

“How we understand the person & character of God affects every aspect of our lives”

- RC Sproul (notable Calvinist)

This is a brief essay against the Biblical view of Calvinism. This isn't against Calvinists, just Calvinism.

I'm simply making the Scriptural case that the God within its pages doesn't look like the God of Calvinism.

At one time I was a proponent, so I understand the draw. Following the system requires laying the Calvinist grid over Bible passages. I also understand this; I think we're all guilty of this at times. Yet, for the Calvinist, I think the habit is particularly strong. If you view all of Scripture and everything about God and his plans and methods along Calvinist lines, most Scripture will start to look like it's telling you what Calvin and his proponents tell you it says. Those words come through the grid; other words fade into the background.

TULIP

Calvinist doctrine is summarized in the acrostic **TULIP**. Not all who would consider themselves Calvinists accept all 5, but honestly, to be consistent, one can't really accept some and not all. These 5 “points” are what I refute in the following sections. In the last section I'll address election, the main point surrounding Calvinism, from what I see as a Biblical point of view.

Total Depravity. This means that people can do absolutely nothing on their own. They make no decisions, they never even think about God, they only sin and hate God continually.

Unconditional Election. People are chosen (elect) whether or not they even have any desire towards God; they can do nothing to resist it. In fact, even the very faith that saves them (let alone works) is imbued in them.

Limited Atonement. Jesus atoned only for the elect at the cross; not for any of the non-elect.

Irresistible Grace. Those chosen have no ability to decide not to be chosen.

Perseverance of the Saints. A chosen one can never be un-chosen; there is nothing a saved person can do to apostacize.

Against Total Depravity

Calvinism: Humans can make no advance at all in the direction of God.

- *But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.* Luke 8:15 (Parable of the Sower)
 - Those who received the gospel had a “good & noble heart.” In the parable, this is explaining the condition of the soil (heart) that the seed landed on; not the condition produced by the seed. There was something stirring in those people before they converted.
- ⁵ Cursed is the man who trusts in man
And makes flesh his strength,
Whose heart departs from the LORD.
⁶ For he shall be like a shrub in the desert,
And shall not see when good comes,
But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness,
In a salt land which is not inhabited.
⁷ "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD,
And whose hope is the LORD.
⁸ For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters,
Which spreads out its roots by the river,
And will not fear when heat comes;
But its leaf will be green,
And will not be anxious in the year of drought,
Nor will cease from yielding fruit.
⁹ "The heart is deceitful above all things,
And desperately wicked;
Who can know it? Jeremiah 17:5-9
 - The heart here is the heart from vs 5; the one that departs from the Lord. Which is different from the “good and noble heart” mentioned above. It’s not saying that every heart is this way.
- *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.* Romans 8:5-8
 - This isn't saying that an unbeliever can't make any movement towards God (total depravity), many, such as Cornelius in ACT 10 did. Paul isn't addressing the question of whether an unbeliever can repent; he's detailing how to live the Christian life.
- Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Genesis 6:5
 - This describes how bad the people in that place at that time got; it's not a general description of all people (not describing total depravity). Here is a description of a different kind of person: *There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain*

priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Luke 1:5-6

- *Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil. Jeremiah 13:23*
 - This is not a universal description of man (not total depravity); in context, it's speaking of a people who have got themselves into such a strong habit of sin (accustomed to evil) that they can't get out.
- *"There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." Romans 3:10-12*
 - It's not that they had no ability, that they were under total depravity; they turned and became what they are. They chose to do this.

Against Unconditional Election

Calvinism: People are chosen (elect) whether or not they even have any desire towards God; they can do nothing to resist it. In fact, even the very faith that saves them (let alone works) is imbued in them. Unconditional election goes both ways (elect & non-elect).

Basic Reasoning: If we knew of an earthly father who chose over half of his children to be the subjects of torment for doing nothing wrong (because they can't help it), that father would be considered a sociopath.

