

Bible vs. Calvinism

Irrefutable Answers and Unanswerable Questions for Calvinists

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The following has been written with the Christ-centered goal of clearly expressing the truth of what the Bible teaches regarding salvation and Calvinistic doctrine. I realize that the terms Calvinist and hyper-Calvinist are not synonymous; however, I contend that the line between the two terms is hard to draw, especially among 21st century believers. Thus, for sake of simplicity and accuracy, I will only use the term Calvinist in this booklet, and this term should serve me well as it is the doctrine of mainstream modern-day Calvinism that I will challenge. To be specific, the intended audience for this writing is anyone who believes any or all of the five so-called doctrines of grace, commonly known by the acronym TULIP.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:16 is one of the clearest and simplest declarations of the gospel. The main truths of the verse are believed by Calvinists and non Calvinists alike, and for this reason, true born again Christians can be found in both camps. However, where doctrinal error exists, no matter how great or small, the potential for damage abounds. The doctrine of Calvinism confuses the simplicity of the gospel, causes great division among brethren, and often is an excuse for an unbeliever to remain in darkness. Through its five manmade doctrines it puts God in a box he does not belong in, and pushes the Bible to a secondary and subservient position. Ultimately, Calvinism is a detriment to the cause of Christ and a tool of the Devil.

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Document Note: Throughout this publication are sections (highlighted in gray) featuring common Calvinist misconceptions and arguments. When defending or promoting their beliefs, Calvinists often present a number of notions that are not based at all on scripture, but instead on logic—and often poor logic at that. These sections of the booklet are an attempt to clear up such misconceptions and combat such arguments.

Misconception #1: If you’re not a Calvinist, then you’re an Arminian

The correct Biblical stance is between Calvinism and Arminianism. In fact, both Calvinism and Arminianism are on the extreme ends of the spectrum. Calvinism is wrong in teaching that some men are born without a chance of believing, while most Arminians correctly teach that salvation is for “whosoever will.” Conversely, the Arminian belief that salvation is tied to works and is something that can be lost is false, while Calvinists believe correctly that salvation is eternal and is not determined by a man’s “works” either before or after the moment of salvation.

The Tone of the Bible

Often lost in the debate between non Calvinists and Calvinists are major themes of the Bible in the Old and New Testament. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and according to passages such as Romans 4 we understand that men were saved by grace through faith in the Old Testament in the same manner they are saved in the New Testament. So, instead of diving directly into the commonly debated passages of the issue, please allow me to point out larger tones or themes of the Bible and explain how they relate to this topic. It is my belief that too often both Calvinists and non Calvinists are guilty of focusing on one tree of the debate, when a view of the entire forest (that is the Bible) should be taken into account.

If Calvinism is true... Why does the devil fight to stop people from believing?

If it is impossible for some men to believe and impossible for other men to not believe, as Calvinism teaches, why do we see Satan fighting so hard to get people off track? Obviously, Satan must not be a Calvinist, as he surely believes man has a choice to make.

2 Cor. 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

According to Calvinist doctrine, it wouldn't matter if the glorious gospel of Christ shined unto these nonbelievers or not—either way they will never get saved. If Satan were a Calvinist he wouldn't even bother.

Matt. 13:18-19 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

And here in Matthew 13, is Satan again wasting his time taking away the seed of the gospel out of a nonbeliever's heart? Unlike a Calvinist, Satan must believe that such a seed can lead to salvation.

By the way, this passage in Matt. 13 is also proof the Calvinist belief in irresistible grace is false. Verse 23 teaches us that the seed spoken of in the parable produces real fruits of salvation, so we can surmise that the seed is truly saving grace. Thus, how is it possible that an individual, with the help of Satan, can remove such a seed from their heart? See page 22 for further arguments against irresistible grace.

The parable of the sower in Matt. 13 offers a plethora of doctrinal value as it also shows us clear reasons why the gospel message is rejected.

The truth is that salvation is available to all and true repentance and faith comes from God's word (the seed). This is why Satan fights so hard, using every trick in his book, to keep the Bible hidden.

Acts 13:7-10b ⁷ ...Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. ⁸ But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. ⁹ Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, ¹⁰ And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

If Calvinism is true... Why does God have to blind the eyes of some to ensure that they do not believe?

John 12:40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

This passage quotes Isaiah 6:9-10 and shows us that God, who was angry at his people because of their wickedness, chose to blind the eyes of the people of Israel and make it impossible for them to believe. Calvinists may use this passage in an attempt to prove that God picks who can and who cannot believe, however, a closer analysis of the context reveals that if God had to blind their eyes to make it impossible for them to believe, then it must have been possible for the people to believe before this moment.

Interestingly enough, John 12 ends in the very non-Calvinistic tone of Jesus explaining that salvation is for "whosoever believeth" and that those who reject Christ and do not receive His words will stand before God and give an account for these decisions.

John 12:46-48 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. ⁴⁷And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. ⁴⁸He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

Just in case a Calvinist should argue that I am taking one isolated passage and not comparing it with other scriptures, please note that the idea that God blinds eyes is reiterated throughout the Bible, including II Thess. 2:10-12.

2 Thess. 2:10-12 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: ¹²That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Here again, God goes to the trouble of sending a strong delusion to people who had pleasure in unrighteousness so that they will be unable to believe the truth. God must not be a Calvinist, for if he were, He would understand that such people are incapable of believing anyway.

