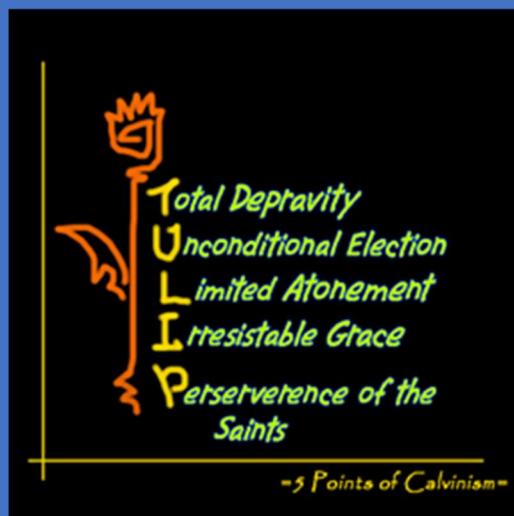


CALVINISM



Calvinism

By Frank Worgan

'It is no novelty, then I am preaching no new doctrine. I love to proclaim these strong old doctrines, that are called by nickname CALVINISM, but which are surely and verily the revealed truth of God as it is in Christ Jesus. By this truth I make a pilgrimage into the past, as I go I see father after father, confessor after confessor, martyr after martyr, standing up to shake hands with me, taking these things to be the standard of my faith, I see the land of the ancients peopled with my brethren; I behold multitudes who confess the same as I do, and acknowledge that this is the religion of God's own church.' Charles Haddon Spurgeon.

Design Of This Work

I offer this as an introductory survey of the system of Theology known as the 'Five Points Of Calvinism', showing it to be a claimed historic system constituting distinct and important 'Biblical' doctrine.

Our study will follow a prescribed pattern of:

- A. Definition.
- B. Defence.
- C. Discussion.

First of all, we shall deal with Calvinism in its historical setting, showing how and why the five-point structure of Calvinism was developed. This will necessitate a brief look at the contents of Arminianism. Devotion will be given to a 'Biblical' defence of Calvinism. Every effort should be made to understand the claims and teaching of such a system, else effort to expose it will be unfair and abuse to its claimants. We shall further inquire into the narratives used by Calvinists, in an effort to perform a just exegesis of the text with the primary purpose of proper interpretation, consequentially the 'destruction' of the Calvinistic theory.

Historical Setting Of Calvinism

When seeking to understand the doctrines of Calvin it helps to consider the Theological conflict taking place in Holland during the first quarter of the 17th century. In 1610 just one year after the death of Jacob (James) Arminius 1560-1609, Five Articles of his teachings were drawn up by his followers.

The Armenians, as his followers came to be called, presented these five doctrines to the State of Holland in the form of a 'Remonstrance' i.e. a protest. The Arminian party insisted that the Belgic Confession of Faith and the Heidelberg Catechism (the official expression of the doctrinal position of the churches of Holland) be changed to the doctrinal views contained in the Remonstrance.

Arminianism

We can summarize this doctrine in the following manner:

1. God elects or reprobates on the basis of foreseen faith or unbelief.
2. Christ died for all men and for every man, although only believers are saved.
3. Man is so depraved that divine grace is necessary unto faith or any good deed.
4. This grace may be resisted.
5. Whether all who are truly regenerate will certainly persevere in the faith is a point which needs further investigation.

Note

There has been some disagreement among Arminians over this final point, however in their doctrines it was altered so as to definitely teach the possibility of one losing his faith thus his salvation.

Jacobus Arminius (or, to give him his proper name Jakob Hermandzoon, was a professor of Theology at Leiden University and he rejected several of the doctrines of Calvin: particularly the Doctrine Of Election (or predestination). Arminius taught that God desires ALL men to be saved, and that God bestows forgiveness on all who repent of their sins and have faith in Christ.

He asked the religious authorities in Holland to meet to settle the issue once and for all. But, unfortunately, worn out with controversy and opposition, he had become a sick man, and he died 19th October 1609, before the Synod met. It was 9 years after the death of Arminius, when, I suppose, his personal influence had waned somewhat, that the Synod was convened in 1618.

It was held at Dort, hence The Synod Of Dort is the name given to this important assembly. (Dort is Dordrecht in Holland). There were representatives from a number of countries where Calvinism had been accepted, including Germany, Switzerland and England.

Altogether there were 84 council members, plus 18 Secular Commissioners. And they met 154 times before the Synod ended seven months later. They rejected the teaching of Arminius and reaffirmed the doctrines of Calvin as the official authoritative doctrine of Protestantism. And they did do in five chapters which have ever since been known as ‘**The Five Points Of Calvinism**’.

Now, these five points, are what we refer to when we speak of Calvinism today. They are as follows. The doctrines of:

1. **Total Inability**, i.e. Total Depravity.
2. **Unconditional Election**.
3. **Limited Atonement**.
4. **Irresistible Grace**.
5. **Perseverance Of The Saints**.

If you have written down these doctrines, you may have noticed the letter with which each one begins. **T U L I P**. And that is a help in remembering the five doctrines. (I express it like this, because when we use the term Calvinism, it may be several different things.

For instance, it is sometimes used of the actual teachings advanced by Calvin himself in his writings and sermons. But it is also used to describe the system of religion, which resulted from his teachings and especially, to the five points of Calvinism, about which I shall speak shortly.

Calvin’s Own Doctrines

1. The scriptures **ALONE** are authoritative.
2. God is **OMNIPOTENT** and governs to bring about his own will and to his own glory.
3. Man’s redemption comes through **SELECTED CHANNELS OF GRACE**: i.e. Through Christ. Through the church. Through the two sacraments. (Baptism and the Lord’s Supper)
4. God determined, according to his own sovereign will, who shall be saved and who rejected.
5. Adam’s sin becomes the sin of all men, because God ordained that men should inherit that sin.
6. The Church is the totality of all who are elected to salvation, whether living or having lived visible and invisible.
7. The Church, its ministry, doctrine, discipline, and government, is divinely appointed.
8. The State has the duty of guarding the divine authority and prerogatives (rights) of the Church, but should not interfere with the Church's laws, doctrines or ministry.
9. The **IDEAL** government is a Theocracy, (combining Church and State).
10. The Lord's Supper is not merely a memorial feast (as Ulrich Zwingli believed), nor is it a ‘**real bodily presence**’ (as Luther believed), but the **MYSTERIOUS** presence of Christ.

Calvin’s Influence In Holland

Calvin’s doctrine has a profound influence in many European countries and especially in Holland which has the longest history of religious freedom of any European country. But Calvin had those who rejected his severe ideas, even in Holland.

Calvinism

John Calvin, 1509-1564. Hence, died aged 55yrs. Born in France, Hometown Noyon in Picardy. From an influential family, father secretary of the Diocese. Calvin seems to have move in high social circles in his time.

First, studied Latin in Paris, but later turned to Greek and Theology, influenced by Martin Luther's reformation in Germany. Because he was a Reformation preacher. Eventually fled to Switzerland, because of the fierce persecution in France. Here, in 1536 published his famous work on the Institutions of Religion. Later visited his hometown Noyon, sold the family estate and came back to Switzerland, settling in Geneva.

At Geneva set up a Church, proclaimed his Confession Of Faith, and came out as a leader of the Reformation. However, his doctrine was so strict and legalistic that there was a rebellion against him, by certain people who became known as Libertines, a name, no doubt, given to them by Calvinist! Calvin was compelled to leave Geneva and he withdrew to Strasbourg, where he devoted himself to New Testament studies and married a widow, when he was 30 years of age. In 1514, he was invited back to Geneva, where the struggle with his opponents continued for 14 years, until Calvin finally gained absolute supremacy.

