

# Examining The Teachings *of* Calvinism

A Sermon Series

by

Pastor Ray Crocker, PhD  
Heritage Baptist Church  
Singapore

“It is better to be divided by truth than to be united in error. It is better to speak the truth that hurts and then heals, than falsehood that comforts and then kills. It is not love and it is not friendship if we fail to declare the whole counsel of God. It is better to be hated for telling the truth than to be loved for telling a lie.”

Dr. Adrian Rodgers

These are the notes that I used in the pulpit while preaching a series dealing with the doctrines of Reformed/Calvinistic theology.

I am making these notes available primarily to the membership of the Heritage Baptist Church of Singapore. However, it is also my prayerful desire that our gracious Heavenly Father will be pleased to use these messages to help others beyond our membership to understand what I believe to be the dangerous teachings of Reformed/Calvinistic theology.

Pastor Ray Crocker  
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# THE PROBLEM OF CALVINISM

## Selected Text

I must confess that I am wading into waters that I personally have no desire to visit – not because I fear the subject matter, but because I recognize the fact that delving into the subject of Calvinism is like diving into a vortex from which we may never escape – *i.e.* it is very easy to start going round and round in theological circles of debate.

The reason for this is basically because, even among those who espouse the teachings of Calvinism, there is NO agreement on what they believe. For example:

1. Most – but not all – Calvinists will hold the five basic points of Calvinism which are stated in the acrostic “*TULIP*” – *i.e.* Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of Believers.
2. Some will claim more. For example, Calvinistic writer Edwin Palmer – *cf.* in the forward of his book The Five Points Of Calvinism – declares, “*Calvinism is not restricted to five points: it has thousands of points.*”
3. In fact, it may be safely said that even John Calvin himself would NOT recognize much of the “*Calvinistic teaching*” that is being spread today!

Calvinistic theologian, Augustus Strong – *cf.* Strong’s Systematic Theology – noted that, “*Much that is called Calvinism would have been repudiated by Calvin ...[because it] is really the exaggeration of his teaching by more scholastic and less religious successors.*”

Therefore, when we try to state Calvinistic theology – and then show from the Bible why we reject it – there will always be some who will claim that we are unfairly misrepresenting the tenants of Calvinism.

1. But it is not that we are misrepresenting Calvinism – it is simply that we are misrepresenting THEIR particular brand of Calvinism!
2. So I want you to know from the very beginning, I am NOT going to waste time trying to cover every possible/conceivable thought that might be espoused by those who follow the teachings of Calvinism.

However, I will be dealing with the five main teachings of Calvinism – as outlined in the acrostic TULIP – and will be showing from the Scriptures why we must reject those doctrinal teachings as being contrary to sound doctrine and the clear teaching of Scripture.

But before we do that, I want to begin our study by stating three points which are very closely linked one to the other – so let’s begin by noticing ...

## I. Our Bibliology.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

Our text clearly says that all doctrine is found in the Scriptures. Therefore, to have sound doctrine, our study of the Scriptures must be founded on two simple principles:

### A. The grammatical interpretation of Scripture.

That is, we believe the words of Scripture are to be understood according to the normal laws of grammar – whether it be in speaking or writing.

### B. The literal interpretation of Scripture.

That is, we do not believe that God spoke in circles or codes – we believe God said exactly what He meant, and meant exactly what he said.

But the Calvinistic/Reformed theologian MUST use an allegorical/spiritual method of interpretation. Let me illustrate by giving you a Bible “*interpretation*” by St. Augustine (*d.* 430 AD) – the man whom John Calvin leaned on very heavily in the formulating of his theology.

#### 1. St. Augustine gave his interpretation of our Lord’s parable of the *Good Samaritan* – cf. **Luke 10:30-37**. He said ...

- a. The Jewish man who was attacked/robbed was Adam and Jerusalem was the “*heavenly city*” from which he fell.
- b. The thieves were the devil who stripped Adam of his immortality and his purity by leading him to sin.
- c. The priest and Levite were the Old Testament Law and ministry, which was unable to cleanse and save him.
- d. The “*good Samaritan*” was Jesus Christ.
- e. The “*inn*” was the church.
- f. The “*innkeeper*” was the Apostle Paul.

Did Augustine “*interpret*” the Scriptures? NO!

- a. Read the context – Jesus gave the story of the Good Samaritan in order to answer the question, “*Who is my neighbor?*”
  - b. You see, Augustine did NOT interpret Scripture – he merely took the words of Scripture and infused into them his own meanings and ideas.
2. That is an extremely dangerous way of handling the Scriptures because the Bible very clearly declares in ...

**2 Peter 1:20 “... that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.”**

In other words, in the Word of God, God has said exactly what He meant – and we have NO right/authority to change or twist the meaning of a single word so that it will fit with our theology/thinking/preferences.

However, that is exactly what Calvinism does! For example:

**1 John 2:2 “And he is the propitiation (*i.e.* the full payment) for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”**

But the Calvinist will claim that the “*whole world*” does not really mean the “*whole world*” – it really means, “*the whole world of the elect*”.

**1 Timothy 2:3-4 “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”**

But the Calvinist says that God does not mean that He desires “*all men to be saved*” – because, according to the Calvinist, God does NOT love all men – but God only loves the elect and therefore desires that “*all the elect might be saved*”.

Dealing with the Scriptures in this way is serious indeed because:

1. It does not really interpret the words of Scripture – *i.e.* it abuses/distorts the words of Scripture to support a prejudiced way of thinking.
2. It moves the authority from the Scriptures to the interpreter – *i.e.* if the words of Scripture do not mean what they say, then we need a teacher to tell us what they mean. Therefore, the teacher – NOT the Scriptures – has become the foundation for our faith.
3. It provides no means whereby we can judge the truthfulness – *i.e.* if the words of Scripture do not mean what they say, then my interpretation is just as good/valid as yours!

So in dealing with Calvinism, I want you to understand that our foundation is going to be the clear statements of God's Word – *i.e.* we are going to be like those Bereans in ...

**Acts 17:11** “... they received the word (*i.e.* the preaching of the Apostles) with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

Bottom line, the Word of God, not the opinions of scholars – no matter who they are, or how many they are, or how eminent they are – will be the foundation for our faith! And this is important because, our view of the Scriptures will determine ...

## II. Our eschatology.

Because of our Bibliology – *i.e.* that the words of God mean what they say, and say what they mean – we also believe that prophecy should be taken literally.

### A. It was true in the Old Testament.

There were many Old Testament prophecies concerning the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ that are found in the Bible – I will not share them all, but the Old Testament declared in very clear terms that Jesus Christ would:

1. Be born of a virgin. *cf.* **Isaiah 7:14**
2. Be born in Bethlehem. *cf.* **Micah 5:2**
3. Enter Jerusalem on a donkey. *cf.* **Zechariah 9:9**
4. Be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver. *cf.* **Zechariah 11:12**

Here is the point – not a single one of those Messianic prophecies was fulfilled spiritually/allegorically! Rather, they were ALL fulfilled literally – *i.e.* exactly as the Word of God said.

### B. It is still true in the New Testament – *i.e.* the outstanding promises to Israel will be literally fulfilled.

1. Israel will go through a period of cleansing – *i.e.* the Tribulation.
2. Israel will be restored to the Land of Promise.
3. Israel's Messiah will sit on the throne of David – *i.e.* the Millennium.
4. Israel will worship in her rebuilt Temple.
5. Israel will be the capital of the world!

Therefore, we hold a Pre-millennial eschatology – *i.e.* we believe that Jesus Christ will literally come to earth before the Millennium for the purpose of establishing a literal Millennial Kingdom – and He will rule for 1000 years:

1. Over all the nations of the world.



2. From His capital in the city of Jerusalem.

However, most Reformed/Calvinistic theologians believe that God is finished with the nation of Israel and that all the outstanding promises of God to Israel have been transferred to the church.

Therefore – even though John MacArthur (in 2007) announced that he was taking the Pre-millennial position – most of the Reformed/Calvinistic theologians take the A-millennial position. That is, they reject a literal Millennial reign.

Because of the way they change the meanings of words in Scripture, when they are confronted with passages that declare the literal reign of Jesus Christ on this earth, they say the passage must be understood in a spiritual/allegorical way.

There are two schools of A-millennialism:

1. The earthly Kingdom – *i.e.* the Millennium is being spiritually being fulfilled right now on this earth. They say ...
  - a. Any place God touches is a “*holy land*” – so when God touched your life and saved you, He set up headquarters in a “*holy land*”.
  - b. Since one day is with the Lord as a 1000 years, and a 1000 years is as one day (*cf.* **2 Peter 3:8**), then any day that God rules in your life is a millennium.
2. The Heavenly Kingdom – *i.e.* when we get to Heaven, Jesus Christ will rule and reign in Heaven for 1000 years.