This passage in II Thessalonians is particularly powerful against Calvinistic doctrine because it clearly shows that God chose to make belief impossible for individuals after they had a true opportunity to receive the saving power of the love of the truth. This means that God did not pick the individual winners and losers ahead of time, but that he gave each individual the free will to choose, and if the right choice is not made then there is a possibility that He will no longer make such choice available.

We thus have revealed a Biblical truth. Total inability to believe does not come at birth, but it can come after an individual rejects God and chooses a life of sin instead.

Rom. 1:21-28 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²²Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, ²³And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. ²⁴Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: ²⁵Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. ²⁶For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: ²⁷And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. ²⁸And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

If Calvinism is true... Why is Jesus amazed that some people do not believe?

Mark 6:6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

In today's world when a person hears the gospel and does not get saved, the common Calvinist does not marvel at all about why such a person does not believe. They simply write the person off as not being one of the "elect." Jesus, on the other hand, apparently is not a Calvinist because he often marvels at unbelief as well as demonstrations of faith or a lack of faith.

Mark 4:39-40 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?

According to this verse in Mark, it would appear that Jesus Christ, the very Son of God, does not understand that the reason His disciples have no faith is because God has not granted it to them. Or so it would appear through the eyes of Calvinist doctrine.

For the true Bible believer, however, this passage in Mark is easy to understand. The disciples, afraid of the wind and waves, started believing more in the danger of the storm than in the saving invisible, hand of God. They made a choice to be afraid instead of choosing to trust God, and Jesus Christ noticed their lack of faith and pointed it out to them.

This was not the only time that Jesus reprimanded his disciples and others for a lack of faith. Jesus rebuked his disciples for a lack of faith in Matt. 16:8, and also rebuked Peter after his failed attempt to walk to Jesus on the water. And note how the passage regarding Peter relates to this discussion.

Matt. 14:31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

Peter in verse 29 actually walks on the water. It is not until he set his eyes on the boisterous wind in verse 30 that he begins to sink in the water and reach out his hand for help. Accompanied with Jesus' deduction that Peter's downfall was due to his lack of faith and his increase in doubt, this passage is a powerful indicator that faith is a human choice to believe. Peter had faith in something supernatural at first as he took his first steps upon the water; however, he soon began to lose his faith and consequently sank. The story is Biblical proof that faith is a human choice, not a Divine gift granted only to select individuals. If God were the one who "gifted" Peter the faith to walk on the water, then Jesus would not have asked "wherefore didst thou doubt?" as if it was Peter's fault for failing.

Beyond being disappointed in people not having faith, Jesus also praised those he found who displayed great amounts of faith. The reactions of disdain above and of praise to follow do not paint a picture of a God "gifting" people faith. They show a picture of some people choosing to have faith and others choosing not to. If this is not true, then the Jesus spoken of in the Gospels is far from the omniscient member of the Trinity that Christianity has proclaimed for centuries.

Matt. 8:10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

This example above of the centurion is one of many showing Jesus rewarding someone for their faith. Be sure to notice though that Jesus marveled at the man's "great" amount of faith and commented that he hadn't see anything else like it in all of Israel. Was this simply because God granted the centurion an immense amount of faith, an amount enough to surprise even Jesus Christ? Not a chance. The truth is that the centurion chose to believe wholeheartedly in the miraculous power of God—something that not many people choose to believe in.

For additional examples of Jesus marveling at unbelief and being angry with unbelief see Matt. 13:58 and Mark 6:6.

If Calvinism is true... Why is God angry at those who do not repent?

Not only does the Bible teach that God is angry at people for not believing, it also tells us that God grows angrier at those who hear the gospel and reject it.

Mark 6:11-12 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city. And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

Why is God so angry at them? They obviously weren't elected, right? And what about the following verse in Matthew where God expresses his desire that the people of Jerusalem turn to Him. Mankind must have a free will, or what else would hinder almighty God from simply gathering the people of Jerusalem by force?

Matt. 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!

Also, note this passage in Matthew 11 where Jesus suggests that the citizens of another city would have believed and repented had they seen such mighty works. This doesn't sound like a Calvinist notion at all, as a Calvinist would contend that it doesn't matter how much God's word and works are spread, but instead is up to individual election.

Matt. 11:20-22 Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.

Misconception #2: Ephesians 2:8-9 teaches that faith is a gift

Eph. 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.

Some Calvinists insist the pronoun "that" refers to the word "faith." In other words, Calvinists would have us believe verse eight reads, "...and that faith is not of yourself: it is the gift of God..." However, rules of grammar,

such as the need for pronoun-antecedent agreement in gender and number, clearly point to the concept of salvation as the antecedent and, therefore, the verse is properly interpreted, “and that salvation is not of yourself: it is the gift of God...”

In addition, the following chapter reinforces the idea that salvation’s saving grace is the gift. In this verse there is no mention of faith at all—a good indication of what the author, Paul, meant in the chapter prior. Only grace is labeled as a gift, and this is a truth that non Calvinists readily accept.

Eph. 3:7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

If Calvinism is true... Why does the Bible teach that there will be a great falling away?

2 Thess. 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

This verse paints the picture that fewer and fewer people will become true believers as apostasy grows stronger. Luke 17 notes that the second coming of Christ will be directly preceded by a time similar to Noah’s day when only eight souls were saved. And in Revelations 3, the spiritual state of the church of Laodicea, believed by most scholars to represent the final stage of the church age, is so fallen that Christ is on the outside knocking to get in.

Why is this? The answer from a non Calvinist would simply be that the world is growing more and more wicked, and is putting less and less faith in the Bible. Thus, decisions to accept Christ as savior are becoming rarer and rarer. The Calvinist, on the other hand, apparently must argue that there is going to be a great falling away because God will chose to elect fewer and fewer individuals as time goes on.