So powerful did he become that he founded what he termed a theocracy in Geneva, which directed all the affairs of the city and the personal and private lives of all the citizens (This sprang out of his views concerning the union of Church and State, and the roll the State should have in supporting the Church). Those who favour and admire Calvin, claim that in spite of his sternness, he rendered great service to the Protestant cause, since he:

1. Systematized the doctrine of Protestantism, and:
2. Organized its Church Discipline.

Those who oppose Calvin point to the fact that he was legalistic and intolerant of those who did not share his views. For instance, when Castellion opposed him, Calvin actually sent documents to the Roman Catholic authorities, his own sworn enemies, laying certain accusations against Castellion. The result was that the man was taken by the Catholics, tried and burned to death. Thus, Calvin rid himself of an opponent.

1. What Did Calvin Himself Teach?

T. Total Inability. **U.** Unconditional Election. **L.** Limited Atonement. **I.** Irresistible Grace. **P.** Perseverance of the Saints.

It is also fitting that we use that word **TULIP**, because the Tulip is always associated with Holland, if anything, it is the national flower of Holland, and it helps us to remind us that these five points of Calvinism were first set out in this way at the Synod Of Dort in Holland.

Why Do We Need To Know About Calvinism?

Why do we need to know about something which occurred over 400 years ago? The answer to that is very simple, because Calvinism is still very much alive! Regardless of how unscriptural we may believe it to be, there are many unthinking people in various churches and religious groups, whose official church doctrine is influenced a great deal by Calvinism, even though many of them do not know it. For instance: the doctrines of:

1. **'Original Sin'** has produced infant baptism which is practiced by the Church of England and the Methodist Churches, even although in theory they both reject Calvinism. But they both accept that a baby is born **IN SIN** and therefore they **'baptize'** it, to get rid of sin.
2. **'Once Saved Always Saved'** is a doctrine held by many **'evangelicals'**, the Baptist church, for instance, the **'Brethren'**, and others.
3. **Salvation by Grace Alone**, through the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, taught by several of these religious groups.

All of these are connected to the doctrines which came from Luther and Calvin. Here in 'The Thirty-Nine Articles' of the Church of England. It states plainly that the Church of England was **'happily saved, from the imposition of Calvin's doctrines, by the wisdom and good sense of Queen Elizabeth 1st'**.

It further states, p.477 further evidence that the Church of England is not favourable to the Calvinistic scheme is found in the remarks on articles 11 and 16. Yet, the Church of England **does** believe in **'original sin'**, as taught by Calvin and practices infant sprinkling which he also practiced!

‘Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.’ Ephesians 1:3-5

And WHEN did it all begin? Before the foundation of the world, God’s eternal purpose. And **HOW** God did it. He chose us in Him. In Christ. Notice, He **BLESSED** us, every spiritual blessing in Christ. He **CHOSE** us, in Him, that we should be holy and blameless. He **DESTINED** us, to be his sons to the praise of his glory, glorious grace.

This has been difficult for some to grasp. It means that even before the creation, God who knows the end from the beginning, **PURPOSED** that those who come into Christ should be choice to Him, (chosen) separated, sanctified and transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ, His Son. Calvinists make this passage teach something it wasn’t meant to the teach. It’s one of the main weapons in their imagined armoury.

Westminster Confession, 3rd Chapter

A certain number **‘are by the decree of God predestinated to everlasting life and others foreordained to everlasting death’, ‘and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either decreased or diminished.’** But this is not the teaching of the Bible, nor what Paul is teaching in this passage. The terms used by Calvinists are certainly found in the Scriptures, and in this letter, but the ideas which they have been taken to express are not.

The Church Of Scotland

John Knox, the Scottish Reformer, the Scottish John Calvin, one might almost say, because he appears to have had the same stern dogmatic disposition as Calvin, John Knox, was so greatly influenced by Calvin’s Geneva church, that he determined to reproduce it in Scotland and the Church of Scotland is Calvinistic to this day. So also, is the Free Church of Scotland which broke away from the state church in protest against the interference of the state. The break did not come on the grounds of any difference in doctrine, they are still Calvinistic.

Here Is What They Believe

The achievement of Calvary is not heightened by the ratio of sinners to saved, rather, the atonement was the price paid to Jehovah to secure the right of faithful men to be adopted into sonship, **‘For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus’, Galatians 2:26.**

The conditions of adoption have been made possible through Calvary. It therefore remains for men to respond through faith to the gospel message. Looked at in this light, the atonement is anything but limited, more we may say, infinite and measureless. For such was the mind of God.

Irresistible Grace

Calvinist definition, simply stated, this doctrine asserts that the Holy Spirit never fails to bring to salvation those sinners whom He personally calls to Christ. He inevitably applies salvation to every sinner whom He intends to save, and it is His intention to save the **‘Elect’**. The Gospel invitation extends a call to salvation to everyone who hears its message. It invites all men without distinction to drink freely of the water of life and live. It promises salvation to all who repent and believe. But this outward general call, extended to the elect and non-elect alike, will not bring sinners to Christ.

Why? Because men are by nature dead in sin and are under its power. They are of themselves unable and unwilling to forsake their evil ways and to turn to Christ for mercy. Consequently, the unregenerate will not respond to the Gospel call to repentance and faith. No amount of external threatening or promises will cause blind, deaf, dead, rebellious sinners, to bow before Christ as Lord and to look for Him alone or salvation.

Such an act of faith and submission is contrary to the lost man's nature Therefore, the Holy Spirit, in order to bring God's elect to salvation extends to them a special inward call in addition to the outward call contained in the gospel message. Through this special call the Holy Spirit performs a work of grace within the sinner which inevitably brings him to faith in Christ. The inward change wrought in the elect sinner enables him to understand and believe spiritual truth; in the spiritual realm he is given the seeing eye and the hearing ear.

The Spirit creates within him a new heart or a new nature. This is accomplished through regeneration or the new birth by which the sinner is made a child of God and is given spiritual life. His will is renewed through this process so that the sinner spontaneously comes to Christ of his own free choice.

Because he is given a new nature so that he loves righteousness and because his mind is enlightened so that he understands and believes the Biblical gospel, the renewed sinner freely and willingly turns to Christ as Lord and Saviour.

Thus, the once dead sinner is drawn to Christ by the inward supernatural call of the Spirit who through regeneration makes him alive and creates within him faith and repentance. Although the general outward call of the gospel can be, and often is rejected, the special inward call of the Spirit never fails to result in the conversion of those to whom it is made. This special call is not made to all sinners but is issued to the elect only!

The Spirit is in no way dependent upon their help or co-operation for success in His work of bringing them to Christ. It is for this reason that Calvinists speak of the Spirit's call and of God's grace in saving sinners as being 'efficacious,' 'invincible,' or 'irresistible'. For the grace which the Holy Spirit extends to the elect cannot be thwarted or refused, it never fails to bring them through true faith in Christ.

Comment

To the serious Bible student, the above proposals attract anything but serious consideration. However, in light of the facts that such claims appeal to scripture as their source we must examine them in that light. I dare not attempt to analyse the mind of those who hold such beliefs as worthy of the teaching of God. I can only suggest that their zeal in radically opposing the Theo-political opposition of their days blinded them to the understanding of God's word. Irresistible calling stands as a monument to futility and game playing of a dotting god.

Never has there been such scathing accusations against the wisdom and nature of Yahweh as the doctrine of effectual calling. Calvin gives us a God, who without reason, genetically endows every man with sin and subsequent damnations in 'roulette' fashion selects a few to enjoy His eternal favour. Without any desire they are destined either to salvation or damnation.

Such a quota has received the eternal irreversible decree of God. Then they present to us a God, who, in spite of the fact, has afore elected a limited group for salvation, conducts history through a course of hardship, promises and hope encouraging them to live lives which have no consequence.

