4. Because God knew who would believe and who would not does not force the conclusion that human free will does not enter into the equation.

5. The omniscience of God knows the end from the beginning including the thoughts and decisions of every person in history. Knowing who is among the elect does not mean that human free will is ignored. In human history, the volitional decisions of men inform the omniscience of God.

6. So what comes first? Election or volition? Paul informs us in Ephesians:

> **Ephesians 1:4**　　　　　　　Since He elected [ἐκλέγω (*eklégō*): to select; to choose] us in Him before the foundation of the world [eternity past], that we would be holy and blameless before Him.

7. The integrity of God plus the omniscience of God predetermines in history who among the human race will from their free will independently choose to believe in Jesus Christ for salvation.

8. Because the omniscience of God knows all that is knowable, God comprehended in eternity past those individuals alive during the Church Age who would believe in Christ for salvation.

9. The issue that resolves the angelic conflict is the free will decisions of Church-Age believers who give the gospel a fair hearing. Those who do but reject the message are transferred to the Torments compartment of Hades at physical death.

10. Those who positively respond to the gospel message are saved and will go to heaven when they die doing so in interim bodies.

11. There is still an ongoing controversy among Protestant theologians regarding the doctrine of election. Understanding the biblical view of this doctrine is critical to understanding James 1:18.

12. One of the most important doctrines within New Testament theology is that of election which we examined in detail in JAS1-99 through -109.

13.   This effort reviewed details important to our study from the series, *Hermeneutics*.[9] Our emphasis here is on the doctrine of election and which answers the question, "What must I do in order to be saved?"

14.   This doctrine covers 11 hours of study. Here is the outline with a brief synopsis:

I.   Selection and Election

1.   Selection occurs at physical birth while election occurs at the moment a person responds with positive volition to the presentation of the gospel.

2.   The gospel contains information that identifies Jesus Christ as the divine solution to our universal sin problem.

3.   At selection a person is imputed physical life while he simultaneously is imputed Adam's original sin. This sets up a barrier between him and God.

4.   Adam's original sin separates man from perfect God and only the perfect personality of Jesus can remove that barrier.

5.   The gospel is called "good news" because it reveals the divine solution to the problem of imputed and personal sins:

The *gospel* is designed to present Jesus of Nazareth as Savior. Any number of details may be presented to describe His person and His work: He is both perfect God and sinless Man, who was sacrificed on the cross for the sins of the entire human race, after which He died, was buried, and three days later was resurrected from the dead. Regardless of how many details are given, the free will of the unbeliever must be left to consider whether to accept or reject Jesus as his personal Savior.[10]

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[9] A 74-hour study comprising research into the development of the orthodox system of biblical analysis. The study begins with the completion of the New Testament canon up to the discovery that its text was written in the common language of the Roman Empire, Koine Greek. Here's the link:
http://www.joegriffin.org/Pages/ClassArchiveSubject.aspx?SeriesID=CC02&ClassNumberStart=285&ClassNumberEnd=358&Subject=Hermeneutics+%e2%80%a2+Clanking+Chains+(2002)

[10] *Forty Proclamations: The Theology of Grace Doctrine Church* (St. Charles: Joe Griffin Media Ministries, 2011), 9.

4. If the target responds positively to the gospel, then he is saved. He is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, is a member of the royal family of God, and is imputed 40 things:

Salvation occurs when the unbeliever responds with nonmeritorious faith alone in Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8–9). This faith response has both purpose and result: The purpose is deliverance from punishment in the lake of fire. The result is the imputation of eternal life. Taken together, salvation means that believers go to heaven when they die (John 3:16).[11]

5. When a person believes in Christ, selection becomes election.

II. The Lapsarian Controversy: The Bèza Distortion

1. John Calvin (1509–1564) correctly taught the doctrine of "unlimited atonement": that salvation is an act of the Holy Spirit on behalf of anyone who freely expresses faith alone in Christ alone for forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life.

2. However, this view was distorted into a heresy by his successor at Geneva, Theodore Bèza (1519–1606). It is important to know that this man did great damage to the West's understanding of critical doctrines of Scripture.

3. One of the significant works that Bèza produced was his Latin edition of Jerome's Latin Vulgate. The version that King James's translators chose to use was not that of Jerome but Bèza.

4. John Calvin did not develop an erroneous doctrine of election, but in the hands of Bèza, it was.

III. Differences between Calvin's and Bèza's Doctrines of Atonement:

1. There is a critically and damagingly wide divide between Calvin's doctrine of "unlimited" atonement" and Bèza's doctrine of "limited atonement."

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[11] Ibid.

2.   Calvin's doctrine establishes that "whosoever will" believe in Jesus through faith alone in Christ alone will be saved.

3.   Bèza's doctrine contends that only those "chosen" by God in eternity past will be saved, no one's free will is essential in the process, and only those whose "works" confirm their election are saved.

4.   Detailed analysis is excerpted primarily from R. T. Kendall's first and new editions of *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*.

