

Hermeneutic Study – 11th Session

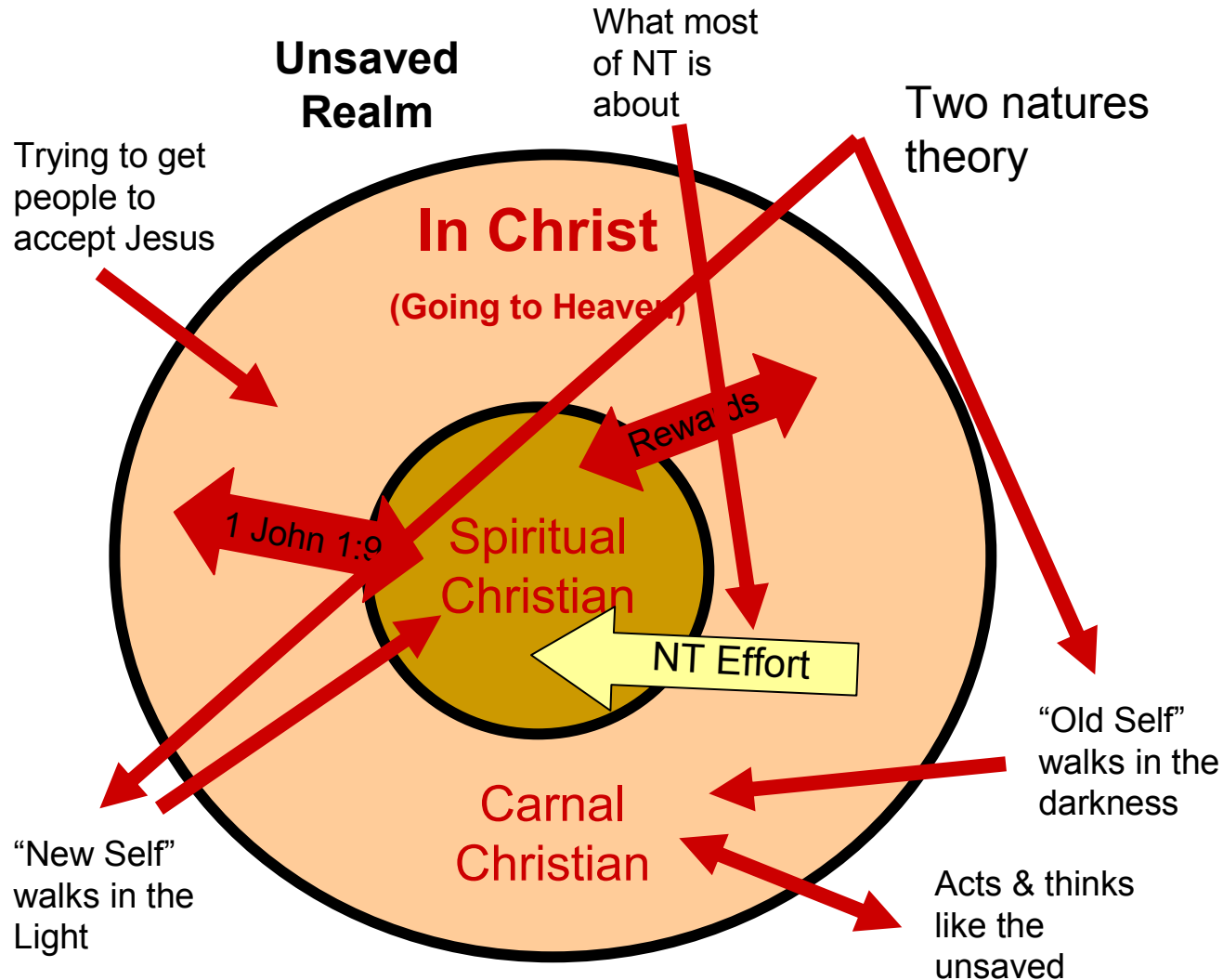
Agenda: for tonight – December 6th, 2009

- Controversial Doctrines, Practices, & Passages – “The Lordship Salvation Controversy”
 - Review Introductory remarks.
 - Briefly discuss two natures or one nature theories.
 - Review comments and summary of “Free Grace Theology.”
 - Comments from individuals supporting “Lordship Salvation.”
 - Looking at the arguments and Scriptures used to support “Lordship Salvation.”
 - Compare commentary examples to understand how the two views apply to interpretation.