But most Reformed/Calvinistic theologians reject the idea of a literal Millennial Kingdom on this earth because they have spiritualized the promises of God made to the nation of Israel and have transferred those promises to the church.

Bottom line: The way we handle the Word of God – allowing the words to mean what they say, and say what they mean – will determine our view of prophecy. But that is not all, the way we handle the Scriptures will also determine ...

### III. Our ecclesiology.

Because of our Bibliology – *i.e.* that the words of God mean what they say, and say what they mean – therefore, we also believe that:

1. Israel is NOT the church.
2. The church is NOT Israel.

However, the Reformed/Calvinistic theologians reject this idea – as we already noted, they believe that the church has replaced the nation of Israel.

This began with Origen (*d.* 251 AD), the “*church father*” who believed the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD was proof of God’s absolute rejection of Israel. Origen said – *cf.* Leon Poliakov, The History Of Anti-Semitism – “*We may thus assert in utter confidence that the Jews will not return to their earlier situation, for they have committed the most abominable crimes, in forming this conspiracy against the Savior ...*”

Therefore, Calvinist writer David Engelsma – *cf.* Reformed A-millennialism – had no problem at all in describing the church as “... *standing on the ruins of Jerusalem ...*”

Now I am running out of time – so let me show you three Scriptures very quickly:

**Jeremiah 31:35-37** “**Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel (*i.e.* cause Israel to cease to exist) for all that they have done, saith the Lord.**”

**Isaiah 54:7-8** “**For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.**”

**Romans 11:1** “**... Hath God cast away his people? God forbid ...**”

The church has NOT replaced the nation of Israel!

## Conclusion

Now let me close with one observation – IF God has not kept His unconditional promise to Israel and has abandoned them, then we have no reason to trust our Lord’s promise in ...

**John 10:27-28** “**My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.**”

You see – bottom line – the character/reputation of God is at stake. And it all comes back to our view of God’s Word. May God help us to NEVER allow human scholarship to turn us away from the clear and precise words of God!

# THE 'T' OF CALVIN'S TULIP

## Selected Text

In our study together last time – as we began our study on the subject of Calvinism – we showed three things that are very closely linked together:

1. Our Bibliology – *i.e.* we believe God said what He meant, meant what He said.
  - a. We do not change the meanings of words.
  - b. We allow the words to speak for themselves.

This is foundational because the way we handle the Scriptures will determine ...

2. Our eschatology – *i.e.* our doctrine of future things.

Unlike the Reformed/Calvinistic theologian, we do NOT believe the prophecies of Scripture should be handled in a spiritual/allegorical way – *i.e.* we believe God's promises will be literally fulfilled.

3. Our ecclesiology.

We do NOT believe that:

- a. The church has replaced the nation Israel.
- b. The promises of God to Israel were transferred to the church.

Now we also mentioned last time that the doctrines of Calvinism are basically contained in the acrostic TULIP – so today we are going to continue our study by dealing with the first point of Calvin's doctrine, which is "*total depravity*".

1. If you ask, "*Pastor, do we believe in total depravity?*" I will say, "*YES!*" In fact, I used to say I was a "*two point Calvinist*" – but I don't say anymore!
2. We need to realize that Reformed/Calvinistic theology defines the term in a very different way than we would – *i.e.* they say that "*total depravity*" means that man is completely unable/incapable of believing in Christ until AFTER the Holy Spirit has regenerated him.

Edwin Palmer – *cf.* The Five Points Of Calvinism – states, "... *once he [the sinner] is born again, he can for the first time turn to Jesus ... asking Jesus to save him.*"

Now that is a HUGE difference:

1. We say that men must believe in order to be regenerated.
2. They say that men must be regenerated in order to believe.

In other words, in Calvinistic theology, faith is not a *condition* to salvation – it is the *result* of salvation. And that is because they believe that no man can believe on Jesus Christ until AFTER He has given them spiritual life.

The significance of this teaching to Reformed/Calvinistic theology is clearly stated by R.C. Sproul – cf. Chosen By God – who wrote, “*A cardinal point of Reformed theology is the maxim, ‘Regeneration precedes faith.’*”

And the importance of this teaching to Reformed/Calvinistic theology is clearly stated by David Engelsma – cf. The Five Points Of Calvinism – when he admitted, “*Deny this doctrine and the whole of Calvinism is demolished.*”

But let’s examine this matter by considering three things:

## I. An examination of Scripture.

It is absolutely true that the natural man – because he is spiritually dead in sin – does not naturally seek after God. That is reason why God has commanded in the Scriptures that sinful men should seek after Him. For example:

**Isaiah 55:6** “**Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:**”

**Jeremiah 29:13** “**And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.**”

**Amos 5:6** “**Seek the Lord, and ye shall live ...**”

The Apostle Paul declared – cf. **Acts 17:26-27** – that God desires those who “ *dwell on all the face of the earth*” should seek Him and feel after Him. And Paul’s conclusion to this is found in ...

**Acts 17:30** “**... God ... now commandeth all men every where to repent:**”

Now this raises a question: Would God command us to do things that we are incapable of doing? Or, may we logically assume that, if God commands us to do something, it is because He knows that we have the capacity/ability to do it?

If God commands us to do that which we cannot do – and then damns us for not doing that which we were totally incapable of doing – then God is NOT a God of justice. But we know that this is NOT the case because the Bible clearly says in ...

**Psalms 89:14 “Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne ...”**

So the Bible says that our spiritual condition does NOT imply that we are unable to seek God – rather, because of our spiritual condition, we are commanded to seek God! So with that, let’s consider ...

II. An explanation of depravity.

A. The meaning of depravity.

When the Bible says ...

1. “*There is none righteous*” – cf. **Romans 3:10** ...
2. “*There is none good*” – cf. **Romans 3:12** ...

... it does NOT mean that unsaved people never make right decisions or do good things for others.

To be honest, I have met some unsaved people who were so good/kind to me that I actually wished more saved people were like them!

Those Scriptures are simply declaring the fact that the unsaved can NEVER do anything that is righteous enough – or good enough – to earn God’s favor or merit God’s salvation. This truth is clearly stated in ...

**Isaiah 64:6 “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”**

1. The prophet did NOT deny the fact of man’s righteousness.
2. The prophet showed the worthlessness of man’s righteousness.

And that is why Paul said – cf. **Ephesians 2:1** – that the unsaved man is spiritually “*dead*” in trespasses and sins.

The reason why the unsaved man’s righteousness/goodness is worthless and unacceptable in the eyes of a holy God is because all of those works are tainted and polluted by man’s unbelief. Remember ...

**Hebrews 11:6 “... without faith it is impossible to please [God] ...”**

Therefore, when we say that man is “*totally depraved*”, it is merely stating the fact that man – in his natural/unregenerate condition – is operating outside the parameters of faith.

B. The result of depravity.

We find this result clearly stated in ...

**Romans 3:11** “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.”

Now the Calvinist will tell us – as we have already stated – that the reason why there is none that seeks after God is because of the fact that they are spiritual dead and unable to seek after God. But the Bible is far less flattering in ...

**Psalms 10:4** “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God ...”

You see, the problem is NOT that men cannot seek God – the problem is that men “*will not*” seek God because of their pride.

So, when we speak of “*total depravity*”, it is merely stating the fact that man – in his natural condition of unbelief – is unable to do anything that will please God or earn God’s favor/merit.

Now let me say – even though men, because of self-righteous pride, do not seek after God, God DOES seek after men! And the reason why God seeks after men is because of the fact that God loves all men – *cf.* **John 3:16** – and the proof of that love was fully manifested at the cross of Calvary.

**Romans 5:8** “But God commendeth (*i.e.* demonstrated/proved) his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Now the Reformed/Calvinist will tell us that the word “*us*” – in both places – is really “*the elect*”. And to prove their point, they will turn to the words of Jesus in ...

**John 6:44** “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him ...”

That is certainly true! The unsaved cannot come to God unless they are drawn. But when did God draw us? The answer is found in ...

**John 12:32-33** “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.”

You see, when Jesus Christ was lifted up – *i.e.* when He died on the cross – He was in fact, drawing ALL men to Himself. Therefore, it is the message of the cross of Calvary that draws men to be saved.