- *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.* 2 Peter 3:9
 - Calvinism says it's God's perfect will to send (billions) to hell. This verse alone defeats that supposition; he's not willing that any should perish. If it's not God's will, it must be up to the individual's will; he or she must have a choice.
- *But Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also; neither would he let the people go.* Exodus 8:32.
- *But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh; and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had spoken to Moses.* Exodus 9:12
 - This has nothing to do with eternal election. In this case, God amplified Pharaoh's own hardening or maybe froze him into a hardened state. He was hardened beyond a point of no return. The 2 English words "hardened" are different words in Hebrew. The one in 8:32 (Pharaoh's action) has negative moral connotations; the one in 9:12 has more the meaning of strengthen/fasten. This would indicate that God simply strengthened his existing position.
- *Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves,* Romans 1:24
 - God at times directs certain wicked people to do specific wicked things. He doesn't take good people and make them start doing wicked things.
- *"Therefore you, O son of man, say to the children of your people: 'The righteousness of the righteous man shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall because of it in the day that he turns from his wickedness; nor shall the righteous be able to live because of his righteousness in the day that he sins.' When I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, but he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die. Again, when I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' if he turns from his sin and does what is lawful and right, if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of his sins which he has committed shall be remembered against him; he has done what is lawful and right; he shall surely live.*
"Yet the children of your people say, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' But it is their way which is not fair! When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall die

because of it. But when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is lawful and right, he shall live because of it. Ezekiel 33:12-19

- Responsibility for each person's own actions. He encourages the wicked to *turn* from his way. How could he do that if God controls every moral choice?

- ¹⁵ *Hear and give ear:*

*Do not be proud,
For the LORD has spoken.*

¹⁶ *Give glory to the LORD your God
Before He causes darkness,
And before your feet stumble
On the dark mountains,
And while you are looking for light,
He turns it into the shadow of death
And makes it dense darkness.*

¹⁷ *But if you will not hear it,
My soul will weep in secret for your pride;
My eyes will weep bitterly
And run down with tears,
Because the LORD's flock has been taken captive. Jeremiah 13:15-17*

- Their pride caused them to reject him (they weren't created that way) and he reacts with tears. To the Calvinist, God should not react this way; he caused them to be that way. Thus, God's true feelings wouldn't be discernable.

- *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse... Romans 1:18-20*

- They did all these things of their own volition and are without excuse. If unconditional election were true, they certainly would have excuse: God appointed me this way & there was nothing I could do about it!

- *And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. Ephesians 2:1-3*

- Those he made alive were once children of wrath. If they were chosen beforehand for glory, they would never be such.
- The Calvinist makes too much of the fact that we "were dead." To take this analogy, that we were all spiritually dead at some point, and use that to mean that we can't take any steps toward God or respond to the Holy Spirit is pushing an analogy too far. Because a physically dead person can't do anything doesn't imply that Scripture's referring to unregenerate people as spiritually "dead" means they likewise can do nothing. Further, the regenerate are said to be "dead to sin," but that doesn't mean they are incapable of it.

- ROM 9

- Romans 9, read carefully, was the most convincing passage against Calvinism to me in the same way that Revelation 20 was the most convincing in favor of Amillennialism. There is too much going on here to get into in detail in this brief document, but just as a teaser, Romans 9-11 deals with Israel. The entire section deals with Israel as a nation. Nothing in the passage addresses how God chooses individuals, but rather how he chose a nation. Here's an example: *it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."* Romans 9:12-13. The Calvinist reads this and thinks it's describing how God chooses the eternal destinies of individuals. No! it's speaking of nations. The older shall serve younger: there is nothing written about their eternal destinies, it's speaking only of their earthly relationship, their earthly functions; one was chosen to produce the messiah. It speaks of the nations emanating from them. The choosing of Jacob over Esau was about the choosing of who would be the progenitor of a nation. The original passage it's referencing (Gen 25:23) says *"Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger."* This has nothing to do with election for salvation. On a personal level, Esau never served Jacob (in fact, at one point Jacob bowed to Esau).
- *For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.* Romans 9:17-18
 - He hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he could punish Egypt & their wicked Gods and have favor on Israel. It's not saying that he chose Pharaoh personally for damnation and there's nothing about God pre-determining Pharaoh's eternal destiny before he was a born. Again, Romans 9-11 all about Israel and national issues.
- I recall listening to R.C. Sproul describing how, when he was young in his Christian life, he could no longer deny the "God chooses individuals based on his own purposes" Calvinist theology based on ROM 9, but nothing in the entire passage speaks of heaven or hell or personal salvation!

