

Doctrinal Differences

Sovereignty: God has eternally decreed everything that will come to pass, and His will is the ultimate cause of all events, including all individual human choices. Nothing happens outside His will. He has planned all things that happen. (Calvinists)

His supreme authority and power, which includes the freedom to create beings with genuine free will. He can govern the universe and accomplish His plans while allowing humans to make real choices. Sovereignty does not require God to have meticulous control over every event. Therefore, it means God has the right and ability to do whatever He wills, but He has chosen to interact with creation in a way that respects human freedom. (Arminians)

Facts about Doctrinal Differences

1) Some Doctrines are
“Secondary”

People who love Jesus can
disagree on “Secondary” Doctrine

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2) A congregation of Jesus Followers should be diverse in our understandings of “secondary” doctrines.

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3) Many doctrines are difficult to understand.

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“His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.”

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4) My understanding of a doctrine that I am ready to defend—even adamantly defend—may be incorrect.

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5) You need to be willing to change your mind.

Facts about Doctrinal Differences

6) There is a big difference between confidence and arrogance.

In Romans 14:1, the Apostle Paul says, “Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters.”

“One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind.” (14:5)

“You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt?”(14:10)

Facts about Doctrinal Differences

7) “Secondary” Doctrines are important because they shape the way we view the world and live our lives.

John Calvin:

By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which He determined with Himself whatever He wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of those ends, we say that he has been predestined to life or death... Some are predestined to salvation, others to damnation...

John Calvin:

Regarding the lost: it was His good pleasure to doom to destruction... Since the disposition of all things is in the hands of God and He can give life or death at His pleasure, He dispenses and ordains by His judgment that some, from their mother's womb, are destined irrevocably to eternal death in order to glorify His name in their perdition... All are not created on equal terms, but some are predestined to eternal life, others to eternal damnation..."

Does God create humans in His own image who are doomed to destruction with no hope of redemption?

Does God plan for humans to sin so that he can use their sin for His glory, and if He does, how can we say that God is not responsible for that sin?

If every human is chosen for salvation or damnation before birth, when a baby who has committed no sin dies, are some of them predestined to an eternity in Hell?

As a man who loves Jesus who is a father of six children, what if some of my children are destined for Heaven and others are destined for Hell? Can I not do anything about that?

If God has already planned everything that will happen, what is the purpose of prayer (asking God for things) and why does James say that we have not because we ask not?

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By predestination we mean the predetermined redemptive plan of God to justify, sanctify and glorify whosoever freely believes.

As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.” (Rom. 10:11)

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

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All people are created with equal value as image bearers of God.

9 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. (James 3:9)

**So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them. (Gen. 1:27)**

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Because God desires mercy over justice and self-sacrificially loves everyone,...

...Mercy triumphs over judgment. (James 2:13)

But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.’ (Matthew 9:13)

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Because God desires mercy over justice and self-sacrificially loves everyone,...

2 He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:2)

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...He has graciously provided the means of salvation to every man, woman, boy & girl. No person is created for damnation, or predetermined by God to that end.

9 The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

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...He has graciously provided the means of salvation to every man, woman, boy & girl. No person is created for damnation, or predetermined by God to that end.

...God our Savior, 4 who wants all people to be saved & to come to a knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all people. (1 Tim 2:4-6)

30 “Therefore, you Israelites, I will judge each of you according to your own ways, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. 31 Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, people of Israel? 32 For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live! (Ezekiel 18: 30-32)

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Those who perish only do so because they refused to accept the truth so as to be saved.

...They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. (2 Thess. 2:10)

Bottom Line: Can we disagree with other Christians and do so in a spirit of love? If we can: let's wrestle with our doctrinal differences together, and let's experience a deepening of our faith together.