

- (2) of the perfect redemption wrought by Christ through His incarnation, atonement, and resurrection.
- (3) of the truth of the gospel of salvation by grace through faith in Christ.
- (4) of their duty to accept the offers and to live in obedience to the commands of the gospel.
- (5) that their impenitence and unbelief are due to themselves, to their own evil hearts; and that they voluntarily prefer the world to the salvation and service of Christ.

Since we do not know who is elect, we must preach the gospel to all men, and trust God for the results. The story is told of the celebrated English evangelist Rowland Hill, who was criticized for preaching election and yet exhorting sinners to repent. He was told that he should preach only to the elect, since only they would receive any benefit from his declaration of the saving efficacy of Christ's atonement. He replied that if his critic would kindly take a piece of chalk and place a clearly recognizable mark on all of the elect in his audience, he would be happy to preach only to them!

of course, it is possible that God has a purpose in the hearing of the gospel by the nonelect: it may be that their condemnation, having been determined by God before the foundation of the world on the basis of their involvement in the fall, may be aggravated by their rejection of the gospel of Christ, in the sense of which Paul speaks in 2 Cor. 2:15-16 -- "For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life."

c. How can the preaching of the gospel to the nonelect be sincere

The word "Insincerity" is defined as "hypocrisy, dishonesty of mind, dissimulation, lack of genuineness." If an impression is intentionally communicated that is contrary to the truth, that is insincerity.

If, in the context of the teaching of the Scriptures as a whole, the gospel message were to communicate the impression that all men will respond favorably to the gospel, or the impression that all men have the desire to respond favorably, or the impression that all men have the basic inclination to respond favorably, or the impression that all men have the ability to understand the gospel truly, then perhaps the offer of the gospel could be characterized as insincere. But does the gospel, contextually understood communicate any of these Impressions?

Sometimes this objection has been pressed to the point that it has posed serious problems for other doctrines. One example of this concerns the doctrine of foreknowledge. Let us construct an illustration.

It may be asked, "Could you sincerely offer to a dying man a miracle drug that would save his life if you had absolute knowledge that he would refuse that drug?"

If you say, "Yes, I could sincerely offer it to him, because there could be a chance, however slight, that he might change his mind and take it."

However, in the ground rules of the illustration, we have already stated that you have absolute knowledge that he will, refuse it. There is no chance that he will receive it!