But again, the Calvinist will refuse to accept that fact – i.e. they will begin to change the clear meanings of words by telling us that “*all*” does not really mean “*all*”. And they will base their changing the meanings of words by reminding us of the fact that ...

1. There ARE some qualified “*alls*” in the Bible – for example ...

**Luke 2:1 “... it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.”**

I am fairly confident that this taxing did NOT affect Singapore – *i.e.* it was all the Roman world over which Caesar Augustus had authority.

2. But the Calvinist assumes – based on the qualified “*alls*” of the Bible – that EVERY reference to “*all*” or “*the world*” should be qualified as being a reference only to “*the elect*”. Therefore, the Calvinist will read ...

**2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is ... not willing that any [elect person] should perish, but that all [of the elect] should come to repentance.”**

But there is NO Biblical justification for such a qualification to be forced on the text – and the proof of that is clearly seen in ...

**John 1:8-9 “He (*i.e.* John the Baptist) was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light (*i.e.* the Lord Jesus Christ). That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”**

This text leaves no doubt – except to those who will NOT see – that the initiating light of God’s love, as revealed in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, reaches to every man who has ever been born! In other words, it is the preaching of the cross that:

1. Confronts ALL men with their sinful condition.
2. Instructs ALL men concerning the provision of God’s grace.
3. Commands ALL men to respond with faith.

But how are these communicated to the hearts of sinful men? That brings us to ...

### III. An exploration of conviction.

**John 16:8 “... when he is come, he will reprove (*i.e.* convict) the world ...”**

- A. Of sin.

**John 16:8-9 “... when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin (*i.e.* it is singular) ... Of sin, because they believe not on me;”**

This unbelief and rejection of God's Son is the "*root sin*" from which every other sinful action comes.

B. Of righteousness.

**John 16:8** "... when he is come, he will reprove the world of ... righteousness ..."

**John 16:10** "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;"

During the life/ministry of Jesus, men were convicted by His presence – *i.e.* He was hated/rejected because He was "*the light*" (*cf.* **John 3:19-20**).

But now that He has returned to the Father, there is NO perfect model of God's righteousness for men to see. Therefore, the Holy Spirit convicts all men of the fact that we have all failed to meet God's standard of righteousness.

C. Of judgment.

**John 16:8** "... when he is come, he will reprove the world of ... judgment:"

**John 16:11** "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged (*i.e.* God made hell for Satan – *cf.* **Matthew 25:41** – and all who reject God and follow Satan will spend eternity in that terrible place)."

So the universal convicting work of the Holy Spirit reveals:

1. A principle of sin.
2. An absence of righteousness.
3. A deserved punishment.

## Conclusion

The Biblical fact is this: Even though men are spiritually dead in their ability to earn/merit God's salvation, ALL men are able to hear and respond with faith to the message of the Gospel. In fact, it is God's desire that all men might respond like the psalmist in ...

**Psalms 27:8** "When thou shalt bid (*i.e.* God's command), Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee (*i.e.* man's proper response), Thy face, Lord, will I seek."

The question is this – have you responded in faith to the Gospel message by repenting of your sin and placing your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? May God help it to be so!



# THE ‘U’ OF CALVIN’S TULIP

## Selected Text

In our study together last time, we saw the “T” of Calvin’s TULIP – *i.e.* the Reformed/Calvinistic teaching concerning “*total depravity*”. And we saw that the Biblical position and the position of the Calvinist are very different ...

1. The Bible says that men must believe in order to be regenerated.
2. The Calvinist says that men must be regenerated in order to believe.

Of course, this flies in the face of all Biblical teaching and human logic – the reason I say that is simply because of the truth that Jesus taught in ...

**John 3:14-15** “... as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

- a. Moses lifted up the brazen serpent – *cf.* **Numbers 21:7-9** – and whoever looked on that serpent was saved from death. They did not look in order to look – rather, by faith they looked and they were saved.
- b. And Jesus declared that – in the very same way – whoever would look to His cross in faith, they would receive the gift of eternal life.

Yet – in spite of the clear statements of Scripture – Reformed/Calvinistic theology says that before saving faith can come, a man must be regenerated by God. And the next point in Calvin’s TULIP – *i.e.* unconditional election – is a natural/logical progression from Calvin’s first false premise.

Herman Hanko, a Calvinist – *cf.* The Five Points of Calvinism – wrote, “*No man can claim ever to be either Calvinistic or Reformed without a firm and abiding commitment to this precious truth.*”

But, as we examine this so-called “*precious truth*” we are going to find it is actually a tragic misrepresentation of the truth because (1) it does NOT agree with the clear statements of Scripture; and (2) it undermines the character of our God. Let’s begin by noticing ...

## I. God’s foreknowledge.

**1 Peter 1:2** “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father ...”

There are three points that I want us to notice together here:

A. Foreknowledge misunderstood.

Reformed/Calvinistic theology declares that God foreknew what would happen because, in His absolute sovereignty, He had decreed it to be so. In other words, God's foreknowledge was based on what He had already determined to do.

Therefore, Robert Zins – *cf. A Believer's Guide to 2 Peter 3:9* – said, “... *it is our contention that God knows all things because He wills all things.*”

That is NOT foreknowledge – it is foreordination! John MacArthur – *cf. Saved* – agrees when he writes, “*God's foreknowledge ... is not a reference to His omniscient foresight but to His foreordination ... It's not that He merely sees what will happen in the future; rather He ordains it.*”

Because they twist/change the clear meanings of words, we find ...

B. Foreknowledge perverted.

You see, that which God decrees/ordains is absolute – therefore, if all things were decreed and ordained by God, then it was God Himself who decreed and ordained that ...

1. Lucifer should rebel against God (*cf. Isaiah 14:12-14*).
2. Adam should follow Lucifer into sin (*cf. Genesis 3*).

In other words, sin originated with God! Now I realize some Calvinists are NOT willing to go that far – but NO Calvinist can honestly deny that this is the clear and logical conclusion to their view of foreknowledge.

Calvinistic writer, Arthur W. Pink – *cf. The Sovereignty Of God* – said, “... *to deny God's foreknowledge is to deny His omniscience [that perfectly agrees with Scripture] ... But we must go further [WARNING: it is ALWAYS dangerous to go further than Scripture]: not only ... did His omniscient eye see Adam eating the forbidden fruit, but He decreed before-hand that he should do so.*”

1. This is illogical.

If sin is rebellion against God – and it is! – then how can man be called a “*sinner*” when he has absolutely and completely obeyed in the thing that God commanded/decreed that he should do?

2. This is slanderous.

The statement of Scripture is absolutely clear when it declares in ...

**Psalm 145:17** “The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.”

If God decreed sin, this is a lie. But not only that, how can we dare to say that spiritual darkness originated with Him of whom it is said ...

**1 John 1:5** “... God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

Bottom line – IF God decreed the sin of Lucifer and willed the fall of man, then these verses are nothing more than cruel and misleading lies!

C. Foreknowledge explained.

**1 Peter 1:2** “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father ...”

The word “*foreknowledge*” – Greek *prog-nō-sis* – means, “*to know something before it happens*”. In the medical profession, after the attending physician runs the necessary tests and studies the resulting data, the word is used to:

1. Define the course of a disease.
2. Define the chances of a recovery.

But with our omniscient God, no tests were needed – *i.e.* He knew all about us before we were ever born! Remember Jeremiah said in ...

**Jeremiah 1:4-5** “... the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”

Because of what God’s omniscience foreknew about Jeremiah, God determined that Jeremiah should be set apart to serve as a prophet to the nations.

In the same way, because of what God’s omniscience foreknew about us – *i.e.* He foreknew how we would respond to the Gospel – therefore, He “*elected/chose*” us to be saved “*according to*” His foreknowledge.

II. God’s election.

When it comes to election, the Reformed/Calvinistic theologian will state that it is an “*unconditional election*” – *i.e.* a term that is NOT found anywhere in the Bible. But it simply means that God chose certain individuals to be saved – and their election was:

1. NOT based on any condition – *i.e.* it is “*unconditional*”.

C. Samuel Storms – *cf. Chosen For Life* – states, “By making election conditional upon something man does, even if what he does is simply to repent and believe the gospel, God’s grace is seriously compromised.”

In other words, the Calvinist views “*faith/believing*” as a “*work*” of man. But the Bible makes it very clear that “*faith/believing*” are NOT works! Consider ...

**Ephesians 2:8-9** “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

**Romans 4:5** “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

Yet, the Reformed/Calvinistic theologian ignores these Scriptures and insists that man’s believing and repenting are “*works*” to be shunned – and this is based on their contention that man’s election must be ...