- *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.* Romans 8:28

- Those who are chosen are chosen on the basis of being in Christ (*"just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world"* Ephesians 1:4).
- From this passage all we know is that God foreknew some and that he predestined them to be like his Son, not that people were individually picked for salvation. In other words, it's not about choosing who would be saved; it's about what would happen to those who would ultimately be saved (there is a glorious end for believers). It's a picture of God's plan for his people.
- He is foreordaining the fact that faith will result in these glorious things. We take that as a given & that there is something beyond that being discussed here, but it's not a given; it's an awesome thing.
- God surely does have individual foreknowledge, but that's probably not described here.

- *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.* Romans 8:29
 - Following from previous note, we're talking about those who are in Christ. If you are in Christ, you're being conformed to the image of Christ; if not, you're not. Those not in Christ are not under consideration here.
- *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* Romans 8:35
 - All things he mentions as being able to separate us are external. He is talking about things that could possibly separate us (the church) from Christ. No such thing exists. But by a person's decision, which is not a thing, he can choose to separate from Christ (draw back, become estranged from, etc.). *"Keep yourselves in the love of God"* Jude 1:21
 - This shows that when you do see one departed from faith, it wasn't God's fault. Further, the issue is Christ's love for us (in the direction from Christ to us); not our love for him (in the direction from us to Christ).
- *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father...* 1 Peter 1:1-2
 - This most logically means that he knew who would believe & he elected them based on their faith.
- *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.* Ephesians 2:8-9
 - Strap on your seatbelts, this is a big one. The Calvinist says that even the faith that you have was infused by God; a preposterous idea.
 - Salvation (not faith) is what is not of ourselves in the passage above. It wouldn't make sense for faith to be a work (whereas many believe that salvation is). One reason "that" doesn't refer to faith (aside from logic) is because they have different gender in Greek, and it's very rare for such a combo not to match.
 - *But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works...* Romans 4:5-6. Note: his faith. Boasting is excluded because it's not of works, the discussion is not around any boasting of faith. This is an important point; boasting only pertains to works; not faith.
 - Faith is in fact of us. For the Calvinist to think that faith itself is a work is to completely misunderstand the concept; it's the opposite of a work. Faith is a choice, and a matter of giving the credit to God rather than yourself!
 - Our salvation is granted and kept by faith.
 - *And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.* Genesis 15:6. Abraham's faith was credited to him for righteousness; God accepts faith as trade for righteousness. It's not our righteousness, but it is our faith!
 - *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* Romans 5:1-2. Faith is

the conduit by which we access grace which saves. We must stand there in that grace.

- *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation... 1 Peter 1:3-5*
 - *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17. Faith comes by hearing; not by God's will or by God imbuing you with it.*
- *..these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. John 20:31*
 - *If unconditional election were true, this would read, "having life you may believe."*
- *Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. Luke 10:30-33*
 - *Modern Calvinism doesn't say God appoints some for damnation; he merely passes them over. How then would God be any different from the people in this story who pass over the man who fell among thieves & didn't care for him?*
 - *But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? 1 John 3:17. This is what God is like; not a God that shuts up his heart.*
- **John 6**
 - *Calvinism draws heavily from this chapter; here are some notes.*
 - *All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. John 6:37*
 - *How the father gives, how they come is explained in vs. 45: They hear & learn from the father (they're not given by decree).*
 - *It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. John 6:45*
 - *This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing... John 6:39*
 - *He lost none but one departed (none of them is lost except the son of perdition John 17:12). The ones that were given are simply those who believe, as vs 40 says (everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life). It's God's will that everyone sees and believes. They were already the Father's; they're now given to Jesus for the next stage in the redemptive plan.*
 - *No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him... John 6:44*
 - *All who are his were drawn; not all who are drawn actually come (I drew them with gentle cords, With bands of love [but Israel rejected him] Hosea 11:4).*

- If unconditional election were correct, Jesus would essentially be telling these people, "You're not going to follow me because you can't. Sucks to be you!" What would be the point of that? Rather, the message is... believe.
- *...not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother... 1 John 3:12*
 - This says Cain is of the Devil, but God told Cain if he did well, he would be accepted (*So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door.* Genesis 4:6-7). If unconditional election were true, God lied to Cain.
- *For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You. Psalms 86:5*
 - Just an example of the God we serve; he is merciful to all who come to him, not only to those who have been "called before the foundation of the world."
- *...God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2:3-4*
 - God desires all to be saved, not that his "good pleasure" is to damn most as Calvin taught. This single verse refutes the doctrine if we had no other.

