

## Picking Off The Petals

### The Goal

The main goal here is to use **scripture** in proper **context** and **godly logic** to determine what we believe about our salvation in and through Jesus Christ.

What is the Gospel all about?

What was the **purpose** of the cross?

What did Jesus teach about salvation?

Is **salvation** done completely by God or is it accomplished cooperatively by God and man?

These are questions that have to be studied in order for a person to know what to do with Calvinism. When Calvinism confronts you and you don't know the answers to these questions it's going to be a **stumbling** block.

### What Is Calvinism?

**Calvinism** is a system of beliefs developed by **John Calvin** (1509-1564), a French theologian during the **Protestant Reformation**. Calvin was a lawyer who later became a Pastor in Geneva, Switzerland. Calvin produced many commentaries on various books of the Bible, but he is best known for his seminal work known as *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, a detailed work expounding Christian theology.

Some see Calvinism synonymous with **Reformed Theology**. There are similarities, but Reformed theology is a broader set of theological ideas that go beyond soteriology, often associated with covenant theology. Not everyone claiming Calvinism claims to be "Reformed," and many Calvinists reject covenant theology.

The **Hyper-Calvinist** emphasizes the sovereignty of God to such an extent that man's human responsibility is denied. In actuality, Hyper-Calvinism is a rejection of historic Calvinist thought. Hyper-Calvinism denies that the gospel call applies to all; and denies

that faith is the duty of every sinner; and denies the gospel offer to the non-elect; and denies that the offer of divine mercy is free and universal; and denies that there is such a thing as "common grace"; and denies that God has any sort of love for the non-elect. Calvinists do not agree with the Hyper-Calvinists.

Calvinists take the Bible to be the **literal** Word of God, and they **emphasize** the **sovereignty** of God in the world's affairs, especially the salvation of sinners. They take the view of **monergism** in their soteriology. Monergism, which comes from a compound Greek word that means "**to work alone**," is the view that God alone effects our salvation. The opposing view, **synergism**, which also comes from a compound Greek word meaning "**to work together**," is the view that God works together with us in effecting salvation. Salvation is all of God, says the Calvinist, and those who are saved are the grateful recipients of divine grace.

### **For The Teachers Better Understanding of the TULIP**

- **Total Depravity:** Sin has affected all parts of man. The heart, emotions, will, mind, and body are all affected by sin. We are completely sinful. We are not as sinful as we could be, but we are completely affected by sin. The doctrine of Total Depravity is derived from scriptures that reveal human character: Man's heart is evil (Mark 7:21-23) and sick (Jer. 17:9). Man is a slave of sin (Rom. 6:14-20). He does not seek for God (Rom. 3:11). He cannot understand spiritual things (1 Cor. 2:14). He is at enmity with God (Eph. 2:15). And, is by nature a child of wrath (Eph. 2:3). The Calvinist asks the question, "In light of the scriptures that declare man's true nature as being utterly lost and incapable, how is it possible for anyone to choose or desire God?" The answer is, "He cannot. Therefore God must predestine." Calvinism also maintains that because of our fallen nature, we are born again not by our own will but God's will (John 1:12-13); God grants that we believe (Phil. 1:29); faith is the work of God (John 6:28-29); God ordains people to eternal life (Acts 13:48); and God predestines (Eph. 1:1-11; Rom. 8:29; Rom. 9:9-23).
- **Unconditional Election:** God does not base His election on anything He sees in the individual. He chooses the elect according to the kind intention of His will (Eph. 1:4-8; Rom. 9:9-11) without any consideration of merit or quality within the individual. Nor does God look into the future to see who would pick Him (lest God learn and react to man's choices). Also, as some are elected into salvation, others are not (Rom. 9:15,21).
- **Limited Atonement:** Jesus died only for the elect. Though Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient for all, it was not efficacious for all. Jesus only bore the sins of the elect. Support for this position is drawn from such scriptures as Matt. 26:28 where Jesus died for 'many'; John 10:11, 15 which say that Jesus died for the sheep (not the goats, per Matt. 25:32-33); John 17:9 where Jesus in prayer interceded for the ones given Him - not those of the entire world; Acts 20:28 and Eph. 5:25-27 which state that

the Church was purchased by Christ - not all people; and Isaiah 53:12 which is a prophecy of Jesus' crucifixion where he would bear the sins of many (not all).