This notion seems especially inaccurate when one notes the many verses showing God’s anger at the world when faith is scarce. He destroyed the world in Noah’s day because of the putrid state it reached, and He will unleash the horrors of the tribulation period and begin a host of judgments upon this present evil world.

If Calvinism is true... Why is salvation more prevalent where the Bible and Biblical evangelism is prevalent?

For Calvinists, this fact makes absolutely no sense at all because there should be no trend involved with salvation, instead the pattern of true believers should represent a sporadic and random process with no rhyme or reason at all. If salvation is a completely random process not based at all upon the decision of individuals, there should be, in essence, just as many born again believers in the backwoods of Bangladesh as there are in the Bible Belt of the United States.

To put this thought in simpler terms, why is it that the children of believers have been more inclined to become believers than the children of nonbelievers? The answer to this question for non Calvinists is simple: the children

of believers are more likely to be saved because they are taught the Word of God, and the choice and need to believe is made very clear to them.

To continue this example, consider the following verses (and others like them) that show a child's upbringing will affect his decisions, including the decision to believe, as an adult.

Prov. 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Prov. 19:18 Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

Prov. 23:13-14 Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

Rom. 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Notice this verse in Romans 10. The non Calvinist can read and interpret it at face value. The Calvinist, however, must feel somewhat inclined to comment "...faith cometh by hearing (and election)."

Calvinists put too much faith in their manmade doctrine of individual election, and not enough faith in the converting power of the Bible. This truth will be expounded upon in a later section.

If Calvinism is true... Why do Christians have blood on their hands if they do not witness?

Ez. 3:18-19 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

The idea that God will hold Christians somewhat responsible for the wicked not turning from sin does not fit well in the Calvinist line of thinking. If an individual was not "elected" to turn to Christ, then why should God put blame on a Christian for not warning (i.e. witnessing) to that person? The Calvinist may argue that this is an obscure passage in the Old Testament, however, it should be noted that Paul reiterated the concept.

Acts 20:26-27 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

If Calvinism is true... What happens to children born in infancy?

Though Calvinists argue amongst themselves on this point, devout Calvinists preach, and I dare say Calvinist doctrine in its very nature implies, that unelect infants who die in infancy go to hell.

This doctrine is completely unscriptural and is yet another example of the manmade philosophy of Calvinism taking precedence over scripture. Jesus' words paint a clear picture that children are innocent and precious in the eyes of God. By likening those in heaven to children, and by teaching that one must become as a child to enter into heaven, I think we can safely assume that children go to heaven.

Matt. 19:14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Matt. 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Some may ask at what age a child is no longer innocent in the eyes of God. The best answer for this is found in the Old Testament. When Adam and Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2) death was introduced into the world. By the same token, when a child arrives at an age of clearly knowing the difference between right and wrong he is past the age of innocence and will face the wages for sin—death.

As an additional proof text, Deuteronomy 1:39 gives a related typology. The children who did not know the difference between good and evil were spared the punishment of being banned from the promise land. If one considers the promise land to be a typology of heaven, as many scholars do, this verse is especially troubling for the Calvinist doctrine.

Deut. 1:39 Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.

If Calvinism is true... Why does the Bible say salvation is available for all?

Calvinists write at length and go out of their way—out of necessity—to attempt to explain the hundreds of verses that either explicitly or implicitly teach that salvation is available to every man. Such verses are too numerous to list in one pamphlet, however, a few are written below and additional references can be found on page 21 regarding arguments against the third Calvinist doctrine of grace, limited atonement.

I Tim. 2:4-6 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

I John 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Rev. 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Calvinists attempt to brush away all such verses by saying that "world" doesn't mean world, "all" doesn't mean all, "whosoever" doesn't mean whosoever, etc. They'll point to one reference where a word such as "all" is being used in a non-all-inclusive manner and illogically draw the same conclusion for other verses.

However, the Bible is too clear, and the references too numerous, for Calvinists to whisk away the many verses that do not conveniently fit into their doctrine.

Misconception #3: To choose to believe is a work

Argumentative Calvinists are quick to label all non Calvinists as Armenians. One way they do this is by saying, "If you believe a person can believe, then you believe in work salvation!" In other words, non Calvinists say that a person can choose to accept Christ as their savior, and a Calvinist would say that such a choice is a work. But is it really?

Rom. 5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

The Bible, in multiple references, describes salvation as a gift given by God. Even a child understands two key concepts about gifts: (1) One does not work to obtain them, and (2) One must accept them. And it can be safely said that the act of accepting or taking into possession a gift is not considered work in any dictionary, culture, or sane mind.

Christians "work" for their salvation in the same manner the woman did who touched the hem of Christ's garment (Matthew 9). Can it be said with a straight face that this woman worked to heal herself? No, not by any stretch of the imagination. The woman was healed because she chose to have faith in Christ. Similarly, Christians today are saved because they choose to have faith in Christ and the sacrifice he made on the cross.

For those who argue that this analogy is inaccurate, please consider that Jesus compared physical healing with spiritual redemption quite often.

Matt. 9:5 For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?

And note the similarity between these two verses.

Matt. 14:36 And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Whoever touched was healed, and whoever received was saved. Is this coincidental or does the Bible teach that God is ready and willing to reward all those who choose to take a step of faith? Note: for additional commentary on John 1:12 see page 20 regarding unconditional election.

If Calvinism is true... Why does God change his course of action after seeing the actions of man?

