

Ephesians 2013 Lessons 25 and 26

Ephesians 1:3-14

Election, Predestination
and Calvinism

Believer's Adjustment

- *Psalms 66:18 If I perceive sin in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.*
- *Psalms 32:5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*
- *I Cor 11:31 But if we judge ourselves rightly, we should not be judged.*
- *1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all other unrighteousness.*

Invitation: If you have never trusted in Christ Alone for salvation...

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God*; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- Rom. 11:6, *"But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace."*
- Gal. 2:21, *"I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."*

- *Gal. 3:24, "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith."*
- *1 Corinthians 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'*
- *John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only beotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."*
- *"Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" Acts 16:31*

Ephesians 1:3--14

- 3. *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*
- 5 *Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*

- *6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*
- *7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*
- *8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;*
- *9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:*

- *10 That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:*
- *11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*
- *12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.*

- *13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*
- *14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory."*

- This [Predestination] passage in Ephesians deals with God's plan for the believer who is saved by faith.
- Recall Verses 1 and 2:
 - ***1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:***
 - ***2 Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.***

- This passage in Ephesians deals with God's plan for the believer who is saved by faith. Verse 3 introduces the discourse and states that God has blessed believers with "spiritual blessings in heavenly places."

IS CALVINISM BIBLICAL? A BIBLICAL EXAMINATION OF CALVINISM AND ITS TEACHINGS

BY Cooper P. Abrams, III

Introduction

For centuries, Calvinism has been one of the most debated subject along with the doctrines of election and predestination as taught by the modern Reformed movement. The importance of the subject is manifest in that it deals directly with the doctrine of salvation by grace.

These two doctrines are widely debated by some professing Christians who have divided themselves into opposing camps of "Calvinists" and "Arminians." However, there is a third group that is often overlooked. This group is made up of those who accept neither of these extreme views and reject the tenets of both positions. It is the view of this group that will be explained and shown to be the biblical view. The scope of this work will be reveal who John Calvin was and his actions as the minister of Geneva.

Further, this paper will address the teachings of Calvinism and show them to be a radical and unbiblical view.

Those who believe the Bible to be the inerrant and infallible Word of God will take its doctrines seriously. The true biblist¹ appeals to God's word to find His truth in the doctrines of predestination and election, freewill and human responsibility. He will insist, that based on God's word, the truth of the matter can be absolutely discerned.

To understand the problem, let us look at the various positions held, the terms used, and a brief history of the topic.

This will present a biblical solution that correctly addresses the issue and avoids the unbiblical extremes of both the Calvinists and the Arminians. The purpose of this paper is not to present an exhaustive study of the subject, but rather to address the practical side of this theological system, pointing out its unbiblical flaws for the average believer in Jesus Christ.

A Biblical Look at the Five Points of Calvinism (TULIP)

This teaching is referred to as "Five Point Calvinism." The five points are represented by using the acrostic "TULIP."

T - Total depravity of man.

U - Unconditional election.

L - Limited atonement.

I - Irresistible grace.

P - Perseverance of the saints.

TOTAL DEPRAVITY

The first article of Calvinism deals with man as a sinner and teaches that a man is “totally depraved,” unable, having no ability to receive salvation. The Bible clearly teaches that man is born in a spiritually corrupt state that affects his mind, intelligence, emotion, and will. The Bible calls this state “unrighteousness” which means not being right with God. When Adam sinned, he brought into the world both spiritual and physical death and passed his sinful nature to all his progeny. Ephesians 2:1 states man in his natural unregenerated state is indeed “. . . dead in trespasses and sins.”

On this truth, biblical Christians certainly agree. However, the Scriptures do not use the words “total depravity” nor teach this concept in the sense that the Calvinist does. Depravity means to be corrupt, debase, impaired, perverted, etc. The Calvinist goes to the extreme by applying this word to man’s sinful condition and concludes that man’s free will has no part in his coming to Christ and receiving salvation.

The Scriptures clearly teach that man apart from God’s intervention, cannot savingly come to Christ.

Romans 3:10-18 describe all men as being unrighteous and as verse 10 states “As it is written, There is

none righteous, no, not one.”
(Romans 3:10) Man in his fallen state does not understand or seek God, and there is no fear of God before their eyes. God says “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23) and that man’s righteousness is as “filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6)
Paul revealed the state of the carnal mind “Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Romans 8:7-8) But that does not mean that a man cannot with God’s intervention believe and be saved. 12

Certainly, salvation cannot be merited or earned as Ephesians 2:8-9 teaches,

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

Therefore, a man cannot “will” himself to be saved because in his natural state he has no righteousness nor seeks God.

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

Jesus' words reveal how an unrighteous man can be saved and receive salvation by faith. It is God the Father who draws the sinner to salvation.

