

A Response to the Calvinism hidden in Christian Beliefs: Twenty Basics Every Christian Should Know

by **Wayne Grudem**, and **Elliot Grudem**

By Rent-A-Friend 2000

A note before beginning.

This book was assigned for a middle school Bible class, and I became aware of it because of one of the students in the class. I read through it and decided it needed a response. So, here is my response. In short, Calvinism makes everything worse.

To be clear, the authors never explicitly say they are talking about Calvinism, they don't mention "Calvinism" and they don't refer to "TULIP". But as you will see, they are sneaking it in, and it ruins everything it touches, as I will explain in detail.

But once again you get to see Calvinism from the Calvinist so you can see I am not attacking a StrawMan. It matters because of what it does to the doctrines it touches.

Quotes are indicated by the page number on which they appear. I add bolding or italics for emphasis. My comments are in bold. It should be obvious. Enjoy.



Part 1- He chose to save “SOME”

Page 72- The Necessity of the Atonement

“Although it was not necessary that God save any people at all, in His love he chose to save **some**.”

This is wrong. *It was necessary* because of His nature. God is loving, merciful and kind. It would go against His nature to forever let his creation die in their sins. Probably intending to imply that nothing we have done merits forgiveness, they ignore the eternal character of God as revealed in scripture. This may sound like a nit pick but it's important to keep our doctrine consistent with the Character and nature of God, which is part of why Calvinism is heresy.

Also: “SOME.” But the Bible says “All”:

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all
Romans 8:32

God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved
1 Timothy 2: 3-4

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.
2 Peter 3:9

“For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God; so turn, and live.”
Ezekiel 18:32

we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.
1 Timothy 4:10



Part 2- TOTAL DEPRAVITY

Following, the authors give an overview of TULIP without the format, making it a little convoluted.

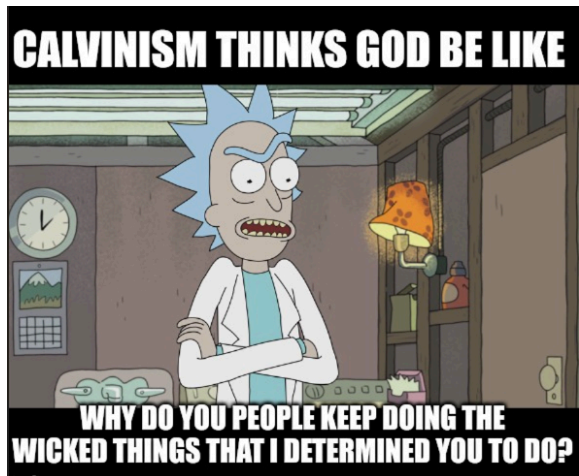
Total Depravity is described on page 64, in ch 8:

Although our inherited tendency to sin does not mean we are as bad as we could be, it does mean that we, like Adam after he sinned, are unable on our own to do anything that pleases God. We lack any spiritual good in ourselves, and therefore, we are unable to do any spiritual good before God.

Also, inherited guilt:

We received not only Adam's sinful nature, but also his sin-produced guilt. ...when Adam sinned, God thought of us all as having sinned.

The T in TULIP is total depravity, as explained above, but what they don't make clear is that one of the effects of being born guilty sinners who are "unable to do any spiritual good before God" is that we cannot accept the Gospel. We cannot admit that we are sinners and repent. Not WILL not, *CAN not*. We can no more repent and believe than a man born without eyes can distinguish between red and blue. We are **TOTALLY UNABLE**.



The U in TULIP is Unconditional Election, which essentially means that, before Creation, God had already chosen which individuals would be saved and have eternal life, and which would go to hell. They cover this in Ch 12.

In the meantime, consider these verses which prove that we **CAN** please God:

And the Lord said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." (Exodus 33:17)

...we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not to please man, but to please God who tests our hearts. (1 Thessalonians 2:4)

When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. (Proverbs 16:7)

we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. (1 John 3:22)

***For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.
(Philippians 2:13)***

walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him (Colossians 1:9-10)

***you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are
doing (1 Thessalonians 4:1)***

Their doctrine of Total Depravity contradicts the Bible which clearly says we can please God, and we can do what is good. Calvinism swings the pendulum from “We’re all basically good”: past what the Bible ACTUALLY says to “even babies are evil snakes (or as they say, “Vipers in Diapers” and no, I’m not making that up). Now here are a few verses which show that God does not punish a person for the sins of his father:

***Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their fathers; every person shall be put to death for his own sin
(Deuteronomy 24:16)***

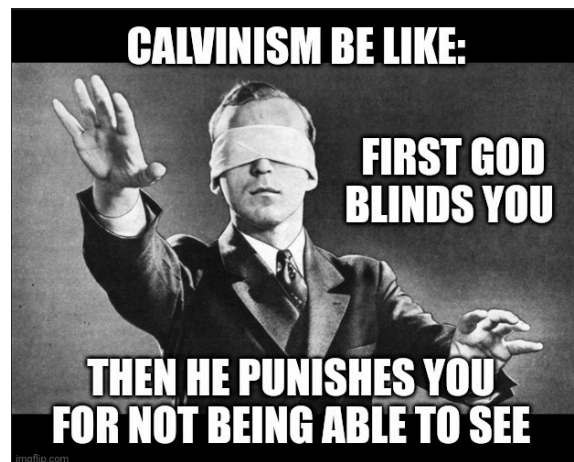
***The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son
(Ezekiel 18:20)***

***In those days they shall say no more, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.' But everyone shall die for his own iniquity
(Jeremiah 31:29-30)***

God does not count a person guilty for sins they did not commit. It is unjust and unbiblical. If I had your grandkids arrested because you committed a crime, you would know this was unjust. God’s justice is better than ours- not lesser.



Part 3- What is Election?



Pg 79 Chapter 12- What is Election?

“Election is **an act of God before creation** in which **He chooses** some people to be **saved**, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of His sovereign good pleasure.”

“... God **ordained** beforehand those who would be **saved**.”

Note- Ordain: *to establish or order by appointment, decree, or law*

Again, this is **not knowing in advance**, as though it intends to say God **KNEW** beforehand who would be saved, but rather he **decided** for each individual whether they would be born destined for heaven or hell. He **ESTABLISHED** their destiny before creation so that a person who ends up in hell **NEVER** had the chance to be forgiven, and those who end up in heaven were always going to end up there and could not have been lost. They use some standard proof texts and miss the context of what or who is being chosen:

“...the truth Paul would later express in Ephesians 1:4-6: God “chose us *in Him [Christ]* before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us *for adoption* through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace.”

Note: Chose who? Us in **CHRIST**. Not us individually to be in Christ.

Predestined what? **Adoption** through Jesus Christ, not salvation of a particular individual. The Calvinist here applies what is describing a group to various individuals, and mistakes individual salvation for the object being chosen, when what has been chosen is Christ to be the means of our salvation, adoption and justification.

Quoted: “He has saved us and **called us** to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time...” 2Tim 1:9

Referenced:

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are **called** according to his purpose.”

Rom 8:28

“For those whom he foreknew he also **predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son**, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.”

Calvinists focus on the words “Chosen” “Called” or “Elect” in all of these passages and others like them. First, *chosen* and *elect* are basically synonyms. They indicate a selection, and not a person being forced to do or be something. None of these verses say that God chose individuals to be saved and others to be damned. They usually explain what God determined for those who are in Christ, or what we who are in Christ are called to. None of these verses say that the list of who will be in Christ was determined by God from eternity past so that we don’t have a choice to accept or reject the gospel. This means that it doesn’t even matter if they even commit any sins. An unborn baby who is NOT of the “elect” is destined for hell because of the sins of Adam on this view. Remember they said “when Adam sinned, God thought of us all as having sinned.”

Called is usually something like “invited” and the scripture verses insist that those who are called *respond to the call*. Calvinism, however, says that even answering the call, or accepting the gift of salvation, or repenting, or putting our faith in Jesus are all WORKS which would MERIT our salvation, which is hinted at here and elaborated on later:

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“...because our *salvation is not our own work* but is a gift from God (Eph 2:8-9).”

Here they clearly distinguish between the elect and the non-elect and let us know that the elect WILL believe where the others will not. Keep in mind, they are believing BECAUSE they were made elect before creation. They are not (on the view of the Calvinist) made elect because of having believed. They say:

“Paul knew that God had chosen *some* people to be saved... for he knew that *some* of the people he spoke to would be the elect and that they would believe the gospel and be saved.”



Note: What we are told Paul knows is not that some people will understand that they are sinners in need of salvation, but instead that SOME of the people he spoke to would be THE ELECT. They WOULD believe the gospel, because they were determined to by God from eternity past. They don’t have the choice or option. It is essentially something done TO them, what TULIP refers to as Irresistible Grace (more on that later).

Part 4- Free Will (A False Dichotomy)



WHAT THIS DOESN'T MEAN

"Affirming the doctrine of election does not mean that our choices don't matter and our actions don't have **any consequences**. Nor does the doctrine of election require us to affirm an impersonal, inflexible **universe** that is controlled by an impersonal, inflexible force."

This is a dishonest bait and switch because it refutes the obvious conclusion (*we cannot choose to accept the gospel and so, at least in this area, we have no free will*) with a false dichotomy.