Controversial Doctrines, Practices, & Passages

The Lordship Salvation Controversy - Introduction

Arminian Theological Framework for NT Epistles

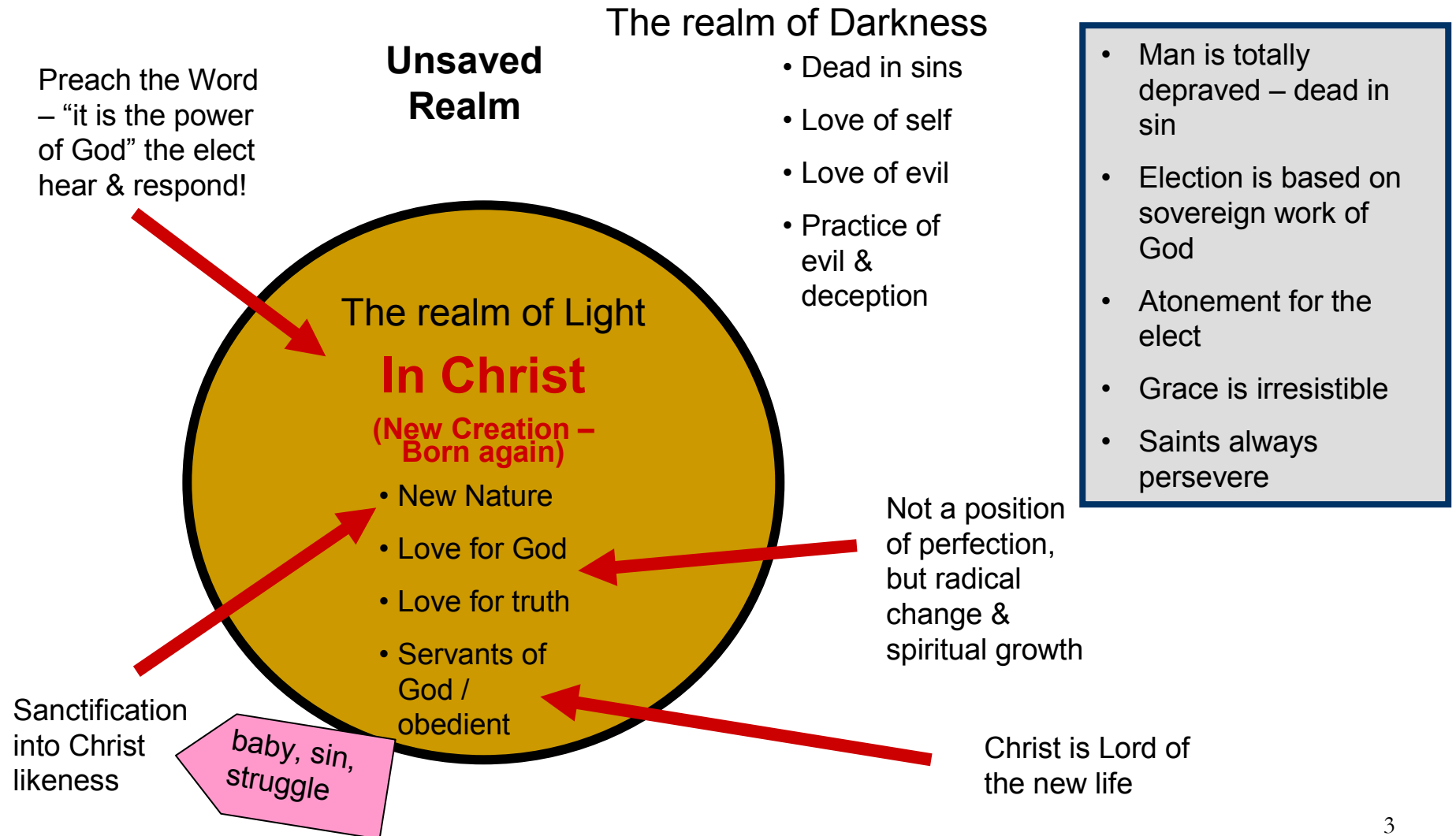


- Man is not totally depraved – has free will
- Election is based on foreknowledge (fore-seeing)
- Atonement covers all people
- Grace is not irresistible
- Saints do not always persevere

Controversial Doctrines, Practices, & Passages

The Lordship Salvation Controversy - Introduction

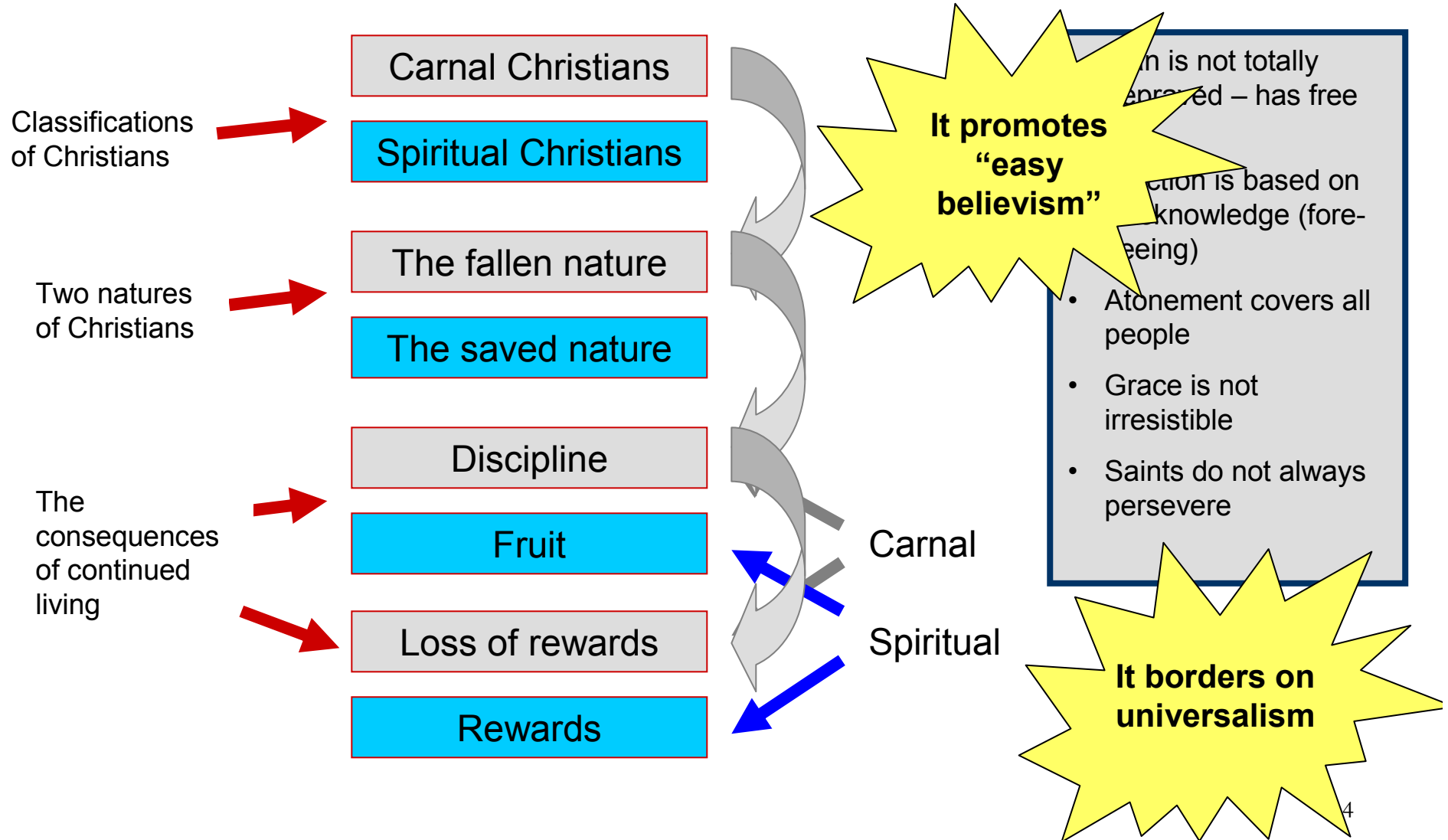
Calvinistic Theological Framework for NT Epistles