- **Irresistible Grace:** When God calls his elect into salvation, they cannot resist. God offers to all people the gospel message. This is called the external call. But to the elect, God extends an internal call, and it cannot be resisted. This call is by the Holy Spirit who works in the hearts and minds of the elect to bring them to repentance and regeneration whereby they willingly and freely come to God. Some of the verses used in support of this teaching are Rom. 9:16 where it says that "it is not of him who wills nor of him who runs, but of God who has mercy"; Phil. 2:12-13 where God is said to be the one working salvation in the individual; John 6:28-29 where faith is declared to be the work of God; Acts 13:48 where God appoints people to eternal life; and John 1:12-13 where being born again is not by man's will but by God's.
- **Perseverance of the Saints:** You cannot lose your salvation. Because the Father has elected, the Son has redeemed, and the Holy Spirit has applied salvation, those thus saved are eternally secure. They are eternally secure in Christ. Some of the verses for this position are John 10:27-28 where Jesus said His sheep will never perish; John 6:47 where salvation is described as everlasting life; Romans 8:1 where it is said we have passed out of judgment; 1 Cor. 10:13 where God promises to never let us be tempted beyond what we can handle; and Phil. 1:6 where God is the one being faithful to perfect us until the day of Jesus' return.

What the <b>GOSPEL</b> says:	What <b>CALVINISM</b> teaches:
Jesus came to save the world.	Jesus came to save only the selected.
Jesus' ransom available for all men.	Jesus' ransom only for the selected.
God's predetermined plan is man be saved through faith in the Son.	God predetermined to select some, cause them to believe, saves them and leave mankind to oblivion and damnation.
He is the propitiation for man's sins.	He is the propitiation for the selected only.
He is the Light of the world so that the world may know Him.	He is the Light of the world but only those selected are chosen to know Him.
The Elect are those who believed in the Son of God.	The Elect are those who were selected from the Beginning.

**“If a thing is free to be good it is also free to be bad. And free will is what has made evil possible. Why, then, did God give them free will? Because free will, though it makes evil possible, is also the only thing that makes possible any love or goodness or joy worth having.” -C.S. Lewis**

## The Petals of The T.U.L.I.P.

There are **Five** main points to Calvinism spelled out by the **TULIP** acronym:

The Bible Answers Calvinism		
	CALVINISM	THE BIBLE
<b>Man</b>	<b>Total depravity:</b> Man is completely affected by sin in all nature he is completely fallen, but is not as bad as he could be in deeds. Furthermore, this total depravity means that the unregenerate will not, of their own sinful free will, choose to receive Christ.	<b>Deprivation:</b> Human nature was seriously affected by the fall, Man has not been left spiritually helpless. God graciously allows for all to repent and believe, but he does not interfere with man's freedom. Man's freedom is the ability to choose good over evil in spiritual matters; his will is not enslaved to his sinful nature.
<b>Election</b>	<b>Unconditional election:</b> Before the foundation of the world God chose certain individuals into salvation. God elects a person based upon nothing in that person because God's election is based on what is in God, God's sovereign will. God gives faith and causes repentance to who he selected. These actions result from God's choice.	<b>Conditional Election:</b> Before the foundation of the world God foresaw those who accepted or denied his son Jesus. The elect are those who of their free will choose faith in Jesus. Election is conditioned by what humanity does with Jesus. The faith God foresaw and based his choice is not forced on sinners but results from man's free will.
<b>Atonement</b>	<b>Limited Atonement:</b> Christ bore the sin only of the elect and secured salvation for them, not everyone who ever lived.	<b>General Atonement:</b> Jesus bore the sin of all people, the elect and the non-elect. It did secure salvation for anyone.
<b>Regeneration</b>	<b>Irresistible grace:</b> There is a outward general call to salvation by grace to everyone, but the Holy Spirit gives to the elect a irresistible special inward call that always brings them to salvation by the grace of enlightening or changing them, soft determinism. The outward call can be rejected by all but the inward call cannot be rejected by the elect.	<b>Resistible Grace:</b> The Spirit shows grace by calling all to salvation by faith. There is one call of the Spirit that effects man outwardly and inwardly simultaneously. Man is free, so he can resist the spirits call, quenching the Spirit. The spirit cannot regenerate the sinner until he believes, faith is man's responsibility.
<b>Security</b>	<b>Perseverance of The saints:</b> All who are chosen by God, regenerated by Christ, and given faith by the spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of God and persevere to the end.	<b>Eternal Security:</b> Those that have faith in Christ and been truly born of God or regenerated cannot be separated from the love of God or loose salvation. Once saved always saved.

