he or we do not have anything to lose; but only have something to gain. After

all, nobody can lose something they have not yet gained. Its like the house, you cannot lose ownership when payments are not made because you do not yet own it. You may lose some investment, but you don't lose ownership. As a home buyer, you must qualify for ownership by *faithfully* making payments until the end of the contract. Then, the ownership title will be given to you.

As a christian, you must qualify for Heaven by believing that Jesus Christ is God's Son, that the Father raised the Son from the dead, and you must have confessed Jesus as Lord (Boss / Manager) of your life (Rom 10:9-10). As a christian, you must be found faithful to that belief and confession, for your whole life, in order to own a place in Heaven.<sup>14</sup> That is, Jesus giving you the crown of life.

It is just like Peter said when talking about the qualities we should be learning about, (II Peter 1:4-11):

4 ". . . He has granted to us His precious and magnificent *promises*<sup>15</sup>, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

5 Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge;

6 and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness;

7 and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, Christian love.

8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten

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12. God desires a people that He can love and who will love Him forever.

his purification from his former sins.

10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;

11 for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom or our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.”

There is no cause for concern about your going to Heaven as long as you practice *these things*.<sup>16</sup> *These things* are a summation of the whole christian curriculum we must learn. But what if you don't practice *these things*?

Isn't the opposite of verse 10 also true . . . if you don't practice *these things*, you might stumble? And in verse 11; if you don't practice *these things*, the entrance of the eternal kingdom wouldn't be abundantly supplied to you?

If one doesn't practice *these things* mentioned by Peter, wouldn't that constitute neglect of ones salvation (Heb. 2:3)? And where does that lead (Heb. 3:12-14)? The bottom line is if you continue in the faith, you gain the reward; if you don't continue in the faith, you don't gain the reward. That is why the Bible, and especially Hebrews, is replete with encouragements to go on with God. Be close to Jesus.

The context of Heb.3 and 6 is the *promise* of salvation . . . if we hold fast our assurance firm until the end.<sup>17</sup> Abraham, the ultimate man of faith, only got *promises* of a heavenly city (Heb. 11:13). Abraham was *promised* a country but it didn't happen . . . yet (Rom. 4:13).

Ephesians 1:13 says, “. . . you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of *promise*, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption (glorification of our bodies) . . .” We don't have the redemption now; it is a promise for the future. When Abraham gets his, we get ours.

If a person were to fall away, how would that happen? He might become dull of hearing (Heb. 5:11). He might not have grown to be a

teacher but remained a babe (Heb. 5:13) and therefore subject to deception by the deceitfulness of sin (Heb. 5:13). Over time, with less and less relationship with Jesus, one becomes more and more influenced by the flesh, the world, pride and the demons. After awhile, the beliefs of christianity become dim, and the concerns of the self become super important.

A persons heart which is hard enough could cause him to turn away from God. Since this person has experienced being a christian and not liked it, and experienced being a pagan, he has an opinion about both worlds. Since, he has the perspective of both sides, you can't convince him that God is good once he has perceived otherwise (Heb. 6:6). So his faith is dead; he renounces his faith. No faith, no salvation.

So, I conclude Hebrews 6:4-6 is trying to

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14. One must be found faithful at the end of life.

Psalms 101:6 - My eyes shall be on the *faithful* of the land, that they may dwell with me; . . .

Ezek.33:18-19 - When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, then he shall die in it.

Mark 13:13 - And you will be hated by all on account of my name, but it is the one who has *endured to the end* who will be saved.

Luke 19:17 - And he said to him, ‘Well done, good slave, because you have been *faithful* in a very little thing, be in authority over ten cities.’

I Cor.4:2 - In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found *trustworthy*.

Col.1:22-23 -... if indeed you *continue in the faith* firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel...

I Tim 4:16 - Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will *insure salvation* both for yourself and for those who hear you.

Heb.3:14 - For we have become partakers of Christ, *if* we hold fast the beginning of *our assurance firm until the end*;...

James 1:12 - Blessed is the man who *perseveres* under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has *promised* to those who love Him.