Controversial Doctrines, Practices, & Passages

The Lordship Salvation Controversy - Introduction

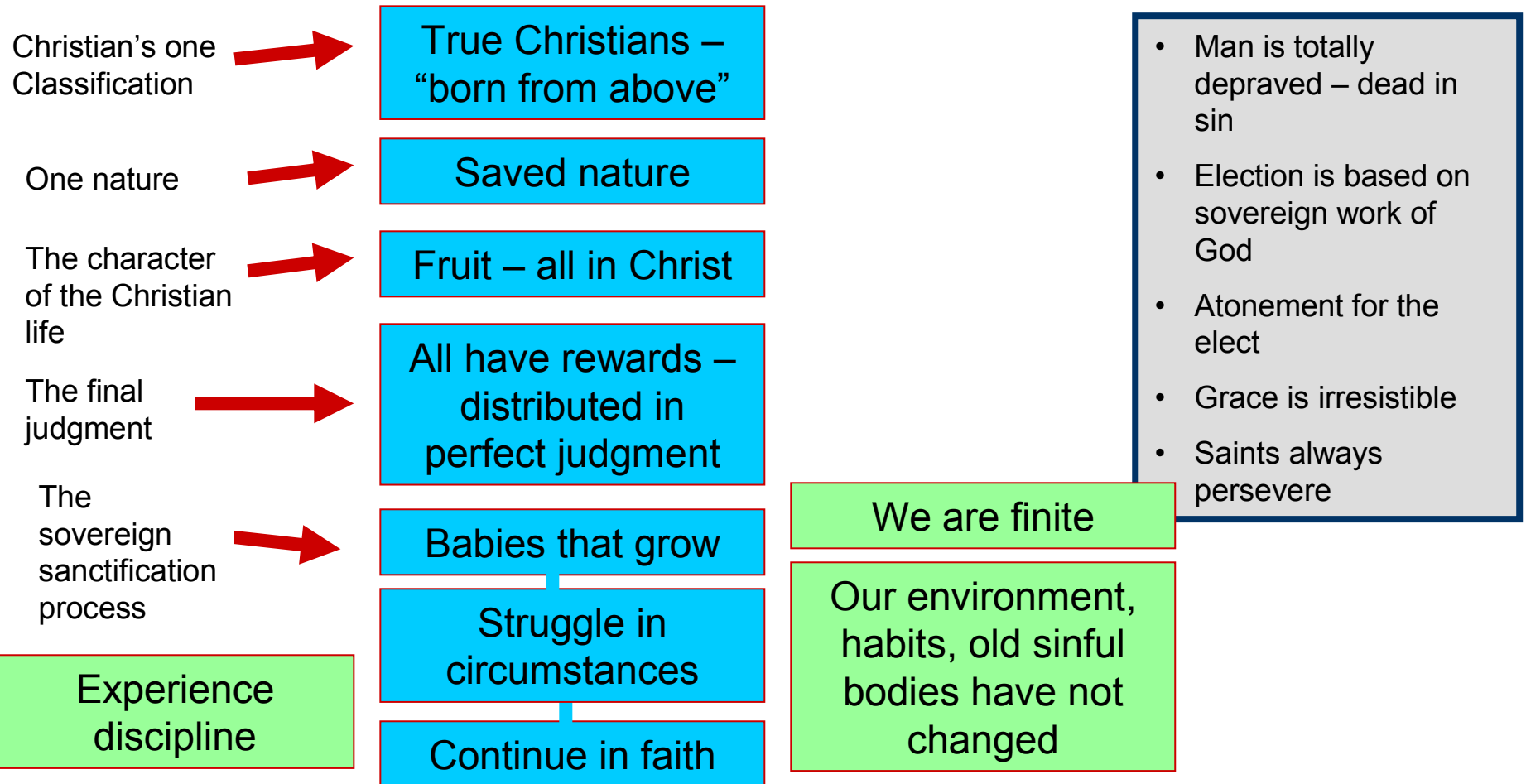
Arminianism Theological Pattern



Controversial Doctrines, Practices, & Passages

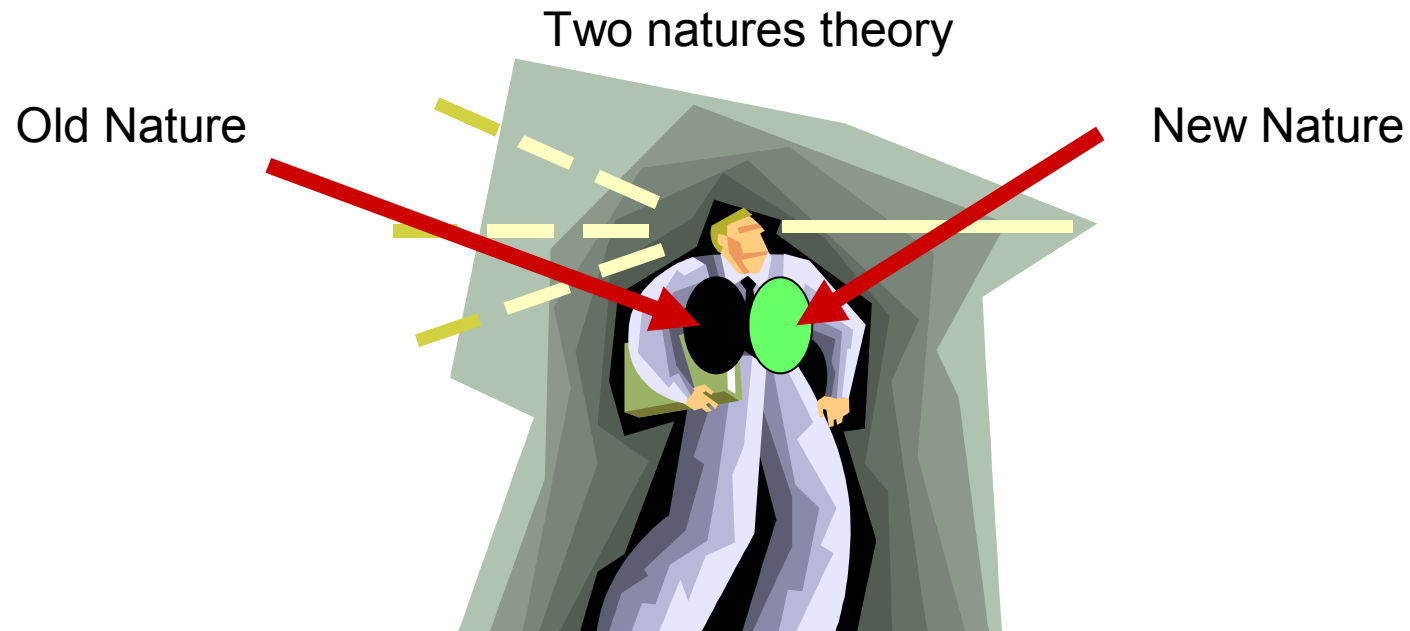
The Lordship Salvation Controversy - Introduction