**My Problems with Calvinism By: Steve Shirley (Founder of [jesusalive.cc](http://jesusalive.cc))**  
**With Alterations By: Daniel Ward for Defenders Conference 2019**

**Calvinism makes God the author of sin**: The Bible says in (Jn 16:9) that unbelief in Jesus is sin, "of sin because they believe not on me." However, if a person is **UNABLE** to believe in Jesus because God has not regenerated or chosen that person, then God has **caused** that person to sin (as opposed to a person who has sinned because he decides to reject Jesus of his own free will).

**Elect angels**: The Bible says in (1 Tim 5:21) that there are elect angels. In other words (from a Calvinist viewpoint), God chose some angels and rejected others. Satan (Lucifer) is an angel who was obviously not one of the chosen (along with one-third of all the created angels: Rev 12:4). Most scholars agree that there are two places in the Old Testament which tell us why Satan was kicked out of Heaven: because of **pride** (Ezek 28:12-19) and because he wanted to become **like God** (Isa 14:12-15). So, I ask the question: Who is responsible for Satan's fall from Heaven (and the one-third of the angels who followed him)? Keep in mind (Ezek 28:15) says that when God created Lucifer, he was perfect (as I am sure ALL of the angels were) until iniquity was found in him. This iniquity was connected with his rebellion which is why he was cast out of God's presence. It is not said that Satan was cast out because he wasn't elect, but rather, he was cast out because of a choice he made to reject God.

So, if we assume that God made two-thirds of the angels **elect** before He created them (just as He did man), then didn't God have to base His election on the fact that He knew (had foreknowledge) the two-thirds would decide to follow Him (free-will), and **reject** Satan and the one-third because He knew they would rebel (also free-will)? Either that, or they had no free-will to make the choice, thereby making GOD the author of Satan's rebellion. *Do not make the **mistake** of the calvinist and **confuse** elect angels with predestined angels!*

**"Whosoever"**: The New Testament uses this word in 16 verses in conjunction with salvation in Jesus.

"Whosoever believeth" (Rom 10:11)(Rom 9:33)(Jn 3:15)(Jn 3:16)(Jn 11:26)(Jn 12:46)(Acts 10:43)(1 Jn 5:11)

"Whosoever shall call" (Rom 10:13)(Acts 2:21)

"Whosoever shall confess" (Mt 10:32)(1 Jn 4:15)

"Whosoever drinketh" (Jn 4:13)(Jn 4:14)

"Whosoever acknowledgeth" (1 Jn 2:23)

"Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev 22:17)

"Whosoever" indicates to me that salvation is for all of mankind, not just the elect.

Other verses also appear to back this up:

**God desires that all men would be saved:** (1 Tim 2:3-4)(2 Pet 3:9)(Ezek 18:23,32)(Titus 2:11)(Mt 18:14).

Jesus gave His life for ALL people (not just a few) and he:

Died for the sins of the world (Jn 1:29)(1 Jn 2:2)

Reconciled the world unto Himself (2 Cor 5:19)

Draws all men unto Himself (Jn 12:32)

Tasted death for everyone (Heb 2:9)

Is the Savior of all men (1 Tim 4:10)

Is the justification of life to all men (Rom 5:18)

Gave Himself as a ransom for all (1 Tim 2:6)

Is the true Light, which coming into the world, enlightens every man (Jn 1:9).

Came to save the world (Jn 12:47)

(2 Pet 2:1) says Jesus even died for false prophets.

These verses tell me the Calvinist position of "**Limited Atonement**" is wrong.

**"Love your neighbor as yourself":** (Mt 22:39)(Mk 12:31)(Rom 13:8-10)(Gal 5:14)(Jas 2:8) (Lev 19:18) Who is our neighbor? If "yourself" is a Christian, is our neighbor only Christians, or is it non-Christians too? If our neighbor is both, are we supposed to love both equally, or are we supposed to love our Christian neighbors



more? You may disagree, but I personally believe these verses mean "We should love **EVERYONE** as much as we love **ourselves**" (Christians and non-Christians alike). Here is my logic: if a neighbor is all people, if you are a Christian, then you must love a non-Christian neighbor as much as you love your Christian self (I honestly don't think many of us do this.)

Therefore, my question for the Calvinist is, "Does God apply this standard to **Himself**?" If God has arbitrarily chosen someone to be His child and live with Him for eternity, and another to a excruciating eternity apart from Him, He clearly doesn't love **equally**. This would indicate that God is asking us to follow a standard of loving all equally that He clearly does not follow Himself.

A majority of Calvinists do indeed believe God loves His elect more than the non-elect. Based on a few verses, some even believe God **hates** the **non-elect**.