2. Based entirely on God’s sovereignty.

That is, God, at some point in eternity past – with no regard or consideration of any other factors – determined who should be, and should not be, saved. But that opinion totally violates/contradicts the clear teaching of the Apostle Peter in the text we just saw a few moments ago – *i.e.* **1 Peter 1:2**.

So how do we handle this subject of unconditional election? Let’s notice two points ...

- A. The basis of election.

**Ephesians 1:4** “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy (*i.e.* separated from the world) and without blame (*i.e.* cleansed from all sin) before him in love:”

This verse is NOT saying that we were outside of Christ and that God – before the foundation of the world – arbitrarily chose us to be placed in Christ. Rather, the grammatical structure declares the very opposite – *i.e.* God chose us because, according to His foreknowledge, He saw us “*in Him*” – “*in Christ*”!

In other words, there is absolutely NO contradiction between the Apostle Paul and the Apostle Peter – *i.e.* they are in perfect agreement with one another. Both of them clearly state that our election was based on what God foreknew!

- B. The sovereignty of election.

The Reformed/Calvinistic theologian will say that our view concerning the basis of God’s election robs God of His sovereignty – *i.e.* they will claim that God is made to be the servant to man’s choices.

Of course, that is absolutely false – but the Calvinist presses the claim because he suffers from a “*spiritual tunnel vision*”. That is, the Calvinist is so focused on the sovereignty of God, he ignores God’s attributes of love, mercy, and grace.

But the Bible presents a clearly balanced view of God, which takes in ALL of His attributes – *i.e.* in the Bible we find that God, in His absolute sovereignty, has freely determined/chosen:

1. To love those who are wicked and undeserving of such love.
2. To mercifully provide a way for salvation for the spiritually bankrupt.
3. To graciously offer an invitation to all men to accept His provision.
4. To judge/damn those who respond to His offer in unbelief.
5. To elect/chose/save those who will respond to His offer in faith.

### III. God’s predestination.

Many writers on both sides of this issue will say that “*election*” and “*predestination*” are one and the same. However, I do not hold to that opinion – it is my opinion that, “*Things that are different are NOT the same!*”

1. That we were chosen/elected before the foundation of the world is very clearly a reference to our standing with God – *i.e.* our salvation and the relationship that we have with God through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ.
2. But predestination – which took place at the same time as our election – has to do with things that are related to our salvation, but are different from our salvation.

The terms “*predestinate*” and “*predestinated*” are found four times in the Bible – and as we consider them, we find that we are predestinated concerning two things:

#### A. Our glorification.

**Romans 8:29-30** “**For whom he did foreknow (*i.e.* those elected before the foundation of the world), he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.**”

1. Those whom God foreknew, He did call them.
2. When they responded in faith, God justified them.
3. Because they were justified, they were glorified.

Now Paul is speaking of a spiritual position. That is why – *cf.* **Ephesians 2:6** – it is said that we are seated together with Christ in Heavenly places. But, not only

does God desire His children to be with Him in a spiritual sense, He desires us to be with Him physically.

But there is a HUGE problem here – *i.e.* right now we have a “*vile body*”. We have a body that is subject to sin, to all kinds of disease, and to death. However, when Jesus comes at the rapture of the saints, the Bible says in ...

**Philippians 3:21** “... shall change our vile body (*i.e.* this natural body), that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body ...”

And that is the “*adoption*” that we find spoken of in ...

**Ephesians 1:5** “... predestinated us unto the adoption of children ...”

We know this is the right interpretation because the Bible also says in ...

**Romans 8:23** “... waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

B. Our inheritance.

**Ephesians 1:11** “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:”

1. The Holy Spirit is the down payment – *cf.* **Ephesians 1:14**.
2. The fullness will be ours in that day when Jesus comes again!

Bottom line: Election has to do with our salvation; and predestination has to do with our eternal security – *i.e.* the assurance of a glorified body and a glorious inheritance!

## Conclusion

God is absolutely sovereign – and in His perfect sovereignty, God has chosen to freely and graciously provide a way of eternal salvation that is open to all men.

1. Those who will hear and believe will find that they were elected to salvation before the foundation of the world – and they are guaranteed a glorious state that will last throughout the endless ages of eternity.
2. But for those who will not believe, they are doomed to eternal damnation.

May God help each of us to hear and to respond in faith.

# THE 'L' OF CALVIN'S TULIP

## Selected Text

So far, in our study of Calvin's TULIP, we have seen:

1. **T** – *i.e.* the teaching of “*total depravity*”. This claims that men are so depraved they cannot believe on Jesus Christ and be saved until AFTER the Holy Spirit regenerates them. But this logic simply does not agree with the Scriptures.
2. **U** – *i.e.* the teaching of “*unconditional election*”. The teaching that God in His sovereignty – at some point in eternity past – with no regard or consideration of any other factors, determined who should be, and should not be, saved.

But by looking into the Scriptures – *cf.* **1 Peter 1:2** – the Bible makes it clear that God, in His sovereignty, determined that our salvation should be conditioned:

- a. NOT on His own arbitrary election/choosing.
- b. On our hearing and believing the Gospel.

Now, in our study today, we are going to examine the third pillar of Reformed/Calvinistic theology – *i.e.* known as “*limited atonement*” – which is the next logical step. But let me begin by stating a foundational truth which is found in:

**1 John 4:16** “**And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.**”

1. Notice God does NOT “*have love*”; God “*is love*” – *i.e.* love is an attribute.
2. But the Reformed/Calvinistic theologian limits God's love.

Arthur W. Pink – *cf.* The Sovereignty of God – wrote, “*The fact is that the love of God is for the saints only ... John 3:16 must, in the final analysis, refer to the world of God's people.*”

Such a blatant denial of God's attribute of love is based on ...

**Romans 9:13** “**As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.**”

Based on this, the Calvinist says God loves the elect (*i.e.* Jacob) and God hates the non-elect (*i.e.* Esau). But the idea here is the same as that which we find in ...

**Luke 14:26** “**If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.**”

Is this a literal hatred? NO! By comparing Scripture with Scripture, the meaning is that, in order to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, our love for God must be so great that it makes our love for our families to APPEAR like hatred in comparison.

But many – NOT all – Reformed/Calvinistic theologians ignore this fact and claim that God literally hates the wicked. They will then take this idea that God's hates the wicked to its logical/terrible conclusion.

1. Since God only loves the elect, the death of Christ on the cross only provided an atonement for those whom He elected/chose to be saved.
2. That is, if you are not a part of the elect, then God hates you and Jesus did NOT die for you – *i.e.* no provision was made for your salvation.

But what does the Bible say? Consider ...

**John 1:29** “... John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

**1 Timothy 2:5-6** “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all ...”

**John 3:14-15** “... as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

**Hebrews 2:9** “... we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

Therefore, in the face of these clear statements of Scripture, it is illogical that “*limited atonement*” could be seriously considered in “*Christian theology*” because it is clearly based on the faulty logic of men instead of the infallible/clear Words of God!

Calvinist teacher Loraine Boettner – *cf.* The Reformed Faith – confesses, “*Augustine died in AD 429, and up to this time, at least, there is not the slightest evidence that any Christian ever dreamed of a propitiation for the elect alone. Even after him, the doctrine of a limited propitiation was but slowly propagated, and for long but partially received (i.e. when it was taught it was most generally rejected until John Calvin).*”

So how can John Calvin and his followers believe that Jesus only died for – and only provided atonement for – “*the elect*”? There are three explanations we will mention:

- I. They redefine universal terms.



We talked about this two weeks ago – because of their spiritual/allegorical method of interpreting Scripture they have redefined words and given them a meaning that is NOT consistent with a literal/grammatical hermeneutic. They will contend that:

1. “All” = “all of those who were elected”.
2. “World” = “the world of those who were elected”.
3. “Whosoever” = “whosoever has been elected”.

As we said before, there ARE some qualified “alls” in the Bible – for example ...

**Luke 2:1** “... it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.”

But, as we mentioned before, I am fairly confident that this taxing did NOT affect Singapore – *i.e.* it was a taxing that affected ALL of the Roman world over which Caesar Augustus had the authority to levy taxes.

However, if you will simply read those passages of Scripture that deal with our Lord’s atonement and His desire for all men to be saved – and if you will read them in their context applying the normal laws of grammar – “all” will ALWAYS mean “all”.

Let me give you just two examples that should be sufficient:

A. Example one ...

**Isaiah 53:6** “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

Two times in this verse we find the word “all” – and these are given to us as a parallelism. That is, both of them will literally mean “all” in order to make clear the truth that the prophet is expressing.