God then presents us with a Christ who put within the hearts of His contemporary fellows' dreams which were to remain for many, impossible. That this Christ commissioned His disciples to track countless miles, putting their lives in jeopardy to preach a gospel unto nations who could not, even if they would, respond to the invitation. The elect find that call irresistible, the sinner can do nothing but ignore it. Not that he wills it, but because his creator as a birth right damned him for ever. All because one man and one woman dined at the wrong table. (R.J. Ritchie).

The Two Callings Of Calvinism

A. Representative calling. Such passages they use are: [2 Peter 3:9](#) / [1 Timothy 4:10](#) / [Colossians 1:20](#), they regard this as purely cosmetic, as evidence of the caring side of God. Of course, it cannot bring a response from the hearers.

B. Hidden calling. Such passages they use are: [Isaiah 6:9-10](#) / [Matthew 13:13-15](#) / [Mark 4:12](#) / [John 12:37-40](#). In this the Holy Spirit attracts the elect (the only ones capable of hearing) to obedience unto Christ. (This next is out of place!)

C. God gives the Spirit only to those who hear, believe, and obey the Gospel. [John 14:16-17](#) / [John 7:38-39](#) / [Acts 2:38](#).

D. Can that call be resisted? [Matthew 23:37](#) / [2 Timothy 3:8](#) / [Acts 7:51](#) / [Nehemiah 9:30](#) / [Isaiah 63:10](#) / [Ephesians 4:30](#) / [1 Thessalonians 5:19](#).

Comment

That the Godhead was united in purpose and fulfilment of redemption, we would strongly agree. It should go without saying, that the nature and will of the one will be in accord with the other, for such is the nature of their being. Christ's ministry in preaching the coming Kingdom, His dying for it, His invitation unto whosoever will, was in total agreement with the Father. We are not left with an act of disobedience in the life of Jesus, rather a clear pattern of the mind and will of God in calling people to repentance. (Back to where we should be.)

The Call Of God

The purpose of all God's conversation with man has been to attract a response and obey His will. Such actions are based on indispensable principles; as the willingness to receive. Since Calvinism deprives a man from doing or thinking on a spiritual level. such actions are futile.

A. An observation from Scripture shows that inability to receive derives from one's own rejection of the truth.

'Take heed what you hear, with what you give, it shall be measured to you, and to you that hear shall more be given. For he who has, to him shall be given and he who has not, from him shall be taken even that which he has.' Matthew 11:20f / Matthew 13:12 / Mark 4:24-25

B. It is evident that spiritual dullness or inability to understand God's calling derived not from Divine Intervention.

1 Timothy 2:4-6 / Titus 2:11 / Romans 5:1-8, but rather from their own rejection of the teaching and preaching.

The Hardening Of The Heart

This is spoken of in two ways.

A. Man's hardening of the heart.

B. God's hardening of the heart.

Observe that God's hardening of the heart never occurs apart from man.

1. It is never an arbitrary matter; it is always closely related to a call from God which evokes a decision.

2. It never leaves a person unchanged. As responding to this call will ripen one to maturity, so neglect will lead to deterioration. Hardening is not the result of a fateful decree but an act of God which manifests its judgment upon man's self-determination.

Comment

To exegete every scripture used by Calvinists would take some considerable time. However, to assert the Biblical viewpoint on the 'Calling of God' consider the following as being the nature of Yahweh in His preaching, then approach the narrative with this in mind.

1. God is not secretive

In His appeals to mankind His will has been open and clear.

'Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts.' Isaiah 55:6-7

All His admonitions are offered in good faith, without the slightest semblance of duplicity. Men are free to act, and valid alternatives are offered.

2. God's calling is unto life.

Instead of acting arbitrarily toward man God is governed in His actions by His purpose of grace toward all men. Romans 11:32 / Titus 2:11. His loving nature will not allow Him to whisper the terms of redemption or candidly hide His son from the lost. Such paths of redemption are heralded throughout the ages and for all to witness.

3. God draws men unto life.

John 6:27 / John 6:44 / John 6:65 / John 12:32. There are two words used for drawing in the New Testament. The distinction is not habitually observed, and the meanings often overlap. One originally means to drag or trail along, as a garment or worn slippers. One distinction, however, is observed the dragging against one's will is never used of Christ's attraction of men. John 6:44 / John 12:32.

Martin Luther said of this, 'The drawing is not like that of the executioner, who draws the thief up the ladder to the gallows; but is a gracious allurements, such as that of the man whom everybody loves and to whom everybody willingly goes.'

Drawing is a matter of compelling, it is not coercive. The coming of Christ constitutes a certification of His Divine Sonship of which men must be persuaded before they can come to Him. **John 5:39f / John 5:21**, Christ implied that they can come to Him if they would. What prevented them, was not imposed by God, but of their own doing, their redemption forfeited on the basis of their rejection of:

1. John's witness **John 5:32-35**.
2. Jesus' mighty works. **John 5:36**.
3. Father and the Scripture. **John 5:37-40**.
4. Moses. **John 5:46f**.

Textual Examples Of God's Calling

A. Belief comes of hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. **Romans 10:17**

B. Belief comes through the witness of signs. **John 20:30-31**

C. Salvation is through the power of the Gospel. **Romans 1:16**

D. Miraculous intervention or the power of the word? **Acts 16:10 / Acts 16:13-14**

E. The Ephesian epic

1. They were dead in sin. **Ephesians 2:1-2**

2. They were saved and sealed, 'after hearing the word of truth.' **Ephesians 1:12-13**

3. The exception of children from this invitation is obvious on the basis of their immaturity. The operative word in all this is faith. A trusting in God that He will fulfil that which He promised.

Calvin damns all infants (outside the elect) to the forecourts of hell, such we may add is his only alternative for rendered incapable by God and elected or not before their time, it is their lot to writhe in the everlasting flames of hell, to the eternal praise and glory of God.

All such assertions are seen as outrageous when set over against the gracious words of Jesus, 'Let the little children come to me and forbid them not, for such is the Kingdom of Heaven', **Matthew 19:14**. Texts for your consideration. **2 Peter 1:10 / Colossians 1:21-23 / Romans 11:22 / John 6:28-29 / Romans 8:28 / Acts 2:41**.

Limited Atonement

Calvinism states, 'In order to secure their redemption, Jesus came into the world and took upon Himself human nature so that He might identify Himself with His people and act as their legal representative or substitute. Christ, acting on behalf of His people, perfectly kept God 's law and thereby worked out a perfect righteousness which is imputed or credited to them the moment they are brought to faith in Him. Through what He did, they are constituted righteous before God. They are also free from all guilt and condemnation as the result of what Christ suffered for them. Through His substitutionary sacrifice He endured the penalty of their sins and thus removed their guilt for ever. Consequently, when His people are joined to Him by faith, they are credited with perfect righteousness and are free from all guilt and condemnation. They are saved, not because of what they themselves have done or will do, but solely on the grounds of Christ 's redeeming work.'

Such a belief as 'Particular Redemption' is necessitated by those who adopt Calvin's thesis on Depravity and Election. It remains a matter of 'common sense' that if humanity is incapable of doing anything for his spiritual food, he has to depend on a God to select those whom He wishes to justify and those whom He wishes to banish. Therefore, when one speaks of election or selection it implies a quota of saved and damned.

Calvinists are forced by their conviction on the afore mentioned doctrines to limit the efficacy of Christ 's death for the redeemed. They do not deny Christ's suffering as invaluable for if God so willed, satisfaction rendered by Christ would have saved every member of the human race. It was of infinite worth and would have secured. salvation for everyone if this had been God 's intention. But it remains limited either in sufficiency or in application by arbitrary decree.

The Reality Of A Limited Atonement

Without appearing to oversimplify the issue, it is obvious that 'atonement' is limited in that not all men will be saved.