This is the principle that Calvinism confuses and carries to the extreme. God's word explains that after Adam and Eve sinned, they knew good from evil. "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever" (Genesis 3:22)

What the Calvinist does not accept or understand is that man can respond to God, using his will, to accept salvation when convicted by the Holy Spirit. Without the intervention of the Holy Spirit, a person does not seek God or desire to receive God's forgiveness. However, when the Holy Spirit illuminates the man's mind and reveals his lost state, God also gives that man the ability to respond with his will and be saved. The same man can also reject God's offer of salvation, and God will allow him to do so not forcing a man to accept what he does not want.

Carrying man's lost condition to the extreme, the Calvinist teaches that God, exercising His sovereignty, first elected and then decreed certain individuals to salvation in time past. According to them, Christ's death was not for all people as 1 John 2:2 states, "And he is the propitiation (full payment) for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2:2) In order to support their theology they conclude that Jesus only died for the few whom He chose to save. This belief directly contradicts the clear statement of 1 John 2:2.

God then, according to Reformed Theology, extended "irresistible" grace to those whom He elected, meaning that God save these people without any action on their part. In other words, God forced them to be saved. Following their baseless logic therefore, a man has nothing to do with his receiving salvation because God chooses to save him and make him believe. In other words "Election is God's choice for some persons."³⁷ This logically means that God does not elect to save anyone else but His few chosen "elect."

Even though the Scripture repeatedly, in presenting the Gospel, proclaims that a man must believe in order to be saved, the Calvinist teaches that only those whom God has predestined to be saved can believe and only when God supernaturally causes them to believe.

UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

The concept of unconditional election purports that God predestined who He would save and who He would not allow to be saved by withholding His grace, thus condemning them to the Lake of Fire. Biblical Christians have strong objections to this tenet of Calvinism. The reason is that unconditional election means that God chose to save some and not to save others. Those who reject Calvinism contend that this belief is an attack on God's very character and nature.

This belief contradicts the biblical teaching that Jesus Christ died and paid the sin debt of all men (1 John 2:2); and that God ". . . will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. 2:4); and that God's nature is love, which means seeking the best for all men (1 John 4:7-8, 16). These Scriptures and others refute the idea that God chooses to give life to most of mankind and gives them life in order to send them to hell. No-where in the Word of God does He say that He decreed who would be saved and who would not be saved.

Men are saved based on their acceptance or rejection of God's gift of grace which He offers to all men. Romans 1:18-23 plainly teaches that man is condemned because he refuses to believe God and accept God's grace. Jesus clearly stated "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." (John 3:19-20) The light without question is Jesus Christ and the Gospel.

Jesus said that men choose to reject the “light” because their deeds are evil, and they refuse to come to the “light” because the “light” reproves their sin. The basis of man’s condemnation is not God, but the man himself who knows the truth and refuses to believe and submit himself to his Creator and Savior. Proverbs 1:29 tells us, “For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD” (Proverbs 1:29) Those who hated the knowledge of God chose not to believe and fear God and thus they condemned themselves; God has always offered grace and mercy to all who will accept it.

LIMITED ATONEMENT

Limited atonement is another natural false assumption of the Calvinist. Calvinists assume that if only those who God has predestined to be saved will be saved, then God limits atonement to only those He elects. All men therefore cannot be saved because God's grace is offered only to those who He has chosen. This is a teaching based on human logic and not on God's word.

1 Peter 1:2 explains who are the elect. “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.” (1 Peter 1:2)

God says He elects according to His “foreknowledge” meaning His knowing in the future. God is omniscient and knows all things past, present, and future. He knew who would believe, and thus He elected what salvation would be provided for those who believed.

The election was not for who would be saved, but what salvation would provide to those who accepted His grace. More will be said about this later.

IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

Being true to their human reasoning, the Calvinists conclude that grace then must be irresistible. If God is sovereign and forces a man to be saved, then the man cannot resist. Those to whom God elected to save will be saved a part from any action on their part. Thus, a man whom God has elected cannot resist God's grace and will be saved.

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

The Scriptures declare that God’s very nature is to love. God’s love is not conditional on a person meriting or deserving His love. No one deserves God’s mercy and grace. But God offers His love unconditionally to all who will believe. God says clearly His desire is that all men come to the knowledge of the truth. This precludes there being anyone whom God has excluded from His offer of grace.

God wants everyone to be saved. If grace is irresistible, as the Calvinist teaches, then why does He not, as a loving God and Creator, save everyone? The answer is plain that most men do not want to believe and they prevent God from giving them His free gift of salvation because they love their sin more than their souls.

PRESERVATION OF THE SAINTS.

The Calvinists continue in using human reasoning to confuse the doctrine of the security and assurance of salvation. They change the words the Bible uses of "assurance" and teach "the perseverance of the saints." (See 1 Thess. 1:5; Heb. 6:11, 10:22)

Calvinism correctly teaches that once saved, a person cannot lose their salvation. However, the term "perseverance of the saints" by definition presents a false understanding of the "security of the believer." Their word "perseverance" means to

"continue on a course of action" or refers to steadfastness.