Calvinistic Theological Pattern



Controversial Doctrines, Practices, & Passages

The Lordship Salvation Controversy - Introduction

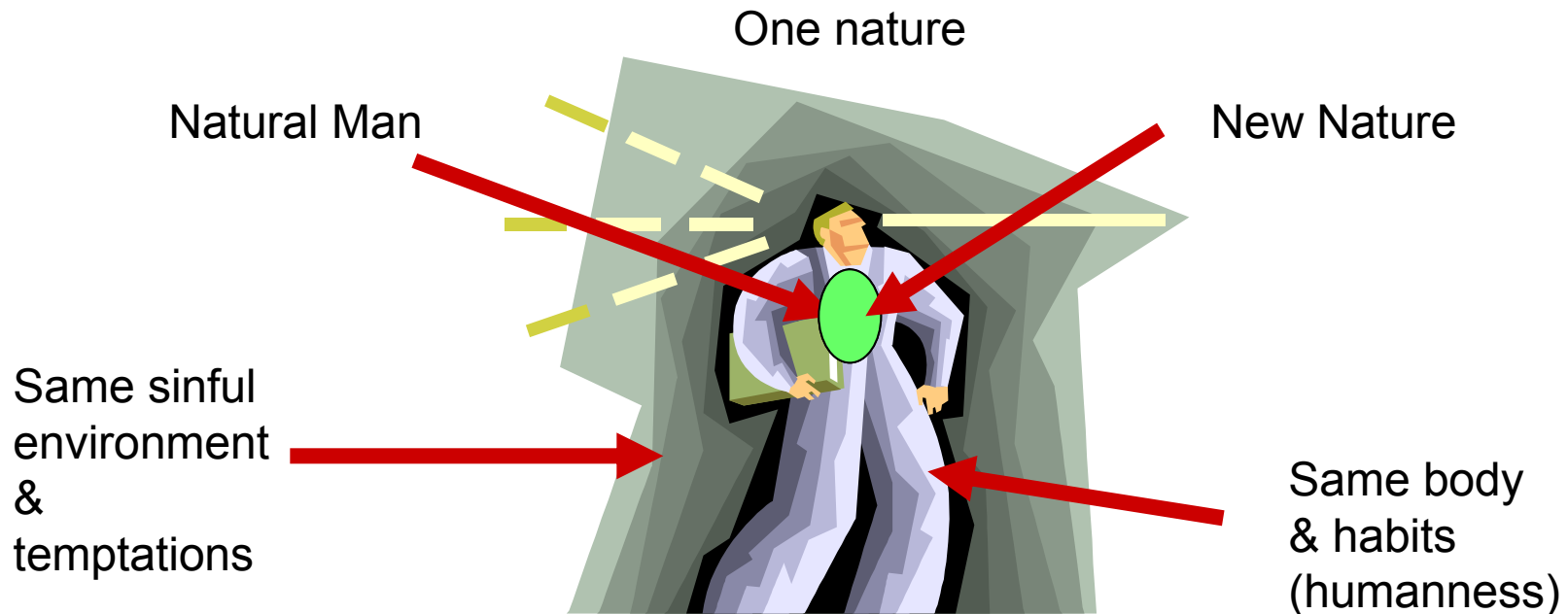


Scripture for backup:

- Rom 7:13-25
- Gal 5:16-18
- Eph 4:17 – 5:20; Col 3:5-17
- Gal 3:3; Phil 3:3; Rom 6:11-13

Controversial Doctrines, Practices, & Passages

The Lordship Salvation Controversy - Introduction



Scripture for backup:

- 2 Cor 5:17
- Ez 36:25-27
- Eph 2:3; 2 Pet 1:4; Gal 2:20; Rom 6:13; Col 3:9-10
- Gal 3:3; Phil 3:3; Rom 6:11-13
- 2 Pet 2:22

Controversial Doctrines, Practices, & Passages

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

□ Introduction

The concept of “Lordship salvation” came about as a contradiction to the era of “easy believe-ism” that crept into the evangelical church beginning in the mid 20th century. The evangelical community has largely accepted “easy believe-ism” as the biblical standard. It was aided by the theological development of the “Carnal Christian” concept (a Christian that acts exactly like a non-Christian) from 1st Corinthians 3.

The opposing position is called ‘Free Grace Theology’ which maintains that the Lordship salvation view is marked by legalism and a lack of graciousness. In particular, Free Grace theology claims that the Lordship position is “fixated” on the works-minded Gospel of Matthew while overlooking the Grace-minded Gospel of John. *From Wikipedia

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Summary of “Free Grace Theology from Zane Hodges book *Absolutely Free*

- ❑ Repentance is not essential to the gospel message. In no sense is repentance related to saving faith (Zane Hodges, *Absolutely Free*, 144-46).
- ❑ Faith is a human act, not a gift from God (*AF* 219). It occurs in a decisive moment but does not necessarily continue (*AF* xiv, 107). True faith can be subverted, be overthrown, collapse, or even turn to unbelief (*AF* 111).
- ❑ To "believe" unto salvation is to believe the facts of the gospel (*AF* 37-39). "Trusting Jesus" means believing the "saving facts" about Him (*AF* 39), and to believe those facts is to appropriate the gift of eternal life (*AF* 40). Those who add any suggestion of commitment have departed from the New Testament idea of salvation (*AF* 27).
- ❑ Spiritual fruit is not guaranteed in the Christian life (*AF* 73-75, 119). Some Christians spend their lives in a barren wasteland of defeat, confusion, and every kind of evil (*AF* 119-25).