1. The first is a universal all – *i.e.* all we like sheep have gone astray.
2. The second is a universal all – *i.e.* the sins of all men were laid on Him.

If you try to force the second “all” to be a limited atonement – *i.e.* that Christ only died for the elect – you have:

- a. Destroyed the grammatical structure of the verse.
- b. Perverted the clear/precious message of the prophet.

B. Example two ...

**Romans 5:18** “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so (*i.e.* in the same way) by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”

1. The first is a universal all – *i.e.* the sin of Adam brought judgment on all.
2. The second is a universal all – *i.e.* the righteousness of Christ provides the means whereby all men might be freely justified.

Again, if you force the second “*all*” to support a limited atonement – *i.e.* that Christ only died for the elect – you have destroyed the grammatical structure of the verse and perverted the message of the Apostle.

The Reformed/Calvinistic position concerning a “*limited atonement*” is only able to stand when men use a spiritual/allegorical hermeneutic that redefines universal terms by giving them a meaning that is NOT supported by the grammar/context of the Scriptures.

Some Reformed/Calvinistic people reject this teaching of a “*limited atonement*” – *i.e.* they are not “*hyper-Calvinists*”. But ALL Calvinist – if they are honest – must agree that it IS the logical conclusion of their spiritual/allegorical interpretation.

## II. They undermine Divine attributes.

Reformed/Calvinistic theology states that the teaching of man’s free will undermines and diminishes the attributes of God. However, our contention is that it is their theology that undermines God’s attributes. For example, consider the Calvinistic view of:

### A. God’s grace.

Those who hold the Reformed/Calvinistic position make much of grace – but their view of God’s grace is divided into two parts:

1. Common grace – *i.e.* this is the grace of God that allows men to enjoy His sunshine; to eat His food; to drink His water; and to breath His air.

**Matthew 5:45** “... he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”

2. Efficacious grace – *i.e.* this is the grace of God that offers salvation only offered to the elect. But what does the Bible say?

**Titus 2:11** “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,”

The Biblical fact is stated in ...

**James 1:17** “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights ...”

EVERY gift from God – *i.e.* physical or spiritual – is a result of God’s amazing grace! But the Calvinist undermines the attribute of grace by claiming that when foolishly reject God’s offer of grace, then God’s grace is diminished.

B. God’s love.

We spoke of God’s love during our introduction – but the Reformed/Calvinistic theology declares that if men are allowed to choose to reject God’s love, it will somehow diminish God’s love.

My first year at Bible College, I met Ginger and fell in love – I invited her to go home with me during the Thanksgiving holiday to meet my parents.

1. Of course, my family also fell in love with her – so, after we returned to school, I told her, *“I would like to spend the rest of my life with you.”*
2. She said, *“That’s nice.”* That was NOT the response I wanted to hear!
3. But here is the point – her rejection did not diminish my love for her.

But the Calvinist undermines the attribute of love by claiming that when men spurn the love of God, it diminishes God’s love.

C. God’s power.

Again, using his own logic – without a single verse of Scripture – the Reformed/Calvinistic theologian will say, *“If Christ died for the whole world but the whole world is NOT saved, then the power of God is diminished.”*

Suppose I put \$1 million in your account, but you refused to accept it – you would be an absolute idiot! But your refusal would in no way devalue the \$1 million.

You see, it is NOT us – it is the Calvinist – who undermines God’s attributes of grace/love/power by insisting that those glorious and wonderful attributes are limited in their scope and ability – *i.e.* they are only effective for *“the elect”*.

III. They ignore clear statements.

GOOD RULE: In Bible study, use the clear statements of Scripture to interpret the difficult; NEVER use the difficult statements to interpret the clear. But most Calvinists ignore this rule – they believe the Bible is only understood by the enlightened few.

I have been told that the only reason I am not a Calvinist is simply because I have not studied it enough to see the light! It has never entered their minds that the reason I am

not a Calvinist is because of the fact that I HAVE studied it and I have found it to be shot full of errors and totally out of line with the clear statements of Scripture!

When it comes to major doctrines like salvation, I believe God has made so simple that even a little child can understand it. Notice two points with me ...

A. Christ is the payment for all.

**1 John 2:2** “And he is the propitiation for our sins (*i.e.* little children – *cf.* 1 John 2:1): and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

B. Christ is the Savior of all.

**1 Timothy 4:10** “... because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.”

This is the same truth we find in ...

**2 Peter 2:1** “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

Jesus “*bought*” those false teachers when He died on the cross – but they will face destruction because they denied Him by refusing to trust in Him!

Bottom line: Man’s sin is NO LONGER the issue!

**Hebrews 9:26** “... but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin (*i.e.* He canceled it out by nailing it to His cross – *cf.* Colossians 2:14) by the sacrifice of himself.”

You see, because Jesus Christ became sin and died on Calvary, men do NOT die and go to hell because of their sin. Men go to hell because they have foolishly rejected the gracious provision of salvation that our loving God freely offers to ALL men.

## Conclusion

When you share the Gospel with other, you do NOT need to wonder if a provision for their salvation was made or not! As Bob Hughes – former missionary to the Philippines – once said so well, “*You cannot take the Gospel to the wrong address!*”

The Bible makes it clear: God loves all men, Jesus Christ died for the sins of all men, and it is our job to make that message known!

# THE 'I' OF CALVIN'S TULIP

## Selected Text

So far, in our study of Calvin's TULIP, we have seen:

1. **T** – *i.e.* the teaching of “*total depravity*”. This claims that men are so depraved they cannot believe on Jesus Christ and be saved until AFTER the Holy Spirit regenerates them. But this logic simply does not agree with the Scriptures.
2. **U** – *i.e.* the teaching of “*unconditional election*”. The teaching that God in His sovereignty – at some point in eternity past – with no regard or consideration of any other factors, determined who should be, and should not be, saved.

But that totally disagrees with the statement of Scripture – *cf.* **1 Peter 1:2**.

3. **L** – *i.e.* the teaching of “*limited atonement*”.

We saw this Reformed/Calvinistic belief states that God hates those who will not believe and, therefore, made NO propitiation for them. However – as we have seen before – the ONLY way to maintain such a position is ignore the clear and obvious statements of Scripture.

Now we come to the fourth pillar of Reformed/Calvinistic theology – *i.e.* “*irresistible grace*”. This point claims that, since men are spiritually dead and unable to respond to God, His grace must be forced upon them in a way that cannot be resisted.

1. Now let me say that I believe in “*irresistible grace*” in the same way that I believe my wife is irresistible. When I met her, I loved her charm, friendliness, and all the other beautiful qualities that I found totally irresistible.
  - a. Of course, you understand, I COULD have resisted her.
  - b. But – praise the Lord – I'm NOT as stupid as I look!
2. In the same way, when men are confronted with the Gospel, and the provision/offer of God's salvation, it is a wonderful/glorious truth that is irresistible.

However, that does NOT mean that men are incapable of resisting it. That is why Jesus said in ...

**John 5:40** “... ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”

- a. It was NOT that they “*could not*” come because they were not elected/chosen to salvation.

- b. Jesus said it was because they “*will not*” – *i.e.* by their own free will they had chosen to resist/reject the grace of God.

But the Reformed/Calvinistic theologian strongly denies this Biblical truth – they say it is impossible for a person to resist God’s grace. In other words, if God has elected/chosen you to be saved, then you WILL be saved no matter what!

Frank B. Beck – *cf.* The Five Points of Calvinism – said, “*I repeat, the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation! Nothing can stop it ... If God’s grace can be successfully resisted, then God can be overcome ...*”

However, not only is this statement foolishly illogical, it is absolutely unbiblical! In fact, it is abundantly clear when we examine “*irresistible grace*” under the microscope of God’s Word – like each of the other points of Calvin’s TULIP – it comes up sadly lacking! In order to accept this teaching of “*irresistible grace*” as being true, we must do four things:

## I. Ignore Biblical statements.

### A. In the Old Testament.

**Proverbs 1:24-25** “... I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:”

**Isaiah 65:12** “Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter: because when I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not.”

Clearly in the Old Testament, men had the ability to resist the will of God – and we see the same thing ...

### B. In the New Testament.

**Acts 7:51** “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.”

Through the preaching of the Apostles, a legitimate offer of salvation was made to the people of Israel – *i.e.* God was working and extending to them the offer of His saving grace – but they foolishly chose to reject it and would not accept it.