There word implies that God will not allow a believer to “backslide” or fall into sin. This may seem to be a minor point to differentiate between “perseverance” and “security,” but the words have different meanings. A believer can and will sin, and can sin to the point that God will chasten him and even take the believers life if he will not repent. (See 1 John 1:8-10) The believer is assured that he is "secure" in Christ and will go to heaven.

Once saved, a person cannot be lost because he did nothing to earn his salvation and cannot do anything to keep it or lose it. (See Rom. 3:20, 27-28, 4:2, 8:38-39; 9:11, 11:6; 1 Cor. 1:29-31; Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Tim. 1:9; Tit. 3:3-5)
Biblically, salvation is totally the work of God and once saved a person is kept secure by the power of God unto salvation.

God said: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:3-5).

The Bible clearly teaches that a man can "backslide" and can allow sin to rule his life. Hebrews 12:6-11, 1 Corinthians 11:32, and 1 John 5:16 teach that God will chasten an unrepentant, sinning believer even unto death to end his rebellion. The Biblical doctrine is the "security" not the "perseverance" of the saints. A saint of God can fail God, but God will not fail the saint. God gives eternal life to those who by faith repent and receive His free gift of salvation. Once saved the believer cannot be lost because God has forgiven all their past, present, and future sins.

Thus, a true believer is secure in God's grace. When a man receives Christ he becomes a new creature, a saved child of God and is indwelt by the spirit of God. He cannot be lost once saved. (See 2 Cor. 5:17) When the unrepentant believer dies he will in eternity be judged but not to condemnation. Christ's judgment of believers is for reward, not condemnation. Thus, the unrepentant sinner who dies will receive no reward as 1 Corinthians 3:14-15 states. "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he

himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” (1 Corinthians 3:14-15)
None of the tenets of TULIP meet the biblical test and they present a false view of the doctrines of election, God’s grace, and of salvation.

Chapter Seven

Doctrinal Problems with Calvinism:

Calvinism Destroys God's Grace

Calvinism is contrary to God's grace itself, which stems from God's love and unmerited favor toward man. To accept Calvinism is to proclaim that God does not love all His creation, and that nullifies His grace. God's grace is the action of His love. Calvinism will agree that God is love, but it in reality portrays God as unloving and unjust to most men on earth.

Calvinism restricts God's love to only a part of His creation, which makes a lie out of God's statements that He loves the world (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 Joh. 4:9-10). “. . . God is love.” (1 John 4:8) God reveals to us that He is love and that is His very nature, therefore He cannot go against who He is and deny His love to some because He chooses not to love them. God says He is love and He cannot go against His nature. God's sovereignty does not allow Him to deny who He is.

How then can the Calvinist accept that God is love, when they believe He withholds his grace from most of the world? Not one word in the Bible limits God's love. God's love is offered freely, and is only limited by sinful men who will not accept His love. However, that is not God's fault, but man's.

John 3:15-16 states plainly "God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son." If one truly believes that statement of God's word, then one cannot be a Calvinist. Man goes to hell because he refuses to believe God and as a sinner rejects God. He is not condemned because God decreed him to burn in the Lake of Fire. He is not doomed because God does not allow the man to repent (Joh. 3:19-20; Rom. 1:18-23).

It is a perversion of God's sovereignty and His grace to conclude that He would violate His own nature and withhold His love from the world.

God is just, and therefore His justice demands that if a man rejects His grace, and Christ's payment for his sins, then the man must pay the debt himself. Yet, 1 John 2:2 says clearly that "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2:2)

The question is simply this: "Does God love the world and did Jesus Christ, God incarnate in the flesh, come to the earth, suffer, and die for the sins of mankind?" The biblical answer is overwhelmingly YES! Then how can the Calvinist teach that He did not?

On what biblical basis does the Calvinist teach that God did not extend His love to all men, even though they reject that love? God says, “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8) There is nothing in the context of this statement that limits God’s grace. Paul explains, “Therefore as by the offence of one (Adam) judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one (Jesus Christ) the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” (Romans 5:18)

In other words, all men stand condemned by their sins, but Jesus Christ offers the free “gift” of “justification of life” to “all” men. Verse 19 says, “For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” (Romans 5:19) The verse says that many will be made righteous, and clearly that limits those who will be saved. However, those made righteous are those who by faith believed and accept Jesus Christ as their Salvation.

Christ died and paid the sin debt for all men, but only those who accept His free gift will receive His righteousness and resulting salvation.

