

**Pastor Robert Rutta**

## **Calvinism – Right or Wrong?**

Gal 1:1-9

The Apostle Paul was rebuking the Galatians because they had been deceived into turning from the true Gospel to a false Gospel.

There is only one method of salvation – simple faith in the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

The Galatians were adding something else to salvation – works.

They were Judaizers – teaching that they were to come to God by faith but then you need to continue on by your works.

Paul let it be known that this was a corruption of the true Gospel.

He is very direct in his message, anyone who teaches another Gospel – whether it be another teacher or an angel or Paul himself – let him be accursed.

No one has the right to change the Gospel message or add anything to it.

In this study we will focus on one of the changes to the Gospel that we need to be careful about – Calvinism.

Many people assume that you must be either a Calvinist or an Arminian.

(Named after John Calvin or Jacobus Arminius.)

When I am asked which I am, I usually say, neither. I am a Biblicist.

Both of those systems of belief were established by men, and both are flawed. My Bible is never flawed.

If I can look in my Bible and see that both of these sets of teaching are in error, then I am happy to say that I refuse both.

My responsibility is to find out what the Bible says and then believe that.

Those who follow the Pentecostal/Charismatic theology tend to follow Arminianism.

They say, among other teachings, that if you sin too many times that you will lose your salvation – but don't worry, you can get it back again.

That is wrong because you didn't gain your salvation by your works and it is not sustained by your works.

(Also, if you lost it, Jesus would have to die again for you to get salvation again. Jesus died once.)

What happened when you got saved:

- Someone presented the Gospel to you.
- As they presented the Gospel, the Holy Spirit spoke to your heart and confirmed that the things you were hearing were true.
- You realized that you were a sinner and that you were worthy of hell. (repentance)
- You made a choice to believe on Him or reject what you just heard. You believed and called out to God for salvation.

**Rom 10:9** That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and **shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.**

**Rom 10:10** **For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness;** and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

**Rom 10:11** For the scripture saith, **Whosoever believeth** on him shall not be ashamed.

**Rom 10:12** For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

**Rom 10:13** **For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.**

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

(We could look at a vast number of other verses that say the same thing. You believe on Jesus and THEN receive everlasting life.)

The order of these events is so important.

If we get this order confused, then our doctrines will be confused.

- As you believe in Him (come to Him by faith), a change happens.

You become a child of God – you now have everlasting life.

At that moment you were regenerated. (born again)

At that moment you are justified.

At that moment you are positionally sanctified.

Traditionally Calvinism has been the teaching of many of the Protestant churches that were formed at the Reformation.

They came out of Catholicism – halfway – but still held onto much of their Catholic thought.

Both Calvin and Arminius believed in the sprinkling of infants.

They both got this teaching from Roman Catholicism and refused to change, no matter what the Bible said.

As I said before, the Bible is my ONLY authority.

I can have no other.

Calvin and Arminius didn't believe that baptism guaranteed salvation for babies, but they did believe that it imparts grace to the babies. (This is much like Catholic theology.)

Is this correct Bible teaching? No.

Baptism in the Bible is always an act of obedience that is done after salvation – and it is always by immersion.

It does not give you some special grace.

The doctrine of baptism is not a difficult doctrine.

Both of these men had a choice – believe what the Bible says or continue to hold onto Catholic teaching.

Both chose to hold onto Catholic teaching.

Calvin, like Martin Luther, chose to persecute the Anabaptists (those that were not part of the Reformation and believed that baptism was by immersion, after salvation).

To his credit, Arminius did not persecute them, although he disagreed with them.

As I am determining how closely I will follow someone's doctrine, I first consider how closely that they regard what the Bible says.

If they throw out clear teaching and refuse to believe, then I don't have much time for other things they may say.

So if they both couldn't even get baptism right because they didn't want to go against their Catholic training, that makes me suspect anything else that they would teach.

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In recent years there has been a change where many different denominations have seen the shallowness of the Charismatics and have decided to embrace Calvinism in a desire for more depth.

There are some very prolific writers that have also gained a great following – John MacArthur, John Piper, etc. They can be very interesting to read (I don't recommend it) and very convincing. They are good speakers.

Ultimately, what we have to determine is: does Calvinist teaching create another Gospel?

If it does, then it is to be avoided.

It is that simple.

Even if it changes the Gospel **a little bit**, it is to be avoided.

No change of the Gospel message is allowed.

Calvinism has many different teachings, (Calvin was a prolific writer) but it can be broken down to a five point acrostic.

I have heard people say, "I'm a three point Calvinist."

Others will say, "I'm a one point Calvinist."

You also run across those who say they are a five pointer.

The truth is that all of these points rely on each other, so if you refuse one of them, the whole house of cards caves in on itself.