So, to claim that God’s grace is something that is irresistible is a position that denies the clear statements of Scripture and flies in the face of Biblical truth.

## II. Give phony invitations.

As believers in Jesus Christ, our purpose is clearly stated in ...

**Mark 16:15** “... Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

As we carry out our God-given purpose of preaching the Gospel to every creature, the Bible declares that we are to plead with men to be saved – *i.e.* we are plead with them earnestly. The Bible says in ...

**2 Corinthians 5:20** “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”

Now notice it:

1. We are God’s ambassadors – *i.e.* we carry God’s message.
2. When we speak, we speak in the place of Jesus Christ.
3. We “*pray*” – *i.e.* we earnestly plead/beg – with men to be saved.

But, IF God’s grace is irresistible, as the Reformed/Calvinist claims, then there are three terrible points that must be considered:

### A. Our God is cruel.

Remember – as we preach the message of the Gospel to every creature, we are speaking in the place of Jesus Christ.

But here is the point – IF Reformed/Calvinistic teaching is true, then Jesus Christ is guilty of presenting the Gospel and pleading with men to be saved whom He knows full well that He has already damned to an eternal Hell!

That is a cruelty of the most sadistic sort! And that is most certainly NOT the kind of actions that would be appropriate/consistent for a God of whom it is said, “*God is love*” – *cf.* **1 John 4:16**.

That is the worst – but at the very best ...

### B. Our God is insincere.

That is, He talks about taking the Gospel to every creature – *i.e.* inviting men to be saved. But the fact is, He is inviting multitudes of people that He has absolutely no intention of saving!

### C. Our God is foolish.

If “*irresistible grace*” is true, then there is NO need for us to get worked up seeking to reach our families, our friends, our neighbors, our nation, our world with the Gospel!

When God began to burden William Carey to carry the Gospel of Christ to the nations of the earth, he expressed his burden to a bunch of preachers.

1. Unfortunately, the preachers in England during that period had been greatly influenced by the Reformation doctrines of Calvinism.
2. Because of their stand on “*irresistible grace*”, Dr. John Rylands said, “*Young man, sit down; when God is pleased to convert the heathen world, He will do it without your help or mine.*”

Fact is, IF the Reformed/Calvinistic doctrine of “*irresistible grace*” is true:

1. The “*Great Commission*” is actually the “*Great Hoax*”.
2. All of our missionary efforts are a waste of our time and God’s money!

BUT – let me make it clear – our God is neither cruel nor insincere nor foolish. The great desire of our God (*cf. 2 Peter 3:9*) is that ALL men might repent of their sins and be saved by His marvelous grace. Therefore, His invitation to be saved is sincerely given to ALL men!

### III. Accept contradictory terms.

There are certain terms that are referred to as an “*oxymoron*”. These are two words that are joined together which actually contradict one another – for example:

1. “*Jumbo shrimp*”.
2. “*Short sermon*”.
3. “*Military intelligence*”.

Well, here is another oxymoron – “*irresistible grace*”. These are two words that simply do NOT go together either logically or Biblically.

#### A. It is not logical.

You see, Reformed/Calvinistic theology imposes salvation on men – *i.e.* they will say that, if you are elected to salvation, then you really do NOT have a choice in the matter. However, such an imposition is NOT grace – in fact, it is the very opposite of grace!



Grace – by the common definition – is the offering of something underserved to a person who must then respond to that offer. Therefore, for men to say that grace is “*irresistible*” is not a logical – or a grammatically viable – option.

B. It is not Biblical.

Throughout the Scriptures, grace is something that is ALWAYS freely given without imposition – that is why (*cf.* **Ephesians 3:8**) God’s grace is called a “*gift*”. And we all understand that a “*gift*”, by its very nature, is something that:

1. May be accepted.
2. May be rejected.

Tom Ross – *cf.* **Abandoned Truth: The Doctrines of Grace** – asked the question, “*If every man possesses a free will that is powerful enough to resist the will of God in salvation, what would prevent that same man from choosing to resist the will of God in damnation at the great white throne judgment?*”

This poor fellow is desperately grasping at straws to defend his point! The answer is so obvious that I cannot imagine any believer not knowing the difference:

1. God’s salvation is by grace and it is freely offered to all.
2. God’s judgment will be imposed – without grace – on all who reject the gift. And if we reject God’s gift, we will in no way be able to resist God’s judgment.

IV. Tolerate bogus definitions.

Every time I have discussed the doctrines of Calvinism, I have always been very quickly pointed to the statement that is found in ...

**Ephesians 2:1** “... you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;”

The Reformed/Calvinistic theologian will carefully point out that, because the unsaved man is dead in sin – and they emphasize the word “*dead*” – he is like a corpse that can do nothing as far as hearing/believing/responding to God’s truth is concerned.

Now we must be careful anytime we use an analogy/picture as the basis for a theological position – *i.e.* we should NEVER use the pictures to interpret Scripture; rather, we should ALWAYS use the Scriptures to interpret the picture.

So, when speak of the natural man being dead in trespasses and sins, we need to use the Biblical definition of the term. So, with that in mind, there are two points that I want us to understand here:

A. The physically dead.

**James 2:26** “... the body without the spirit is dead ...”

Being dead simply means a separation has taken place – that is why, in many places, we find a person is said to “*give up the ghost*”. But this NEVER means annihilation or inability – *cf. Luke 16* – the rich man in hell was able to:

1. See his condition – *i.e.* he was separated from God.
2. Feel his need – *i.e.* he was tormented and thirsty.
3. Express his desire – *i.e.* salvation for himself and his brothers.

And the same is true of ...

B. The spiritually dead.

**Genesis 2:17** “... in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

But when Adam ate the fruit, he did NOT fall down physically dead – but he did die spiritually – *i.e.* he was spiritually separated from God! However, even in that state of spiritual death, Adam was able:

1. To hear the Word of God.
2. To understand the Word of God.
3. To respond to the Word of God – *i.e.* he accepted God’s provision.

It was NOT an “*irresistible grace*” that was pressed upon him – it was a grace that was gladly and willingly accepted by Adam to the salvation of his soul!

## Conclusion

**Matthew 23:37** “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”

The Bible is very clear: Time after time, Christ would have saved them; but they, in their pride and foolishness, refused to respond in faith to His call. You see, contrary to the perverted teaching of the Reformed/Calvinistic theologian, the facts of Scripture are clear:

1. God graciously offers the free gift of salvation all men.
2. The majority of men will foolishly reject that invitation to be saved.

May God help you NOT to be one of those foolish ones!

# THE ‘P’ OF CALVIN’S TULIP

## Selected Text

So far, in our study of Calvin’s TULIP, we have seen:

1. **T** – *i.e.* the teaching of “*total depravity*”. This claims that men are so depraved they cannot believe on Jesus Christ and be saved until AFTER the Holy Spirit regenerates them. But this logic simply does not agree with the Scriptures.
2. **U** – *i.e.* the teaching of “*unconditional election*”. The teaching that God in His sovereignty – at some point in eternity past – with no regard or consideration of any other factors, determined who should be, and should not be, saved. But we saw how this idea totally disagrees with the clear statements of Scripture.
3. **L** – *i.e.* the teaching of “*limited atonement*”. The teaching that God hates those who are not elected – and therefore, made NO propitiation was made for them.

Of course, to prove their point, the Reformed/Calvinistic theologian must abuse the Scriptures.

- a. The Bible make it clear that God IS love; and God, in love, exercised His sovereignty to graciously provide a way of salvation for ALL men!
  - b. But they will change the clear/normal meanings of the words of Scripture and, thereby, force the Scriptures to agree with their theology.
4. **I** – *i.e.* the teaching of “*irresistible grace*”.

We noted that this Reformed/Calvinistic belief states that ALL those whom God elected to be saved before the foundation of the world will be saved – *i.e.* if God has chosen you to be saved, you cannot resist/reject that salvation.

However, we saw from the clear statements of Scripture that the grace of God was “*resisted*” by the nation of Israel – and, in the same way, men may reject God’s gracious offer of salvation even today!

Now we come to the final tenant of Reformed/Calvinistic theology – *i.e.* the “*perseverance of the saints*”. In the minds of many people, this is simply another term for the “*eternal security of the saints*”. But, as we are going to see, there is a HUGE difference!

**1 Peter 1:3-5** “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and

**undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”**

However, according to the teaching of many Reformed/Calvinistic theologians, the saved are not kept by the “*power of God*” – as the Bible so clearly states. Rather, they will say that the saints must maintain their salvation by their own perseverance. For example ...