1. The problem with Election is not that it seems to indicate that **NONE** of our actions have **any consequences**. Cause and effect is not in debate here. The main point of debate is whether we **CAN** make choices, and if so, if accepting the gospel is one of the choices we **CAN** make. Some Calvinists will say we cannot make **ANY** choices (determinism) where these authors seem to sidestep the issue by saying we **CAN** make choices, but those choices are always **DETERMINED** by our desires (more on that later). But here they are arguing a point which **NOBODY** is making to avoid the actual point of contention.

2. Note the use of the word **UNIVERSE**. This is the only time the nature of the universe is discussed, or that God is replaced with a 'force'. This is a blatant attempt to side step fatalism, which is the accurate way to understand having our eternal destinies pre-determined from eternity past. It is God's decree (and perhaps His will) which (on Calvinism) is inflexible. It doesn't require anyone or anything to be impersonal, and the fact that this is their answer is nothing short of dishonest.



Quoted: "he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will" Eph 1:5

Verses like this are used to try and support the idea of election, when the verse does no such thing. In this verse, God determines or predestines us *for adoption*, not salvation. And the adoption is through Christ. What is determined in advance is not who would be saved, but the fact that those who are in Christ will be sons and daughters of God.

“God’s act of election was permeated with *personal love for those whom he chose* (see also John 3:16 and Rom 8:28).”

The problem they attempt to side step with statements like this is the obvious logical flip side: God has a personal love for those whom He chose, which means he does not have that personal love for those he decided not to choose, forcing them to ignore or pervert verses like John 3:16. Many Calvinists will just come out and say God hates those who are not Elect and He wants them to go to hell (more on this later).

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“Scripture continually views us as personal creatures who make *willing choices to accept or reject the gospel*.”

“This invitation and many others like it (for example Matt 11:28) are addressed to genuine persons who are *capable of hearing the invitation and responding to it* by a decision of their wills. These *real decisions* have eternal consequences as is shown in John 3:18...”

Allow me to remind you what we are talking about in this chapter:

“Election is an act of God before creation in which He chooses some people to be saved...”

If God has already decided from before creation who will be saved and who will go to hell, then what is being chosen by the individual? There is literally no choice which can be made. Saying we are “*capable of hearing the invitation and responding to it*” is NOT TRUE on their system. God has determined our eternal destiny, and the dishonesty and self contradiction of these statements will become more apparent as they lean into “Irresistible Grace”, which means when God calls The Elect to the Gospel, they CANNOT refuse, and he changes their heart and makes them have faith before they know it. Again, what they claim God determined from eternity past is NOT simple foreknowledge. It is HIS plan which WILL come to pass, and as they state it has nothing to do with our choices, then our choices are not real, but also caused as part of this plan. This is a contradiction and it is a lie. I do not mean this as an attack on the authors (who probably don’t recognize the obvious contradiction). I mean it as an attack on their system. Here the authors explain that we were not chosen to be elect because God knew we would choose him, as if the Elect is a label God gave to those he knew WOULD come to accept the gospel:

While a proper understanding of election does give *real value* to our decisions and choices, it does not mean that God’s decision was based upon our choices. When God chose individuals “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4), he **did not do so** because he foresaw their faith or some decision they would make.

They have already stated that NOTHING we do can influence God’s choice to put us on the Elect list, and here they say it again. But again, if we have already been predetermined to be saved or not, then what choice do we have? Literally none. Our decision is an illusion. The only actual decision was made by God from eternity past, and

talking as if we have a decision to make, or the ability to make that choice is dishonest and self contradictory. The only possible escape route is if they are claiming that somehow God *accidentally* Elected only those people who would choose freely to accept the gospel. Our decisions are real, and by a wild coincidence, God chose to elect only those of us who chose to accept the gospel. I do not think they mean this.

Part 5- Faith is a Work



They double down and say not only did God *not Elect* those who would freely choose Him, but if we **COULD** choose him, that would steal his glory and merit our own salvation:

If election were ultimately based on our decision, it would **seem** to diminish God's love, cheapen his grace (for there would be some **merit on our part**), and diminish the glory that is due him for our salvation.

See that word “seem”? That is a **BIG** part of this conflict for the Calvinist. They don't even soften the next bit like that. They just state as fact that “*there would be some merit on our part*” if... and here it gets hazy. They're **KIND OF** saying there would be merit on our part if God chose us *because we accepted the Gospel*, like, we would have earned our way onto the **SAVED** list by... accepting the gospel? This kind of thing is usually couched in some discussion of God's glory, suggesting that we want to steal his glory by saying we helped him save us by accepting the gospel, or putting our faith in Jesus.

But they are saying that accepting a gift is a means of helping to pay for the gift. God deserves glory and praise because He offers all of us a gift of salvation and eternal life. Accepting that gift doesn't somehow earn it. It's absurd.

But even if you want to consider faith a work, it's the only one which is connected with salvation by both Jesus and the apostles:

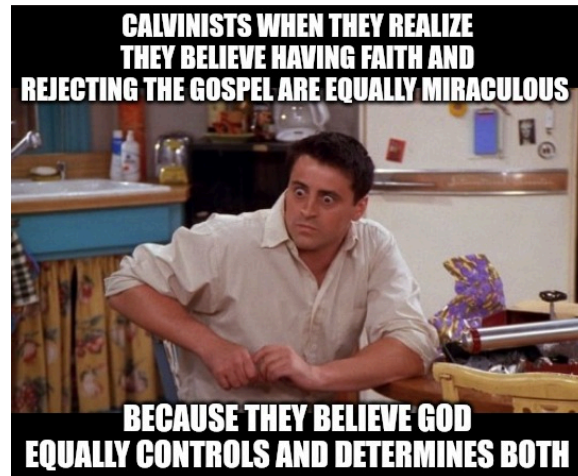
Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” - John 6:29

“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

Acts 16:30-31

... if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:9



Part 6- Escape Pod, Desire

The conflict then becomes this; the doctrine of Election means we **COULD NOT** have made a decision. Rather, faith is not a choice we made, but something God *does TO US*. Of course, that means we do not have the ability to make free will choices. However, the rejection of free will is so obviously stupid that these authors instead try and crowbar it into their doctrine of election, which of course fails:

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In this case it is helpful to use a term other than "free" so as to communicate more carefully what we want to say. For example, the Bible appeals to ***our ability to make voluntary choices or willing choices*** hundreds of times (see the verses above concerning our "willing choice" and also all the commands in the Bible that ask us to respond and obey). ***We aren't forced to make choices contrary to our own will.*** We ultimately do ***what we desire to do***. Making choices is part of what it means to be a human being in God's image, for we imitate God's own activity of deciding to do things that are consistent with his character.

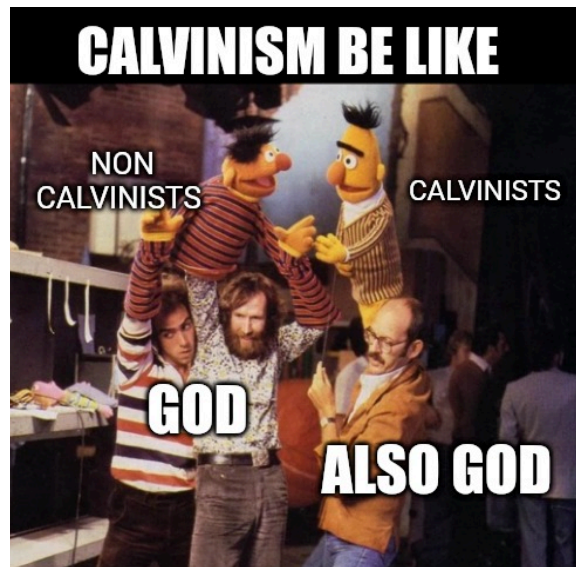
Here's the Calvinist escape hatch: ***"We do what WE DESIRE to do."*** So, those choices are **FREE**, but they are **DETERMINED** by our desires. So, who decides what we desire? The answer to that depends on your Calvinist. If he's a determinist, then he'll say God determines all of our desires and our choices and literally every molecule in the universe.

These authors seem to be trying to skate on the thin ice of making our choices real by saying our will is free because we are not **FORCED** to choose what we desire. And yet, those desires determine all of our choices.

Also, again, the Bible disagrees and tells us that we can do what we don't desire, and can fail to do what we desire to do:

For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. (Romans 7:15)

Either we can decide what we want, or we cannot. The authors decide to be hazy and merely imply their answer- that God determines our desires, which is basically saying that the puppeteer doesn't CAUSE the puppet to move in a certain way. He is only controlling the strings. The problem is, those strings control the puppet, so controlling the strings IS controlling the puppet, and it's dishonest to pretend that those are different things. They are still saying that God decided for us and gives us the illusion of making choices.



They attempt to side step this conclusion by offering a completely different issue:

But does that mean that *God had nothing to do with our choices?*

This is called a “false dichotomy”, and it's a very common Calvinist response to this problem. A false dichotomy is when a person pretends that there are only TWO possible answers to a question. In this case, they are saying EITHER God determines *all* of our choices and we do not have free will, or God has NOTHING to do with our choices. Or as they're about to say, he CANNOT influence our desires:

Do we want to insist that God, our infinitely powerful and wise Creator, **cannot influence** and mold and shape our hearts and **our desires** according to his plan? In fact, if **God works through our choices and desires** to bring about his plan, this preserves our ability to choose willingly while at the same time assuring that our choices will be in accord with what God decided and ordained would happen.

Here's the bait and switch:

Step 1, The False Dichotomy: either God determines our choices or we think he is POWERLESS to even INFLUENCE our choices. Thus, we conclude, the Bible MUST agree that God determines our choices. Commercials can INFLUENCE our choices, but they do not DETERMINE our choices. This contrast is nonsense.