Calvinists often consider themselves the best defenders of the sovereignty of God. However, in the name of defending His sovereignty, they often contradict His word.

Many Calvinists will deny that God reacts to the choices of man, and most, if not all, will deny that man has the free will to even make such choices. Nevertheless, both concepts are clearly shown in the Bible. God, in his sovereign power, has bestowed upon man the ability to choose what he will believe and what he will do.

2 Chron. 7:14 If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

As this verse in Chronicles implies, God sets a choice in front of man and is prepared to respond to man's choice as he sees fit. When man makes the wrong choice, God is not pleased. The Bible teaches that God has even regretted creating man at times. In multiple references, the Bible says God "repented" of something. Any older English dictionary will show a definition of the word to be a change of mind.

Gen. 6:6 And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

Ex. 32:14 And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

1 Sam. 15:35 And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

The fact that God reacts to man's decisions, often even changing his course of action, is irrefutable proof that God has endowed man with a free will. One must either come to this conclusion or he is left to assume that God has multiple personalities and is often displeased with His own decisions. In other words, if Calvinism is true, God created mankind without the free will to choose, and then about 2,000 years later He grew angry at the world for not choosing to do good and promptly destroyed it in a global flood.

Calvinist doctrine does not at all show God to be more sovereign, but it certainly paints him as foolish. See page 15 for additional information on free will and God's sovereignty.

Some Calvinists will respond by calling the idea that God changes his courses of action in response to man's actions as some sort of blasphemy. And they will conclude that if God can change then salvation isn't secure for anyone! This is an illogical and unbiblical conclusion to arrive at. A belief that God can alter what action he will take does not make him a liar. His promises will still stand, and his word He will still uphold.

Titus 1:2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

Note: Calvinists often use the phrase "For I am the Lord, I change not" in Malachi 3:6 to combat this point. A quick look at the context though, along with comparing the verses above, concludes that the statement is speaking in general terms. God does not change. His righteousness, His goodness, His holiness, His power, etc. endure unto all generations. This verse in Malachi and others like it in James 1:17 and Numbers 23:19 are proof

that God will never break his promises, but they are not proof that God is incapable of changing his course of action.

If Calvinism is true... Why does God give time to repent?

Rev. 2:21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

According to this verse, it appears God gives people time to repent and do good. But why would God do this, or even say this, if the option to do good was not even available? This is akin to locking a child inside a room, waiting two hours before setting the house on fire, and then later stating, "Well, I gave the kid plenty of time to leave."

Please note the verse below and ask yourself: how does the idea that God is longsuffering fit into Calvinistic doctrine? Throughout the Bible we are reminded of God's great patience and mercy. But if man does not have a free will, what is God patiently waiting for?

2 Pet. 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

The very fact that time is referred to (longsuffering) in passages relating to salvation indicates that everything is not set in stone. Individuals have not already been handpicked for salvation and damnation; instead God has made salvation available for all and gives ample time for everyone to repent.

Note: Calvinist theologians have written five-plus page responses to this one verse alone. A good rule of thumb for interpreting the Bible is: If it takes a thousand words to explain a 30-word verse the way you want to interpret it, perhaps your interpretation is wrong.

Misconception #4: There is only one way to interpret Biblical terms such as "election" and "ordained"

See page 20 regarding unconditional election.

If Calvinism is true... Is there really a difference between mankind and the animal kingdom?

A Calvinist may answer the question by saying man is unique because he has a soul (or spirit) and animals do not. But if Calvinism is true, what difference has this made? Animals are only capable of seeking ways to please their own flesh, and Calvinists would argue that man is only capable of the same. Animals live a robotic predetermined existence and man does the same.

However, the Bible says that God created man in his own image, gave him a living soul, and teaches throughout that the purpose of man is to glorify God.

Gen. 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Gen. 2:7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

1 Cor. 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (Note that with salvation comes the ability to fulfill mankind's purpose—to glorify God)

Having been created in such an image, given such a spirit, and bestowed with such a purpose, is it really such a stretch to think that God gave all men the ability to choose to do His will?

If Calvinism is true... Why does God blot people out of the Book of Life?

Ex. 32:33 And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.

Psa. 69:28 Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.

Rev. 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.

According to the Bible, all men have their name written in the book of life, and, as these verses show, at some point God blots out the names of those who reject God and the truth. But notice how this blotting happens after the choice of man. Does this not give credence to the fact God has given every man a chance and a choice, and that a man is not damned until he chooses to reject the truth?

Furthermore, if Calvinism is true, why do the non-elect have their name in the book in the first place? Or, why aren't their names blotted out immediately considering they have no chance of ever being redeemed?

Rev. 20:15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Refuting TULIP

Total Depravity

The Biblical truth taught in Romans 3:23, “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, ” is one that all Bible believers can agree upon. Non Calvinists firmly believe that men are depraved sinners and that the only way a worthless sinner can be justified is by believing in the perfect sacrifice of Christ. With the doctrine of total depravity, however, Calvinists proclaim that sinners are totally unable to believe if they are not one of the “elect.” In other words, Calvinists believe that some people, in fact most, are incapable of believing and are inevitably doomed to spend eternity in hell. This doctrine is completely contrary to what the Bible teaches and is the result of failing to rightly divide the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15).

In an attempt to prove man’s inability, Calvinists often cite a number of passages proving man’s heart is wicked (Jer. 17:9), men are born in sin (Psa. 51:5), men desire sin (John 3:19), and even the so-called righteous actions that men do are filthy rags in the eyes of God (Isa. 64:6). Non Calvinists have no trouble with these passages, however, because they do nothing to prove that a sinner is incapable of repenting and accepting the free gift of salvation.