Jesus Himself made this observation ‘**broad is the way that leads to destruction and many there be that find it.**’ **Mathew 7:13.** Is such an innocent observation the basis of Calvinism? Quite frankly, No.

The Theological Issue

The question of Limited Atonement according to some, delves into the complicated chambers of theology, braved only by the most noble and learned of our profession. Intricate in its appearance, it may be, and with subtlety may reason toward its conclusion, but it’s importance in the lives of mankind is beyond comparison with any other issue. (something missing from the notes)

Adam died in the garden! God warned Adam not to eat or he would die. He did eat; therefore he did die. That death was **spiritual**, this was the primary separation from God. In no other sense did they die (immediately) after they sinned. We have here what we might call a ‘**procedure of dying**’.

1. Tempted. 2. Sinned. 3. Separated.

Adam exercised his ability and made that capacity to sin actual, resulting in separation. You will note that punishment involved the severing of his relationship with God. The implication that ‘**capacity and ability**’ were removed is not justified. God did not re-model man’s faculties, re-design His creation, rather his relation with it altered. The Bible is emphatic in describing man’s dilemma.

‘**The wrath of God is revealed against all unrighteousness.**’ **Romans 1:18.**

Our sin is our problem.

1. All have sinned. **Romans 3:23**
2. He that knows good and does not, sins. **James 4:17**
3. There is none that does good no not one. **Psalm 4:3**

What is the Biblical definition of sin?

1. The etymological meaning is lit. ‘**A missing of the mark**’. ‘**Hamartia.**’
2. The New Testament usage is more comprehensive in its application for moral obliquity.
3. It is a principle or source of action, an inward element producing acts.
4. Sin acts through the body, the seat of sin is the will. Angels have sinned against God, **2 Peter 2:4**, and man, **Matthew 27:4**.

Compare these texts, **1 John 1:10 / and 1 John 2:1**. Using sin in the aorist tense, (with no implication of being repeated) cf. with **1 John 3:6 / 1 John 3:8-9**, where the present tense is used indicating the condition resulting from an act.

The consequences of sin

Without involving the full implications of the acts let us suffice to say that the client of sin dies or is separated from God. the state being the result of breaking God’s law as a conscious act.

Is original sin or the condition of separation from God hereditary?

Before examining this further, keep this in mind:

1. Death only reigns where there is sin, we are separated from the tree of life.
2. Sin is the conscious act of disobedience.

That there was a time in a man's life when he was without sin. cf. **Psalm 106:37-38 / Romans 7:9 / Romans 9:11 / Isaiah 7:16**. A man will be punished for his own sin.

An exposition of Romans 5:12

In the fifth chapter of Romans, Christ and Adam are used as types to contrast the condition of the redeemed to that of the lost. Note that the Spiritual state of man is the argument and not physical as some would suggest. Adam is used as the representative of sin; this is historically and theologically correct. Christ is used as the representative of life and reconciliation based on the same principles.

Whatever your conclusion is on this text, remember the tenor or the essay is this, man’s condition i.e. Adamic or sinful is reversed on the basis of Christ 's achievements.

If you conclude universal of hereditary on the basis of Calvinist inability, you must conclude universal salvation on the omnipotent ability of Jesus. The narrative of Romans five heralds the resulting state of man on the basis of the choice he makes. His ability to choose will either ring the death bell or sound forth his reconciliation.

The Urgency In Paul's Opening Thesis Is Encouraged By Man's Capability Rather Than His Inability

Missionary miles were trampled because man had an Option of life over death, the commission given by Jesus to wean the faith of humanity Godward. Calvin's suggestion that man is incapable of making such decisions undermines the advancement of evangelism rendering it a futile endeavour. Reference texts, [Ezekiel 18:20](#) / [Ezekiel 18:30](#) / [Deuteronomy 24:16](#) / [Romans 2:5-6](#) / [Romans 14:1-2](#) / [Jeremiah 17:10](#) / [Revelation 22:1-2](#).

In conclusion let us deepen our Biblical concept of man, his God and reconciliation, examining the human potential, physically and spiritually. Remember the thrust of Calvinism on this issue:

‘Man are left in their dead state and are unable of themselves to repent, to believe the gospel or to come to Christ’.

‘They have no power within themselves to change their natures or to prepare themselves for salvation.’

It is interesting to notice that in spite of Calvinist's definition of total depravity i.e. indicating the whole of man's being, his body, soul and spirit, the totality of man's faculties, emphasis is always put on the spiritual. [How much is totally?](#) Would it not be reasonable to suggest that man is incapable to the same degree, body and soul as spiritual.

Let us be the first to acknowledge that without God we are nothing. In Him depends our past, present and future. Life itself is because God has breathed it, human achievements in the physical realm are courtesy of God given abilities. [But what about spiritual achievements?](#) The faithful demonstrations of our forefathers, the response of multitudes to the preaching of the gospel. The Spirit filled life of the apostles, what was the basis for their achievements and what made it acceptable to God. Understand that without the intervention of God in human affairs there would be no concept of divinity, let alone a desire to please it.

Therefore, all rests on the initiative of God to reveal Himself. This He did, because [‘that which is known of God is evident within them: for God made it evident to them.’](#) [Romans 1:19](#). Within this revelation were precise plans instructing man how to achieve and maintain reconciliation with God. In Adam's case as in ours, it is the fulfilling of the law. The value in offering righteousness to God is rewarded by justification. [Romans 2:14](#) / [Romans 2:25](#). Not as he cautions in [Romans 4](#), on the basis of human merit, but on faith.

Hence God has put within man's reach to render faithful lives in return for reconciliation. Fallen man is blind and deaf to spiritual truth. [Genesis 6:5](#) / [Romans 8:7-8](#) / [Ephesians 4:17-19](#) / [Titus 1:15](#) / [1 John 1:8-10](#). Man in that state is of himself unable to repent, to believe the gospel or come to Christ. They have no power within themselves to change their nature. [Job 14:4](#) / [Matthew 7:16-18](#) / [John 6:44](#) / [2 Corinthians 3:5](#).

Total Depravity In Light Of Scripture

The Calvinists have well said, [‘the view one takes concerning salvation will be determined to a large extent, by the view one takes concerning sin and its effects on human nature.’](#) With a view to understanding the Biblical concept of man, his condition and his hopes, let us consider the following propositions in light of Calvin's theory:

1. Life and death.
2. Man's dilemma
3. Biblical definition of sin.
4. Consequences of sin.
5. Exposition of [Romans 5:12](#)

It is certain mankind forfeited when he sinned, but what in fact did he lose and what was his subsequent condition, physically and spiritually.

A. Before the fall.

Man had bestowed on him the greatest honour, [‘made in the image of God.’](#) [Genesis 1:27](#). Evidently this was not anything physical, for. God is spirit. Rather it was those God-like attributes of intellect, moral stamina and more important, he was righteous.

B. Man's capacities and subsequent abilities.

1. Capacity to love, subsequent ability unto Eve.
2. Capacity to function physically, subsequent ability to survive in the garden.
3. Capacity to sin, subsequent ability in that he disobeyed God.

Note, it is a fundamental of logic that the conclusion of an argument can legitimately comprehend nothing more than the premises from which it is drawn. This is important to keep in mind when examine the Ede affair. Conclusions must be deduced from the facts on hand, we have no theological licence to do otherwise.

C. Life and death are very profound realities. attempted definitions have proved to be very relative.

It is, however, necessary to have a basic understanding of these phenomena in order to understand man's condition after the fall.

1. To say that life is equivalent to mere existence is very misleading. Example: our mineral content on the earth has existence, but it does not have life.
2. To say that death is mere annihilation is absurd. We see death in evidence every day without annihilation. Example, a tree may die but it is not annihilated.
3. Life and death are governed by certain conditions. An essential condition of life being **union**. An essential condition of death being **separation**. To give life to any substance it must be properly united to some life-giving imparting agent. For death to work it must be separated from that agent.