Step 2, we still have the problem of the obvious fact that we make free will choices, not only because the Bible literally commands us to, but because we experience this every day of our lives (as they acknowledged above). BUT, if we decide that we FREELY choose to do whatever it is we DESIRE MOST, then we can have free will choices AND God can influence those choices.

Step 3, God “*works through our desires*” to “*bring about his plan.*” The puppeteer pulls the string and the puppet moves, and we say that, since the puppet moves because of the STRING, then it’s not movement caused by the puppeteer, only INFLUENCED by him. The puppet is free to do what the strings make him want to do. The puppet is free... and yet determined.

But the conclusion is this, according to what they have said:

Election is an act of God before creation in which He chooses some people to be saved...God works through our choices and desires to bring about his plan, assuring that our choices will be in accord with what God our infinitely powerful and wise Creator decided and ordained would happen.

They attempt to double down on their illusion of free will here:

Therefore, if we respond to Christ's invitation in a positive way, we can honestly say that **we chose to respond to Christ** while also saying that it was (in ways we cannot fully understand) **ordained by God**.

Yes, the puppet freely chose to move in the direction the string was pulling, which by wild coincidence is ALWAYS in the same direction the puppeteer is pulling the string. They are saying that God determines our choices by determining our desires, and assuming that we ALWAYS do what we desire most (*even though we very often do otherwise, and are commanded by scripture to do otherwise*).

Beloved, I urge you... to abstain from the *desires* of the flesh
(1 Peter 2:11)



Part 7- It's a MYSTERY

The contradiction between election and our ability to make choices is so obvious that Calvinists have to answer, and the answer is simply that it is a mystery which we cannot hope to understand:

If we can't fully understand how these two things can be true at the same

time, then we must acknowledge that there is **mystery** here. At least in this age, we cannot completely grasp this **mystery**. And although we do not understand it, we should at least be sure that we speak the way the Bible speaks about this in all aspects of its teaching.

This is not a mystery, it is a contradiction. If God determines any of our choices, then those choices are not free. It does not matter if he determines them directly, or by some means such as determining our desires. Either way we are not free to make a choice. The question is merely whether we are a hand puppet or a marionette.



To be clear, a **FREE** choice is not a completely *uninfluenced* choice, as that is nearly impossible in a physical universe. But if we *always* do what we desire, then temptation is not anything less than a causal determination of our actions. We are commanded by scripture to do what is right, no matter what we **DESIRE**, and we have that ability as anyone who has ever fought against an addiction or gone on a diet knows.

walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.
(Galatians 5:16)

Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial... each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire (James 1:12 & 14)

flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness (2 Timothy 2:22)

make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (Romans 13:14)

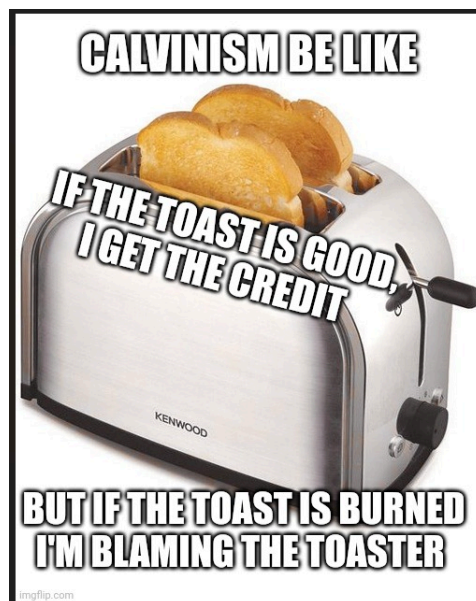
As a side note, the author's position does not require God to determine **ALL** of our choices as some Calvinists believe. Rather, they need only assert that the **ONE** decision which God causes us to make (or keeps us from being able to make) is the decision to accept or reject the gospel. Frankly, I find this option actually worse than the other.

They continue to try and defend the idea that we have free will and can make real choices, again with a false dichotomy:

Furthermore, God also created us so that **our choices would be real choices**. However, our choices do not need to be **absolutely free of any involvement by God** in order to be real, voluntary, willing choices.

This is true. Being determined so that we **CANNOT** make a choice, or being “absolutely free of any involvement by God” are not the only two choices, and it annoys me that Calvinists present it like this. Neither are “God controls every molecule in the universe so that every thought, word, belief and action of every person in history are meticulously controlled according to what God determined from eternity past” and “God can’t influence any person or even in history, and he cannot determine ANYTHING.” There is the reasonable middle ground and third option that God can and does cause certain things, influences others, and lets us generally make free will choices, but because he is all knowing can both affect what choices we have to make and also deal with the choices we do make. Turning these things into extreme bazaar absolutes like that is dishonest and illogical and staggeringly common.

Part 8- Who Gets the “Blame” for People in Hell?



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What about those who do not believe, those whom **God has not "elected" or chosen?** The Bible never puts any blame on God for anyone's rejection of Christ's claims. The emphasis is always on the **willing choices of those who refuse to believe**, and the blame for their unbelief rests with them.

Note the word “**BLAME**.” This is a subtle change of topic, intentionally done with emotionally charged language. They could have said, “Who is ultimately responsible?” or “Who makes the decisive decision which results in salvation of damnation?” Or

perhaps, “who or what is the “Effective cause”? But instead they use the language of **BLAME** so that we **FEEL** it wrong to even ask the question if God, on this system, is the actual decisive agent which results in the damned being lost forever. But while an effective poisoning of the well, it does not answer the question, it only accuses the questioner.

Also note, “the willing choices of those who refuse to believe.” **This statement only makes sense if they have the ability to choose otherwise, but as we will see later, they don’t believe that the non-Elect CAN choose to do anything but refuse to believe, just as a person who is pushed into the pool can choose not to be wet. It would be silly to even phrase it that way.**

We previously established the T of TULIP:

“We lack any spiritual good in ourselves, and therefore, we are unable to do any spiritual good before God.”

And we are literally *conceived* with the guilt of sin already laid on us because of our species:

We received not only Adam's sinful nature, but also his sin-produced guilt.
...when Adam sinned, God thought of us all as having sinned.

And so not merely BORN as guilty sinners- but conceived as GUILTY of sin- who cannot do any spiritual good, we are what Calvinists called “Totally depraved,” which includes in it the idea that we are “totally unable” to respond positively to God or the Gospel. God chooses or Elects who will believe and be saved, but many people “refuse to believe” which brings us back to the previous question about our ability to make free will choices, or at least *this* free will choice.

Not to be redundant, but remember they said this:

Election is **an act of God before creation** in which **He chooses** some people to be **saved...God works through our choices and desires** to bring about his plan, assuring that our choices will be in accord with what God our **infinitely powerful** and wise Creator decided and ordained would happen.

So if God chose that a particular person would reject the gospel and go to hell... I don’t think we need to use the language of “blame” to see that this clearly teaches that God decided that the person going to hell *was going to go to hell*. He essentially elected them for hell. And again, it doesn’t matter if he determined it directly or merely determined their desires which determine their actions and choices, he has caused them to reject the gospel because he decided from eternity past that they would.

This is called ‘double predestination’, and not all Calvinists affirm it, but it makes little difference to their system. It’s like saying, “Pushing someone into the pool doesn’t mean I have chosen them to get wet.” You knew the pool was there when you pushed them over.

Calvinism essentially teaches that, since we are born not only sinful, but guilty, we are destined for hell the moment we are conceived, even if we are Elect, because we carry the GUILT of Adam’s sin. This is not taught in the Bible. The opposite is:

The one who sins is the one who will die. The child will not share the guilt of the parent, nor will the parent share the guilt of the child. The righteousness of the

righteous will be credited to them, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against them.
(Ezekiel 18:20)

But on this system every human is conceived guilty and deserving of hell, because they are held guilty for Adam's sin, and so the single predestination Calvinist says, "God chooses some to be saved and lets the other alone to end up in hell as they deserve." So instead of choosing the unelect to be damned, on this view God is simply passive and watches people he COULD Elect go to hell because somehow this brings Him more glory than saving everyone would do (which is Single Predestination). Again, the Bible does not teach this, and it leaves God as the only being capable of being an agent of free will capable of causing a person to avoid hell, be forgiven and saved.



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Replying to @ReformedDoc

But if you don't hate sin, it's because God determined you to be totally unable to hate sin, because he hates you, because you sin, because he makes you sin.

-Calvin

To clarify, on Calvinism, every single human is guilty the moment they are conceived because they inherit Adam's guilt. ALL of them will be born rejecting God and the gospel. Those chosen to be the Elect will, at some point, accept the gospel and be saved because of something God does to them. The rest are lost either because God hardens them in their rebellion and causes them to remain in their sinful rejection of the gospel, or merely watches passively as they are in sinful rebellion, knowing that He alone can cause that to change and choosing to do nothing instead. This is how Calvinism describes God.



Part 9- Jars of Clay

The authors are about to use this verse to tell us we're not allowed to ask these questions, but consider it in this context:

*But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?
(Rom 9:20-21)*

The Calvinist interprets this verse to mean that God makes some people for salvation and others for damnation, and there's nothing we can do or say about it. But if that is the case, then what sense does it make to try and remove the "blame" from God for those who are lost? Are we pretending that it is somehow outside of His control? It doesn't matter if you dislike the word "blame" when the heart of the issue is, every single individual who goes to hell (according to this system) is going because God determined before creation that they would. NOT because of a choice they made. Let me quote them again with a slight variation:

Therefore, if we respond to Christ's invitation in a **NEGATIVE** way, we can honestly say that **we chose to reject Christ** while also saying that it was (in ways we cannot fully understand) **ordained by God**.