To arrive at the Biblically correct position on this topic, one should first look at God’s position.

Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

If what Calvinists believe is true and God gives only certain individuals the ability to repent, then why does God command all to repent? An analogy to put this in perspective would be a father locking all four of his children in separate rooms inside a house, giving only one of the children a key, and then commanding all of them to exit their rooms to get out of harm’s way. The child with the key easily unlocks his door, grabs his father’s hand, and moves to safety. And shortly after, the father sets fire to the house and the other three are burnt alive. Such a parent who would command a child to do something impossible (exit the room) and then punish the child for not doing it would be a monster—and such a God would be a monster.

Thankfully, the true God of the Bible is nothing like what Calvinist doctrine portrays him as.

2 Pet. 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

God’s desire is that none perish, and that all come to repentance. To return to our analogy, God is like a father who has brought four children into this world (inside the house). There is most certainly destruction ahead, but God gives each child the ability (the key) to use his free will to choose whether to stay in the room and face destruction or use the key, walk through the door, and live.

A devout Calvinist will probably have two major complaints about this analogy. First, they’ll say that God is not sovereign (i.e. all-powerful) if his desire is for people to leave the house and they don’t. Secondly, they’ll argue that everyone would choose to leave if they had the ability. Both arguments are worldly philosophies that are

founded on man's wisdom and not the scriptures. The first one is simply an illogical understanding of sovereignty, and the second overlooks the many reasons the Bible gives for why people choose to stay in the path of destruction instead of turning to the light and life everlasting.

Calvinist Misconception #5: A free will makes God less sovereign

Calvinists often scoff and argue something along the lines of, "a free will gives more power to man and less power to God." The premise is simply false. Whether God created a world where a man can choose to obey or disobey, or he created a world where a man has no choice in the matter makes no difference in sovereignty at all. Either way, the world was created in the manner in which our omnipotent God intended it to be. This Calvinist argument is sort of like saying that the father who gives a key to each child inside the house is less sovereign than the father who gives a key to only one child. Both are equally sovereign because both established the system of who will live and who will die. The children of the second father without a key will die, and the children of the first father who do not choose to use the key and walk out the door will die.

Either way, a sovereign ruler rules on the terms which he decided. God created the rules, and those who do not follow them and choose to accept Christ as their savior go to hell.

Some Calvinists believe that God desiring something to happen is the same as God mandating something to happen. This is a complete fallacy. God hates sin (Prov. 6) and his desire is that men do not sin at all; however, we know that men use their free will to sin all the time. By this same token, it is God's desire that all believe, yet he is disappointed again and again by unbelief.

The fact that God's desires for mankind are not always fulfilled and that he is disappointed in the choices men make is evident in a number of passages throughout the Bible. In Genesis, God is disappointed in mankind so much that he sends the flood, in I Samuel God is disappointed in the actions of Saul, and in Jonah 3 God sees the decisions of the people of Nineveh and responds by withholding judgment.

Gen. 6:5-6 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

1 Sam. 15:35 And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death: nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

Jonah 3:9-10 Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

Note how, regardless of how it is specifically defined, the word "repent" used in these contexts indicates that God is reacting to the choices of man. In shoe leather then, if God always acts on his desires as some Calvinists say, the people of Nineveh would have been destroyed immediately. For more on the idea of God repenting, i.e. altering his course of action, refer to page 11.

Calvinist Misconception #6: If a free will existed, *everyone* would choose to believe and go to heaven

This popular argument for Calvinists is completely absurd. To make this statement a Calvinist has to throw out all of the verses they ardently use to defend the idea of total depravity. The Biblical stance is to admit, yes, man does have a free will to believe, however, often the cares of the world and the pleasure of sin for a season blind the eyes of man and make the decision to believe a rare one. In other words, man uses his free will to seek sin instead of God. And in our analogy, the children are too caught up in the sins and pleasures found inside the house to use the key to step away from the house and toward the father.

Proof for this explanation is found throughout the Bible. Here are two quick references about how sin—whether it be pride, lust, etc.—influences people to make the wrong choice (also, see page 2 to read about the devil's role in this).

2 Thess. 2:12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Heb. 11:24-15 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

John 3:20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

So, we know that the wickedness of man and the devices of this world are what hinder most people from turning to and believing in Christ. Calvinists though, as mentioned before, believe most people do not believe because they do not have the ability to. A favorite verse of the Calvinist is Ephesians 2:1.

Eph. 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

To the non Calvinist, and no doubt the average Bible reader, the phrase "dead in sins" means that men are spiritually dead before they come to Christ (the "truth, and the life" as John 14:6 tells us). The phrase is used only in Eph. 2:1, 2:5, and Col. 2:13, and, as judged by the context, is simply stating man's position before salvation. Once a person is saved he is instantly made spiritually alive, or as the Bible says he is "quickened." The fact that men move from death to life at the point of salvation is prevalent throughout the Bible.

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; but is passed from death unto life.

Calvinists, however, use the phrase "dead in sins" to support their belief in "total inability." They teach that a person must be "elected" in order to be made alive and capable of believing the gospel. In this thought though, they obviously put the cart before the horse because it is clear that spiritual life begins at the point of salvation, not at the point leading up to salvation. Thus, the fact remains that a spiritually dead person must turn to Christ before becoming spiritually alive. How is this possible for someone who is dead?