Perseverance Of The Saints

What the Calvinists say, 'The doctrine of Perseverance of those who profess the Christian faith are certain of heaven. It is saints, those who are set apart by the Spirit - who persevere to the end. It is believers, those who are given true, living faith in Jesus Christ, who are secure and safe in Him. Many who profess to believe fall away! but they do not fall from grace for they were never in grace.' True believers do fall into temptations and they do commit grievous sins, but those sins do not cause them to lose their salvation or separate them from Christ'.

The Westminster Confession of Faith gives the following statement of this doctrine. 'They whom God hath accepted in His beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved'.

Comment

Such belief as this cannot stand alone but is a necessary part of the Calvinist system of theology. If God has chosen men unconditionally to eternal life and if His Spirit effectually applies to them the benefits of redemption, the inescapable conclusion is that these persons shall be saved. Faced with the previous Calvinistic beliefs, the interpretation of perseverance, as made by Calvinist theologians, is impossible to justify by scripture.

The Destiny Of The Elect

In opposing this doctrine, let us not be misunderstood, 'The gates of hell will never prevail against the church of Jesus.' **Matthew 16:18**. Nor is there any force in heaven or hell that can alter the destiny of the faithful. Should the redeemed of this earth number one, then that one would be as sure of his rest with God as would any multitude.

The Condition Of The Elect

As all the promises of God from the beginning of time, their fulfilment was contingent on conditions met. Abraham would only father a great nation if he obeyed the call of God, Israel would obtain her election only in as much as she adhered to the law of God. This was well brought to light by Paul, in reminding the Jew of their righteousness being dependent on their faith. **Romans 11:20**.

We must conclude on this basis that election is conditional.

- A. Corporately. **Ephesians 5:27**.
- B. Individually. **Colossians 1:23 / 2 Timothy 2:12**.

- A. Condition on following Christ. **Matthew 16:24**
- B. Condition on keeping the commandments. **John 15:10**
- C. Condition on keeping faith. **Colossians 1:21-23**
- D. Condition on holding fast the word. **1 Corinthians 15:1-2**
- E. Condition. If we faint not. **Galatians 6:7-9**
- F. Condition. Do not sin. **Hebrews 10:26-31**

Unconditional Election

The Calvinist speaks: Because of Adams transgression, His descendants enter the world as guilty, lost sinners. As fallen creatures, they have no desire to have fellowship with the Creator. Who is holy, just and good, whereas they are sinful, perverse and corrupt. Left to their own choice, they inevitably follow the god of this world and do the will of their father, the devil. Consequently, men have cut themselves off from the Lord of heaven and forfeit all rights to His love and favour. It would have been perfectly just for God to have left all men in their sin and misery and to have shown to none. God was under no obligation whatsoever to provide salvation for anyone. The doctrine of election declares that God, before the foundation of the world, chose certain individuals from among the fallen members of Adam's race to be the objects of His unmerited favour.

These and these only He purposed to save. God could have chosen to save all men (or He had the power and authority to do so) or He could have chosen to save none (or He was under no obligation to show mercy to any) but He did neither. Instead He chose to save some and to exclude others. His eternal choice of particular sinner unto salvation was not based upon any foreseen act or response on the part of those selected but was based solely on His own good pleasure and sovereign will. Thus, election was not determined by, or conditioned upon, anything that men would do, but resulted entirely from God's self determined purpose.

Those who were not chosen to salvation were passed by and left to their own evil devices and choices. It is not within the creature's **JURISDICTION TO CALL INTO QUESTION** (capitals mine) the justice of the Creator for not choosing everyone to salvation. It is enough to know that the judge of the earth has done right.

Is this the God we know?

Election, when viewed from the Calvinist's viewpoint creates a very uncomfortable picture of God and His management in human affairs. For reasons unexplained by Calvinists, Yahweh has chosen some on whom He bestows saving grace and favour, while others are decreed to live in common misery. God's motivation in this is founded on His free will and mercy without respect for human worth. Such election made by Him can neither be interrupted, changed, recalled or annulled, neither can the true elect be cast away, nor their number diminished.

Election Is A Biblical Theme

It is certain such phrases as election, chosen and predestination are common in scripture. We would consent to the fact that God's will concerning humanity, it's fall, and redemption were all foreseen in the mind of God and such plans toward their reconciliation were implemented in a systematic and irrevocable manner.

Example:

- A. It has been so decreed that God receives only those whose lives are righteous, for such is the nature of God.
- B. It is systematic in the sense that it had design and purpose, for such is the nature of God.
- C. It is irrevocable in the sense that it is the word of the Lord, never compromising, never changing, for such is the nature of God.

God has chosen individuals and nations for the purpose of fulfilling His will. Consider the following, the separation of Abraham to bear the seed of a nation who would facilitate the coming of a Messiah. **Genesis 12:1-3 / Genesis 22:18.**

Through Isaac and Jacob, we see this materialize in the commonwealth of Israel a nation elected by God and protected by His will and providence. However, in the midst of their splendid achievements and honour one must not dismiss the real purpose in predestinating these people, **'that they might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which he afore prepared unto glory, even us whom he also called, not from the Jews only, but also from the Gentiles'**.

As he said also in Hosea, 'I will call that my people which was not my people and her beloved that was not beloved. And it shall be, in the place where it was said unto the, you are not my people there shall they be called the sons of the living God.' Romans 9:23-26 / Hosea 1:10.

Corporate Solidarity

It becomes clear at this point, that such election as is spoken of by Calvinists, i.e. God choosing certain individuals from among the fallen members of Adam's race, to be objects of His undeserving favour, is not consistent with Biblical definition. Far from it being a personal selection process, we see it as dependent on Christ furnishing a ground on which God could save men. Romans 3:25-26. Consequently, it stands that election is only in union with Christ. 'In whom he has made us accepted in Him before the foundation of the world'. But IN Christ.

The word corporate is essential to the exegesis of Ephesians chapter one. The scripture does not refer to election on an individual level. Rather as a body i.e. the assembly, He has chosen us. Obviously, this body is made up of individuals, but the election refers to the body or the group, in fact the tenor is carried throughout the Epistle. It remains therefore, that if an individual stays part of that elect, his future is secured and in a very real way is predestinated to glory with God. Such security is threatened only by apostasy.

Election according to His will

The above heading, I believe to be acceptable to Calvinists and others. There is a thin line of reasoning here I would like us to follow, but one which presents itself helpful in understanding the question of election. The Calvinists state, 'election was not determined by, or conditioned upon anything that men would do, but resulted from God's self-determined purpose.'

To continue this line of thought let us accept the above statement as one of fact, without application to one belief or the other. Since God is a consistent God and one who does everything with purpose and reason, I suggest if we determine what the will of God is concerning the redeemed, we can further understand the mechanics whereby he set them apart for that salvation.

What is the will of God concerning salvation?

1. God desires all men to be saved. 1 Timothy 2:4
2. God is not willing that any should perish. 2 Peter 3:9
3. God was active in declaring His will to men. Romans 10:16-18 / Acts 8:27 Acts 14:17 / Romans 2:1-16 / Romans 5:12

Comment

Calvin's approach to these verses and a multitude of others follows a significant pattern. He is urged to adopt this reasoning on the basis: if God is omnipotent, if He truly wanted all men saved, then all would be saved. Thus, he nullifies any argument by referring to the hidden purpose of God.