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Summary of “Free Grace Theology from Zane Hodges book *Absolutely Free..continued*

- ❑ Heaven is guaranteed to believers (*AF* 112) but Christian victory is not (*AF* 118-19). One could even say "the saved" still need salvation (*AF* 195-99). Christ offers a whole range of postconversion deliverance experiences to supply what Christians lack (*AF* 196). But these other "salvations" all require the addition of human works, such as obedience, submission, and confession of Jesus as Lord (*AF* 74, 119, 124-25, 196). Thus God is dependent to some degree on human effort in achieving deliverance from sin in this life (*AF* 220).
- ❑ Submission is not in any sense a condition for eternal life (*AF* 172). "Calling on the Lord" means appealing to Him, not submitting to Him (*AF* 193-95).
- ❑ Nothing guarantees that a true Christian will love God (*AF* 130-31). Salvation does not necessarily even place the sinner in a right relationship of harmonious fellowship with God (*AF* 145-60).

Controversial Doctrines, Practices, & Passages

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Summary of “Free Grace Theology from Zane Hodges book *Absolutely Free..continued*

- ❑ If people are sure they believe, their faith must be genuine (*AF* 31). All who claim Christ by faith as Savior--even those involved in serious or prolonged sin--should be assured that they belong to God come what may (*AF* 32, 93-95). It is dangerous and destructive to question the salvation of professing Christians (*AF* 18-19, 91-99). The New Testament writers never questioned the reality of their readers' faith (*AF* 98).
- ❑ It is possible to experience a moment of faith that guarantees heaven for eternity (*AF* 107), then to turn away permanently and live a life that is utterly barren of any spiritual fruit (*AF* 118-19). Genuine believers might even cease to name the name of Christ or confess Christianity (*AF* 111).

Controversial Doctrines, Practices, & Passages

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Looking at the arguments and Scriptures used to support “Free Grace Theology”

- ❑ The entire book of Acts fails to reveal a single passage where people are pressed to acknowledge Jesus Christ as their personal Lord in order to be saved.
- ❑ Salvation is distinguished from discipleship and makes requirements for discipleship separate from salvation. Our Lord distinguished the two (Luke 14:16-33) as two separate things.
- ❑ Christ did not require the Samaritan woman to set her sinful life in order, or even be willing to, so that she could be saved. He did not set out before her what would be expected by way of changes in her life if she believed. He simply said she needed to know who He is and to ask for the gift of eternal life (John 4:10).
- ❑ Christ guarantees everlasting life to those who are convinced that He fulfills that promise – that is to everyone who simply believes in Him (John 6:47).

Controversial Doctrines, Practices, & Passages

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Looking at the arguments and Scriptures used to support “Free Grace Theology” ...continued

- ❑ Being a Christian means following an invitation, whereas being a disciple means forsaking everything. To confuse these two aspects of the Christian life is to confound the grace of God and the works of man, and to not distinguish the difference between salvation and sanctification.
- ❑ The gospel of John is the only book of the Bible written to non-Christians, and it significantly does not use the term "repentance." Therefore repentance is not a requirement for eternal life, only faith in Christ.
- ❑ Within the Free Grace movement there is some dispute over what is the essential content of saving faith. One side holds faith in Jesus of the Bible is sufficient for eternal life. The other side holds that one must believe in at least some of the following theological truths: death, burial, resurrection, and/or deity of Christ.

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Looking at the arguments and Scriptures used to support "Free Grace Theology" ...continued

Scriptures used for support:

- ❑ John 1:12. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name;"
- ❑ John 3:16; 3:18; 3:36; 4:10; 5:24; 6:29; 6:35; 6:37; 6:40; 6:47; 6:63; 7:38-39; 8:24; 17:3; 20:29; 20:31.
- ❑ Matthew 9:2. "And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."
- ❑ Mark 2:5; 5:36; Luk 7:50; Rom 3:27-28; 4:5; 5:1; 10:9; Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8-9; Col 2:20-23.

Controversial Doctrines, Practices, & Passages

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Comments from Key Individuals Supporting “Lordship Salvation”

John MacArthur from his book “The Gospel According to Jesus” writes: “Listen to the typical gospel presentation nowadays. You’ll hear sinners entreated with words like, ‘accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior’; ‘ask Jesus into your heart’; invite Christ into your life’; or ‘make a decision for Christ.’” You may be so accustomed to hearing those phrases that it will surprise you to learn none of them is based on biblical terminology. They are the products of a diluted gospel. It is not the gospel according to Jesus. The gospel Jesus proclaimed was a call to discipleship, a call to follow Him in submissive obedience, not just a plea to make a decision or pray a prayer. Jesus message liberated people from the bondage of their sin while it confronted and condemned hypocrisy.”

Controversial Doctrines, Practices, & Passages

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Comments from Key Individuals Supporting “Lordship Salvation”

J I Packer writing about “the Gospel According to Jesus” writes: “God has joined faith and repentance as the two facets of response to the Savior and made it clear that turning to Christ means turning from sin and letting ungodliness go. Biblical teaching on faith joins credence, commitment, and communion; it exhibits Christian believing as not only knowing facts about Christ, but also coming to Him in personal trust to worship, love, and serve Him. If we fail to keep together these things that God has joined together, our Christianity will be distorted. ‘Lordship salvation’ is a name for the view that upholds these unities.”

Controversial Doctrines, Practices, & Passages

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Comments from Key Individuals Supporting “Lordship Salvation”

James Montgomery Boice writing about “the Gospel According to Jesus” writes: “What does it mean to be a Christian? His (MacArthur’s) answers address themselves to what I consider to be the greatest weakness of contemporary evangelical Christianity in America. Did I say weakness? It is more. It is a tragic error. It is the idea – where did it ever come from? – that one can be a Christian without being a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. It reduces the gospel to the mere fact of Christ’s having died for sinners, requires of sinners only that they acknowledge this by the barest intellectual assent, and then assures them of the eternal security when they may very well not be born again. This view bends faith beyond recognition- at least for those who know what the Bible says about faith – and promises a false peace to thousand who have given verbal assent to this reductionist Christianity but are not truly in God’s family.”

Controversial Doctrines, Practices, & Passages

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Comments from Key Individuals Supporting “Lordship Salvation”

John Piper from his book *The Pleasures of God* – “So often you find in many churches and ministries the cultivation of an implicit two-stage Christianity: a faith stage and then (maybe) an obedience stage. But this is not the way the Bible pictures the life of faith. The separation of faith and obedience, as though faith were necessary for salvation and obedience were optional, is a mistake owing to a misunderstanding of what faith really is. True saving faith is not the kind of belief in the facts of the gospel that leaves the heart and life unchanged.”