Calvinism has a False View of Man's Will

The Calvinist contends that using one's will to receive salvation is a work and man thus takes part in his receiving his salvation. As the Bible clearly teaches a man cannot merit or earn his salvation. However, the Calvinists pervert this simple truth and attempt to make this truth fit their theology, concluding that a man's will has no function in his being saved. (See Eph. 2:8-9)

The question is “Does willfully believing and accepting Jesus Christ as one's Savior constitute a "work?"

One of the first arguments the Calvinists use to support their belief is that a man is totally depraved, which means his will is also depraved, and cannot willfully believe and be saved. As pointed out earlier, the Bible does not use the word “depraved” but rather says that he is “unrighteous.” Using the word “depravity” limits a person’s respond under any circumstances. They conclude that God in the past decreed who He would save and then at some point in time in that "elected" person's life God gives him irresistible grace and the person is saved.

They reason correctly that man is dead in his trespasses and sin and so being spiritually dead, he can do anything to save himself. Yet, they take the extreme and unbiblical position that man cannot believe unless God forces that belief on him. Their idea is that man's will has no part in a person believing and accepting Jesus Christ as his Savior. They conclude God decreed the person would be saved and then God thrusts salvation on the person irregardless of the person's will. Furthermore, their argument is that if a man chooses to be saved, his act of using his will is a form of work, and works cannot save.

Truly, works cannot save, but does that mean that a man, who hears God's word and is convicted by the Holy Spirit of his sins, cannot then accept by faith God's offer of redemption? If God offers salvation, as so many scriptures teach, why cannot a man accept His grace? Is a person responding to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit constitute a work? Let us look as some examples those in the Bible records used their wills and make choices in response to God.

In Genesis 2:16-17 God said to Adam, "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17) Did not God give Adam and Eve a choice? He was warned that if he ate fruit from the forbidden tree he would surely die. Thus, how Adam used his will had consequences. God gave Adam a clear choice. Eat of all the other trees, but not this one. The Lord allowed Adam to use his will.

Did Adam and Eve use their wills in making their fateful decision? The Calvinist cannot deny this plain truth, but he then distorts Adam using his will in response to God by concluding that after Adam sinned, God took away man's ability to use his will. Yes, man's will was made corrupt in the Fall, but it was not removed nor was it beyond God's ability to have the Holy Spirit illuminate so the man could respond to God's drawing him and believe as John 6:44 states.

In Genesis 4, Able and Cain were also given a choice. This was clearly after the Fall , a minor detail that John Calvin and his followers ignore.

Both of Adam's sons could have obeyed God and by faith presented to Him a blood sacrifice and be accepted, or they could reject God's word, disobey God and be rejected by Him. Able made the correct choice and Cain did not. It should be noted what God said to Cain in Genesis 4:7 to Cain, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him."

In other words, God says that if Cain had believed God and by faith

21 offered a proper sacrifice would he not have been accepted?

God gave Cain a choice and because he did not believe and fear God, he willingly rejected God, fully knowing the truth and what he was doing. He rejected God's offer of grace and stood condemned.

Throughout the whole of the Bible, God gave men choices. He always told them what was righteous, meaning what was "right" and was His will.

He also warned them of making the wrong choice. Why does God do this if men are predestined by God as to what they will do, and have no ability to do otherwise? God also gave the children of Israel a choice in the offering of an animal as a symbolic burnt offering for their sins.

The burnt offering did not take away sin, but is a picture of Christ's later suffering, shedding His blood and dying for the sins of the world. Leviticus 1:2 plainly states that giving the burnt offering was not a commandment, but it was to be a free will offering of the people in repentance of their sins. The Hebrews were not obligated to offer a burnt sacrifice for their sins. Yet, if they believed God, they would obey Him, confess their sins, and want to honor the Lord in their offering of a sacrifice.

It is very important to note the wording of God's instructions to Moses. "Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD." (Leviticus 1:2-3) The Calvinists claims that God only offers His grace to those He has selected and the rest of mankind is doomed, by God's will and degree to the fires of hell.

Yet, in His instructions concerning the offering of a sin offering by the children of Israel, God made no restriction. He said "If any man of you bring an offering to the Lord." God also said in the New Testament, "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Acts 2:21) (See Romans 10:13). Never in God's word is there even a hint that God withholds His grace from anyone who desires to come. Nowhere in God's word does it say that God choose to offer His grace to some and withhold it from others.

When God reveals the truth to a person it simply means that God understands that the person can respond. That is why Christians preach and teach the Gospel. Through the preaching and teaching, God is revealing Himself to sinners and showing them, through the convicting power of the Holy Spirit how they can be saved. Hebrews 11 abounds with men and women who obeyed when God. When God told them His will, they obeyed, believed God, and it was "counted unto them for righteous." These hosts of the "heroes of faith" used their God given wills to honor God.