A. W. Pink – *cf. Practical Christianity* – taught, “*If there is a reserve in your obedience, you are on the road to Hell.*”

John Otis – *cf. Who Is The Genuine Christian?* – wrote, “*Maintaining an unforgiving spirit will surely destroy our souls in hell.*”

John Murray – *cf. Redemption Accomplished And Applied* – stated, “*Let us appreciate the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints and recognize that we may entertain the faith of our security in Christ only as we persevere in faith and holiness to the end.*”

In other words, these gentlemen are very close to the position that Paul condemned in ...

**Galatians 3:3 “Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”**

However, because the fulfillment of their salvation is based on their perseverance, it is impossible for the Reformed/Calvinist to have a real assurance about their eternal destiny. For example, Calvinist R.C. Sproul – *cf. Assurance of Salvation* – spoke very honestly of his own personal battle with doubts concerning his salvation/election.

1. He says that, when he looked at his “*works*” he was confronted by his “*sins*” – and because of his sins, he began to doubt/question whether he was really one of the elect or not – *i.e.* he doubted his salvation!
2. Finally, his conclusion was that “*... being uncomfortable with Jesus was better than any other option.*”

But what does the Bible say about our assurance of salvation?

**1 John 5:13 “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life ...”**

What had John written? Let’s trace it ...

**John 3:36 “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”**

**John 5:24 “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (*i.e.* judgment); but is passed from death unto life.”**

**John 6:47** “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”

**John 10:28** “... I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”

**1 John 2:25** “... this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.”

An honest reading of these passages makes it very clear:

1. The result of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is to have eternal life – *i.e.* it is NOT something that will be decided at the final judgment when all my works are judged and examined; it is a PRESENT possession.
2. Eternal life is NOT based on my perseverance – it is based on the power of God!

Yet, Philip Congdon – *cf.* “*Soteriological Implications Of Five-Point Calvinism*” in the Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society – boldly stated, “*Absolute assurance of salvation is impossible in Classical Calvinism ...*”

And the reason is simply because Reformed/Calvinistic theology declares that men must persevere to be assured of Heaven. This false position is based on a misunderstanding of ...

**Revelation 3:5** “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.”

Reformed/Calvinism will say, “*See, we must OVERCOME the world, the flesh, and the devil, in order to be assured of a place in Heaven.*” But is that really what the text means? NO! The proper understanding of this text is clearly seen in ...

**1 John 5:4-5** “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”

1. You see, the “*overcomer*” is NOT someone who consistently – and without fail – follows/obeys God in all things.
2. Rather, the “*overcomer*” is simply the one who has earnestly/sincerely placed their faith and trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ! That is why the Apostle Paul – as he faced a Roman execution – was able to say in ...

**2 Timothy 1:12** “... I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day (*i.e.* the Apostle Paul, like the Apostle Peter, understood he was kept – not by his own perseverance – by the power of God).”

But the Reformed/Calvinistic teacher cannot accept this – they will argue, “*How can a person who is truly elected turn their back on the Christian faith/doctrine?*” And the reason they cannot find an answer to their question is because they stumble over three problems:

I. The problem of false believers.

We often hear about “*believers*” who have turned their backs on Christianity and gone into a false religion – *i.e.* apostasy. For the Reformed/Calvinist, this is something that they simply cannot reconcile! But the problem is easily answered in ...

**1 John 2:19** “**They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.**”

Please remember here that even the Lord Jesus warned us of three things:

A. The fact of fruitless tares.

Jesus taught that an enemy would sow tares among the wheat (*cf.* **Matthew 13:25**) – *i.e.* Jesus was teaching that there will be many in the church who look, and talk, and act like they are saved – but they are just tares with no fruit!

B. The fact of flocking birds.

The kingdom would be like a tree that draws birds (*cf.* **Matthew 13:32**). In the Bible, we can find many times when believers are likened to “*sheep*” – but true believers are NEVER called “*birds*”. In fact, if you will compare **Matthew 13:4** with **13:19**, it is the devil and his crowd that are referred to as “*birds*”.

In other words, Jesus was simply teachings that many unsaved people will flock to church – *i.e.* they like good/honest/moral people – but they are NOT saved!

C. The fact of fruitless branches.

Jesus taught that the “*true vine*” would have worthless branches that would produce nothing (*cf.* **John 15**) – that is, there would be those ...

- a. Who would attach themselves to Christianity.
- b. Who would NOT have the indwelling Christ.

Therefore, they are cut away and burned. You see, contrary to the false teachings of some, these are NOT Christians being sent to Hell because they were unfruitful – rather, it is a warning about “*false believers*” who have attached themselves to Christianity!

So when you see a so-called “*believer*” turning their back on the faith and going back into the world – or going back into some false religion – it is NOT that they have departed from the faith. Rather, it shows that they were NEVER in the faith!

## II. The problem of deceived believers.

The word “*heretic*” is only found one time the Bible – *cf.* **Titus 3:10** – and if you will read the context, you will find that it is clearly talking about a true believer who has been deceived by a false teacher and led away into false doctrine.

Now I believe that is exactly what happens when men turn from the clearly stated truths of Scripture to adopt the teachings of Reformed theology/Calvinism. And when that happens, the Bible clearly instructs us how we are to respond to them:

- A. We are to rebuke them. *cf.* **Titus 1:13**
- B. We are to separate from them. *cf.* **2 Thessalonians 3:14-15**
- C. We are to avoid them. *cf.* **Romans 16:17**

And the reason why we are to do these things is so that the deceived brother might see the error of his way – and so that he might repent and be restored to a doctrinal position that agrees with the Scriptures.

Now – let me quickly say – just because a believer does not follow some false doctrine, it does NOT mean that they are as spiritual as they ought to be. There is ...

## III. The problem of carnal believers.

**1 Corinthians 3:1** “And I, brethren (*i.e.* they WERE saved), could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.”

The “*carnal*” believer is more like the world than like Christ. There are three reasons:

- A. They are babes – *i.e.* these are new believers who have never been taught.
- B. They are immature.

All babes are immature – but NOT all immature people are babes!

**Hebrews 5:12-13** “... when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.”

C. They are backslidden.

A clear example of this is found in the story of Lot – *cf.* **Genesis 12-19**.

1. Lot left Abraham and joined himself with Sodom.

In all of the historical record, there is NOTHING that would imply that Lot was anything more than a wicked Sodomite who was only saved from destruction because of God's kindness to his Uncle Abraham!

2. But then we come to ...

**2 Peter 2:7-8** "... [the LORD God] delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)"

You see, Lot was a man who had been justified and declared righteous by the LORD God!

- a. Did he consistently live like it? NO – he failed miserably!
- b. Did his lifestyle change his relationship with God? NO!

It affected his fellowship with God – but NOT his relationship.

None of us are perfect – that does NOT mean we should be content with our spiritual imperfections. Rather, while we strive to grow stronger in our relationship with God, we must remember that what we lack does not, in any way, diminish the relationship we have with our Heavenly Father!

## Conclusion

Bottom line – no matter what men may say, the Bible is our FINAL authority – and the Word of God declares that, if we are "*in Christ*", we are kept by the power of God. We are NOT kept by our own perseverance!

So – let me ask you this – do *YOU* know that you are a child of God? According to the clear statements of Scripture, we can have that assurance because – if we are "*in Christ*":

- 1. We are NOT kept by our own perseverance.
- 2. We are kept by the power of God!

Does His Spirit, bare witness with your spirit, that you are a child of God?



# CALVINISM: DOES IT MATTER?

## Selected Text

Over the past weeks, in our study of Calvin's TULIP, we have seen:

1. **T** – *i.e.* the teaching of “*total depravity*”. This claims that men are so depraved they cannot believe on Jesus Christ and be saved until AFTER the Holy Spirit regenerates them. But this logic simply does not agree with the Scriptures.
2. **U** – *i.e.* the teaching of “*unconditional election*”. The teaching that God in His sovereignty – at some point in eternity past – with no regard or consideration of any other factors, determined who should be, and should not be, saved.

But that disagrees with the clear statement of Scripture – *cf.* **1 Peter 1:2**.

3. **L** – *i.e.* the teaching of “*limited atonement*”.

We saw this Reformed/Calvinistic belief states that God hates those who will not believe and, therefore, made NO propitiation for them.

However, the Scriptures make it clear – God IS love; and by an act of His divine love, God did exercise His sovereignty to graciously provide a way of salvation for ALL men through the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary!

4. **I** – *i.e.* the teaching of “*irresistible grace*”.

This is the belief which states that ALL those whom God did elect to be saved before the foundation of the world will be saved – *i.e.* if God has chosen you to be saved, you cannot resist/reject that salvation.