Bruce Demarest and John Feinberg from their book *The Cross and Salvation*: “We conclude that for conversion to be authentic and transforming, pre-Christians must make the Lord Jesus Christ the object of their exclusive loyalty. This means that to the best of their knowledge penitents will forsake all known vice and cling to the Savior as their only hope of salvation. Genuine conversion will thus involve sincere repentance, total commitment to Christ, and submission to the Lord’s sovereign rule. We are not saying faith plus works saves; we simply invite an honest assessment of what biblical conversion involves.”

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Looking at the arguments and Scriptures used to support “Lordship Salvation”

- ❑ Christians that have saving faith are first of all “born again.” John 6:44 states that no one can come to Christ unless the Father draws him. This fits with the Scriptures teaching on total depravity (Eph 2:1; Rom 3:11). Therefore no one could believe in the first place unless God Himself deals in effectual grace. This is exactly what is meant in Eph 2:8-9. Faith is a gift from God on the basis of grace. The concept missing in Arminian theology (the Free Grace Theology) is the transformation of the “New Birth” (John 3:5-8; Jer 31:31-34; Ez 36:25-27). The point being that this and only this is true saving faith, and when true saving faith is present it is a life transforming work.
- ❑ The faith that saves commitment does not mean the person leads a perfect life. But commitment to Christ does mean that obedience rather than disobedience will be the trend of the life. The Christian life is a struggle (Phi 2:12-13; Gal 5:17). God’s love to His own becomes chastening when necessary (Heb 12:5-11). When there is sin, the true person of faith confesses sin and comes to the Father for forgiveness (1 John 1:9).

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Looking at the arguments and Scriptures used to support “Lordship Salvation”...continued

- ❑ Faith is a wholehearted trust in Christ personally (Gal 2:16; Phil 3:9). Not merely faith about Him; faith in Him.
- ❑ Those who have true faith will love Christ (Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 16:22; 1 John 4:19), and will want to do His bidding. Such a person may sin, but not continue to defy His authority and pursue what Christ hates.
- ❑ Surrender to God is the true believers highest joy, because he has become a new creation (2 Cor 5:17).
- ❑ The Free Grace Theologians claim the Gospel of John does not address repentance, and addresses faith as though it can come in any form, type, or degree. However, it is the Gospel of John that addresses the necessity of the “New Birth” (John 3:5-7); the reality of the necessity of God’s sovereign calling (John 6:44; 65); that not every kind of faith is sufficient (John 2:23-24; 8:30-31). In fact the idea of being “set free” in

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Looking at the arguments and Scriptures used to support “Lordship Salvation”...continued

John 8:32 means to be set free from the dominion of sin & the old self – thus obedience with repentance. The entire writing of John’s first epistle is delineating the difference between profession and true saving faith (1st John 3:9).

- ❑ The sinner's act of faith is not the main issue in the lordship controversy. The real debate is with what God does in redeeming the elect. Is the person claiming faith really born again? (John 3:3; 7 ; 1 Peter 1:3 , 23)? Is the old self "crucified ... and no longer serving as a slave to sin" (Rom 6:6)? Does the person have a new nature? (2 Pet 1:4 ; 2 Cor 5:17)? Is the faith of such the person can now say they are slaves to righteousness (Rom 6:18)?
- ❑ The Arminian approach to faith is sadly fostering a faith in one’s faith, not in the transforming power of Christ alone and with it a complete submission to Christ as the Lord of life.

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Looking at the arguments and Scriptures used to support “Lordship Salvation”...continued

- ❑ Free Grace Theology proponents take their strength from claiming to be champions of grace. However, their type of grace is anemic. Titus 3:5 further eliminates the Arminian ideas of grace – that man obligates God via man’s exercise of profession without possession which is suppose to assure man of glory while leaving man locked in his sin. No, salvation--all of it--is "not on the basis of deeds which we have done" (including our profession or faith in our faith). It is God's work, done "according to His mercy." It is not merely a declaratory transaction, legally promising a place in heaven while the sinner is left captive to sin. It involves a transformation of the nature, through "the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit" – thus transforming the life!
- ❑ Repentance is essential to the Gospel. As man in Adam is hopelessly lost in sin, a change is required with conversion (1 Thess 1:9). Paul's evangelism always demanded conversion: "God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent" (Acts 17:30). Repentance is what leads to life (Acts 11:18) and to the knowledge of the truth (2 Tim 2:25). Thus salvation is impossible apart from repentance.

Controversial Doctrines, Practices, & Passages

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Comparing commentaries on the two positions:

- ❑ The claim that repentance was not part of John's Gospel is refuted throughout John by the change in life implied (John 3:36; 8:11; 10:4-5; 17:16; 21:15-17). Repentance is not a prerequisite of Salvation, it is a component of the new birth, and is demonstrated as a part of the persons faith.
- ❑ How do "Free Grace Theology" advocates deal with 1st John? In Zane Hodges commentary on 1st John he describes the purpose of the letter "It warns against the dangers of false teaching and exhorts believers to lives of obedience to God and love for their brothers and sisters." Writing about 1 John 1:3 "*what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.*" Hodges commentary says the following: "The objective John had in mind in writing about these significant realities was that you, the readers, may have fellowship with us, the apostles. Since he later, in 2:12-14, made it perfectly clear that he regarded the readers as genuine Christians, his goal was obviously

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Comparing commentaries on the two positions...continued:

not their conversions. It is an interpretive mistake of considerable moment to treat the term ‘fellowship’ as though it meant little more than to be a Christian. The readers were already saved, but they needed this letter if they were to enjoy real fellowship with the apostolic circle to which the author belonged.”

- From my own commentary by comparison I have written: “1st John is about reality – how can one know they have eternal life? Many people profess to be Christians but are not. The epistle of 1st John provides the answer to the genuineness of any persons salvation by providing contrasts based on the reality of the evidence of true salvation (eternal life) in the recipient, as compared with the evidence of the unsaved. For the reader it is as though they are taking a self-evaluation with eternal consequences (1 John 5:13).” MacArthur has written: “The apostle John also wrote an entire epistle about the marks of a true believer (1 John 5:13). To those struggling with assurance, he did not counsel them to pin their hopes on a past incident or a moment of faith. He gave instead a doctrinal test and moral test, and reiterated them throughout his first epistle.