In neither case could we have done any different, and in both cases the only determining factor which led one to accept Christ and the other to reject Christ was the election of God. The authors seem to understand that this paints God in a very bad light, and so they continue trying to get him off of the hook:

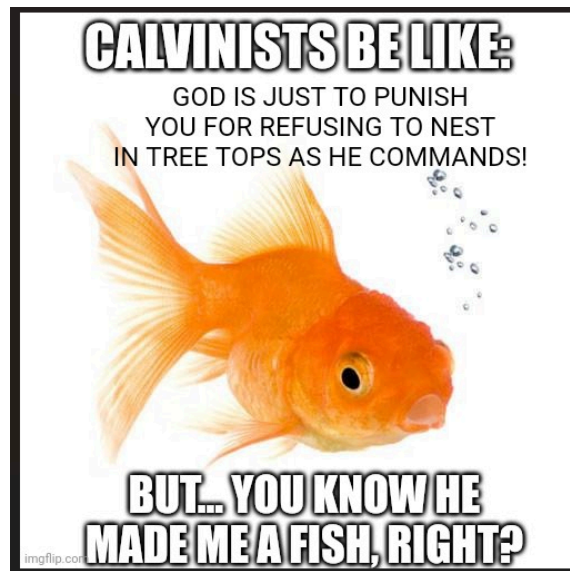
...earlier, Jesus said, "You **refuse** to come to me that you may have life" (John 5:40). And Paul in Romans 1:20 says that all who reject the clear revelation of God given to all mankind are "**without excuse**." This is the consistent pattern in Scripture: People who remain in unbelief do so because **they are unwilling** to come to God, and the blame for such unbelief always lies with the unbelievers themselves, never with God. Once again, **we probably will not be able to fully understand** in this age just how this can be so.

Perplexingly, they have chosen to use some of the many passages of scripture which indicate that we can make a real choice in spiritual matters, saying that all of mankind are "without excuse". But can there be a better excuse for rejecting the gospel than the fact that God assures that "our choices will be in accord with what God our infinitely powerful and wise Creator decided and ordained would happen"? In other words "God made me do it". Can there be a better excuse than that?

God determined that we were born without eyes, and as a result, we cannot distinguish between red and blue. Is a person born without eyes "without excuse" when he cannot tell red from blue? Or does he have an excuse which is literally outside of his control? Does a clay vessel made for dishonorable use bear the weight of having determined that it would be a vessel for dishonorable use, or was that decision made for it?

Punting to "mystery" does not change the fact that they are caught in a rather obvious contradiction, and are insisting that we don't think about it. They say "*People who remain in unbelief do so because they are unwilling to come to God,*" and yet the reason they remain

in their unbelief is because God determined from eternity past that they would, but it's not his "fault" that they remain in their unbelief even though he planned it in advance and works to insure it comes about. The Calvinist accuses God but points to *mystery* when this obvious fact is noticed.



Part 10- An Emotional Argument Against Emotional Arguments

They continue to dig the hole they are standing in even deeper:

Is God Really Fair?

At this point some people will object that if the doctrine of election is true, then God isn't really fair. Since God chooses some to be saved and passes over others, **deciding not to save them**, his grace is awarded rather unfairly.

Just keep in mind the admission: "**deciding not to save them**," as it is one of the only times that they will paint God (our infinitely powerful and wise Creator) as other than entirely passive. They continue:

But if he does save any human beings, then this is a demonstration of grace, which goes far beyond **the requirements of fairness and justice**.

Quite literally, it goes **AGAINST** the requirements of fairness and justice, as they are about to explain themselves:

If God saved only five people out of the whole human race, this would be mercy and grace. If he saved one hundred, this would be amazing mercy and grace. But in fact he has decided to save "a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages" (Rev. 7:9). **This is mercy beyond our comprehension.**

Yes, but **MOST** people will not be saved, and they have just told us that it is because “*God chooses some to be saved and passes over others, deciding not to save them*”. The Calvinist seems to think this is a piece of their doctrine which has already been explained, or which doesn’t need to be thought about in the light of scripture. Here they basically tell us, “**Stop asking questions**”:

(Rom. 9:19). In essence, Paul is giving voice to a very common question: If **each person's ultimate destiny is determined by God**, then how can this be fair? Even when people make willing choices, determining whether they will be saved or not, if **God is actually somehow behind those choices**, then how can he be fair? (Romans 9:20-24)

The better question is, How can they be “without excuse” as Paul states in Romans 1? Calvinism doesn’t merely say that “God is actually somehow behind those choices” like a coach suggesting plays from the sidelines, but rather that the lost were chosen by God from eternity past to BE LOST. Not only is this in direct conflict with those passages which indicate that the sinner who rejects Christ is accountable for rejecting Christ, but also those which say that God does NOT WANT ANY to be lost, but for all to be saved:

God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved
1 Timothy 2: 3-4

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.
2 Peter 3:9

The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent
Acts 17:30

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life
John 3:36

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.
John 3:17

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”
John 1:29

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all
Romans 8:32

Again, the Bible does not tell us that Jesus came to offer eternal life to the Elect, or to “some” but to ALL. And the scripture tells us that God desires, not “some” to be saved, but ALL. Calvinism is forced to ignore or distort many passages of scripture.



Part 11- Two of Everything

The Calvinist answer to this contradiction between the scripture and their system is to label it as a “mystery” and then to accuse us of being arrogant for even asking these questions:

Paul is essentially saying that there is a point beyond which **we cannot answer back to God or question his justice**. God has done what he has done according to his sovereign will. He is the Creator; we are the creatures, and we ultimately have no basis from which to accuse him of unfairness or injustice. Our response to these words in Romans reveals a lot about our hearts and **our willingness to submit** to our sovereign Creator.

So when it comes to the gospel, our willingness to submit is determined from Eternity past, but when it comes to accepting the doctrine of election, God just leaves that one up to us? That seems to be what they are saying. Also, “stop asking questions.” But what we are objecting to is NOT God and his sense of justice, but Calvinism and its distortion of scripture and the character of God. Responding by saying we as creatures have no right to question God is a gross misrepresentation of the question being addressed.

If election is true, then does God still want everybody to be saved? Yes, according to some Scripture passages. In 1 Timothy 2:4, Paul writes of our God and Savior "who desires **all people** to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

Pg 86

Peter says the same thing in 2 Peter 3:9 when he writes that the Lord "is patient toward you, not wishing that **any** should perish, but that **all** should reach repentance."

The contradictions between the clear and repeated teaching of scripture and the doctrines of Calvinism are so obvious that the Calvinist is forced to start creating doubles of everything. The first one is the desire or WILL of God.



God's Will Vs God's Will

But people who support the doctrine of election will say that God desires to further his glory more than he desires to save every person and that passages like Romans 9 indicate that ***His glory is furthered by saving some people but not all.***

So, 2 Peter 3:9 SHOULD have said "the Lord "is patient toward the elect, not wishing that any of the elect should perish, but that all should reach repentance, except those who he determined not to be saved." After all, the original verse only took into account one of God's wills- his "revealed" will:

This is what is sometimes called his "**revealed**" will, what he tells everybody on earth they should do. But such verses are not talking about **God's secret, hidden plans** from all eternity to choose some people to be saved.

So, does God want ALL people to be saved? "Yes! But actually no." Because "God desires to further his glory more than he desires to save every person," and (somehow) "***His glory is furthered by saving some people but not all,***" then his "**revealed**" will (He wants everyone to repent and be saved) is in conflict with his "**Secret**" will (he hates most people and wants them to go to hell).

Read this line again: "***His glory is furthered by saving some people but not all.***" This contradicts scripture SO MUCH that they have to split God's desires into two irreconcilable desires that makes a LOT of verses somewhere between nonsense and lies. Calvinism distorts the character of God to protect its system.



Rent-A-Friend 2000 @ABitOfOrange · Mar 20

Replying to @RisingDisciples

Did God want Jonah to obey and go to Nineveh or did God want Jonah to disobey and run from Nineveh?

Calvin: Yes

God's Love Vs God's Love

Consider John 3:16:

“For God so loved the world (of the elect), that he gave his only Son (to the elect), that whoever believes in him (the elect) should not perish but have eternal life.”

So not only do you have to crow bar the elect into verses which do not mention them, you have to change other things too- For God so LOVED the world now either means the world of the elect, OR it means the *general love* of God for all people as opposed to God's *personal love* for the elect who he desires to be saved. But then this verse immediately changes from one to the other. “For God so loved THE WORLD” (which must be a general love for all mankind) “that he sent his only son” (only to the elect because of his personal love for them individually). The love of God in a single sentence has to be defined in two incompatible ways.

This is similar to how God desires all people to be saved, but at the same time desires only the elect to be saved. Calvinism has to split the will of God into two, and the love of God into two.



Rent-A-Friend 2000 @ABitOfOrange · Apr 27



Replying to @faithgracesaved

You forget that Calvinism has two versions of many things, including the will of God. His prescriptive will is a command to repent, while his deterministic will is for sinners to sin, and for most to reject Him forever. On Calvin, God is in conflict with himself.

God's Desires Vs God's Desires

But now they will explain how God makes himself sad:

God has great sorrow when he thinks about those who will not be saved. "As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. 33:11).