What is the process by which a man comes to believe in the perfect saving sacrifice of Jesus Christ? It is here that Calvinists incorrectly insert "election" as the remedy. The answer for what brings a wretched man to the point of salvation, to the point of having faith in the unseen, is none other than the word of God. Calvinists need to put more faith in the power of God's word, and less faith in their manmade doctrine.

Psa. 119:50 This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me.

David, a depraved man such as us all, states that he was made alive (the definition of "quickened") by God's word. His belief is completely in line with the New Testament.

Rom. 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

1 Pet. 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.

2 Tim. 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

1 Cor. 1:18-21 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. ²⁰Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? ²¹For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

Heb. 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

From the verses above we see that the word of God is powerful enough to save anyone who hears it. But what about those who are not around the Bible and have no chance to hear its truths? A Calvinist would answer that such people need to be "elected" in order to seek the truth of the Bible.

Calvinists often cite the story of Lazarus in John 11 as a proof text for their belief in total inability. They say that as Lazarus was unable to come to life on his own, people who are spiritually dead cannot come to life unless God specifically calls them. This point is very weak for a number of reasons, including the following.

First, to equate physical death with spiritual death is the same mistake that Nicodemus made when considering physical birth and spiritual birth in John 3. Physical processes and spiritual process are not synonymous, thus the example of Lazarus coming back to physical life by the call of Jesus is practically irrelevant to the argument of "election."

Secondly, the belief that Jesus has a central role in development of someone's faith is not questioned by non Calvinists. John 1 makes it clear that Jesus lights every man, not just the elect.

John 1:9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Misconception #7: Spiritually dead is the same as physically dead

Calvinists, almost like clockwork, equate the phrase “dead in trespasses and sins” in Eph. 2 with physical death and say something along the lines of, “a dead body in a casket is incapable of doing anything!”

However, being spiritually dead and physically dead are two very different things.

In the parable of the prodigal son, which is an analogy tied directly to salvation, notice that the father twice states that his son was dead (Luke 15:24 and 32).

Luke 15:32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

It is said that he was dead, however, just a handful of verses earlier the prodigal son is capable of realizing that he was wrong, repenting, and turning to the father.

Luke 15:18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee.

Just as the prodigal son, men are separated from God today because of their sins, yet they are capable of choosing to seek the God and go to him. And it is safe to assume that God’s reaction is the same as the father’s when one turns from his wicked ways, from death into life.

Misconception #8: Similarly to how you cannot choose your birth parents, you cannot choose God as your heavenly father.

Along the same line of reasoning, Calvinists also sometimes use the argument, “We cannot choose our birth parents, so how can we choose God?” Once again this is an argument based in logic and not scripture. Jesus’ words to Nicodemus provide the answer.

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Misconception #9: Men are incapable of seeking unless they are elected

Another verse misconstrued and heavily leaned upon by Calvinists to defend the doctrine of total depravity or inability is Romans 3:11.

Rom. 3:11 There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.

Calvinists take a hard line on this verse, claiming it is to be interpreted literally and thus it means “absolutely nobody seeks unless they are elected!” However, if we are to interpret this verse literally, doesn’t it say that

nobody seeks God, and doesn't nobody mean nobody? Even the elect?

No, the correct interpretation of this passage is once again better understood by looking at the context. Paul's theme in this chapter, and throughout the book of Romans, is that all the world is guilty before the eyes of God. He states in chapter three that even the Jews who follow the law are guilty. And it is in this context that he says, in respect to righteousness, there is none good.

His phrase in verse 11 "none that seeketh after God" is meant to describe the state of the world. It is quite similar to common phrases used by Bible believing preachers today such as, "nobody wants to serve God these days," or "the people of the world don't fear God."

Mat. 7:7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

Jer. 29:13 And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

These two verses say a lot about the concept of seeking. First, Jesus teaches us that we should seek, regardless of whether you are elected and have the "ability" to or not. Second, we are to seek God with our whole heart. If Calvinism is true, what difference does it make if you seek wholeheartedly or halfheartedly? You are not seeking of your own accord anyway. But, thankfully, Calvinism is not true and it makes perfect sense for God to want his creation to sincerely, not halfheartedly, seek Him.

To those who still insist that the phrase "none that seeketh after God" means nobody on the face of the earth seeks after God the following verse should also be taken into consideration. If this verse in mark is interpreted in the same face-value fashion, then apparently "all men" are seeking Christ.

Mark 1:37 And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee.

Misconception #10: Only those drawn are saved, and only the elect are drawn

John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

Some Calvinists hold this verse as proof that God has elected some individuals, and that only these individuals will be drawn and, consequently, saved. A major problem with this interpretation is that it directly contradicts the words of Jesus.

John 12:31-33 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. 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.

Similarly to John 1, Romans 1:20, and Psalm 19:1, this verse teaches us that all men are drawn. Whether by the light that Jesus puts in everyone, God speaking through His creation, or man's conscience bearing witness, every man has an understanding of God and is without excuse. Also notice that it says in John 6:45, just one verse later, those who hear the Bible come to God. And this ties in perfectly with Romans 10:17.

Rom. 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Total inability is a manmade doctrine. The only thing holding a man back from coming to Christ is himself.

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

Unconditional Election

Perhaps it is here where Calvinists have strained the hardest to interject their beliefs into what the Bible actually says. Unconditional election is the Calvinist doctrine that God “elected” only certain individuals; furthermore, he elected them for no rhyme or reason at all.

To correctly understand this topic one must understand the correct interpretation of Biblical terms such as “elect” and “ordained.”

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

From this verse we see that God has given all those who receive Christ the power to become the sons of God. This is clearly a “condition” for election to salvation. This verse proves the following: (1) God elected a specific group to receive salvation, and (2) the condition for being a part of this group is believing in and receiving Christ.