Referring to such Apostolic phrases as 'all men' Calvin suggests the election and will of God extends to all races or strata of humanity. (poor, rich, sick etc.) The Calvinist's view of election not only leaves us with a crisis, above which we are unable to rise, but presents us with a God without dignity, a respecter of persons, a sadist who delights in Russian roulette with the souls of His creation. If Calvinists have nothing better to offer, then gift us with their silence.

What is the word of God concerning salvation?

1. Romans 5:12-21 states that election comprehended all men potentially. The sacrifice of Jesus laid grounds on which God COULD save the repentant.
2. The promises made by God many years ago unto the Jews. prepared them for a universal invitation into the Kingdom His Son would establish.
3. Acts 2 witnesses Peter offering the keys to the Kingdom, to those who would acknowledge their wrong and turn to God for forgiveness.
4. To Isolate God's eternal purpose from the discussion on election, will throw such narrative under discussion out of focus.

That purpose being the consummation of all things in the end time, when the righteous will be with God forever in the Kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world.

An examination of Ephesians 1:1:3-14

It has been well said that of all passages of scripture teaching the election **Ephesians 1:3-14** is the foundation passage. G. C. Berkouwer observes ‘**The history of the doctrine of election may be interpreted as an effort to understand the meaning of these words**’ Divine Election page 135.

The key to the text

B. F. Wescott ‘**Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians**’ page 149. ‘**The whole passage is a psalm of praise for the redemption and consummation of created things, fulfilled in Christ through the spirit according to the eternal purpose of God. This fulfilment is contemplated specially in the relation of the believers to Christ, chosen in Him, redeemed, enlightened, sealed.**’

Everything is contingent in Christ

God chose us in Christ. **v4**

God graced us in Christ. **v6**

God redeemed us in Christ. **v7**

God summed up all things in Christ. **v10**

God made Israel a divine heritage in Christ. **v11**

God grafted in the Gentiles in Christ. **v13**

God sealed us by the spirit in Christ. **v13**

God pledged a larger hope in Christ. **v14**

The election of Christ

Scriptural affirmation is plentiful concerning God's choosing of Jesus. **Matthew 12:18**, in reference to **Isaiah 42:1-7**, bears testimony to the purpose and power of His elect personified as being beyond anything to which a prophet was ever called or capable of, more than mere mortal was ever able. cf. **Isaiah 49:1-13**. Note It may be advantageous to note that the ‘**Canons of Dort**’ referring to **Ephesians 1:4** affirm the election is in Christ.

Christ’s awareness of His election.

Throughout the ministry of Jesus, He makes mention of the purpose for which He was sent. It was the concern of Jesus in the days of His flesh, the theme of His preaching and the subject of His solemn warnings and promises.

Christ the instrument of election

It is important to understand the necessity of Christ fulfilling the will of God in order for election to be instrumental. It is difficult to find consistency within Calvinism on this point. There are times when they speak of Christ's role as being symbolic rather than instrumental. That God had already been appeased by the intention of the incarnation, the crucifixion and resurrection, rendering them as pure cosmetic acts.

On the contrary it is critical if the ‘**machinery**’ of election is to function at all it must be through the actual offering (on man’s territory and within his time) of Christ on the cross. Christ Himself viewed this as necessary. cf. **Luke 24:44 / Luke 24:46-48 / Hebrews 9:26**. ‘**An eternal past knew no other future, and an eternal future will know of no other past, save Christ crucified**’. Such was instrumental in the election of men to salvation.

What The Calvinists Say

‘**But He came into the world to represent and save only those given to Him by the Father. Thus, Christ’s saving work was limited in that it was designed to save some and not others.**’

The alternatives are present

1. If one universalises the atonement, i.e. ‘**Christ died for all,**’ we limit the efficacy in the sense that Christ dies for all and not all respond, then it is lacking in its effectiveness.

2. The other alternative they suggest, is one which limits the atonement to those who were elected for eternal life. In this it has design, purpose and total prosperity. On the other hand, as John Murray in his work, ‘**Redemption, accomplished and applied**’ states, ‘**We are confronted with the necessity of choosing between an atonement unlimited in extent but in efficacy and an atonement limited in extent but unlimited in efficacy.**’

The Atonement

A serious fallacy in Calvinist's reasoning is that atonement is totally 'man-ward'. Mankind being the guilty party, he being, the object of God's election, the beneficiary of all grace and recipient of all atoning work. However, in spite of what it achieved for mankind one must put the atoning act of Christ in its Biblical perspective. God **WAS** the offended party; man was the one who needed to be reconciled. Therefore, rather than the sacrifice being offered totally for man, it was offered directly to and for the glorification of Jehovah. Godward rather than man-ward.

Purpose Of Atonement

In a word, 'reconciliation'. **2 Corinthians 5:17-21**. The mission of Christ was to negotiate grounds on which man would once again be in a relationship with God. Throughout the scripture we are reminded of the need for sin offerings.

In the Patriarchal period through the Mosaic era until the 'fulness of time' sin offerings in abundance were made to Yahweh as terms of the covenant grace. Of this the Hebrew writer said, 'Wherefore even the first covenant hath not been dedicated without blood.' He goes on to state, 'For apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission'.

So 'blood shedding' is an integral part of the covenant making. Offered in faith unto God, it makes it possible for Him to fellowship freely with His creation once again. As is brought to light through the Hebrew epistle, such sacrifices as have been previously offered, slip into insignificance compared to the offering of Jesus. So, in essence it achieved its utmost design, reconciling the creation with its creator. But that is much like saying, 'a country has gained its freedom'. Such a statement fails to project the terms, sacrifices and reforms in such an attainment.

Consequently, the complexities of such victories are often less pondered upon in the euphoria of the times. In using such terms as, 'the efficacy of the Atonement' let us not determine efficiency purely by numbers redeemed. The atonement question will never be solved by mathematical comparison. In fact, the number of the redeemed has little or no significance in the Calvary event.

Should man never have responded to the Gospel call, Golgotha and its related events would be no less successful and accept able in the eyes of God. The sacrifice of Christ would have been just as successful should the Pentecost multitudes never have responded to Peter's sermon. Stating that atonement was purely an operation to secure the elect, vastly underestimates God's scheme of redemption. Where it is true to say, 'Christ died for the elect,' it is also quite correct to say, 'He died for everyone.' **1 John 2:2**.

I believe in foreknowledge. I believe in predestination and foreordination. I believe in election. But in the Bible sense, not in the Presbyterian sense. In a word, I am sure that God knows the end from the beginning. He had had the scheme of redemption prepared in His own mind even before historically sin came into the world.

He predetermined that salvation should be made possible to all men. He ordained that salvation should be made possible through the death of Jesus the Christ. He predetermined how the death of Jesus should become effective to salvation and predetermined the conditions on which men are to be saved.

He also foreordained (arranged beforehand) that those who accepted His offer of salvation should be taken out of the lost world to form his special people His Body. Hence the assembly was planned even before the foundation of the world. He foreordained that those who accepted salvation on His terms should be transformed to the likeness of His son.

Let me approach this from another angle and put it like this.

God, who knows the end from the beginning, predestined and foreordained that is beforehand and arranged beforehand that man should have the opportunity of salvation on certain terms.

1. Those who accepted the offered salvation would be the ones whom God chose to be His special people.

We choose god when we believe the gospel. God chooses us because we are believers. This is the meaning of **Ephesians 1:4**, not that God had 'before' chosen who should believe, but that those would be chosen would be believers.

2. He determined, those who believed would become His sons and daughters.

3. He determined, that those who became His sons and daughters, should become like Jesus. **Romans 8:28.**

4. He determined, that those who became like Jesus should be known for their good works.

‘Created in Christ Jesus for good works which god prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.’
Ephesians 2:10

Jacobus Arminius

This Dutch Reformed Theologian became involved in a highly publicized debate concerning the interpretation of Election and Reprobation. For him God's will was unceasing love as the determinative initiator and arbiter of human destiny. After the defeat at Dort, the Dutch Remonstrant were condemned by the Synod and suffered Political persecution for a time, but by 1630 they were legally tolerated.