Rev.2:10b - Be *faithful* until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

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13. Romans 8:5-7 with John 15:7

teach us to be diligent about growing in christ so we won't be vulnerable to the deceitfulness of sin. This coupled with realizing that God likes us despite our sometimes sinful actions,<sup>18</sup> is a formula for dependence on the Holy Spirit. Thus, we are free to love God and serve Him.

## **Election**

God's choice of certain individuals unto salvation before the foundation of the world was based upon His foreseeing that they would respond to His call. This means God knew they would open themselves to listen to godly men who were acquainting them with God, and who He is to them. They further allowed themselves to hear, learn and cooperate with the Holy Spirit to believe, have faith, continue their faith until the end of life. Those that cooperate with God sufficiently, come to love God, are glorified at the judgement, and are thus elected to Heaven.

## **Human Freedom**

Human freedom explores the question of how much control does man have concerning coming to know and love God. Calvinists say man has zero ability to come to know God. Arminians says God allows man grace to enable a sinner to repent and believe. Managed Cooperation Theology suggests that God has given man sovereignty over his own life which makes him capable of making decisions about life. His capability to make decisions leads to his ability to love others and to love God.

And, if man cooperates sufficiently, the Holy Spirit will work with him through the salvation process. Such that, he will come to love God and be taken to Heaven. However, the opposite is also true, that if man does not cooperate sufficiently, the Holy Spirit cannot work with him enough for him to come to love God; and thus, he dies in his sins.

The problem with trying to talk about this

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15. Emphasis is mine.

subject is every case, every person's experience is different. There are so many variables having to do with environment. Some variables are intelligence, parentage, living conditions and personality. The biggest problem is mankind is separated from God. That means we can't go somewhere to see Him. He can only be seen through the eyes of faith.

## **Limited Ability**

A person is born with a blank experience slate. Their experience starts sometime near birth. The first years of life are totally selfish, and only look inward to self satisfaction. Perhaps God has made it this way to preserve the life of the child. Anyway, that is how babies are, even as they grow into children. All children are self-centered. All people are the center of their world until they learn to be different, if they ever learn to be different. Babies don't care if mom or dad are asleep or have worked all day, when they are wet or hungry, its either satisfy me or listen to the crying.

As children, they take in everything, they learn about everything with which they come in contact; good or bad. This includes spiritual topics. Children and people must learn about God just like they learn about arithmetic. The little people are blank slates just waiting to be filled with knowledge of all kinds, including knowledge of God. If they get true knowledge of God, they are blessed, if not life is harder and possibly a tragic destiny.

As children, they tend to be open to new subjects, so if you catch children during their formative years, they cooperate much better than later. This is why a parent must be committed to teaching Godly principles early in life. But as they get older, they have acquired such a vast amount of knowledge, they begin to think of themselves as sufficiently knowledgeable about life. Then, any new information about life is suspect; as to whether it is true or false. Once a

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16. II Peter 1:5-7 i.e.: faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, christian love.

person gets to this age, it is much more difficult to teach him anything, or for him to accept anything. When people grow up and become adults, they are usually self-sufficient. That means they make their own decisions about life; what they shall do and where they shall go and what they shall believe.

Because of the fall and separation from God, man from the womb is “Natural” and unregenerate, and only possesses finite knowledge and flawed character. In most cases, now days, their life perspective does not include a true knowledge of God. However, man goes on forming opinions and making decisions about life, based on what knowledge level, and character traits, he possesses at the time. He doesn’t realize he is missing God’s infinite knowledge and perfect character. He also doesn’t realize he is missing the components of God’s knowledge and character which makes his life successful by God’s standards. This also means, man forms opinions and makes decisions about life and spirituality, that are different from God’s. This different thinking is called sin.

Sinful thinking is magnified by Satan and His angels. Sinful thinking causes sinful action. Since no man can think like God, because we are separated from Him, all Natural people are sinners. A person’s thinking can only be changed by the individual opening himself to the possibility of God’s truth not yet known.

This truth must be conveyed by godly men who are the spiritual descendents of Jesus. If he so opens himself; exposure to, belief of, and faith in God’s truth and ways are probable. But this takes the realization that he does not know all about life and therefore, he should listen and learn. This is why Jesus said in Matt. 18:3, “Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Human freedom extends to mankind through God’s gifted sovereignty, such that mankind must cooperate with godly men to learn about a God, whom he does not know; to be

influenced by the Holy Spirit; whom he does not know exists, in order to learn about a God who He can not see; to go to a Heaven that he is not sure exists. This requires the cooperation of God and man together; not just one or the other.