They used their wills through the power and ability God gave them. Their faith did not come from themselves, but came from God. They did not act in their own righteousness, but in the righteousness and power of God. Joshua beckoned Israel to serve the Lord saying, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the 22 Ammorties, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Joshua 24:15)

Israel had a choice to serve God or idols. This was a choice of salvation or damnation. Joshua warned them "If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good." (Joshua 24:20) If they were totally depraved and could not respond then why did God speak to them through Joshua and offer them the choice? If all were "predestined to heaven or hell with no ability to respond except according to how God had programmed them, why offer the choice?

If any of the children of Israel, who heard Joshua's promise of salvation, were not permitted by God to respond, then the choice and the offer would have been a lie to those poor souls. God's offer of grace was God enabling man to respond. If God offers He cannot deny what He offers. If you take away man's ability to use his God given will to obey God then you also take away his responsibility for his actions.

Plainly, God gave them a choice, and they used their God given wills to accept or reject God's offer. The Calvinist has no biblical basis to say that a man's will has no part in his salvation.

Over sixty [150] times in the New Testament God tells man to believe and be saved. Belief is an act of one's will. However, God is clear that a lost man cannot on His own be saved. It is true that a man cannot by himself will himself to be saved. Yet, when God draws a man, then man's will is illuminated and he is enabled by the Holy Spirit, he can through God's power and provision, believe and accept by faith God's offer of grace. Surely, a man cannot do this on his own. It is false doctrine to deny this vital and necessary act of God, the Holy Spirit, beckoning a person to be saved, by offering man salvation.

God does not force a man to believe and accept His grace and use man as a robot. He illuminates a man's will, shows him the truth, and offers Him forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

Inconsistencies of Calvinism

There are many inconsistencies in Reformed Theology. God says in Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Several truths stand out sharply in this passage.

Plainly, the heart of God's plan is that without faith in God, it is impossible for a man to please or come to God.

The man who comes to God must believe that God is. This means that God exists, is man's Creator, and that every man is responsible to Him. A "depraved" robot, which is the Calvinist's view of man, cannot express faith, nor believe or seek God. The Calvinist's irresistible grace means preprogrammed grace!?

Furthermore, God says that faith is inseparably tied to "diligently seeking Him." A robot cannot seek anything, but can only perform the programming he is given. How can a "totally depraved" man desire to seek something he is incapable of knowing exists?

The context of God's statement is of the saving faith, of men who heard God's promises, and by faith, received them. By God's very definition of faith Calvinism is refuted. Calvinism is a maze of inconsistencies and unbiblical conclusions that defy any logic and have no support from God's word. There are no inconsistencies with God as He is a God of order, organization, and true logic.

The Misuse of Words by the Calvinists

“Whosoever” - “pas” - The word “pas” (whosoever) in John 3:16, Acts 2:21, presents a problem for the Calvinist because the word means “whoever” and “whatever person: no matter who,” and in the verse it means “whoever believes.”⁴²

The Calvinist twists the word to infer it means “all the believing ones of those who were predestinated to believe by God, in contrast to the ones God will not allow to be saved because He withholds His grace from them.”

However this is not substantiated by the Greek definitions of the words used, or by teachings of the New Testament. "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Acts 2:21) In Acts 2:21, Robertson identifies the phrase "shall call on" as "First aorist middle subjunctive of epikaleo, common verb, to call to, middle voice for oneself in need. Indefinite relative clause with ean and so subjunctive, puncticular idea, in any single case, and so aorist."⁴³ It can accurately be translated as "whatever person would call on the Lord will be saved."

In other words, whatever person would call on the name of the Lord "sozo" (shall be saved), meaning shall be delivered.

In John 3:15-16, the word "pas" as a pronoun modifies the word believes. The verse literally says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever (whatever person or whoever) believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) The Greek dictionary by Arndt-Gingrich says this in the context John 3:15-16 it means "everyone who, whoever."⁴⁴

The Greek word(s) "pas, pasa, pan, ras, rasa, ran," are used in the New Testament and translated hundreds of times "all, whosoever, everyone, whole, all manner, etc." The word "pas" is used 99 times in the New Testament. The word is all inclusive and how it is modified determines who it is referring to. In John 3:15-16 and Acts 2:21 the word "whosoever" simply means every person who believes will be saved. The word "whosoever" is not restricted to the supposed few who are decreed to receive irresistible grace from God but to all the world.

“World” - kosmos. - The Calvinist insists that the word "world" used in verses such as John 3:16, and 1 John 2:2 does not mean the whole world, but only applies to the elected few who are decreed by God to receive irresistible grace. Note how explicit is 1 John 2:2, "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole (holos "all") world (kosmos)." The word when used with the article refers to the whole of something.

For example: "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. . ." (Acts 11:26) Barnabas and Saul taught at Antioch for one year. If the Calvinist was consistent he would have to translate the verse to mean they assembled for some indefinite or unspecified period of time. However, the use of the modifier "whole" restricts the phrase to mean one complete year.