Controversial Doctrines, Practices, & Passages

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Comparing commentaries on the two positions...continued:

- ❑ From my own commentary on 1 John 1:3 by comparison I have written: “In having this fellowship it means that those sharing fellowship with the Godhead have the righteousness of Christ (for God cannot associate with wickedness) and the same holy desires. Those in fellowship love what He loves. This means practically that God is not a stranger, and the person in this fellowship wants to be in His presence because his nature has been made likened unto God’s nature. It is therefore impossible for someone who does not love God, and does not like the same things God likes to have fellowship with Him.”
- ❑ 1 John 2:9 as an example: *“The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.”* Hodge says in his commentary: “If John thought that no Christian could hate another Christian, there was no need to personalize the word ‘his.’ But, the opinion, held by some that a true Christian could never hate another Christian is naïve and contrary to the Bible and experience. Even so great a man as king David was guilty of murder, which is the final expression of hate. John was warning his readers against a spiritual danger that is all too real (1:8, 10).

Controversial Doctrines, Practices, & Passages

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Comparing commentaries on the two positions...continued:

And he was affirming that a Christian who can hate his fellow Christian has not genuinely escaped from the darkness of this present passing age. To put it another way, he has much to learn about God and cannot legitimately claim an intimate knowledge of Christ. If he really knew Christ as he ought, he would love his brother.”

From my commentary I have written: “John says that if we claim we are in the light, but really hate our brother then we are not in the light at all. “Does” trumps “says” and contradicts it. The idea is that it is impossible to be in the light, and at the same time hate our brother who has been saved by Christ. This is because God or Christ is synonymous with light, and so is regeneration. The person saved by Christ by the very definition is a person who is **in the light** (1:6-7). If the person then claiming to be in the light is in actuality hating another person in the light, the equation is impossible. Love and light go together, and hate and darkness go together. There is no other mixture possible. It is impossible because of what has just been discussed about the nature of God, and of love (2:5-6). Such a person who hates their brother is claiming to be in the light, but in reality they are in darkness (the realm of the unregenerate).”
Context - also, see 1 John 3:10.

The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Reminder rules of hermeneutics:

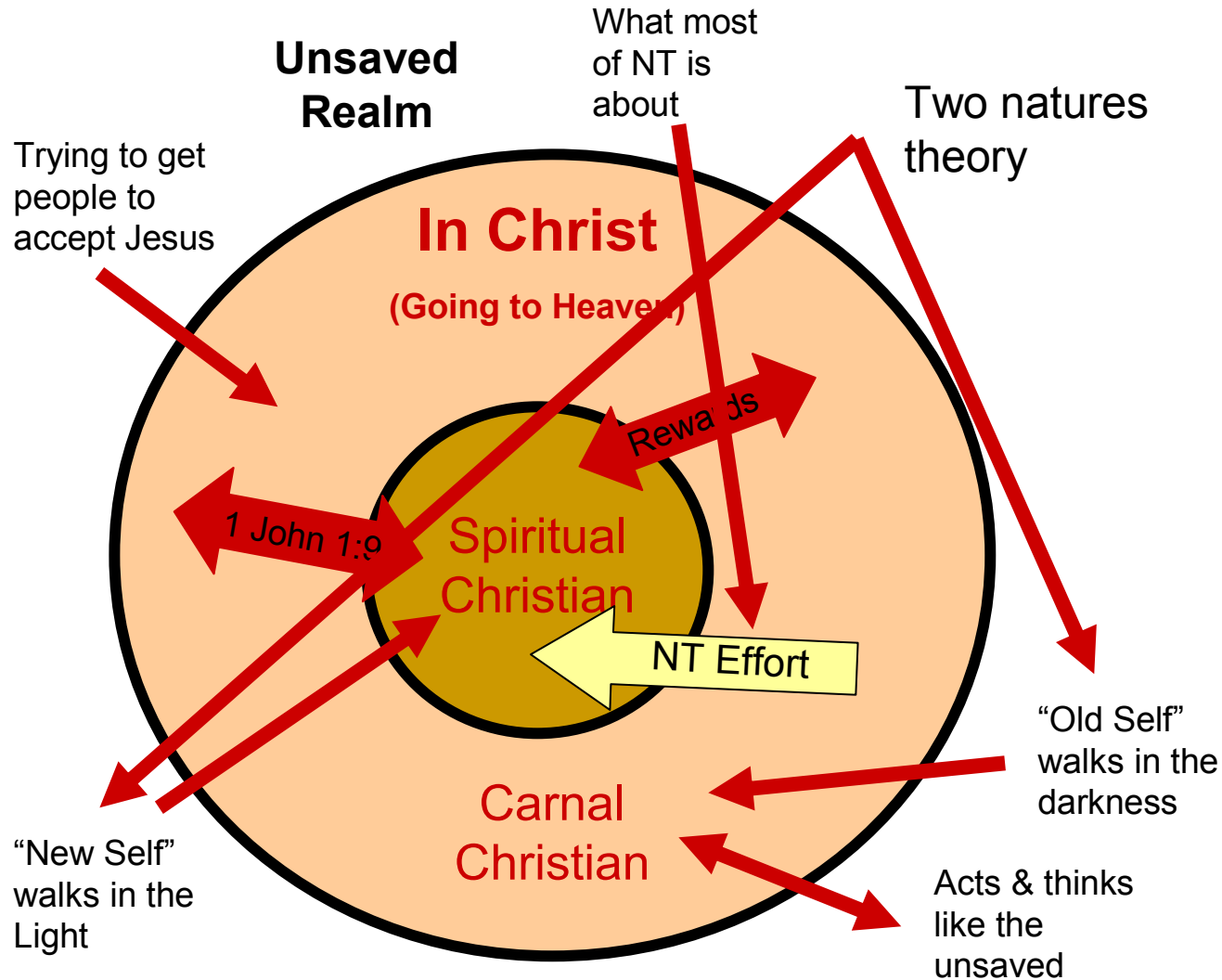
- ❑ The interpreter must rest his theology on those passages that are clear and not upon those that are obscure – essential truth is not tucked away in some incidental remark in Scripture nor in some passage that remains ambiguous even after thorough research.*
- ❑ There is one system of truth or theology contained in Scripture, and therefore all doctrines must cohere or agree with each other. That means that the interpretations of specific passages must not contradict the total teaching of Scripture on a point.*
- ❑ The interpreter must know the context of a particular passage by studying the materials immediately before it, and immediately after it. The material before the passage is the radar which guides the approaching, and the following material is the radar of the leaving. And if we can track the material approaching and leaving the particular passage, we have the framework in which the passage is to be understood.*