They quote a verse where in God clearly says he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, and instead he desires that they repent and turn away from evil, AND YET “each person's ultimate destiny is determined by God (our infinitely powerful and wise Creator)” and he decides “not to save them” which... makes him sad?

“God has great sorrow when he thinks about those who...” he decided NOT to save? Nothing forces God to choose the elect or to reject those who are not elect, so it only makes sense to say that the distinction is the will of God. So in one sense, God desires those who go to hell to go to hell and he acts to make it happen according to his desire and decree. But then, he ALSO desires everyone to be saved, so that when the lost are lost, He “has great sorrow when he thinks about those who he doesn’t desire to be saved... because he desires them to be saved”? The Calvinist system describes God as being double minded, and yet being double minded is criticised in scripture:

the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (James 1:6-8)

God works through our choices and desires to bring about his plan, which includes who will go to hell, and when his plan is brought to completion because he works through our

choices and desires to bring about his plan, God has great sorrow when he thinks about those who *he decided NOT to save? It's nonsense.*

The authors continue trying to make this seem Biblical:

When Jesus thought of the people who rejected him in Jerusalem, "he wept over it" (Luke 19:41), and he said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem... How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and **you would not!**" (Matt. 23:37).

Shouldn't Jesus have said "I would have gathered your children together... but you were not elect"? And if he decided who would be elect, why is he weeping over those who He determined would not be elect? Are we really expected to interpret this verse to mean that? It's absurd. Calvinism puts God in conflict with himself.

The Grace of God Vs The Grace of God

Having split God's desires into two conflicting desires such that getting what he determines makes him sad, and he weeps because his eternal decree is fulfilled, and then splitting God's love for the world into a general, neighborly love which does not desire people to avoid eternity in hell, and a personal love which includes desiring those people to avoid eternity in hell, the authors will now split God's blessings and grace into two conflicting kinds:

In addition, God gives all human beings innumerable blessings in this life that are **not part of salvation**. This doctrine is sometimes called "**common grace**" because it refers to a manifestation of God's grace that is common to all people and is **different from God's saving grace**.

Sometimes those blessings will be physical. Jesus says, in Matthew 5:45, that God "makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."

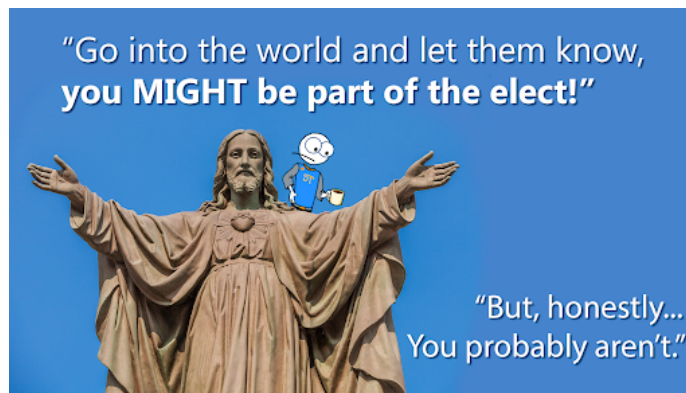
God has a kind of grace that he pours out on the whole world (like rain) and another kind which brings the gift of eternal life which is only for the elect. For some sinners, he apparently says, "I love you enough to bring rain and sun for your crops, but you are absolutely going to hell because (somehow) My glory is furthered by saving some people but not all."

The authors offer this example which, to me, seems to work against them beautifully:

...even those who reject the claims of Jesus are not fully given over to falsehood and irrationality.

EXCEPT when it comes to the gospel. **THAT** is what this position is teaching! Think about it! They are saying that God allows or even produces clear thinking and the ability to grasp truth and logic in **ALMOST** any area, except the one which could lead them to Christ and in him, eternal life. It's like unlocking **EVERY** door in a burning building except the fire escape. That is not the God of the Bible. Yes, God offers a common grace in the form of sunshine and rain, but he also offers the gift of grace through Jesus Christ to all people because he desires all people to be saved. **THAT** is what the scripture teaches.

Part 12- Limited Atonement



Believe it or not, Calvinism offers itself one more escape pod for this dilemma, and it's the L of TULIP: Limited Atonement.

In short, it teaches that the atonement paid for by Jesus' death and resurrection was limited to the elect. The "Lamb of God who takes away *the sin of the world*" actually only died for the sin of the elect, so God not only doesn't determine those people to accept the gospel, but there would be no point because JESUS DID NOT DIE FOR THOSE PEOPLE. Their sins are NOT paid for. God has, on this system, chosen NOT to give the lost the desire to accept a gift which is NOT OFFERED TO THEM. If a non-Elect person could somehow admit that they are a sinner and repent, Jesus would say No. That is what Calvinism teaches, and yet, what does the Bible seem to say over and over?

"everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Romans 10:13

Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Acts 2:38

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Romans 1:16

If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

Revelation 3:20

whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.

John 5:24

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all

Romans 8:32

The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent

Acts 17:30

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

John 3:17

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

John 1:29

The book of Mark doesn't even get halfway into the first chapter before Jesus is preaching repentance to everyone:

Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."
(Mark 1:14-15)

"Repent" is a command, which indicates that the people hearing it could obey. Jesus does not seem to believe that there are an elect or an unelect who are Totally Unable to repent.

The authors widen the gap between the common grace of God and the saving grace of God:

Pg 88

God answers many prayers that are prayed for the benefit of unbelievers.

He's willing to give them sun, rain and answered prayers for their benefit, *but not salvation*. Really? Maybe these are the people who Osteen intended to target with "Your Best Life Now"? Again, the Bible does NOT divide the human race into these two categories.



Part 13- God is Patient with Himself for no Apparent Reason

The authors try to get their position to merge with 2 Peter and it just gets perplexing:

Although common grace does not save people, **God's delaying his judgment allows many to come to salvation**: "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that **any** should perish, but that **all** should reach repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Such common grace already demonstrates a large measure of God's goodness and mercy toward **all** Mankind.

If God has determined from eternity past who will and will not be saved, then how is delaying his judgement allowing anyone to be saved? He's being patient with himself? Essentially, he planned before creation who would be saved and who would not, and now he's waiting on himself to finish saving those who he determined would be saved so that all of the elect should reach repentance? But if this verse is about the elect, it gets even more ridiculous, because we're supposed to believe that God is *patient toward the elect*, not wishing *any of the elect* to perish, but that *all the elect* should reach repentance as he already Determined they would from eternity past.



And even though the elect are a minority, the fact that God is patiently waiting for those who he chose before creation to be saved, *to be saved*, "demonstrates a large measure of God's goodness and mercy toward all Mankind"? How? It's utter nonsense. His patience with the elect won't keep a single lost sinner out of hell, so how is this even common grace? It's not.

Once again we are told to look at the doctrine in a manner selfish enough to give no thought to those who are being lost.

The doctrine of election demonstrates to us that God loved us, not for who we are or what we have done or will do, but simply because he decided to love us.

We won the salvation lottery, so we should believe that this means God loves only us and just ignore those verses about God so loving the WORLD, because those verses don't mean love like he loves US. Those verses are about a different kind of love- a love for people who you give rain and sunshine and eternal damnation with no hope of salvation or chance for repentance.

Calvinists have literally preached that, when they see their family, friends and children in hell, they will celebrate because it somehow gives glory to God. While also filling him with great sorrow. It's not a mystery, it's a pile of nonsense so close to blasphemy that they share a zip code.

Part 14- Irresistible Grace

A while back I introduced the I of TULIP, which was Irresistible Grace. Here the authors bring in the concept without the name to both teach and horribly muddle the idea of faith.

Pg 90, CH 13, What Does It Mean to Become a Christian?

Effective Calling

This kind of calling is a summons from the king of the universe;
it is a summons that can't be denied, and it brings about the desired response in people's hearts.

Note: "can't be denied"

This calling is an act of God the Father, speaking through the human proclamation of the gospel, in which he summons people to himself **in such a way that they respond in saving faith**. Because it comes from God and **always** results in saving faith, it is sometimes referred to as effective calling.

Note: "always results in saving faith"

The Calling of God Vs The Calling of God

But there is a broader sense of "calling" that refers to **any** preaching of the gospel to anyone, whether they respond or not. In distinction from effective calling, which always brings response, we can talk about the "gospel call" in general, which goes forth to all people, and which is sometimes referred to as external calling or general calling.

Now we have two distinct and conflicting kinds of calling. One is irresistible and causes a person to believe, and the other is a useless waste of time. Clearly those to whom the call

is effective are the elect, and those to whom the call is general are not the elect, though an elect person can hear a NON effective calling MANY times before they hear the EFFECTIVE calling.

In John 12, Jesus says “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”

So that drawing is apparently a general draw, which will only ACTUALLY draw the elect because to them it will be effective. Jesus doesn’t say that here, but we’re meant to believe he intended to but just forgot. The Calvinist must assume that Jesus forgot to mention a LOT of things in his teaching.

Now in John 6 Jesus says “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.” In this verse, we’re meant (on Calvinism) to believe that Jesus is talking about an effective call, and when he says “no one can come to me unless the father draw him” we’re supposed to assume Jesus meant “No one who the Father draws can resist coming to me,” even though neither the English nor the Greek allows the actual text to mean this in some equivalent sense.

If we instead assume that Jesus said the things he meant, and that John actually read his own book as he wrote it, we can put these together and have Jesus communicating,

“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”

Jesus is telling us that the way in which God the Father is going to draw all people to himself is through Jesus, and if people don’t come to God through Jesus, they will not be able to come to God. John has spelled it out for us:
we can come to God. How? Through Jesus.