5. **P** – *i.e.* the teaching of the “*perseverance of the saints*”.

It is this point that caused John MacArthur – *cf.* Hard To Believe – to say, “*The life we live, not the words we speak, determines our eternal destiny.*”

That sounds impressive/spiritual. But it should be noted that MacArthur did not give a single Scripture to support his statement. Why not? Simply because there are NONE! You see, the Bible makes it very clear that we are kept by the power of God – we are not kept by not our own works/perseverance!

Now, as we come to the end of this series, I want to deal with one final question – *i.e.* does it matter where we stand on this issue? Of course, I believe it DOES matter.

First, it matters because – as we have seen over and over again – a Reformed/Calvinistic theological position can only be supported by choosing to ignore/change/twist the statements of Scripture. That alone condemns the teachings of Reformed/Calvinism as unscriptural.

However, there are three other reasons why it matters – *i.e.* it is because of the three dangerous consequences that accompany the teachings and doctrines of Reformed/Calvinistic theology. Let's begin by noticing that ...

## I. It breeds spiritual arrogance.

As we have seen, Calvinism is NOT a Biblical doctrine – rather, it is a system of human philosophy/reasoning that proves its points by ignoring or redefining the clear terms and statements of Scripture.

Since men must invent and sort out the new meanings/definitions for Bible words and concepts, their theology has become a complicated thing – and because it is complicated, those who are able to figure it all out are revered as great scholars!

R.C. Sproul – *cf.* Chosen By God – proudly declares, “... *the titans of classical Christian scholarship [are Calvinists] ...*”

Now that is just a bit intimidating – after all, who are we to debate/discuss anything with the “*titans*” of Christian scholarship? But this is based on the fact that most Reformed/Calvinists claim that only the “*enlightened few*” are able to understand God's truth.

1. I have talked with Calvinists who said to me, “*I used to believe like you; but then I found the truth.*” The implication is, “*You dummy – what's wrong with you?*”
2. In other words, in the mind of the Calvinist, the “*spiritually enlightened ones – those spiritual 'titans' of Christian scholarship*” are those who believe and hold to the teachings of Reformed/Calvinistic theology.

So Reformed/Calvinistic are in perfect harmony as they sing the praises of that so-called “*scholarship*” that supports their doctrinal position. However, notice two things:

### A. The Biblical fact stated.

**1 Corinthians 2:14** “... **the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**”

Please notice that the truths of God's Word are “*spiritually discerned*” – they are NOT intellectually discerned.

1. We are responsible to “*study*” the Scriptures (*cf.* **2 Timothy 2:15**) – and, as we study the Word of God ...
2. It is the ministry of the Spirit of God to lead us into “*all truth*” (*cf.* **John 16:13**) – and He does not lead us into God’s truth by:
  - a. Contradicting Himself.
  - b. Changing the normal meanings of the words.

You see – bottom line – how well we know God’s Word has NOTHING to do with our IQ or our intellectual abilities. Rather, it has everything to do with our simple faith in, and our obedience to, the Word of God!

That is why the Lord Jesus Himself – after arguing with the religious intellectuals of His day – prayed in ...

**Matthew 11:25** “... I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.”

In other words, the great doctrinal truths that the intellectuals could not grasp were easily understood by the “*babes*” – *i.e.* the teachings of Christ were easily understood by those who had a simple, child-like faith.

- B. The Biblical fact illustrated.

**Psalms 119:98-100** “Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.”

But there is a second dangerous consequence with Reformed/Calvinistic teaching ...

## II. It breeds spiritual coldness.

- A. Toward our God.

**Luke 6:32** “... if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye (*i.e.* are you worthy of any special praise/honor)? for sinners also love those that love them.”

**John 15:19** “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”

Now, according to the teachings of Reformed/Calvinism, our God ...

1. Only loves those who love Him – *i.e.* the elect.
2. Hates those who do not obey Him – *i.e.* the non-elect.

In other words, according to the Reformed/Calvinistic theologian, the God of the Bible operates on the same standards as the unsaved world!

That is an outright slander against our God! But not only is this a slander against our God that results in a spiritual coldness, it also produces a coldness ...

B. Toward our neighbor.

Many times we joke about hypocritical parents who say to their children, “*Don’t you do as I do – you do as I say!*”

But that is exactly what Reformed/Calvinistic theology accuses God of doing! It is their theological position that our God:

1. Has no love for the non-elect.
2. Has no desire to save the non-elect.
3. Has made no provision to save the non-elect.

And yet, that same God demands that we have a compassion for the souls of all men! That is the very point we find in ...

**Matthew 9:37-38** “... [Jesus said] unto his disciples, **The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.**”

If Reformed/Calvinistic theology is true, then God is a hypocrite because He demands that:

1. We should be concerned for those whom He hates.
2. We should pray for those whom He has no intention of saving.

Now this does NOT mean that all those who hold the teachings of Calvinism are cold and indifferent when it comes to soul winning – for example:

Charles Spurgeon – *cf.* The Soul Winner – a self-declared Calvinist, said, “... *soul winning is the chief business of the Christian ...*”

However, in view of what Reformed/Calvinism teaches about salvation and damnation, I am convinced that those few Calvinists who do evangelize do so in spite of their Calvinism, and not because of it.

1. You see, there is not one distinctive of Reformed doctrine that encourages or promotes the evangelism of the lost – just the opposite is true.
2. In many places, the understanding of Calvin’s teachings has discouraged, and/or totally stopped, any real effort to reach the lost with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, most Reformed/Calvinistic churches are filled with a spiritual coldness when it comes to having a burden/desire to reach the world for Jesus Christ.

1. I know a church that, years ago, was a vibrant church – souls were saved nearly every week in their services. In fact, my father-in-law was saved in that church.

Because of the crowds that were coming, they built a large auditorium that would seat some 1200 people – and it was nearly packed every Sunday.

2. But then the pastor changed his theology – *i.e.* he adopted the teachings of Reformed/Calvinism.

About twenty years later, because of his friendship with my father-in-law, I was invited to preach in his church. In that great auditorium there were only about 150 people – most of the sections were roped off – the zeal for soul winning was gone.

That is the heartbreaking reality that is seen in many of the churches that have fallen into the snare of Reformed/Calvinistic theology.

### III. It breeds spiritual idolatry.

Duane Edward Spencer – *cf.* TULIP: The Five Points Of Calvinism In The Light Of The Scripture – is right when he proudly states, “... *throughout history many of the great evangelists, missionaries, and stalwart theologians held to the ... doctrines of grace known as Calvinism.*”

On Sunday morning, December 11, 1864, Charles Spurgeon – known as “*the prince of preachers*” – preached a sermon. In that sermon (*cf.* The Man With The Measuring Line), Spurgeon said, “*There is no soul living who holds more firmly to the doctrines of grace than I do ... if you ask me, do I hold the doctrinal views which were held by John Calvin, I reply, I do in the main hold them, and rejoice to avow it.*”

Therefore, based on the fact that many of the “*great men*” in church history held the five points of Calvinism, I have actually had Calvinists try to make me feel ashamed – *i.e.* they will try to make me feel unspiritual – for rejecting the doctrines of Calvinism.

So what is my answer to that? Let me answer with the Biblical principle found in ...

**Exodus 23:2 “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil ...”**

You see, I do not care who has believed the teachings of Calvinism in the past – or who believes it today. When men abuse/twist/change the words of Scripture to support a doctrine that the clear language of Scripture denies, I will NOT join with them.

You see, to follow a doctrine that is clearly contrary to Scripture simply because “*great men*” have espoused it, means that I have made “*great men*” to be more important than the clear words of God – and that is idolatry!

The sad fact is, for many people, the points of Calvin’s reformation theology is of more importance than the inspiration of the Scriptures – but as true Bible believers ...

1. We do NOT judge the Words of God by the teachings of Martin Luther, or John Calvin, or Ray Crocker, or any other man!
2. Rather, we judge the teachings of ALL men by the Word of God!

This is the very thing we find in ...

**Acts 17:11 “... [the Bereans] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”**

You see, those Bereans had the same attitude as Apostle Paul in ...

**Romans 3:4 “... God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar ...”**

## Conclusion

When it comes to something as serious as the destiny of your eternal soul, we better make sure that our faith is solidly resting:

1. Not on the wisdom/reasoning/philosophies of men.
2. On the eternal, infallible, inerrant Word of God!

This Bible is the ONLY solid foundation on which to build our faith/lives – everything else is shifting sand!