I want to be very clear. I am a zero point Calvinist.

I'll do my best to explain why.

The five points of Calvinism are taught with an acrostic, taking the first letters of each and making the word T-U-L-I-P

T Total Depravity

U Unconditional Election

L Limited Atonement

I Irresistible Grace

P Perseverance of the Saints.

Some of these points sound right at first and seem to have a Biblical basis, until we look at them a bit further and see where the teaching takes us.

Others are clearly wrong and little needs to be said to convince anyone.

These teachings were not unique to Calvin. Most of these were the teachings of the Roman Catholic teacher Augustine.

Calvin was just continuing in the Catholic teaching that he was raised with.

The key to determining whether a teaching is right or wrong is whether it can be found to be taught in the Bible.

If it differs from what is taught in the Bible, then it is wrong.

## **I. Total Depravity (sometimes called Total Inability)**

Calvinist Teaching: As a result of Adam's fall, the entire human race is affected; all humanity is dead in trespasses and sins. Man is unable to save himself.

The truth is that:

We are sinners and cannot save ourselves.

We have no righteousness of our own.

So at first this point would sound reasonable, BUT, they mean a bit more than that.

They teach that the sinner is so depraved that he could never make a spiritual decision on his own, he could never seek God, so God in His sovereignty chooses him and elects him to salvation. (Several points of the TULIP intertwine. We will see these later.)

God must then **regenerate** the sinner, giving him a new heart, before he can come to God in repentance and faith.

A cardinal belief of Calvinism (one that everything crumbles without) is that you are regenerated before you believe.

Sprouls says that:

A **cardinal** point of Reformed theology is the maxim: "Regeneration precedes faith."

(R.C.Sproul, *Chosen by God*, 72)

Arthur Pink states this doctrine as follows: "Faith is not the cause of the new birth, but the consequence of it." (The Sovereignty of God, p. 73).

Remember that regeneration, being born again, is a complete change. We are now in Christ and children of God. We have everlasting life.

If God regenerates the sinner in the way that the Calvinists teach, then why would a born again person need to repent – to see himself as a sinner deserving of hell – because he isn't going to hell anymore.

Why would he need to believe? He is already changed and born again.

The timing and order of all of these things is very important.

They say that with this new heart that seeks after God it is only natural that he would now come to Christ as he is pulled by the grace of God to make that decision.

Thus, the soul is regenerated and born again by God **FIRST** (without any expression of will or desire by the man) so that he can believe and be saved.

**You change from death to life without faith in Christ!!**

This order is so wrong in so many ways.

MacArthur says that "the unsaved are dead, incapable of any spiritual activity. Until God quickens us, we have no capacity to respond to Him by faith."

Remember that to quicken is to make alive.

You were made alive when you were born again.

Their teaching is that you were so depraved that you couldn't even decide to seek after God. You do not have the will.

Remember when Jesus gave the parable of the pearl of great price.

**Mat 13:45** Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

**Mat 13:46** Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

A man was seeking after something precious, found it, and then made sure he got it.

The Bible teaches that there is nothing good in man to earn or deserve salvation.

Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

While the Bible teaches the sinfulness of the human race, it nowhere teaches total inability.

The Bible never hints that the lost are unable to seek after God.

Jesus looked over Jerusalem and wept and said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . .how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, **and ye would not!**" (Matt. 23:37).

Here again notice, He did not say, "How often would I have gathered you together, but you **could** not." No. He said, "Ye **would** not!"

It was not a matter of whether they **could**; it was a matter of whether they **would**.

Revelation 22:17, the last invitation in the Bible, says, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. **And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely .**"

Some Calvinists use John 6:44 in an effort to prove total inability. Here the Bible says, "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him...."But the Bible makes it plain in John 12:32 that Christ will draw **all men unto Himself**.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw **all men** unto me."

The Jews resisted the Holy Spirit.

**Act 7:51** Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye.

Remember that Jesus rebuked the cities of Israel that would not repent. Matt 11:20-24

God invites the ends of the earth to be saved:

**Isa 45:22** Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else.

God invites those who are thirsty to come and drink freely. Isa 55:1-3

In John 3:14-18 the emphasis is on us believing in Him and that this is for the whole world.

(This is where they redefine the words "whosoever" and "world." We will see that later. They also redefine "all.")

As many as receive Jesus become the sons of God. John 1:10-13.  
God is not willing that any should perish. II Pet 3:9

God's will is that all would be saved.

**1Ti 2:3** For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

**1Ti 2:4** Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

The Bible always leaves it as an act of the will for whosoever would believe.

The only way to get around this is to redefine words like whosoever or all. We will see these things later.