Total Depravity

1. **Defined.** The view one takes concerning salvation will be determined, to a large extent, by the view one takes concerning sin and its effects on human nature.

It is not surprising therefore, that the **first article** dealt with in the Calvinistic system is the doctrine of Total Depravity.

2. What they really mean:

When a Calvinist speaks of man as being Totally Depraved, they do not mean that man's nature is corrupt, perverse and sinful throughout. The adjective ‘**total**’ does not mean that each sinner is as totally or completely corrupt in his actions and thoughts as it is possible for him to be.

The word ‘**total**’ is used to indicate the **whole** of man’s being has been affected by sin. The corruption extends to every part of man, his body, soul and spirit; It affects the totality of mans faculties, his mind, his will. As a result of this inborn corruption, the natural man is totally unable to do anything spiritually good. Note that the terminology implies spiritual inability. ‘**Incapable of good,**’ Child of Satan, Blind to the truth. All these are typical Calvinist phrases.

3. Concerning man’s beginning.

Man did not come from the Creator in a sinful state. Adam was made upright, there was no evil whatsoever in his nature, under no natural compulsion to choose evil.

4. Consequences of Adam’s decision.

He thereby plunged himself and the human race into spiritual ruin and lost for himself and descendants the ability to make right choices in the spiritual realm. His descendants are free to choose, every man can make choices through his life, but in as much as Adam’s offspring are born with sinful natures, they do not have the ability to choose spiritual good over evil. Man’s will as a result of inherited depravity, is in bondage to his sinful nature.

Westminster Confession Of Faith. Chapter IX Section 3

‘Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation so as a natural man, being all together averse from good and dead in sin is not able by his own strength, to to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.’

5. Texts used by Calvinists in support of man’s Total Depravity

a. Adam was warned not to eat on the threat of immediate death. **Genesis 2:16-17.**

b. Adam disobeyed, consequently brought spiritual death upon himself and humanity. **Romans 5:12 / Ephesians 2:1-3 / Colossians 2:13.**

c. David confessed to his birth in sin. **Psalm 51:5 / Psalm 58:3.**

d. Because all men are born in sin, by nature they are spiritually dead. Jesus taught that men must be born anew to enter God's Kingdom. **John 3:5-7 / 1 John 1:12-13.**

Believer's Elected

1. Before time began. **2 Timothy 1:9**
2. In Christ. **Ephesians 1:4**
3. To adoption. **Ephesians 1:5**
4. To Good works. **Ephesians 2:10**
5. To be conformed to image of Christ **Romans 8:29**
6. To Eternal Glory. **Romans 9:23** (as blessing of faithfulness).

‘Make your calling and election sure’. **2 Peter 1:10**

Arguments against Calvinism

1. Not One verse which suggests that Christ did **NOT** die for all men.
2. But many passages which teach that He died for the sins of all men. **John 3:16 / 1 John 2:2**, etc.
3. Many passages which teach that he died for every man. **Hebrews 2:9**
4. He died for those who would otherwise perish. **Romans 14:15 / 1 Corinthians 8:11**
5. Gospel is for all men; to be preached in all the world and to every creature, all creation. **Matthew 28:19-20 / Mark 16:15-16**
6. Man's responsibility taught in **2 Peter 1:10**

How election applies in Scriptures

Election of Individuals to Perform special tasks.

1. Sons of Levi to be priests. **Deuteronomy 21:5**
2. Men to be Prophets. **Jeremiah 1:5**
3. Kings and rulers. Cyrus. **Isaiah 45:1**
4. Men to be apostles. **Acts 9:15-16 / Galatians 1:5 / Paul Ephesians 1:11-13**

This election, or foreordination, shows God using his sovereign will. But it only has to do with the **task** for which these men were chosen. It implies nothing as to their salvation or their final destiny. See **1 Corinthians 9:27**.

Election of Nations or Groups of people to special privileges.

1. Israel an example. **Deuteronomy 9:4-6 / Deuteronomy 7:6**.

Israel as an object lesson, special blessings for nation which obeyed God, demonstrating the graciousness of God. Ultimately all other nations were to be blessed also. But these blessings did not guarantee Israel's salvation. Thousands fell in the wilderness. **Hebrews 4:11**. Finally the entire nation disowned and rejected. **Matthew 21:43**.

Election of Individuals to become sons of God.

In the Old Testament an entire nation was ‘**elected**’ ‘**Chosen**’ because of a physical relationship to Israel. In New Testament there is a spiritual election in which physical birth is disregarded and people are chosen to become sons of God on the basis of their faith in Christ.

In other words, in O.T. times, God elected all of the descendants of Isaac to receive blessings. So, in New Testament **all** who believe in Jesus Christ are elected to salvation and blessing. Notice in **1 Peter 1:2** ‘**elect through the sanctification of the Spirit**’. This means there were chosen ‘**elected**’ **because** they had been sanctified. They were not elected in their sin and disobedience, or whilst they were **unsanctified**. They were elected **through** the sanctification of the Spirit **in** Christ Jesus. Although their election is according to what God **foreknew would happen**, that is, God **knew** who would accept and obey the Gospel. The condition of election is faith and the place of election is in Christ and the agency of election is the Holy Spirit.

Election

Three Calvinistic Views of Predestination.

1. Absolute Predestination. Which states that the Atonement not intended for everyone nor is it offered to everyone.
2. Atonement sufficient for everyone; but still not offered to everyone.
3. Atonement sufficient offered to all, but in its application to the elect only. (Many called but few chosen.)

What Calvinism means

1. Man is totally and wholly evil and cannot possibly have any contact with God or with goodness.

2. Certain people, however, have been chosen by God to be saved, quite regardless of their wickedness or goodness, but solely on the basis of His own sovereign will. The rest are 'passed by' and are doomed to be eternally lost.

3. This election is so certain and unalterable that nothing man can do will change it. The saved cannot be lost and those doomed to be lost cannot possibly be saved.

Why do Calvinists accept this doctrine?

Because it offered what appears to be a readymade solution to the problem of evil. It says that after the Fall, nothing remained but total wickedness. And after the death of Christ, nothing but good remained for the elect.

The Term 'election' in the Scriptures

The word 'ekloge', means picking out, choosing. Thus, the elect are the chosen. Election God chose us. In the New Testament, Christians are called the chosen, or chosen 20 times. **1 Peter 1:2**, but the term itself refers only to the fact that they have been chosen and does **not** give any reason for their being chosen. The basis of God's choice is not given.

Foreordination to arrange or appoint before. Predestination to determine before. He Destined us. Pre-knowledge to know before. The word which we really ought to begin with is the word, foreknowledge. The fact that God knows **before** is the fact with which it all begins and upon which everything rests. Everything lies within God's foreknowledge. There is nothing outside of that knowledge. There is nothing of which He does not have prior knowledge. Omniscience, all knowledge is related to this. God knows everything.

On that basic premise we start out

Foreknowledge is one aspect of God's omniscience. But foreknowledge itself, does not say anything about the way in which God will **use** His foreknowledge. He could know everything and do nothing about anything, be indifferent. He could know everything and become involved in everything. He might know everything and decide to take action in some things. But the word foreknow ledge, I say again, tells us **nothing** about God's purpose. It only tells us that one of the characteristics of God is that He is Omniscient.

Indeed, all of these words tell us things about God, which could **only** be made known to us by God Himself. We have no way of knowing that God knows beforehand, or chooses beforehand or determines beforehand, unless He personally reveals these things.