5.   Since the publication of his first edition in 1981, those of the limited atonement camp have sought to discredit his research. In the Preface of his New Edition, Kendall answers his critics:

6. Since the publication of his first edition in 1981, those of the limited atonement camp have sought to discredit his research. In the Preface of his New Edition, Kendall answers his critics:

   'A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.' Even if I answered my critics line by line the 'Yes, but' syndrome would not close down. I must say that I have yet to read a refutation of my research that was done by one who had no aspirations along traditional Reformed lines.[1]

7. What Kendall did discover is that the limited atonement view was developed in Calvin's name after his death by his protégé and successor, Theodore Bèza. This is exposed by Kendall in chapter two of his book, "Theodore Bèza and the Heidelberg Theologians" (pp. 29-41).

8. Fundamental in the development of Bèza's doctrine was the belief that Christ died for the elect only.

9. This means that those individuals who were elected by God in eternity past are the *only ones* for whom Christ died. All others are said to be "reprobate." These were brought into existence with no hope of salvation and are left to die in their sins without hope or recourse.

10. Kendall summarizes this view: "In a word: those for whom Christ died must necessarily be saved; those for whom He did not die must necessarily be damned."[2]

11. Bèza therefore takes the *death* of Christ, which is summed up by the word "atonement," and links it with the doctrine of *election* in such a way that election *predetermines* one's salvation.

12. From this concept Bèza developed a system that later became known as supralapsarianism.

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[1] R. T. Kendall, "Preface to this New Edition," in *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*, new ed. (Waynesboro, Ga.: Paternoster Press, 1997, vii.

[2] Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism* (1979), 29fn2.

13.   This term is not as complicated as it appears. The prefix *supra-* means "above, over, or before." In the middle is the word "lapse" which comes for the Latin word *lapsus*, meaning "fall." The two suffixes at the end are *–ian* and *–ism*. The former refers to those who believe in the principle that man is fallen. The latter indicates that it constitutes a belief system or a doctrine.   Therefore, if you believe in the doctrine that mankind is "fallen" then you are a lapsarian and you are a proponent of lapsarianism.

14.   Bèza's system contends that in eternity past when God sovereignly determined how He would deal with the eternal future of the human race, He decreed to elect a few to salvation but not all.

15.   Bèza further contended that if God's elective decree was placed in a logical order then the act of election would occur before His decision to permit the fall. Thus, Bèza's system became known as supralapsarianism: he believed the doctrine of the fall, but asserted that election logically occurred *before* the fall.

The Supralapsarian Order of the Elective Decrees

1-   **The decree to elect some to be saved and to reprobate all others.**

2-   **The decree to create men, both elect and non-elect.**

3-   **The decree to permit the fall.**

4-   **The decree to provide salvation for the elect.**

5-   **The decree to apply salvation to the elect.**

16.   Note that according to Bèza, the decrees of election and reprobation occur first and thus have logical priority over the decrees to create mankind and permit the fall.

17.   The decree to elect some to be saved and to reprobate all others results in the doctrine of double predestination: men, not yet created, are predetermined for either heaven or the lake of fire and human free will is not a substantial consideration.

18.   Note the heresy: some men not yet created and not yet fallen are condemned by the justice of God! These so-called "reprobates" are not candidates for redemption because Christ did not die for their sins.

19. Another inconsistency: the elect are said to be redeemed before they are created and before they fall. But redemption can only apply to those who are fallen!

20. Nevertheless, Bèza contends that God through Christ saves the elect only. The <u>death</u> of Christ on the cross becomes the *means* of saving the elect, not the <u>faith</u> of the individual.

21. Bèza interprets Ephesians 1:4 to mean that since election occurred in eternity past then salvation of the elect is an accomplished fact. (p. 32)

22. Problem: How does the elected person know of his election and thus have assurance of his salvation?

23. Unlimited atonement asserts that Christ died for all mankind. Thus when the sinner expresses his personal faith in Christ he may surely know he is saved.

24. But under the principle of limited atonement, the sinner has no way of knowing whether or not he is among those for whom Christ died. The resultant dilemma is evaluated by Kendall:

> **Bèza has told us Christ died for the elect. This makes trusting Christ's death presumptuous: we could be putting our trust in One who did not die or us and therefore be damned. Thus we can no more trust Christ's death by a direct act of faith then we can infallibly project that we are among the number chosen from eternity: for the number of the elect and the number for whom Christ died are one and the same. The ground of assurance, then, must be sought elsewhere than in Christ. (p. 32)**

25. Since Christ's atoning sacrifice was limited to a predetermined few, no individual may look to Christ for assurance about his eternal future. Bèza understood the quandary his theology created but, undaunted, he came up with a solution.

> **NOTE: Bèza's sixteenth-century spelling is modernized:**

> **When Satan puts us in doubt of our election, we may not search first the resolution in the eternal counsel of god whose majesty we cannot comprehend, but on the contrary we must begin at the sanctification which we feel in ourselves … forasmuch as our sanctification from which proceeds good works, is a certain effect of the faith or of Jesus Christ dwelling in us by faith.**