The fact that there is a condition necessary to become a part of the elect is shown throughout the Bible. Even passages that many Calvinists use to support their doctrines are at odds with unconditional election.

1 Pet. 1:2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father...

Because this first shows God choosing people ahead of time, Calvinists conclude that election must be unconditional. However, this verse says quite the contrary. If individuals are elected unconditionally, and the decision is not at all based upon a man’s choice to believe, God would have no need to look into the future whatsoever. If Calvinist doctrine is true, this version should simply read, “elect according to God” because what need would God have to look into the future to elect someone at random? The correct interpretation of this passage is that God used his foreknowledge to look into the future and elect all those who believe.

Eph. 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Though often misconstrued by Calvinists, this verse in Ephesians is a great verse to understand how election really works. Before the world was even formed, God chose all those “in him” (in Christ) to receive salvation. In other words, God did not select specific individuals as winners and losers ahead of time regardless of conditions, but he selected a group—all those who believe! This is commonly referred to as “corporate” or “group election” and is the correct interpretation of the Bible.

Heb. 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

Additional proof that the term “elect” applies to all believers and not random individuals can be found in the following verses. Election for a Calvinist happens before salvation, thus, there could be both saved and unsaved elected individuals at a given time. But note how the term “elect” is used exclusively for saved individuals in the passages below.

Mat. 24:31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Rom. 8:33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Only saved people will be gathered together at the sound of the trumpet, and only saved people are justified and sealed by the blood of Christ. Thus, the term “elect” must be taken to mean a group of believers—and not a group of individuals composed of those who both have and haven’t received salvation.

Job 36:12 But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.

2 Thess. 1:8-9 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;

There is a definite condition required to become a part of the elect and it is to turn to Christ in obedience to the gospel. Those who do not meet this condition will face the wrath of God. As a side note, if some people were created without the ability to believe; would a righteous God really punish and take vengeance upon them for not believing?

Limited Atonement

Of the five points of Calvinism, it could be argued that the doctrine of limited atonement stands as the starkest contradiction to Biblical truth. The Bible is clear that there is nothing limited about the sacrifice of our Savior; nevertheless, Calvinists continue to confine the power of Christ’s blood and the convicting power of the word of God. Jesus died for all, and His blood is capable of atoning for the sins of whosoever believes.

Rom. 5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

In the same manner that one man’s sin brought condemnation upon all men, so too the sacrifice of Christ gave all men the opportunity to be saved.

Rev. 22:17b ...And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Some Calvinists say the doctrine of limited atonement would be more appropriately named something along the lines of "intentional atonement" or "particular atonement." They do this to get away from sounding to limit Christ's sacrifice, and to point out that Christ paid the penalty for the sins of a certain group.

This latter point is actually one that non Calvinists believe in, though it seems some Calvinists do not realize this. Christ's sacrifice did save one particular group--all those who believe! If you believe and understand the truth of corporate election, i.e. God elected all those who believe, then all verses of the Bible fit together like a glove.

If you believe in individual election and limited atonement though, you will always struggle with the overabundance of verses that show salvation is available for all. A small sample of such verses are listed below.

1 Tim. 2:4-6 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Heb. 2:9 But 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.

Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

Isaiah 45:22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

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.

Titus 2:11 "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men"

Rom. 10:13 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

One argument that Calvinists often use is that an "unlimited atonement" means that Christ's death really didn't save anyone. This is again a failure to understand the opposing viewpoint. Jesus' death on the cross and his resurrection saved all those who believe. Therefore, His sacrifice is not limited or bound whatsoever, it accomplishes exactly what it was meant to.

1 John 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Did Christ save everyone in the world? No. Did Christ make salvation available to everyone in the world? Absolutely.

Irresistible Grace

Heb. 2:3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

Non Calvinists believe that in the same manner each man has a free will to receive God's grace, every man also has the free will to resist it. Calvinists, obviously, do not agree with the latter point, but they do so at the peril of ignoring many clear cut passages in the Bible.

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.

Acts 13:46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

Notice the following passage in Hebrews which talks of someone partaking of the Holy Ghost and then falling away. This passage can only mean two things. Either Christians can lose their salvation, which we know is absolutely wrong, or individuals can resist and reject the Holy Ghost even after It has convicted a man and brought him to the verge of repentance. Ultimately, this section of scripture teaches that such a man has rejected his last chance to be saved.

Heb. 6:4-6 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

The truth of the Bible is that man has been resisting God's grace and rejecting God's gospel since the dawn of time. This is why the Bible is riddled with God's expressed disappointment in mankind.

Matt. 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!

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

Prov. 1:24-25 Because 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:

Acts 28:27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

Heb. 4:6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

The fact that people reject God's grace every day and the devil is waiting to take the seed out of a man's heart makes the need for Christians to witness even greater. An unfortunate side effect of the doctrine of irresistible

grace is that it makes the need to witness and share the gospel irrelevant. If God's grace is irresistible and elected individuals are guaranteed to come to the truth, then there is little need, if any at all, to plant or water as Paul describes in I Corinthians 3.

But, alas, we can rest assured that there is a definite battle for souls and one battlefield is inside the heart of man.

Heb. 3:12-19 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. ¹³But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end; ¹⁵While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. ¹⁶For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. ¹⁷But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? ¹⁹So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

A man is not only condemned because of his sin, but also because he chose to not believe.

Heb. 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

The witness of Christians is of great importance in this fight for souls. And, to reiterate an earlier section, the key that God uses to open a man's eyes is the Bible.