Further, the word "world" is kosmos and denotes as Arndt-Gingrich states, ". . . in philposph. usage the world as the sum total of everything here, and now. . . 3. as the sum total of all beings above the level of the animals. . . 4. the world as the earth, the planet on which we live. . . b. the as the habitation of mankind. . . .c. the world in contrast to heaven, . . . 5. the world as all mankind, . . b. of all mankind, but especially believers. 8. totality, sum total."45 Note the use of "whole world" in 1 John 5:19 "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."

The Calvinist interpretation contradicts the statement of the passage 1 John 2:2. John makes the unmistakable distinction between the whole world and those who are identified as believers. It is a gross misrepresentation of this phrase to limit it to any individuals elected by God through His supposed irresistible grace.

These passages state that Jesus Christ was the full payment, the "propitiation, " for the believer's sins, and also for all mankind. Jesus' suffering and payment for sins was for all of mankind.

Sadly, only those who by faith believe will be saved and receive God free gift of grace. (Eph. 2:8-9)

Calvinism Distorts the Glory of God

A good example of the distorted extremes of the Calvinist is that they profoundly proclaim the marvelous glory of God while distorting this very truth. For example: this author watched Mark Kielar, a passionate Calvinist of the TV program “Word Pictures” aired on Cross TV, proclaimed that God shows His glory to those to whom He gives His grace, by sending those who are not allowed to believe and receive His grace to the Lake of Fire!

What a completely warped idea he has of God’s majesty and glory.

In other words, Kielar said that God, in saving some by irresistible grace and sending everyone else to an eternal hell, does so because He is sovereign and in doing so shows His glory?! That sounds like the actions of a tyrant and not a loving and just God.

Thus, Kielar concludes that God shows how much He loves His “elect” by sending those He does not love to hell and by tormenting them for infinity.

That shows the extent to which the Calvinist will go to “justify” his perverted and distorted view of God.

Let me explain further: Yes, man is responsible and stands in condemnation for his sins.

Those who reject God's grace do so because they love their sins more than their souls. (John 3:19-20)

But to say that God is sovereign and because HE is sovereign He can act anyway He desires is a perversion of God's very character. If in His sovereignty He has chosen to withhold His offer of grace, and thereby will not allow the condemned to be saved, then makes God must share in the blame for those who reject Him.

There is no glory in that for God.

Calvinism is a distorted, false theology that denies the very nature of God and, His plan of salvation and degrades God and His glory by making Him unloving and unjust.

This vein of thinking is at least cult like because it distorts the loving and just character of God. In the place of our true Creator, they worship a God that says He loves, but at the same time acts unloving.

God absolutely condemns sin and will destroy those who rebel against Him and refuse His grace.

But the Bible never says men do not have the chance to repent and be saved because God would not allow them to.

To bring a man into the world and give him life who is already condemned to hell is absolutely an unloving act.

No matter how hard the Calvinist tries to explain this away, this is the heart of his theology.

It is a fact that to send a man to the Lake of Fire and not allow Him any chance for redemption is without question unloving.

God says He died for the sins of all the world as 1 John 2:2 states.

Jesus said that if a man would believe in Him, his sins would be forgiven and he would have everlasting life and not perish.

(John 3:15-16, 36, Acts 2:21)

The word believe means to “to have faith, to entrust, commit or put ones trust in.” (Strong's 4102)

These actions of a man's will that are based on his trust in the One in whom he is believing and entrusting himself to.

It is God who seeks the lost and initiates His offer of salvation.

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

Romans 1:18-23 explains that God reveals Himself to every man, and therefore a man who ends up condemned in hell is there because he rejected God's offer. The passages states this is the reason the wrath of God rests on the one who reject His grace. Jesus said "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." (John 3:19-20)

The cause of a man's condemnation is because he willingly rejects God's free offer of mercy and grace.

To labor the point, it boils down to this.

If God gave life to a man, but prior to that decreed that He would not allow the man to be saved and withholds His offer of grace, then the blame for the condemnation rests with God, and not wholly with the man. If God created a man to burn in the fires of hell and will not allow him to be saved, then the condemned man is doing the only thing God will allow him to do, and God is responsible for the man's condemnation.

Clearly, this defies logic and cannot be the case. According to Calvinism, a man sins because God will not allow him to do otherwise.

This is totally foreign to our glorious Creator, Savior, and God. Most Calvinists in the pew do not take the time to consider what their false teachers are telling them, especially those of renown. Some of the ardent proponents of Calvinism, by their actions show that they have a distorted and false view of God and His plan of salvation.

Calvinism may outwardly present the Gospel, but they clearly do not understand it or even biblically believe it. This deceives many people as these popular teachers eloquently teach the grace of God, but they do not explain their distorted and unbiblical view of it. Recently, I was surprised to hear David Jeremiah fervently preach a message on the love of God from his current series promoting his book “God Loves You.” I read the following in the Introduction to the book he was offering to his audience, “I did some checking on what kinds of books were being published, particularly books about God.