## Our Home

God will take to Heaven all who are faithful to Him. Jesus has prepared a place for us with many estates, the New Jerusalem.

The New Jerusalem is the place where God lives, and we will live; Heaven. It is like a large satellite, a cube, 1500 miles long, 1500 miles wide and 1500 miles high.<sup>19</sup> It is large enough. If everyone was given one cubic mile (1 mile by 1 mile by 1 mile) of space, the cube would hold 3.375 billion people.

## Our Rewards

The following are rewards given for various aspects of work performed during life. The rewards come in the form of crowns. Each person will get at least one crown; the Crown of Life. Some people will have up to five stars in their crown, the stars representing multiple crowns.

1. *Crown of Life* - Given to those judged faithful to the Lord, or during the Great Tribulation, who die for the Lord (James 1:12; Rev. 2:10).
2. *Crown of Righteousness* - Given to those who love His appearing (II Tim. 4:8).
3. *Incorruptible Crown* - Given for living a disciplined christian life (I Cor. 9:25; II Tim. 2:5).
4. *Crown of Rejoicing* - Given for leading someone to the Lord (Phil. 4:1; I Thess. 2:19).
5. *Crown of Glory* - Given to Leaders or shepherds in the church (I Pet. 5:4).

We have a tremendous future. I look forward to the day we meet God face to face. He is so very good to give such wonderful gifts and especially the gift of Himself.

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17. Hebrews 3:6; 3:14; 6:11. See also II Peter 1:4-11,

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18. *ibid*

## **Proximity To Open Theism**

There will undoubtedly be persons who may want to dismiss Managed Cooperation Theology as just another version of, or variation on Open Theism. There is some similarities but in no way has anything I am saying, come out of, or from, Open Theism. The similarities that exist are purely coincidental.

All of the theology, which I purport as truth, has its root in Scripture. That is my source. I would suggest the common themes which Open Theism and Managed Cooperation Theology share, are principles taught in Scripture. However, Open Theism proponents may not agree with all of Managed Cooperation Theology ideas. And I, as the originator of Managed Cooperation Theology, am not willing to agree with Open Theists on their stand on the classic attributes of God. On the other hand, I am not willing to take a stand with the proponents of the classic attributes of God either; because they too, read beyond Scripture in their arguments. Either group may or may not be correct on those subjects, but as Ryrie says, speaking on those subjects goes beyond the scope of Scripture. It is a futile endeavor, and just promotes divisiveness. I am taking Ryrie's advice, and I will not speak where the Lord has not spoken.

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11. Salvation is based on a conditional promise.

Acts 2:39 - For the *promise* is for you and your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call to Himself.

Rom 13:11 - If salvation is nearer now than when we first believed, salvation cannot come at regeneration. Therefore, salvation must be a future *promise*.

Gal.3:14 - "... in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the *promise* of the Spirit through faith."

Gal. 3:22 - "... But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the *promise* by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe."

Gal.4:28 - "... And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of *promise*."

Eph 1:13 - "... In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation - - having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of *promise*.

Eph. 3:6 - "... to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the *promise* in Christ Jesus through the gospel, ...."

Phil 3:11-12 - Paul says he lives that he *may attain* to the resurrection (future); not that he has *already* attained it. Therefore, he must be waiting for the fulfillment of a *promise*.

II Tim. 1:1 - "... Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the *promise* of life in Christ Jesus, ...."

Titus 1:2 - "... in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, *promised* long ages ago, ...."

Titus 3:7 - . . . that being justified by His grace we *might* be made heirs according to the *hope* of eternal life.

Heb. 10:23 - "... Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who *promised* is faithful; ...."

Heb. 10:36 - "... For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was *promised*."

James 1:12 - Blessed is the man who *perseveres* under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has *promised* to those who love Him.

James 2:5 - "... Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He *promised* to those who love Him?"

I John 2:25 - "... And this is the *promise* which He Himself made to us: eternal life."