100% Effective... Unless It’s Said Wrong

But our Calvinist authors have decided that, some people are elect, and God chose them for salvation from eternity past, and that *they CANNOT resist the call* when it is made to them, and that their decisions are determined by their desires, which God uses to get the result he wants. And yet, they have decided that you can give the gospel and still screw it up:

Elements of the Gospel Call

There are three key elements that **should be** a part of every gospel call: an explanation of the facts concerning salvation; an invitation to respond to Christ personally in repentance and faith; and a promise of forgiveness and eternal life.

There are three key elements that should be a part of every gospel call... But WHY? If the person is Elect, and the call is effective, then they CANNOT resist. This is like saying, “If you don’t tell them that it’s raining in the right manner, they won’t get wet.” They continue trying to teach you how to give a call which the elect cannot resist because God decided they would accept it from eternity past:

But simply stating these facts isn't enough. There must be an **invitation** to repent and believe this good news personally.

Calling this an invitation is like saying being arrested is an invitation to spend time in jail, or pushing you off a cliff is an invitation for you to experience gravity induced acceleration. It's misleading. An invitation is, by definition, something you can accept or reject. Jesus includes this in the Parable of the Banquet:

Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'

"But they all alike began to make excuses." Luke 14:15-24

He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. Matt 22:3

According to Calvinism, either you **MUST** accept, or you **CANNOT**.

And just as a reminder, for those who cannot accept, there is literally nothing for them to accept anyway (as- on Calvinism- *Jesus did not die for their sins*), so the invitation is a lie. The Calvinist will tell you that, we don't know who the elect are, so it's ok to pretend that they **MIGHT** be until we know better, but to me this doesn't change the fact that Jesus commanded his disciples to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation." This is a very strange command if you remember that we are supposed to accept the idea that God has already decided, from eternity past, that **MOST** people will be **UNABLE** to accept the Gospel, and the few that accept it have no choice because they were determined to be saved from eternity past.

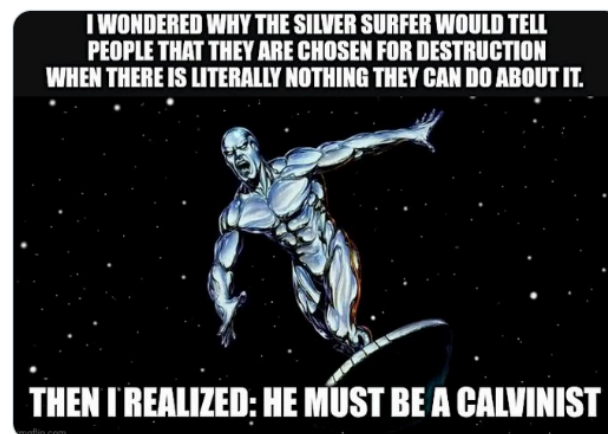
What is the point of preaching the gospel to anyone? Surely the Calvinist doesn't think God can't save the Elect if we don't preach to them, because then their salvation is determined a bit by our works and we are helping God to save them. Doesn't this just seem like busy work? Like, this won't affect your grade, but it will kill twenty minutes. Is it just me?



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Yup.



Part 15- Responding in Faith

Because they have to do **SOMETHING** with it, the authors get around to John 3:16 and hope we don't think about it too much because we've accepted their whole "Mystery" schtick:

To those who **respond in faith** to the gospel call, God promises that their sins will be forgiven and that they will experience eternal life with God himself. "For God so loved **the world**, that he gave his only Son, that **whoever** believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). As Jesus said in John 6:37, "**Whoever** comes to me I will never cast out." (*emphasis mine, as per usual*)

Consider for a moment that the Elect may hear the gospel many times for years and reject it over and over. But if they are Elect, then at some point they will accept it and be saved. What they have said above seems to imply that the way we present the gospel can persuade people to accept or reject it, but that would mean that we **HELP** God to save people, even if just a little, so clearly they would reject that. But the larger question is, why does God refuse to have them accept it the first time? If he has chosen them to be saved, why wait? This verse seems to indicate that God is being patient with us:

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)

However, that would mean that any particular person is capable of accepting or rejecting the gospel. It would mean God's patience is due to his wanting all people to be saved, and not his own refusal to just flip the **FAITH** switch on those Elect people right away.

This system teaches that God commands us to repent, knowing that only the Elect will **EVER** be able to.

But then he also refuses to make the Elect repent until a particular time, maybe very long into their life after many years of being a lost sinner.

None of this makes sense by itself, and it absolutely does not make sense when compared to what it taught in the Bible.

After the invitation to respond to the gospel is given, God must bring about a change in an individual's heart **before he or she is able to respond in faith**. That change, a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us, is sometimes called regeneration. We play no role in this regeneration; it is completely an act of God.

Let me clarify: Even the Elect **CANNOT** respond positively to the gospel. They are born **TOTALLY** incapable of repenting and accepting the gospel.

Let me also remind you of a few things they said previously in this book:

Pg 82

"Scripture continually views us as personal creatures who make **willing choices to accept or reject the gospel.**"

"This invitation and many others like it (for example Matt 11:28) are addressed to genuine persons who are **capable of hearing the invitation and responding to it** by a decision of their wills. These **real decisions** have eternal consequences as is shown in John 3:18..."

Both of these statements are Biblical and true, but incompatible with their Calvinism. And now we learn that their system teaches that not only are these statements a lie about MOST people, but even for the elect this is not true. In their system, even the Elect CANNOT accept the gospel until God “regenerates” them. This is what I referred to as “flipping the FAITH switch,” and what they will describe as “being given a new heart.” As they said above, this is “completely an act of God.” It is something God does TO the Elect, not merely for them and certainly not with them. He flips the switch in their mind from “Reject” to “Accept,” and they discover that they have a faith which has been given to them, just as a lightbulb discovers it is emitting light because you flipped the switch to “on.”

Pg 93 How the Call Is Responded To

Once God has summoned through an effective call and changed a person's heart through regeneration, the **necessary response** is repentance and faith. But since the gospel call is a personal call, it requires a personal response. This **willing**, personal, individual response to the gospel call, in which a person sincerely repents of his sins and places his trust in Christ for salvation, is called conversion.

Once again, this is either dishonest or a baffling misunderstanding of their own system. The authors have said “*the necessary response is repentance and faith*,” and yet, how can something be a “necessary response” to an irresistible change which is done to them? Again, this is like saying, “Falling is the necessary response to being pushed off a cliff.” Remember they said this at the start of this section:

This kind of calling is a summons from the king of the universe;
it is a summons that can't be denied, and it brings about the desired response in people's hearts.

It CANNOT be denied, and yet it carries with it a “necessary response”? But the reason you not only CAN do this, but WILL do this is because God has flipped your faith switch to ON:

That change, a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us, is sometimes called regeneration. We play no role in this regeneration; it is completely an act of God.

In the passages below, it seems that the authors not only think that regeneration is necessary before a person can repent and have faith, but also that regeneration is when God puts repentance and faith in you, such that they are not actually a response to regeneration, but they are the substance of regeneration.

If I have true saving faith, I no longer simply believe facts about Jesus; instead, I personally trust Jesus to save me.

This is true. But again, this is something not even the elect can choose to do. This, on their system, is something God does to you when you are regenerated, and no one is BORN regenerated. Regeneration happens when you are able to hear and understand the gospel preached to you (when it is an Effective Call), which may be many years into a person's life.

This trust involves two aspects: repentance and faith. Paul preached a gospel "of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). The author of Hebrews says that the first two elements of foundational Christian teaching are "repentance from dead works" and "faith toward God" (Heb. 6:1). Repentance means a **conscious decision** to turn away from your sins, and faith means turning to Christ to forgive those sins.

But once again they are talking as if this is something a person can choose to do. A "conscious decision" is not something which is done to you. It is something you choose to make happen *while aware that you are choosing to make it happen*. But they just told us this:

After the invitation to respond to the gospel is given, God must bring about a change in an individual's heart **before he or she is able to respond in faith**. That change, a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us, is sometimes called regeneration. We play no role in this regeneration; it is completely an act of God.

Here they say "We play no role in this regeneration; it is completely an act of God," and yet continue talking as if we have a choice we can make when they say "he or she is *able to respond in faith*." But they have already told us that we cannot choose to respond, which they described as "*it is a summons that can't be denied*." We are not **ABLE to **NOT** respond positively, so what sense does it make to say he or she is **ABLE** to respond? This is like saying, "After I push you off the cliff, you will be **ABLE** to fall." It's true in a sense, but it's very misleading at best.**

So again, the idea of this system is that faith and repentance are the result of (or substance of) something God does to us, which we **CANNOT do even if we are one of the Elect.**

Part 16- What God Does

Pg 95 ch 14

Paul writes in Romans 8:30 that those whom God called "he also justified." We discussed "calling" in the previous chapter. In this chapter, we will discuss what God does after he **effectively calls** someone and after that person **responds positively** to God's call in repentance and saving faith.

Actually, we discussed two different callings. But the issue here on out is the continuing question as to the relationship between faith, repentance, and regeneration, and where, if anywhere, a person makes a choice of any kind or if the Elect person is entirely passive.

Paul is clear that this justification comes after **we respond to the gospel call in faith** and that justification is **God's response to our faith**. In Romans 3:26, Paul writes that God is the "justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" and in Romans 5:1 that we are "justified by faith." In Galatians 2:16 he writes, "We know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ." These verses

clearly show that justification is by faith.

