

Calvinists want to read verse 4 to say God created some people to be evil so he can give them disaster! *What?!* Proverbs 16:4 means no such thing.

# Safford Church of Christ

3888 S Hwy 191, Safford, AZ 85546

7 April 2013

## News:

The Tonto Church of Christ will be hosting an **Arizona Men's Leadership Meeting** on Monday, April 8. Some of us may be interested in attending as Josh Austin, Morenci, will be speaking there on the subject of Native American Outreach. It will be held at the Tonto Church of Christ, 1101 W. Tonto St., Phoenix.

There will be a potluck-style picnic at the Graham County Fairgrounds 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. on April 20.

Potluck this month is scheduled for April 21 after A.M. Services.

Please continue to pray for Tatyana's daughter Olga who is undergoing treatments for cancer.

## Prayer List:

**Healing:** *Jerry Robinson's daughter Christie, Jerry Robinson's mother Norma. Mike Cavasos, Sandy Cavasos, Ben Atchley, Faye Atchley, Nicolas and Annie Self, Douglas and Jonda Gardner, Dave Morse, Richard Tuey. Travels: Pete and Cindy Waller.*

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<http://saffordchurchofchrist.org>



## Sermon Topics

**A.M.: Father Forgive Them**

Luke 23:34

**P.M.: "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my heritage."**

Isaiah 19-20

Pulpit Evangelist

*Ken Knowlton: 428-5974*

Elders

*Ben Atchley: 428-2246*

*Greg Briggs: 428-8756*

*John Cunningham: 428-0895*

## Services

Sunday Bible Class	10:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship	11:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship	6:30 P.M.
Wednesday Evening Class	6:30 P.M.
Thursday Ladies Bible Class	10:00 A.M.

## Calvinism and Proverbs 16:4

by Neil Short

Almost every non-Calvinist who slowly came to embrace Calvinism resisted at first and then finally relented based upon a single scripture. Which scripture varies from person to person. In every case the particular scripture is misunderstood and to one who is still teachable, it is easily understood with just a little explanation (Acts 8:30-31; Romans 10:14). For example, I just read this comment on the Web:

And so one morning while reading Acts, I stumbled upon a verse that broke the camels back. [He quotes Acts 13:48]. I was a Calvinist.

A mistake some non-Calvinists make may be that of too much focus on "correcting" misunderstandings of common verses used to support Calvinism. While it is important to seek accurate meaning to

these passages, it's also important to know why we must investigate non-Calvinist meanings. The reason is because Calvinist interpretations of these passages cause the Scriptures to contradict other Scriptures.

This article is not about Acts 13:48. It's about Proverbs 16:4.

This topic may be a little odd for a bulletin article. The way I see it, the doctrine of Calvinism causes a lot of unnecessary trouble in the hearts of believers. It is not a "settled" doctrine. It is a false doctrine and it should be confronted rather than ignored. This particular verse has been on my mind recently and I think I should share with you some of my study results about it.

Proverbs 16:4 reads:

The LORD has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble (RSV, NRSV, ESV, ≈ NASB).

This verse *seems* to teach the Calvinist doctrine that God created some people with the purpose of sending them to Hell (a logical corollary to Calvinism's *Irresistible Grace* and *Unconditional Election*). This interpretation contradicts several straightforward Biblical passages saying that God does not want anybody to be damned and he is grieved when somebody chooses that life destiny (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9; Ezekiel 18:30-32; 33:11; Lamentations 3:33). That's why we check for an alternative interpretation for Proverbs 16:4! or we need to accept the Calvinist explanation and wrestle mightily with the other passages (as Calvinists do with 2 Peter 3:9).

My instant reaction to the "destined for Hell" view is a question. Why would you grab a verse out of the Wisdom literature of the Bible and apply it mathematically – like an axiom or theorem? Think of any proverb from Proverbs. Is it a rule that is true in every circumstance? The proverbs are true in a general sense; but there are [almost] always exceptions. Once we understand exactly what Proverbs 16:4 actually says, we'll see that the usual method of applying proverbs applies here too. In fact, reading this verse in the Calvinist way is reading it in some way other than as a proverb. What life-lesson is being taught by stating that some people are created by God for Hell? None at all. It is thus seen as a statement of universal fact amidst a vast ocean of wisdom proverbs. Point: When you apply a Bible reading, be sure to acknowledge the kind of literature the reading is.

What does Proverbs 16:4 actually say?

### *The Calvinist reading contradicts other scriptures*

The Hebrew verb often translated "has made" (RSV, NRSV, ESV, NASB, KJV, ASV) can also be translated as "works out" (NIV, NCV, NET). The word translated as "purpose" can also be translated as "answer." Thus, the meaning of the verse is that God works things out so that the end of the wicked properly answers their wickedness. As a bonus, that reading appreciates Proverbs 16:4 as a proper proverb. The NIV has the best reading of this verse:

The LORD works out everything for his own ends-- even the wicked for a day of disaster (NIV).

Let us not ignore the plain translation of the International Children's Bible:

The Lord makes everything work the way he wants it. He even has a day of disaster for evil people (ICB).

Best of all, this interpretation agrees with the full scope of Scripture, including Proverbs 22:8; Hosea 8:7 and this:

Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up (Galatians 6:7-9, NRSV).

### *The Calvinist reading contradicts its own context*

In Scripture, the individual man's eternal state (reward or disaster / Heaven or Hell) is always a consequence – something that results from something else. Always! In other words, the nature of a man's eternal state of affairs has an antecedent – something that a consequence results *from*.

Proverbs 16:3-7 follows the *proverbial* format of antecedent – consequence. Proverbs 16:3 says to "Commit your work to the LORD" (first/antecedent) "and your plans will be established" (second/consequence). Verse 5 says people who are arrogant (first) "are an abomination to the LORD" (consequence). Verse 6 says people who are loyal and faithful (first) find atonement for iniquity (consequence). Verse 7 says when people's ways please the LORD (first) they have peace with their enemies (consequence). God sees to it. Verse 4, in agreement with the context, says people who are evil (first) will find disaster (consequence). God sees to it. But