



Election, Predestination, Calvinism and “Free Will”

And other matters you were *predestined* not to fully understand this side of Heaven.

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 Scriptures are printed verbatim with references noted but highlights and underlines are added. Quotes and all primary sources are footnoted.

Overview of TULIP

(“TULIP” is a *memory hook* for the “5 Points of Calvinism” and presented here with an overview of an Arminianistic response.)

The Five Points of Calvinism and Arminianism

Category (TULIP)	<i>Calvinism</i>	<i>Arminianism</i>
Total Depravity of Man	<p>Total Depravity/Inability</p> <p>Because of the fall, man is unable of himself to savingly believe the Gospel. The sinner is dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God. God, and God alone acts in the salvation process. Salvation is God’s unmerited gift to the sinner.</p>	<p>Free Will or Human Ability</p> <p>Although human nature was seriously affected by the fall, man has not been left in a state of total spiritual helplessness. God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but he does not interfere with man’s freedom.</p>
Unconditional Election	<p>Unconditional Election</p> <p>God’s choice of individuals to salvation before the foundation of the world rested solely in his own sovereign will. His choice of particular sinners was not based on any foreseen response or obedience on their part (such as faith, repentance, etc.)—only whom God has selected.</p>	<p>Conditional Election</p> <p>God’s choice of certain individuals to salvation before the foundation of the world was based on his foreseeing that they would respond to His Call. Election therefore was determined by or conditioned on what a person would do. God choose those whom He knew (of their own free will) would cooperate with the Holy Spirit’s working.</p>
Limited Atonement	<p>Limited Atonement</p> <p>Christ’s redeeming work was intended to save the elect only and actually secured salvation for them alone.</p>	<p>General Atonement</p> <p>Christ’s redeeming work made it possible for everyone to be saved but did not actually secure the salvation of anyone.</p>
Irresistible Grace	<p>Irresistible Grace</p> <p>The Holy Spirit extends to the elect a special inward call that inevitably brings them to salvation. This call is irresistible.</p>	<p>Resistible Grace</p> <p>The Holy spirit extends to all people a call to be saved. But, inasmuch as man is free, he can successfully resist the Spirits call.</p>
Perseverance of the Saints	<p>Perseverance of the Saints</p> <p>All who are chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Holy Spirit are eternally saved and cannot lose their salvation.</p>	<p>Falling from Grace</p> <p>Those who truly believe and are truly saved can lose their salvation by failing to keep up their faith. NOTE: Not all Arminians agree on this point; some hold to the doctrine of “eternal security” for every Believer.</p>

Some Important Observations

1. This issue is very complex.* Ultimately, only in Heaven will we truly know “God’s exact position” on this matter

*Other issues: Supralapsarianistic Calvinism, Infralapsarianistic Calvinism, Sublapsarianistic Calvinism, Antinomianism, & an understanding of languages, much of church history, “Free will” vs. the sovereignty of God, systematic theology, biblical hermeneutics, etc. The point is, this is a very deep theological subject. Respected scholars who love God deeply fall on “both sides of the fence” on this complex issue.

2. Problems with *extremes* on both sides:

Extreme Calvinism: A. It equals fatalism; B. How can God fault anyone for sin if no one can resist His will and if everything is a predetermined plan of God? C. It makes God the *Author of Sin*.

Extreme Arminianism: A hyper-view of Arminianism is that our will can overrule the will of God—that’s heresy.

3. Important Scriptures to both arguments:

Calvinism: Eph. 1:4-5 (NIV) - *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 to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will. Acts 13:48 (NIV) – When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.*

Arminianism: 2 Peter 3:9 (NIV) – *He is patient ... not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

1 Timothy 2:3-4 (NIV) – *This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. Romans 10:13 (NASB) - ... for “Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

4. VERY Important Quotes/Thoughts:

A. Both Doctrines Stand True and Must Stand Together

“Everyone must come to grips with the fact that he is intimately related to the one who reigns as the supreme God. This biblical truth is especially difficult for those who, knowingly or unknowingly, pit man’s freedom against God’s sovereignty. Both doctrines are taught in the Scriptures; both doctrines stand true. The fact that we cannot comprehend everything about the way God has chosen to operate does not erase the truth of these teachings or hinder their operation.

- Dr. Tom Cliff, *A Passion for Prayer*, p. 72.