Reminders of their statements from previous chapters:

Election is an act of God before creation in which He chooses *some* people to be saved.

[God] summons people to himself in such a way that they respond in saving faith. Because it comes from God and **always results** in saving faith, it is sometimes referred to as **effective calling**.

God must bring about a change in an individual's heart **before** he or she is able to respond in faith. That change, a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us, is sometimes called **regeneration**. We play no role in this regeneration; it is completely an act of God.

Once God has summoned through an effective call and changed a person's heart through regeneration, **the necessary response is repentance and faith**.

Repentance means a conscious decision to turn away from your sins, and **faith** means turning to Christ to forgive those sins.

Perhaps I am being semantic, but I think repentance and faith, in this system, is not a “necessary” response, but an irresistible response. I’ve never heard anyone claim that God regenerates a person who doesn’t repent and believe, and so it seems that these are intended to be two sides of the same coin. While it doesn’t seem to be in this book, most Calvinists will say that Faith itself is a gift which, like regeneration (or as part of it?) is entirely of God and something we don’t even WANT until *after* He has bestowed it to us. They imply this briefly in this line:

God honors our initial faith (**faith that he gives us**)

Usually the proof text is the one they use below to talk about justification:

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Justification by Faith Alone

Paul explains that people are "justified" by God's grace "**as a gift**, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24). In Ephesians 2:8-9, Paul is clear when he writes, "By grace you have been saved through faith. And **this** is not your own doing, **it** is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." Justification comes as a result of God's grace (which means we don't deserve it), and it comes as **God's response to our faith** (which is the opposite of depending on ourselves or our good works).

Calvinists tend to interpret “it is the gift of God” to refer to Faith, instead of (as was almost certainly intended by Paul) the entire phrase “By grace you have been saved, through faith.” For this reason they say putting our faith in Jesus (or as these authors put it, “faith means turning to Christ to forgive those sins”) would be an act which merits our salvation and so would be a salvation by works where we help to pay for our sins because of something we did. “Turning to Christ”, if it is something we do, would be a work which merits our salvation, in their system. These authors talk SORT OF as if we choose to put our faith in Jesus, while at the same time implying that this is something we do because of what God does to us (regeneration). Again, it seems like they are

suggesting that, because God Elected to push us into the pool, we respond by getting wet. This changes the meaning of “necessary” and makes more sense of this statement:

Once God has summoned through an effective call and changed a person's heart through regeneration, **the necessary response is repentance and faith.**

It seems that they may intend “necessary” to mean what HAS to follow, as opposed to what is required. More of a cause and effect as opposed to a morally right response. It is necessary, not as an obligation, but in a metaphysical sense, meaning that it can not be any other way. But then the use of the word “response” is misleading because we do not and cannot respond by repenting and “turning to Christ”. Repentance and turning to Christ has happened to us, just as getting wet happens when we are pushed into the pool. It might be a necessary result, but it is not a “response” as we cannot respond or even react. All of these, on this view, happen to us, and we come to realize it after it has been done to us.

While the authors fail to clarify, this section seems to imply the doctrine of election, though, of course it doesn’t need to because the Bible does not teach Election in the Calvinistic manner:

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In John 1:12 we are told that to all who received Christ, to those “who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” **This is not a privilege available for everyone**; Paul says in Ephesians 2:2-3 that those who don't believe in Christ are “sons of disobedience” and “children of wrath.”

To most Christians, this claim that those who don't believe in Christ are “sons of disobedience” and “children of wrath” would be a moral judgement on them for rejecting God and embracing their sin, just as when Jesus says of those who reject him in Jerusalem “YOU were not willing” (Matthew 23:37). However, because of their Calvinist foundation, these authors are most likely intending to describe the non-Elect as being born to be sinners, existing only to have God’s wrath poured out on them (they are the vessel made for a dishonorable purpose in Rom 9:20-21). This is not, on their system, an accusation of those “who suppress the truth by their wickedness” (Romans 1) but instead the identification of their species, in a sense. Where Jesus says you must be born again, the Calvinist says you were born a hell bound sinner the same way a moose was born to be a moose and can be nothing else. Even if the moose wanted to be a sparrow, he could not climb into an egg and hatch as a sparrow. Similarly, the non-Elect do not want salvation, but even if they did, they could not be born again. They are not children of god waiting to have the faith switch flipped to on. They are children of wrath waiting for the “common grace” to end and the wrath to begin.

Pg 102, ch 15

Becoming a Christian is a **gift from God that requires our involvement**; we find the same to be true for sanctification. Progress in sanctification is a gift of grace, but it is a gift we can expect to receive. Just as God honors our initial faith (**faith that he gives us**), he also honors our continual acts of faith and obedience...

It is strange that they say “Becoming a Christian is a gift from God that requires our involvement” as many a Calvinist has said, “I contributed nothing to my salvation except

my sin.” This is their effort to again respect us as moral agents who are capable of making choices, which conflicts badly with their Calvinism.

Ironically, here they finally make clear that faith is a gift from God as is traditional in Calvinist doctrine: “*God honors our initial faith (faith that he gives us)...*”
Because remember they said this:

Once God has summoned through an effective call and changed a person's heart through regeneration, **the necessary response is repentance and faith.**

So once again, either because they are contradicting themselves or are just poor writers, they have described *our response* as a *gift from God* which He gives us. These cannot both be true.

If faith is a gift, it is not something we choose to do in response to something (whether that is regeneration or the preaching of the gospel). It is something we receive, either because of being regenerated or as a key component of it. When we are pushed into the pool, we receive the gift of getting wet, but we cannot *respond* by getting wet the way we can respond to anything else, especially in a willing, conscious manner as they have implied previously:

Therefore, if we respond to Christ's invitation in a positive way, we can honestly say that **we chose to respond to Christ...**

the Bible appeals to ***our ability to make voluntary choices or willing choices*** hundreds of times... ***We aren't forced to make choices contrary to our own will.*** We ultimately do **what we desire to do.**

“Scripture continually views us as personal creatures who make ***willing choices to accept or reject the gospel.***”

“This invitation and many others like it (for example Matt 11:28) are addressed to genuine persons who are ***capable of hearing the invitation and responding to it*** by a decision of their wills.

Here is the trick of the Calvinists' definition of “Regeneration.” We are described as **having free will because we have the “ability to make voluntary choices or willing choices... We aren't forced to make choices contrary to our own will. We ultimately do what we desire to do.”** But before being regenerated, every single person ever born desires to reject the gospel, even those who are Elect. The Elect will eventually hear an “effective calling” which is followed by God regenerating the person, which means (at least in part) that they “get a new heart” which means they have ***new and different desires.*** Regeneration (however it is related to the gift of faith) ends with a person who desires to accept the gospel and repent, which they do because “*We ultimately do what we desire to do.*”

Just to backtrack a little, we are responding to their claim:

Paul is clear that this justification comes after **we respond to the gospel call in faith** and that justification is **God's response to our faith.**

But again, either because of dishonesty or just bad writing, this is all, at best, misleading.

We don't "respond," we are **CHANGED**. We don't put our faith in Christ, God puts faith in Christ into us. And since "*our initial faith*" is "*faith that he gives us*", Justification is either another part of regeneration, or God "responding" to other things God has done (assuming these things are put in a temporal order and don't happen all at once). However this all plays out once it is clarified, it is incompatible with their claim that anyone is "*capable of hearing the invitation and responding to it by a decision of their wills.*" This language is only meant to hide the fact that this whole system is deterministic and fatalistic. It's deceptive and inaccurate, and it is unbiblical.

Part 17- Their System in a Nutshell

Here is their system made of quotes from the book. Following is a dismantling of the system showing how there are Biblical ways to understand the ideas which are actually found in scripture such as Election, calling, and others.

Total Depravity:

We lack any spiritual good in ourselves, and therefore, we are unable to do any spiritual good before God.

Also, inherited guilt:

We received not only Adam's sinful nature, but also his sin-produced guilt. ...when Adam sinned, God thought of us all as having sinned.

Unconditional Election:

Election is an act of God before creation in which He chooses *some* people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of His sovereign good pleasure.

Irresistible Grace:

[God] summons people to himself in such a way that they respond in saving faith. Because it comes from God and always results in saving faith, it is sometimes referred to as **effective calling**.

It is a summons that can't be denied and **always** results in saving faith.

Regeneration:

God must bring about a change in an individual's heart **before he or she is able to respond in faith**. That change, a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us, is sometimes called **regeneration**. We play no role in this regeneration; it is completely an act of God.

Repentance:

Once God has summoned through an effective call and changed a person's heart through regeneration, **the necessary response is repentance and faith**.

Repentance means a conscious decision to turn away from your sins, and **faith** means turning to Christ to forgive those sins.

Faith is a Gift:

Becoming a Christian is a gift from God that requires our involvement; we find the same to be true for sanctification. Just as God honors **our initial faith (faith that he gives us)**

Justification:

justification comes after **we respond to the gospel call in faith** and that justification is **God's response to our faith.**

Part 18- Pulling the Weeds out of the TULIP Garden

The following is Chapter 16 *From my book "Tip Toeing Through the TULIP", available on Amazon, or AbitOfOrange.com*



Most of this book has been me explaining what I think are the logical fallacies of Calvinism, but I would like to take a few pages and explain what the Gospel is. In order that you may see what I think and not just what I disagree with, let me take a brief walk through TULIP and offer another point of view so I can clarify what it is I think the Bible actually teaches. Yes, I'm going to drag the Bible into this discussion. I know, it sounds crazy, but humor me if you would. This is what TULIP would look like if it were based on the teachings of Jesus instead of John Calvin.