Against Limited Atonement

Calvinism: Jesus atoned only for the elect at the cross; not for any of the non-elect.

- *And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.* 1 John 2:2
 - How could this be any clearer? He died not just for our sins (us believers), but for everyone's sins.
- *For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.* 1 Timothy 4:10
 - This is just too easy to disprove...
- *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all.* 1 Timothy 2:5-6
- *Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.... be reconciled to God* 2 Corinthians 5:18-20
- *And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?* 1 Corinthians 8:11
 - Christ died for the one who perished.
- *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.* 2 Peter 2:1
 - The Lord bought those even who denied him.
- *By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* 1 John 3:16
 - This is how the love of God is manifest. For God to disregard those perishing would be the opposite of love.
- *All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.* Isaiah 53:6
 - All went astray; the iniquity of all was laid on Christ. This same concept along with its double "all" is repeated here:
 - *Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.* Romans 5:18

Against Irresistible Grace

Calvinism: Those chosen have no ability to decide not to be chosen; they are Christians whether they want to be or not.

- *What more could have been done to My vineyard That I have not done in it?* Isaiah 5:4
 - God is sovereign, but a sovereign can be resisted (like resisting a king). Example: Jesus is sovereign, but the rich young ruler resisted him. This question in ISA would be nonsense if posited by a sovereign who can't be resisted.
- *But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.* Luke 7:30
 - God had one thing in mind for them: his will. They rejected it.
- *Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He marveled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.* Mark 6:5-6
 - Jesus couldn't do works there because of their lack of faith. He marveled at their lack of faith. He would not marvel if he knew it was the Father who simply gave faith to some & not others.
- *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!* Matthew 23:37
 - God *wanted* to gather them, but they were *unwilling* (they had their own will). Scripture speaks many times about God calling people who ignore it. Scripture frequently speaks of God being angry that people didn't believe him, or do what he wished. If irresistible grace were true, God wouldn't say these things, he would know that it's because he caused it to happen anyway. See how this makes almost everything illogical? You really have to be taught such a system; the vast majority of people wouldn't arrive at it on their own.
- *We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.* 2 Corinthians 6:1-2
 - One can receive the grace of God, but it not be irresistible, rather, it's "in vain."

Against Perseverance of the Saints

Calvinism: A chosen one can never be un-chosen; there is nothing a saved person can do to apostacize.

Section Preface: The warnings in Scripture against falling away would be pointless in a Calvinist light. In either case of a person being elect or non-elect, the warnings would be useless (the elect don't need them; the non-elect can't heed them). Nonsense; why warn those who are not now nor will ever be Christians not to fall away? What's worse, they may keep more false Christians hanging around in the church.

- *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance... Hebrews 6:4-6*
 - When I still believed the Calvinist view, this was the verse that finally broke me. Calvinists must tap dance all around this (and other warnings in Hebrews). The writer is emphatic that he is speaking of believers (enlightened, tasted the gift, partakers, tasted the powers). They can fall away ("fall away" literally means apostacize).
- *For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? Hebrews 10:26-29*
 - Like the passage above (only in the reverse), this one emphatically describes an apostate, but yet that person was sanctified by the blood.
- *But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. Hebrews 10:39*
 - Some draw back; others [continue] in belief unto salvation.
- *Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God Hebrews 3:12*
- *Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. ¹² Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. ¹³ But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. Luke 8:11-13*
 - Some believed for a while but fell away. Were they saved while they believed? Vs 12 says yes.
- *But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. 1 Corinthians 9:27*
 - The word for disqualified here is the same as the word for reprobate. It's the same word that is unquestionably used to refer to unsaved people here:

- *Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified. 2 Corinthians 13:5*
 - Considering the context of the next chapter (about reprobate Israel), and the fact that Paul is certainly a Christian, he must mean loss of salvation.
- *Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins. James 5:19-20*
 - He's talking to Christians about one who wanders from the truth such that bringing him back saves his soul from (spiritual) death. Sure sounds like a Christian can lose salvation.
- *For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. 2 Peter 2:20-21*
 - "Knowledge" in this epistle indicates intimate or saving knowledge making this mean that they really were saved. It's worse because now they're jaded; they've been there, they know the truth, & are unlikely to return. It's worse at end than beginning (before they escaped the world) must mean loss of salvation.
- *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. John 10:27-28*
 - No one can snatch them: no one can force Christ away from you, but you may wander away on your own (& get devoured by a wolf). Many verses seem to imply eternal security by saying that a believer will always have eternal life or words to that effect. This language, however, is simply implying a continuation of a state of belief without denying that that state can change. This is proved by JOH 3:36 which reads, "*he who does not believe the Son shall not see life*". Taken uncritically, this would mean that a person who does not presently believe cannot ever have eternal life. We know this is untrue because if it was, nobody would ever be saved.
- *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. John 17:12*
 - "Those given to him" throughout the upper room discourse refers to his faithful remnant - the apostles. Yet, one of them fell away.
- *For if we died with Him, We shall also live with Him. If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself. 2 Timothy 2:11-13*
 - Remaining faithful probably means faithful to his word. In this case, that may refer to the bad things he promised to do to those who are unfaithful. In any case, it can't mean he remains faithful to us if we aren't faithful to him; the previous verse says the reverse. One can't read this text and come to any other conclusion unless he/she has been taught a theology that says otherwise.

- *And out of the ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.* Genesis 2:9
 - The tree of life was something that must be eaten of on some regular basis. We can deduce this from REV 22:2 (the same tree there yields fruit every month; why would it continually blossom if it need only be eaten from once?). Thus, we need to partake regularly (like partaking of him [John 6:51] and abiding in him [JOH 15:4]), or we will be cut off from the tree of life (MAT 7:19). If we taste the fruit, but don't return, we may not be able to get the fruit again.
- *...who "will render to each one according to his deeds": eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath* Romans 2:6-8
 - Salvation isn't based on doing good, but the continuance of it has something to do with works.
- *And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.* Luke 12:42-48
 - This passage begins by speaking of a servant (both of these hypothetical people are servants) who has stopped obeying his master (quite obviously a picture of servants of the Lord). Then when the master returns, he sends that servant where the unbelievers go. Not only that, but the backslidden servant is judged more harshly than one who was never a servant.
- *He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.* Revelation 3:5
 - If your name can be blotted out, that means it was once in, so you were saved but now aren't.
- *My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you, I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.* Galatians 4:19-20
 - He labors in birth again. This seems that indicate one can indeed be born again, unborn, and born again.
- *So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* Matthew 19:28
 - At this time, Judas was present as one of the twelve. That promise applied to him... until he defected.

- *I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition... John 17:9-12*
 - Jesus describes his apostles as "those who are yours." This indicates they were of God's true remnant. Jesus then goes on to say one is lost.
- *Therefore the LORD God of Israel says: I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.' But now the LORD says: 'Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. 1 Samuel 2:30*
 - Blessings don't continue unconditionally to those who turn against God.
- *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith... 1 Timothy 4:1*
- *You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. Galatians 5:4*
 - I'm going to employ the linguistic tactic sometimes used by Calvinists – What does fall from grace mean? It means fall from grace.
- *For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 1 Corinthians 8:10-11*
 - A brother perishes. That word perish means "to destroy fully."
- *Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. John 15:2-6*
 - The branch was in him; now it's not.
- *Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. Proverbs 4:23*
 - God keeps those who keep themselves:
 - *Little children, keep yourselves from idols. 1 John 5:21*
 - *When the army goes out against your enemies, then keep yourself from every wicked thing. Deuteronomy 23:9*
 - *Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world... Revelation 3:10*
 - *We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him. 1 John 5:18*
 - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:3-5*
 - We are kept through faith.

- *...keep yourselves in the love of God* Jude 1:21
 - Our part.
 - *Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling...* Jude 1:24
 - His part.
- *Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.* 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22
 - Our part.
 - *Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Thessalonians 5:23
 - His part.
- *I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.* John 17:6
 - Our part (they kept the word).
 - *Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.* John 17:11
 - His part.