2 Cor. 5:18-20 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 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.

A popular saying among Bible believers is that the key to salvation is the heart. These two verses in Psalm attest to the truth of the saying.

Psa. 34:18 The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Psa. 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

To fit this concept into Calvinist theology, one would argue that God softens the heart of an elect man and thus he seeks and receives the gospel. However, in the Calvinist viewpoint there is no easy place to fit the many verses in the Bible that show man actually hardens his own heart—i.e. resists the truth and God's grace. If some men are born as part of the unelect, would they not be born with a heart that is already hardened? To say that a man can harden his heart is to say a man once had a heart capable of believing.

Zech. 7:12 Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts.

2 Chron.36:13 And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the Lord God of Israel.
We are commanded in multiple passages not to harden our hearts.

Heb. 3:15 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

Such people who reject God's truth are described as "being past feeling" in Ephesians. Does this not imply that they were once at a point of feeling? Doesn't exactly sound like the dead-in-the-coffin description Calvinists give for the non-elect, does it?

Eph. 4:17-19 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

Perseverance of the Saints

The Bible is very clear that salvation is something which cannot be lost. Once saved, always saved.

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; but is passed from death unto life.

Jesus Christ paid the price for your sins once. If you believe this then you are sealed in Christ forever.

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

Eph. 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise

Eph. 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

However, point "P" of the Calvinist acronym TULIP doesn't stand for preservation of the saints. It stands for perseverance of the saints, which is something entirely different. The perseverance of a Christian plays absolutely no role in retaining salvation. Salvation is assured by Christ and Christ alone.

Calvinists will often state that this doctrine simply means that saints persevere because they are preserved by God, yet the fact remains that the title of this last doctrine leaves something to be desired. It is grossly erroneous

at face value, and is misleading and confusing at best. Furthermore, because point "P" is so intertwined with the other four doctrines of Calvinism, it is no doubt safe to do away with all five points and simply stick with the Bible.

Conclusion

God created mankind with the duty of glorifying Him. All men have this opportunity, yet only a few choose to do so. Despite what Calvinism teaches, there is a clear choice to be made, and the choice is available to all mankind. Who will you serve?

Josh. 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Verses often used by Calvinists

The following section will address a number of verses used as "proofs" of Calvinism. These verses are listed last in the booklet on purpose. They should be viewed in the context outlined in the sections above. By doing this you will fulfill the mandate of comparing scripture with scripture.

John 6:37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Answer: Calvinists contend that God gives Christ all those who come to him. Non Calvinists can agree with this because James 1:17 teaches us that "every good gift and perfect gift" comes from above. The difference, however, is that non Calvinists believe God gives souls to Christ by the fact that He created them, gave them a free will, lighted every man with the truth (John 1), and established a system by which faith comes from hearing the Bible (Romans 10:17). Each believer is certainly—in a general sense—a gift, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being..." (Acts 17:28).

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.

Answer: All believers, as a whole, are chosen out of the world. We are "a chosen generation, peculiar people, an holy nation a peculiar people" as it says in I Peter 2:9.

Psa.115:3 But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.

Answer: God does do whatever he pleases, and, as I Corinethian 1:21 says, "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." In other words, it pleased God to institute a process by which "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

Answer: This verse does not show a progression or order of events. The last phrase could just as accurately be written, "as many as believed were ordained to eternal life." An example of similar phrase structure would be, "All those who made the all star team were talented." And note the context of the verse and the verses that surround it. Just two verses earlier (46) is a strong proof text against the doctrine of irresistible grace.

1 Pet. 1:2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. (Also, Romans 8:29)

Answer: This verse was covered earlier (see page 20), but let it be restated that the word "foreknowledge" in this passage gives credence to the theory that election is conditional and is contingent upon a person believing. Why else would God need to look into someone's future to elect them?

Heb. 9:15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

Answer: This verse cannot be talking about election, as defined by Calvinism, because of the word "might." According to Calvinists, if someone is called, i.e. elected, there is no question whether that person will receive salvation or not. The correct interpretation of this passage is that God calls everyone to him (see page 21), but only some choose to receive salvation.

Chapter 9 of the book of Romans is a very unique section of scripture in the Bible, and no doubt it is a favorite of Calvinists. The chapter offers great insight into the mind of God, regrettably, however, it is often misconstrued and read only through the glasses of a Calvinistic worldview. Until one decides to read the Bible objectively and open-mindedly, growth and spiritual enlightenment is impossible. Below are just a few of the more popular verses for Calvinists.

Rom. 9:13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.

Answer: It should first be understood that this verse is a quote from Malachi 1:2-3, which was written well over a thousand years after Jacob and Esau were on the scene. Thus, the idea that God hated Esau and loved Jacob because of their actions is not farfetched at all. Furthermore, God is all knowing and simply could have hated Esau because he already knew what he would choose to do with his free will. Either way, this verse does not at all prove that some people are damned without a chance.

Romans 9:14-16 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

Answer: In regards to salvation, God chooses to have mercy on believers just as it says later in the chapter in verse 33.

Interestingly, right after chapter nine is a favorite chapter of non Calvinists. Below is a section of this chapter that does well to summarize the fact that God made salvation available to all. And verse 21 gives us an illustrated idea of how God desires men to come to him.

Romans 10:11-21 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. ¹² For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. ¹³ For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. ¹⁴ How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! ¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? ¹⁷ So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. ¹⁸ But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. ¹⁹ But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you. ²⁰ But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me. ²¹ But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

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