And I was surprised that the simple message of God's love was being largely ignored. I knew what God wanted me to do. He wanted me to tell people, in the midst of such dark times, that God loves them; that He always has loved them; and that He always will love them. The title came together in my mind— something that doesn't always happen up front in the writing process: **God Loves You: He Always Has— He Always Will.**"⁴⁶

However, nowhere in his book does he mention election, predestination, or TULIP.

He failed to mention that he believes God's love is only extended to the few who He decreed or were elected to receive His grace, but not to all the world. He proclaimed that if a man would believe, then Jesus Christ, God would forgive his sins and give him eternal life.

Yet, this famous preacher was in reality was offering salvation to many in the audience that he believes cannot be saved because they were not elected to salvation. The Calvinist has no rival in preaching piety or God's sovereignty.

Yet while the Calvinists are proclaiming God's glory, they are degrading Him and making Him like the other unloving and false god's of men's imaginations.

Does Calvinism give a biblical explanation of election?

The beliefs of the Calvinistic system of theology misinterpret the Bible's teaching on election. However, biblically election does refer to salvation as they contend, but to what salvation accomplishes in the life of the one who believes. Election is God's plan for what He desired would be the benefit of those who believed and put their faith in Him. Election then is God's plan or blueprint of salvation. Election is not what individual God will save, but what salvation would mean to those who accept His grace.

This is explained in Ephesians One.

Verse 3 introduces the subject and content of the discourse. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3)

Paul is addressing how wonderful (blessed) is God who has blessed us with spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.

This is addressed to believers to remind them of the blessing of salvation to those "in Christ."

Verses 4-6 explain the blessing that God gives to believers and what salvation is to achieve in their lives.

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”
(Ephesians 1:4-6)

God has chosen "us," meaning those who are saved, before He created the world, that the believer should be holy (separated) and without blame (forgiven all sins) before Him in love.

God's plan was that before the world existed, to make salvation a blessing to those who believed and received His grace by making those who are saved a part of the family of God, His children.

The verse does not say or even imply that God chose which individual He would save, but to what salvation would impart to them. God is stating His blueprint for salvation.

He is not saying that He is choosing some and rejecting others. There is not one hint of such a thought.

Verse 5 says God predestinated that believers would be "unto" (eis) the children adopted by Jesus Christ by the "good pleasure of His purpose will."(eudokia)

In other words, God purposed that believers would be the adopted children of God. The statement does not address who God would save, but the relationship of the believer who is saved.

Verse 6 states "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." (Ephesians 1:6)

God's plan that He chose, was that those who are saved would be holy, without blame, and they would be the adopted children of God.

Therefore it is His plan that is in view, not who would He would save.

His plan, which is the blessing that is being proclaimed, is that those who by faith received God's gift of grace are "to the praise of the glory of his grace."

It is God's grace, meaning His mercy and love, that are to His praise and glory.

God is glorified in His benevolence (grace) and love toward sinful men.

Verse 7 continues, proclaiming the basis of redemption, that God's plan is that the believer is made acceptable unto God through Jesus Christ's blood, being forgiven of his sins through the distribution (kata) of the "riches of His grace."

That certainly does not sound like God is limiting His grace, but rather abundantly offering it to those who will accept it.

Neither this passage nor the New Testament says God elected or chose who would be saved or to whom He would deny His grace. The glory of His grace is that it is freely offered to all.

This can be seen in the many passages of God's word stating that Christ died for all men.

Calvinism teaches that election or God's gift of grace is limited to a select few whom God chooses to save.

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the whole world and offers salvation to all who will believe. Note that this truth is plainly taught in the following verses:

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

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

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

"Who (speaking of Christ) gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Timothy 2:6).

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead" (2 Corinthians 5:14).

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

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

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

"Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Romans 5:18).
"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9).

Clearly, each of these Scriptures teaches that Christ died for the sins of all men everywhere and wishes all men to be saved.

Any teaching of man that contradicts this truth is false, and that should settle the matter.

It is understood that those that hold to limited atonement often counter by saying "the world" and "all men" does not mean the entire world or all men, but refers only to the "elect."

Surely, such a line of thinking is based on man's faulty reasoning and not on sound hermeneutical principles.

The clear meaning of the word "world" (cosmos), as used in the Bible, means the whole earth and everyone on it or the lost world.

It is never used in the Bible as referring to God's elect or those who are saved.

The word "all" is all-inclusive.

"All men" encompasses everyone.

If God had wanted to limit the scope of salvation, He could have easily chosen a better word than "all", "world" and "every" man!

He chose these words because they convey the meaning that God intended.

He paid the price for all men's sin everywhere in the entire world! He bought with His own blood the right to offer all men salvation.

Limited atonement would imply he only suffered for those that will be saved, and this clearly an unbiblical teaching.