#### **How did David know his infant son was with the Lord?:** (2 Sam 12:18-23)

speaks of David and the loss of his baby with Bathsheba. In (2 Sam 12:23), David says, "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." David clearly believed that after his infant son died, he was with **the Lord**. How could he make this claim? What if his child was not elect? Many Calvinists believe that all children who die are **elect**. I would agree on this point. However, as I see it, this creates a logical problem for the Calvinist. If all children who die are elect, then one of two things must be true (unless I am missing something). Either God makes them a part of His elect after they die or God made them elect before they died. If the former is true, then this contradicts the Bible teaching that God **elected all of His chosen people** at "the foundation of the world" (as is taught in: Eph 1:4, Rev 13:8, Rev 17:8). If the latter is true, then it must mean that God "elects" infants who die with the "foreknowledge" that they would die.

**God's will or grace can be resisted:** Contrary to the Calvinist position that God's will (or "grace") is "irresistible," the Bible has a number of verses showing that man

**CAN** resist God's will: (Jn 5:40)(Mt 23:37)(Lk 13:34)(Acts 7:51)(Mt 21:42)(Acts 4:11)(Lk 7:29-30)(2 Th 1:8-9)(Rom 10:21)(2 Kin 17:14-18).

Studying Jesus' words to Paul in (Acts 9:5)(Acts 26:14) "it is hard for thee to kick against the goads / pricks." In studying this, I came to the conclusion that Jesus was telling Paul that he was fighting against the **drawing** of the Father, and the **conviction** of the Holy Spirit. He was **resisting** God's grace!

**The Marriage Feast:** The Marriage Feast, found in (Mt 22:1-14), speaks of what the Kingdom of Heaven will be like. Jesus says that guests were sent **invitations** by the king (God) to the Marriage Feast but "They would not come." How could they refuse to come if God's will is **irresistible**? Verse 14 concludes the parable saying, "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Also see: Mt 20:16). From a Calvinist standpoint, shouldn't **all** who are called become **chosen**?

**The Great White Throne Judgment:** (Rev 20:11-15) At this judgment, unbelievers from all of history will be judged for their works and then cast into the Lake Of Fire. From a Calvinist viewpoint, these **unbelievers** never had a **chance** to believe in the one (Jesus) who could pay for their sins because God never regenerated or chose them. In other words, God will hold them accountable and punish them for something they could do anything about.

It is hard for me to imagine being a believer in Heaven and **knowing** and **watching** an unbelieving loved one is being thrown into the Lake Of Fire because God decided not to **choose** them; and then, **rejoicing** that we were chosen instead.

**The Bible tells us that God has chosen people based on certain qualities:**

Here is a quote from one Calvinist: "You will find nowhere in Scripture where God looks upon an individual and bases His choice of election and predestination based on some quality in the individual."

In other words, the Calvinist believes that God **elects** some people and **rejects** others based on absolutely nothing. The Bible pretty clearly seems to contradict this.



Here are a few verses:

(James 2:5) God chose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom.

(Mt 5:3)(Lk 6:20) God said the Kingdom of Heaven is for the poor in spirit.

(1 Cor 1:26-28) God has not chosen the noble, wise, or mighty, but rather the weak, foolish, and lowly.

(Job 22:29) God will save the humble.

(Mt 19:23-24) It is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

(Mt 21:31) Jesus said tax collectors and prostitutes would get into the Kingdom of Heaven ahead of the religious leaders.

As you can see, God has **chosen** or **rejected** people for the "Kingdom Of Heaven" based on some quality they possess. He did this based on **foreknowledge** He had from the beginning of the world as to what the person would become. Based on this, and other examples of foreknowledge shared above, it seems logical that God could elect people based on His foreknowledge of who would **accept Jesus as Savior**.

## **Wrap-up**

Share your closing thoughts on Calvinism and this study.

Field questions form the group for discussion, if there is time.

Close with this example by Dr. Leighton Flowers in his article "*The Corporate View of Election*":

Concerning election and predestination, we might use the analogy of a great ship on its way to heaven. The ship (the church) is chosen by God to be his very own vessel. Christ is the Captain and Pilot of this ship. All who desire to be a part of this elect ship and its Captain can do so through a living faith in Christ, by which they come on board the ship... Election is always only in union with the Captain and his ship. Predestination tells us about the ship's destination and what God has prepared for those "mark in Him

by faith” (Eph. 1:13). God invites everyone to come aboard the elect ship through faith in Jesus Christ. [Life in the Spirit Study Bible, pp. 1854-1855]