*Taken from "Protestant Biblical Interpretation" Bernard Ramm

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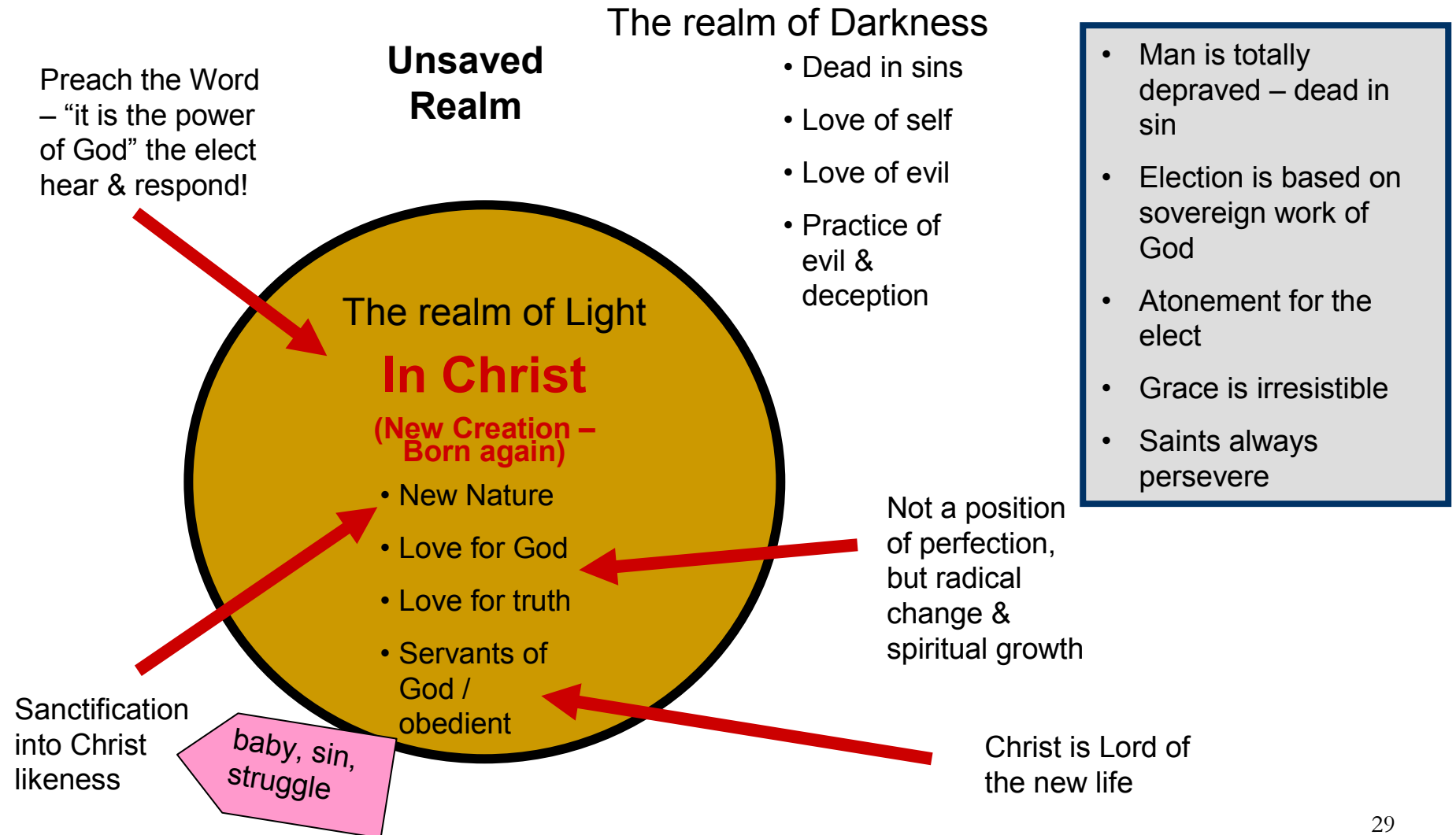


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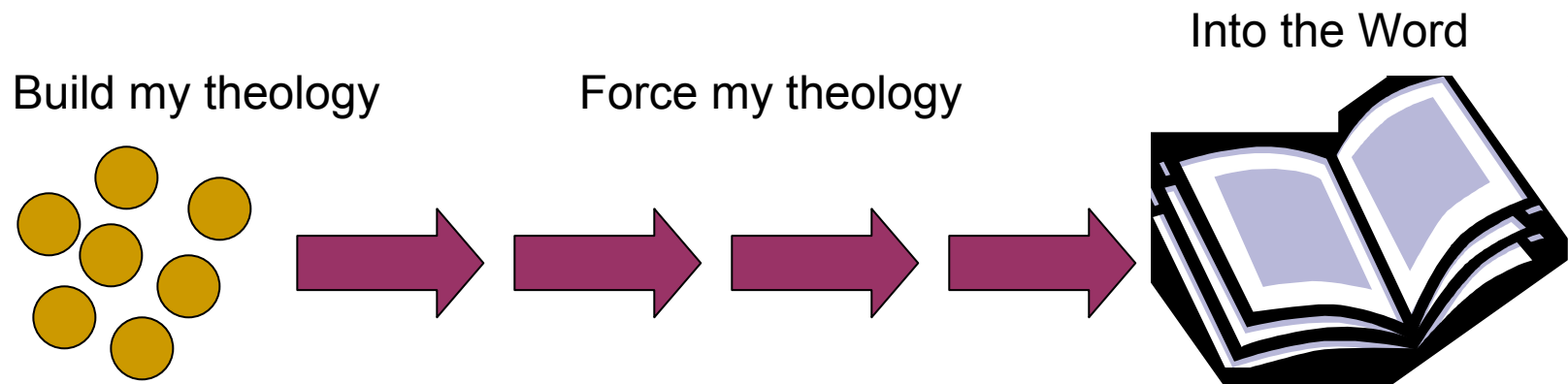
Calvinistic Theological Framework for NT Epistles



The Lordship Salvation Controversy

Reminder rules of hermeneutics..continued:

- The interpreter has as his goal to discover the original meaning and intention of the text. His goal is exegesis – to lead the meaning out of the text and shun eisogesis – bringing a meaning to the text.*



*Taken from "Protestant Biblical Interpretation" Bernard Ramm

Questions and Discussion – followed by
fellowship continuing at the restaurant.....