### **Two Kinds of Scriptures that Overthrow Total Depravity / Inability:**

1. **Scriptures containing a command to believe:** Acts 17:30; Isaiah 45:22; Mark 1:15; Matthew 11:28; I John 3:23; John 7:37; Revelation 22:17; Isaiah 45:19.

**Act 17:30** And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

**Isa 45:22** Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else.

**Mar 1:15** And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

2. **Scriptures implying the possibility that a man can believe:** John 5:40; I Thess. 2:16.

**Joh 5:40** And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

**1Th 2:15** Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men:

**1Th 2:16** Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

We were sinners, needing salvation, but God calls for us to believe.

If He makes you born again, without your will, then so many verses become silly, because He is offering something you couldn't do and that He did to you without your will.

### **II. Unconditional Election**

By unconditional election Calvin meant that God has already decided who will be saved and who will be lost, and the individual has absolutely nothing to do with it. He can only hope that God has elected him for Heaven and not for Hell.

John Calvin in his "Institutes," Book III, chapter 23,

"...Not all men are created with similar destiny but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every man, therefore, being created for one or the other of these ends, we say, he is predestined either to life or to death."

So Calvinism teaches that it is God's own choice that some people are to be damned forever.

He never intended to save them. He foreordained them to go to Hell. And when He offers salvation in the Bible, He does not offer it to those who were foreordained to be damned.

It is offered only to those who were foreordained to be saved.

God's choice of certain individuals unto 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.** On the contrary, God gives faith and repentance to each individual whom He selected... These acts are the result, not the cause of God's choice. Thus, God's choice of the sinner, and not the sinner's choice of Christ, is the ultimate cause of salvation. (David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, 16-17.)

This teaching obviously disagrees with the oft-repeated invitations in the Bible to sinners to come to Christ and be saved.

If you believe this:

- There is no reason to witness to anyone or give out the Gospel in any way because they can't change anything. If they were selected to be lost, they will be lost.
- Then we need to change the meaning of some words. All does not mean all in some verses. It means "all who were chosen." The world (like in John 3:16) does not mean everyone but only those who were selected.

The Bible doctrine of God's foreknowledge, predestination and election are true doctrines that we don't need to be afraid of. We just need to make sure that we look at the words of scripture and let the Bible define them.

**1Pe 1:2 Elect** according to the **foreknowledge** of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

We have a cause and effect statement here.

Because God knew you would get saved (by your freewill) then He elected you.

In this verse Peter tells us **what we are**.

We are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God."

We are a chosen people.

The word translated as **elect** literally means 'chosen.'

This all centers on the fact that **God knew beforehand that we would accept Him**.

Our election is "through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience."

When we were saved, God's Holy Spirit *sanctified* us.

That is, He made us holy in God's sight in our position in Christ before God.

Notice that we have been sanctified *unto obedience*.

We have been chosen and sanctified by God so that we might be obedient to God.

This is through the 'sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.'

Thus, our election and sanctification have been through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

This is a reference to when He sprinkled His blood on the mercy seat in heaven, thus making an everlasting propitiation for our sin.

This was done apparently after the crucifixion and during the three day interval before His resurrection.

It is pictured in the Old Testament high priest on the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), sprinkling the blood of the sin offering upon the mercy seat in the Tabernacle, thus making atonement for the sins of the people for that year.

We are “elect **according** to the **foreknowledge** of God.”

This entire doctrine pivots on the word “foreknowledge.”

### **Romans 8:29-30**

<sup>29</sup> For whom he did **foreknow**, he also did **predestinate** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

<sup>30</sup> Moreover whom he did **predestinate**, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

These verses have a very clear and simple message, but many have been confused by them.

The confusion usually comes as they try to force the verses to match up with man’s ideas instead of just reading the verses.

Some have looked at these verses and tried to teach Calvinism, that God selected who would get saved and who would go to hell and that He gave you no opportunity to choose.

To get this teaching they have to redefine the simple meaning of words and add to what the passage says.

It is important that we keep track of the order of events in these verses and that we only read into the verses what is there – not what someone else may say or think.

To **foreknow** means to know before.

Before the world was created God foreknew that I would get saved and that you would get saved.

Does that mean that He decided it and caused it to happen? No

He knew that I would hear the Gospel and that I would use the freewill that He has given me and that I would believe.

**Predestinate** means to determine beforehand.

(It is dangerous when you talk about predestination but leave out foreknowledge. Foreknowledge explains it all.

That is where you get doctrinal error.)

So, God knew beforehand that I would get saved and He determined that He would do something.

What did He predestinate? That I would be “conformed to the image of His Son.” (“sanctification of the Spirit”)

Since God knew that I was going to get saved, He started planning the things that would make me more like Jesus.

God’s will and plan is that we be like Jesus.

Predestination is not a call to salvation.

It is God planning what would happen to those that would believe.