B. A Discussion of Salvation Must Include a Trinitarian View of God

“Our salvation involves all three Persons in the Godhead (Eph. 1:3–14; 1 Peter 1:2). You cannot be saved apart from the Father’s electing grace, the Son’s loving sacrifice, and the Spirit’s ministry of conviction and regeneration. This Trinitarian aspect of our salvation helps us to understand better some of the mysteries of our salvation. Many people get confused (or frightened) when they hear about election and predestination. As far as the Father is concerned, I was saved when He chose me in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4); but I knew nothing about that the night I was saved! It was a hidden part of God’s wonderful eternal plan. As far as God the Son is concerned, I was saved when He died for me on the cross. He died for the sins of the whole world, yet the whole world is not saved. This is where the Spirit comes in: as far as the Spirit is concerned, I was saved in May 1945 at a Youth for Christ rally where I heard Billy Graham (then a young evangelist) preach the Gospel. It was then that the Holy Spirit applied the Word to my heart, I believed, and God saved me.”

- Dr. Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*,
cf. 1 Cor. 2:10 Commentary, p. 46.

5. One important passage to understand:

Study Verse Section - Romans 8:29-30 (NASB) - ²⁹ For whom He foreknew Gk: προγινώσκω, προ meaning “before” and γινώσκω meaning “to know” – From which we get our English word, “prognosis” VERY IMPORTANT (cf. Exegesis): “Foreknew” (Eng. “Prognosis”) is used here as a verb in third person, singular gender, aorist tense, active voice, indicative (NOT imperative) mood, **He also** Gk: καί meaning (lit.) “then” (a cumulative-force participle) modifying **predestined** those whom He foreknew **to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren;** ³⁰ **and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.**

6. Conclusion:

Frank Facts about Our World and the Gospel

A. In teaching on this subject, we must be true to all scriptures and incorporate a Trinitarian view of God in our doctrine.

1 Peter 1:2, NLT - ² God the Father knew you and chose you long ago, and his Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. May God give you more and more grace and peace.

B. Everyone will make a personal decision for or against Christ.

Joshua 24:15, NIV - ¹⁵ But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

C. Not all will be saved! (Matthew 13:24-30)

Matthew 13:24-30, NIV - ²⁴ Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. ²⁵ But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. ²⁶ When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. ²⁷ “The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’ ²⁸ “ ‘An enemy did this,’ he replied. “The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’ ²⁹ “ ‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’ ”

D. Many will perish!

Matthew 7:13-14, NASB95 - ¹³ “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. ¹⁴ “For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Noah’s Ark—only a few were saved and many were lost.

Sodom and Gomorrah—only a few were saved and many were lost.

E. Some who think they are saved will be lost!

Matthew 7:21-23, HCSB - ²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord!’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² On that day many will say to Me, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many miracles in Your name?’ ²³ Then I will announce to them, ‘I never knew you! Depart from Me ...’

F. There is no salvation after death!

Luke 16:19-31, HCSB - ¹⁹ *“There was a rich man who would dress in purple and fine linen, feasting lavishly every day. ²⁰ But a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, was left at his gate. ²¹ He longed to be filled with what fell from the rich man’s table, but instead the dogs would come and lick his sores. ²² One day the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ And being in torment in Hades, he looked up and saw Abraham a long way off, with Lazarus at his side. ²⁴ ‘Father Abraham!’ he called out, ‘Have mercy on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this flame!’ ²⁵ “ ‘Son,’ Abraham said, ‘remember that during your life you received your good things, just as Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here, while you are in agony. ²⁶ Besides all this, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you, so that those who want to pass over from here to you cannot; neither can those from there cross over to us.’ ²⁷ “ ‘Father,’ he said, ‘then I beg you to send him to my father’s house— ²⁸ because I have five brothers—to warn them, so they won’t also come to this place of torment.’ ²⁹ “But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.’ ³⁰ “ ‘No, father Abraham,’ he said. ‘But if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ ³¹ “But he told him, ‘If they don’t listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.’ ”*

G. This may be someone’s last chance to come to Christ!

Proverbs 27:1, NLT - ¹ *Don’t brag about tomorrow, since you don’t know what the day will bring.*

H. We, as a church, (and you, as an individual) must do everything within our means to spread the Gospel of Christ.

Matthew 28:19-20, HCSB – [Jesus said to the church] ¹⁹ *Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*



T*he doctrine of God’s election and Man’s freewill are like two rails for the train. Both exist ... both are true ... both are needed but never shall the two meet this side of Heaven. Only at the throne of Christ shall the two rails meet. Shall we understand it fully this side of glory—not in our small minds ... never-the-less, truth stands. Shall we preach God sovereign? Yes, I say. Shall we preach man must be saved? Yes, I say, again. Shall all men, we included, say “yes” to Christ. Yes, I pray!*

- C.H. Spurgeon (Summarized)

U*nderstanding a Trinitarian view of God, our testimony is that as God knew, Jesus saved, and the Holy Spirit wooed unto Himself. Somehow in the mysteries of God, a sovereign, all-powerful, all-knowing God delighted enough to give us—who breath our next breath only by His grace—both the privilege and responsibility to say, “Here am I, save me.” I believe that only in Heaven will we realize the dynamics and complexities of His simple processes of saving men.*

- Joe K. Taylor