Against Determinism

Calvinism: The overall teaching of Calvinism is the general idea that God ordains every detail of history in advance such that we're all just puppets in his play. This is the summary of the general idea behind all the main 5 points.

Section Preface: We pray 'Thy will be done on earth as in heaven' precisely because God does not always get his will done on earth.

- *Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; Acts 2:22-23*
 - God ordains the means as well as the ends of human events w/o violating human freedom and responsibility. There is nothing saying that he specifically placed such deliverance into the heart of Judas. There were others who intended to take him, but God prevented such from happening until the time was right. Sometimes God does specifically turn the heart of a person (such as Pharaoh). Pharaoh was already far down that road; God's judgment was already imminent; he just nudged him further. Pharaoh is mentioned because he's *exceptional*. If God steered everyone all the time it would go without saying.
- *You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. James 4:2*
 - Prayer changes things. I don't think it's like Calvinist teaching that everything is pre-determined and we only pray because we're told to.
- If God always & everywhere controlled all things, Scripture would not say some things are of God & others aren't. And if he unilaterally determined every choice, why does Scripture frequently refer to him hardening/blinding? This speaks of him redirecting people in *certain* cases.
 - *Thus says the LORD:
"Heaven is My throne,
And earth is My footstool.
Where is the house that you will build Me?
And where is the place of My rest?
² For all those things My hand has made,
And all those things exist,"
Says the LORD.
"But on this one will I look:
On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit,
And who trembles at My word.
³ "He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man;
He who sacrifices a lamb, as if he breaks a dog's neck;
He who offers a grain offering, as if he offers swine's blood;
He who burns incense, as if he blesses an idol.*

*Just as they have chosen their own ways,
And their soul delights in their abominations,*

⁴ So will I choose their delusions,

And bring their fears on them;

Because, when I called, no one answered,

When I spoke they did not hear;

But they did evil before My eyes,

And chose that in which I do not delight." Isaiah 66:1-4

- They chose their actions & God will choose some judgmental delusions.
- *For they intended evil against You; They devised a plot which they are not able to perform.* Psalms 21:11
 - God thwarts plots. If he controlled everything, there would be no reason to create his own plots just to thwart them.
- *(they have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or speak, nor did it come into My mind)* Jeremiah 19:5 (also 32:35)
 - The wicked do things that God would never think of.
- *Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.
And in Your book they all were written,
The days fashioned for me,
When as yet there were none of them.* Psalms 139:16
 - Though he foresees us and has a plan for us, it doesn't necessarily mean every single action is planned for us as if we make no choices. "The days" may simply mean the overall plan.

Class Election

Section Preface: Election is certainly a Biblical teaching. I believe the “choosing” or “election” spoken of in Scripture is best explained by applying the concept of “class election.” This is the idea that God chose (before the foundations of the world) a group/class of people that would be his elect. One can look at all verses mentioning election *individually* and they would fit either the Calvinist or the class election paradigm; we must interpret them based on the totality of Scripture.

- *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.* 1 Peter 2:9-10
 - We are a chosen generation; not chosen individuals.
- *As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."* Romans 9:13
 - The chapter of Romans 9 was discussed earlier in the section “against total depravity.” To re-cap, it speaks of the election of a nation; not individuals. From that, a good argument can be made that people choose whether to be a part of the chosen nation (a non-Jew could choose to join and a Jew could choose to not be a Jew inwardly). So, it is today; the church is chosen (the church being the fulfillment, or if you prefer, simply the analog, of Israel). People choose individually whether to be in that category.
- *...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love...* Ephesians 1:4
 - Not chosen to be in Christ, but chosen in Christ. Note also that he chose "us" ... "without blame," and in EPH 5:27 he presents the church "without blemish" (*...that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*). Us here is the same as the church there - us is the church.
- *God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.* 1 John 5:11-12
 - The life is in Christ. If you're “in Christ,” if you're part of the body of Christ, the chosen people, you have the life; otherwise, you don't. It's up to each person to decide where he wants to be.
- *Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.* Romans 8:30
 - “Glorified” is in the past tense: Calvinists take that to indicate the certainty of election. That seems (again) like reading a theology into it; more likely it indicates that all are glorified in Christ who is the one who has already been glorified.