I can already hear the Calvinists hitting their CAPS LOCK keys as they prepare to answer me. Bring it on.

Total Depravity

Depravity- the stain left by sin- is totally everywhere. This is true, easy to observe in our own hearts and neighborhoods, and clearly taught by the Bible.

“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?”

Jeremiah 17:9

Every part of us is touched by sin, from our physical bodies that get sick and die, to our hearts which are quick to adopt fear, selfishness and greed.

We're not PURE EVIL, and we're rarely as bad as we COULD be. Even an atheist can love his wife and children. Even an atheist can care for widows and orphans. Even a politician tells the truth every now and then, even if only by accident. We're not TOTALLY depraved in the sense that we're overflowing with evil and nothing else. We're just living in a world where no part of it isn't stained by sin.

Even our good deeds are often stained by our pride as we hope someone sees us doing good so they can praise us for our goodness, or by greed as we hope we get rewarded for doing good. But we are still human, made in the image of God and therefore capable of great good. A stain doesn't destroy the fabric, it just miscolors it. Our sin doesn't remove from us the image of God we were created with, it only distorts and dirties it. Our deceitful hearts aren't incapable of love, compassion, kindness, and even repentance. They are simply difficult to trust because they are *also* capable of much worse things.

Our depravity doesn't remove from us the ability to know we need God. We are incomplete without Him, and restless until we find our rest in Him, like a dirty pig feeder wishing he was back in his father's house. We're poor and dirty because of our own foolish sin, but we're still capable of admitting that. Some of us still try to find the way back home. Some people do search for God and all who search find Him. Jesus says, **“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”** *Matt 7:7* Others prefer another god of their own making and fail to find Jesus for the same reason criminals fail to find a police officer. But those are choices we make, not a program we are given before birth which we must follow like robots. It's not a determination which was made for us before we were born.

We are not incapable of accepting the love of God, but rather we are called by Jesus- in fact commanded- to accept His mercy, put our trust in Him, and be forgiven and adopted as sons and daughters.

“I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life...”

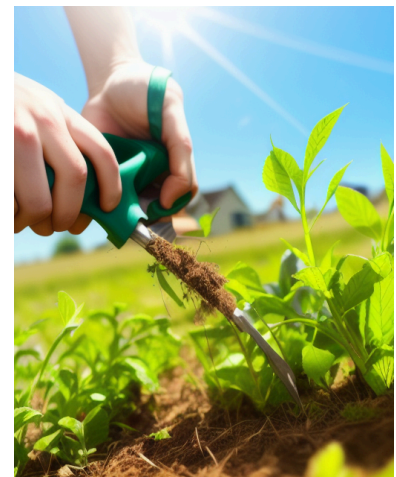
Deut 30:19

Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

Mark 1:14-15

Jesus taught repentance, and it is still the message the church preaches 2,000 years later.

We may be addicted to our sin, but we are entirely capable of admitting that addiction and crying out to Jesus for help. The prodigal son came to his senses, acknowledged what a mess he had made of his life and decided to ask his father for forgiveness. That's the story Jesus told, and it's the one I believe.



Unconditional Election

To be “elect” means to be “chosen.” Who were the chosen people of God in the Old Testament? It was the Jews. Does that mean that being born a Jew was all that was needed to be saved? Did it mean that no gentile could be saved? No on both counts. It meant that God chose the Nation of Israel to be his messengers, carrying to the whole world the truth of who God was and how EVERYONE could have a relationship with him. They were also chosen to be the people through which Jesus would come to the world.

It wasn't the Jews who decided to be the people God used in this way- God chose them. The nation of Israel was chosen- Elect.

The salvation of the individual Jew depended on their choice to worship God alone. They had the ability to choose to give their heart to the one true God, or to one of the many demons masquerading as a god, which sadly many of the chosen people did through Israel's history. The nation was a chosen nation, but the individuals still had a choice to make. The choosing was corporate- a nation was chosen- a people. But the salvation was a matter of the individual.

“Now therefore fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Joshua 24:14-15

The chosen people of God today is the church. The body of believers which we call the church is, like the Jews before us, the group chosen to bring the message of God's love to the world, but also like the Jews, being born into the group was never how one is saved. I was born to parents who went to church because they were born to parents who went to church. I was not saved because I was born into a Christian family, and no one who is not born into a Christian family was born without hope of salvation. We each have a choice to make- whom will we serve? Being Jewish, Baptist, Lutheran, Pentecostal, or any other will not save you from your sins. The church is the chosen nation to bring Jesus to the world, and those chosen for salvation are not those in the “church,” but those who are in Jesus Christ.

The Church is the kingdom of God, where King Jesus waits to adopt new children into his family. This election- this being chosen- is not based on those of us in the church. We did not earn a place by being smart or beautiful or important. Jesus earned our place and offers it to us as a gift. The condition for being chosen is not found in us. It is found in Jesus. OUR election is unconditional. Jesus met the conditions for our election, and we are saved and made new when we are *in Him*.

for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Galatians 3:26-27

Limited Atonement

The limit to the atonement is the number of doors which lead from hell to heaven: one, and it is Jesus Christ.

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.

Acts 4:12

But where Calvinism teaches that Jesus only died for a small group of people chosen before time began, Jesus himself teaches that he was lifted up on that old rugged cross so that ANYONE who looks to Him will be saved from death and given life.

*“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that **whoever believes in him** may have eternal life.*

*“For God so loved **the world**, that he gave his only Son, that **whoever believes in him** should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that **the world might be saved** through him.”*

John 3: 14-17

Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:38

Irresistible Grace

This just falls on the heels of the previous ones. Atonement is not limited- Jesus died for the sins of the whole world so that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

...if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 2: 1-2

I feel like that's as clear as it can get. Jesus died for the sins of the whole world. EVERYONE is offered the grace of God. So why are some not saved? Because *they resist* the grace of God.

Why then does Calvinism teach *irresistible grace*? It's the logical continuation of the first parts of TULIP. If we are totally depraved so that we are totally unable to repent, and if our unconditional election isn't about how we are saved or the election of the church to carry the Gospel to the world, but rather about how certain individuals are chosen to be given the gift of faith, then it logically follows that a totally depraved person would only reject faith and the grace of God, so they must not be ABLE to reject it. Grace must be irresistible. But what does the Bible say?

For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts

Psalms 95:7-8

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice,

do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion”

Hebrews 3:7-8

How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!

Matthew 23:37

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

Romans 1: 18-19

Over and over the Bible says that we hear the call of God and have the ability to either accept His love and turn away from our sin, or to harden our hearts and be unwilling to be gathered to Him as His children. We are commanded NOT to harden our hearts, and told that the wicked suppress the truth which is plain to them. It does not say that we are totally unable to hear and understand the invitation, and it does not say we are only capable of hating God, and it does not say that the grace of God is irresistible. We are told that the love and mercy of God is a gift that he offers to us, and that we are told to accept. **“Choose this day whom you will serve.”**

That choice is real.

Perseverance of the Saints

This one is hazy even among the Calvinists, but here's my take.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

John 10: 27-28

The idea that there is a set limit on how many times you can sin before you lose your salvation seems to me to be one of the more absurd ideas I've had to ponder. When you have ETERNAL life, it isn't like a house plant that you have to keep alive. It's ETERNAL.

This is why Jesus and the New Testament writers compare our relationship with Jesus with a marriage. We make vows to each other, and it is till death do we part- but Jesus is eternal and gives us everlasting life, so there is no parting. Being married is a lifetime commitment, and if you're a selfish idiot, then maybe you're a bad husband, but you don't lose your husbandness by being a bad husband just as you don't lose your fatherhood by being a bad father. A bad Christian is still saved, because Jesus is still committed to him, even though he is a bad Christian. We don't obey Jesus to continually earn that salvation, but to celebrate it and be thankful for it. I don't do the dishes to maintain my marriage, but because I love my wife. If I never washed another dish again, it would not make me less married, even though it might make my wife less happy.

If you have eternal life, *it is eternal*. But being engaged is not the same as being married. Living together is not the vows of marriage. Being religious or calling yourself a Christian is not the

same as making the vows to the bridegroom of the church. Choose this day whom you will serve. If you're still dating other gods, or dress shopping because you're PRETTY SURE He's the one... you're not married. Raised in the church, speaking fluent Christianese, listening to Christian pop radio hits, or even eating at Chick-Fil-A are not the same as being a Christian, any more than living together is the same as being married.

You need to take the step of faith, make the vow, and be the bride.



I promised you to one husband, to Christ

2 Corinthians 11:2

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

Ephesians 5: 31-32

I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

Revelation 21:2-3

Bible reading and meditation

**God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved
1 Timothy 2: 3-4**

**The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.
2 Peter 3:9**

**“For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God; so turn, and live.”
Ezekiel 18:32**

**As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live
Ezekiel 33:11**

**we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.
1 Timothy 4:10**

**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
1 John 1:9**

**if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
2 Corinthians 5:17**

**“everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
Romans 10:13**

**“Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.
Isaiah 45:22**

**For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,
Titus 2:11**

**Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
Acts 2:38**

**For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.
Romans 1:16**

If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

Revelation 3:20

whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.

John 5:24

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16-17

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved

Mark 16:16

if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:9

I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live,

Deuteronomy 30:19

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all

Romans 8:32

“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

Acts 16:30-31

The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent

Acts 17:30

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life

John 3:36

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

John 3:17

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

John 1:29