The Calvinist must disagree with many portions of God's Word to continue to teach that Christ's death was limited to only a few men who would be saved.

Matthew 7:13-14 and Romans 3:10-26 explains why men are lost and are condemned to hell.

Romans 1:18-22 says:

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations,

and their foolish heart was darkened" (Rom. 1:18-22)

The verse says that God's wrath is revealed from heaven against men's sin and that man holds the truth in unrighteousness.

It states that God has revealed Himself to all men and therefore all men are without excuse.

This begs the question . . . "Why would God reveal Himself to all men and base His wrath on the fact that men know the truth, but reject it, IF some men could not respond to God's revelation of Himself?"

Furthermore, the Calvinist must conclude that when he preaches the Gospel and presents salvation to his listeners, he is doing so "tongue in cheek."

He must admit he is offering something that some hearing him cannot receive because God will not permit them to.

I listened to a popular radio preacher eloquently speaking on the love of God for sinners for about fifteen minutes and then tell his audience that if they would believe in Jesus Christ they would be saved.

Yet, as a Calvinist, his teaching contradicts his proclaiming of receiving salvation based on whether a person would believe. This radio and television preacher, because of his belief in Calvinism, does not believe that most who hear his messages can be saved because he believes God has chosen to withhold grace to most of the world and thus condemned them without any hope of salvation.

The Gospel then becomes "Good News", only to the select few.

The others, whom the Calvinist says are born for hell, are wasting their time even hearing of Christ's death, burial and resurrection, because they cannot receive Christ.

They are, according to Calvinism, elected by God to an unalterable course to hell.

I heard John MacArthur on the radio clearly and passionately present the Gospel.

He calls his programs "Grace to You," but plainly believes that God's grace is only for the "few." What is baffling me is the fact that he and the Calvinists cannot see the contradiction in their beliefs and message.

For example, in his message on “God so loved the World- Part 1, John 3:16” John Piper states, “For God so loved the world . . .” The most common meaning for world in John is the created and fallen totality of mankind.

John 7:7: “The world cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify about it that its works are evil.”

John 14:17 states “. . . the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him.”

That is the way John is using world here. The word refers to the great mass of fallen humanity that needs salvation.

It is from the countless number of perishing people from whom the “whoever” comes in the second part of the verse: “. . . that whoever believes in him should not perish.”

The world is the great ocean of perishing sinners from whom the whoever comes.”⁴⁷

Yet, in another message, Piper says about God’s love: “It’s not a saving love that he has for everybody. Else everybody would be saved, since they would not have to meet any conditions, not even faith.”⁴⁸

Can there be any question that what Piper believes and what he preaches is a contradiction?

To labor the point, if Calvinism is true, the Calvinists who preaches, teaches, and witnesses to the Gospel is in reality, according to Calvinism, lying to most of the people who hear him and he's doing so in Jesus' name.

It is a lie to tell a man that if he will believe in Jesus Christ that he will be saved (Romans 10:9-10) while, at the same time, believing and teaching that most cannot accept Christ because God will not allow them to be saved.

According to Calvinism, the unelected are not offered God's grace, and most of the human race is doomed to hell with no chance of redemption.

Technically and practically it is a lie to tell an unelected person he can be saved when one believes he cannot.

In all the literature I have read I have never found where the Calvinists gives any criteria for determining who is elected and who is not.

The reason is clear . . . not even the Calvinist would go that far in their false teaching.

Doctrinal error perverts God's truth and corrupts the very Gospel the Calvinist claims he believes.

The questions the Calvinist must answer are these: "How do you know someone is elected?"

On what basis do you make such a determination?"

Jesus speaking to Israel, warned them that the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah would receive less punishment in the day of judgment, because Israel had the privilege of seeing and hearing the Messiah, but rejected Him. (See Matthew 10:15) He said the same thing of Chorazin and Bethsaida warning them of the results of their rejection of their Christ.

"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes" (Luke 10:13).

Jesus stated that their condemnation was because they had seen His miracles and heard His message, but had rejected Him as their Messiah.

This clear truth is but another death blow to the heresy of Calvinism.

Clearly, the people in these two cities, where Jesus presented the Gospel had a choice.

Yet, they willingly rejected the truth that they heard from Jesus Himself.

Because of their rejection, Jesus said they would be judged more harshly than those who had not been privileged to hear the truth. If the people in these cities in Israel could not have responded to the truth after hearing it, because they were predestined by God to Hell, then on what basis could God judge them more harshly than those who had not heard? Doubtlessly, God held them accountable for their sin of rejecting the truth and in doing so verified that they could have responded, but chose not to.

It was not God who chose to send them to hell simply because He could do so and because He decreed their condemnation. The people of these two cities condemned themselves because of their willing unbelief.

THIS one verse concisely sums up the Bible's argument against Calvinism:

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