The next word **foreordination** reveals a little more about Him than foreknowledge, This word says that God has beforehand ordained or appointed that certain things should happen. The question is **what are those things?** Well, we know for certain that His plan of salvation more specifically, his purpose to save men, was formed beforehand. The scheme of redemption was predetermined and fore ordained (arranged.)

Here is the crux of the issue. Did God include in that major decision, **who** should be saved in the Calvinistic sense of **how many**. Or how the **lost** were to be saved that is the method of how salvation was to be affected. That is the great difference between Calvinists and us.

'Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will'
Ephesians 1:3-5

When Paul speaks of election, foreknowledge, predestination, choosing means something different from what the Calvinist means.

Calvin: by decree of God, some foreordained to eternal life and others to eternal death.

Paul: by the will of God that **all men** should be saved and come to the knowledge, **1 Timothy 2:3**.

Calvin: neither are any redeemed by the Lord, but the elect only.

Paul: Christ gave Himself a ransom for all. **1 Timothy 2:6**.

Calvin: God's choice falls on men whilst they are still outside of Christ and in their sins, and unites them to Christ that they, the elect might receive forgiveness

Paul: When men respond to the Gospel and obey it and come to Christ, it is **then**, that God's choice falls upon them, that they become the elect, and enter into the blessings which before the foundation of the world, God had determined to bestow upon believers.

Calvin taught that some people who are still '**children of wrath even as the rest**', are among those whom God has already chosen to be saved, and therefore they will eventually become children of God. Paul teaches that no man is elect until he is in Christ. And all men are 'non-elect' until they accept the Gospel. Once in Christ we are caught up in the current of God's eternal purpose, and being His children are blessed with every spiritual blessing.

'For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfilment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.' Ephesians 1:4-14

What does Paul mean by use of the words predestination and foreordination? Is this a passage which teaches that men are foreordained to eternal life? To whom does Paul refer when he says, '**even as He chose us in Christ**'? Ephesians 1:4.

There are Three possibilities:

All Christians? A general statement.

Jews? Notice **Ephesians 1:12**, '**first hoped in Christ.**'

Apostles? **Acts 9:15-16 / Galatians 1:15 / Ephesians 3:2.**

Let us try to find out. If this passage is to be understood as referring to **salvation**, according to the plan of God from before the creation of the world, it would certainly apply to **all** Christians generally. Even if Paul is speaking about himself speaking, what is true of Paul, where salvation is concerned, is true of every Christian, And there are some people who simply take the passage as referring to the marvellous thing that God has accomplished in redemption.

Notice the contrast between the use of the words **we** and **you** in **Ephesians 1:11** and **Ephesians 1:13**. Paul quite clearly puts two groups of people over against each other. He speaks of **we**, including himself and **you** also. It suggests that Paul is **speaking of a special calling of the apostles**. Read again verses **Ephesians 1:9-12** and compare **Ephesians 3:2-6**.

In **Ephesians 1:10** Paul uses the word in the KJV dispensation in the ASV administration, Giving the idea of stewardship, household management, provision or arrangement. Here in **Ephesians 1:10**, it is in the sense of stewardship see **Ephesians 3:2** '**As you already know, God has given me this special ministry of announcing his favour to you Gentiles.**' **Galatians 2:7 / Colossians 1:1-25**. Here it describes Paul's election (selection) to apostleship.

Paul claims that he was, '**set apart before he was born and called by the grace of God to the office of apostle.**' **Acts 9:15-16**. Chosen vessel, vessel of election. **Galatians 1:5** '**Even before I was born, He had special plans for me.**'. Perhaps he is thinking of His apostleship to the gentiles for Paul is writing to Gentiles. Paul reminds them five times in this letter that they were **Gentiles 2:11**, for example. No Hope, Without God.

Mystery (favourite word.) **Ephesians 3:3-5**, musterion / secret Not a mystery because it cannot be understood but a secret which can be understood when revealed.

Colossians 1:25-27 '**I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known.**'

Ephesians 1:7. He purchased our freedom through the blood of his Son, and our sins are forgiven.

Ephesians 1:13-14. Earnest, arrabon, pledge. More than an instalment handed over in advance, as a guarantee that the rest will follow. **Why redemption?** (apolutroosin) Buying back that which was sold under sin, redeemed by His blood. Ransom, like a prisoner of war. Justification reconciliation.

The Holy Spirit is given as a pledge that delivery will be completed, the promise of full emancipation, freedom, a promise of that which God had already made possible. Bearing in mind that the one who is sent bears the **authority** of the **one** who **sends**.

What was the authority of Paul?

To the saints. **What is a saint?** Hagios set apart, Holy, Holy ones. **1 Corinthians 1:2** ‘to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.’

Holy 161 times Holy One, 4 times, Holy Place, 3 times, Saints 61 times. So, a saint is one who is holy. Nothing to do with being dead, as Catholics seem to think. If you are not recognized as a saint while alive, will never be one when dead, and being a saint has nothing to do with a title or name conferred upon you, but with a condition of life into which you are brought by the blood of Christ.

Ephesians 1:1. Grace and Peace, Charis, means here the friendly attitude which goodwill and kindness and love flows. The thought is that God is kindly disposed towards us. And as the result of this feeling of love, He does He does loving deeds. Grace is not something that we earn or merit. That is spontaneous because of what God Himself is.

Peace, eirene, unity, Concord. No peace without grace These two are twins. The prayer - or doxology, **Ephesians 1:3-14.** Thanks for the general Mercy of God. Compare with **2 Corinthians 1:3-7.** Thanks for the special deliverance. **Ephesians 1:3** ‘who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.’ Heavenly places 4 times in **Ephesians 1:20 / Ephesians 2:6 / Ephesians 3:10 / Ephesians 6:12.**

Position to which believers are raised, **Ephesians 2:6 / Ephesians 3:10**

Position in which Christ is given all authority, **Ephesians 1:20**

Position where we are reminded that fighting against evil, **Ephesians 6:12**

How are we chosen /called?

‘As he hath chosen us in Him.’ **Ephesians 1:4**

‘You can understand the wonderful future he has promised to those he called.’ **Ephesians 1:18**

‘God planned for you to be saved. You are first crop. You believed the truth, and the Spirit made you holy. For this purpose, he called you through our proclamation of the good news, (Or (through our gospel)) so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ **2 Thessalonians 2:13-14**

Called through the Gospel / chosen by God through the message of the Christ who was proclaimed
‘God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe.’ **1 Corinthians 1:20**

‘We were told good news, as they were, but the message they heard didn't help them, because they didn't believe it.’
Hebrews 4:2

If these Christians were subject to the irresistible call of Calvinism and were going to be saved whether they liked it or not. These verses would make no sense. And **2 Peter 1:10** ‘Hold Fast to make your call and election sure?’

Paul's prayer

‘His is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.’ **Ephesians 1:14**

Redemption of the purchased possession. **What is this redemption? Does it refer to congregations purchased by blood of Christ? or to individual Christians? Romans 8:23.**

Ephesians 1:15. Evidently the letter was also intended for some whom Paul had never met.

Ephesians 1:16. Similar expression in Romans, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians all the assemblies.

2 Corinthians 11:28 ‘On top of everything else, every day I feel the pressure of my concern for all the congregations.’

Ephesians 1:18. Heart kardia, chief organ of physical life.

By transition man’s mental and moral, activity, both rational and emotional. Not merely emotional but rational. Heart has eyes, in other words ability to understand. Eyes a channel of understanding.

In **Ephesians 6:6** ‘do the will of God with all your heart.’ Heart psuche. **Proverbs 23:7** ‘As a man thinks in his heart.’

Romans 10:10 ‘with the heart man believes unto righteousness.’

Hebrews 3:12 ‘Thoughts and intents of the heart.’

Mark 2:8 ‘Reason in the heart.’

1 Kings 3:8 ‘Give your servant an understanding heart.’