**Eph 1:4** According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, **that we should be holy and without blame** before him in love:

**Eph 1:5** Having **predestinated** us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

**Eph 1:6** To **the praise of the glory of his grace**, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

The calling is not to salvation, but to Godly living.

God chooses and elects every Christian to holiness and Godliness in this life.

God predestines that every Christian will be conformed to the image of Christ when we get to heaven.

Let me illustrate it this way:

Illus. The South Island Teen Camp was a few months ago.

How did they know who was going to attend?

Of course, they sent a letter and said that \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ had been selected.

No, they put out an open invitation for anyone.

Some thought about it and maybe even considered it, but then said no for various reasons.

The ones that decided to go filled out the information sheet and gave it to me.

Some things were then predestinated – planning started.

When they got those names they started preparing the meals and room assignments and everything else.

The planning was not for who would be able to attend.

It was for all that would occur because they attended.

Before the world was created God already knew who would believe so He started making some plans.

Romans 8:30 just continues v29 and brings it to a logical conclusion.

This is not God in His sovereign power using irresistible grace to force you to believe whether you want to or not.

This is just an overview of the work of God.

As part of that predestination – planning ahead – He called, justified and glorified us.

Again, you will have the Calvinist that looks at this verse and says, “See, He calls us so we didn’t have a choice.”

Were you called to salvation? Yes

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).

But the Calvinist neglects one obvious truth, not everyone that is called says yes.

I have seen people that were under the definite conviction of the Holy Spirit – they knew they needed to get saved and they were considering it – but they said no.

There are many reasons why a person might say no, but the truth is that many who are called refuse.

For those who respond to that call, they are justified and plans are made for their eternity.

My sins are washed away and God sees me with the righteousness of Christ.

Notice:

A. **We were predestinated** - Past tense.

B. **We were called** - Past tense

C. **We were justified** - (To declare righteous!) - Past tense.

D. **We were glorified** - Past tense - In the mind of God, we are already with Him in Heaven.

God sees me as glorified – even though it hasn't happened yet – just as He saw the other things before they happened.

As far as God is concerned, I am just as safe as if I was already glorified and in heaven.

God in His foreknowledge knows who will trust Jesus Christ as Saviour, and He has predestined to see that they are justified and glorified. (your salvation is secure)

He will keep all those who trust Him and see that they are glorified. But the doctrine that God elected some men to Hell, that they were born to be damned by God's own choice, is a radical heresy not taught anywhere in the Bible.

Nowhere does the Bible teach that God wills for some to go to Heaven and wills others to go to Hell. No.

The Bible teaches that God would have all men to be saved.

**II Peter 3:9** says that He is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

**I Timothy 2:4** "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

Those who teach that God would only have some to be saved, while He would have others to be lost are misrepresenting God and the Bible.

Are there any inconsistencies or errors in the Bible? NONE

Those two verses that I just mentioned destroy the entire teaching that God has chosen some people to eternal damnation and they can never have any chance to be saved.

Even so, I have had people to want to continue to argue the point.

That is because the Bible is not their source of doctrine – although they claim it to be.

If your doctrine disagrees with even one clear verse of Scripture, then your doctrine is wrong.

Some things to remember:

1. At the point where you see a clear verse, then your argument stops and you believe His Word and change your beliefs.

2. When you see that the Bible defines a term (like predestination – God planning for what He would do with you after you believed), then you continue with that definition in other passages where God uses the same word. The Bible defines itself.

No one is predestined to go to Hell, except as he chooses of his own free will to reject Christ and refuses to trust Him as Saviour.

**John 3:36** says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Nothing could be plainer. The man who goes to Heaven goes because he comes to Jesus Christ and trusts Him as Saviour.

And the man who goes to Hell does so because he refuses to come to Jesus Christ and will not trust Him as Saviour.

### **III. Limited Atonement**

By limited atonement, Calvin meant that Christ died only for the elect, for those He planned and ordained to go to Heaven: He did not die for those He planned and ordained to go to Hell.

This doctrine completely contradicts many, many plain Scriptures.

I John 2:2, "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but **also for the sins of the whole world** ."

1 Timothy 2:5-6

5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

6 Who gave himself **a ransom for all**, to be testified in due time.

The Bible teaches that Jesus is the Saviour of the world.

John 4:42

42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, **the Saviour of the world**.

I John 4:14, "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the **Saviour of the world**."

John 3:17 "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but **that the world through him might be saved**."

No man will ever look at Jesus Christ and say, "You didn't want to be my Saviour."

Jesus wants to be the Saviour of all men.

I Timothy 4:10 "For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, **who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe**."

The Bible teaches that Christ bore the sins of all people. Isaiah 53:6 says, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

There are twos "alls" in this verse. The first "all" speaks of the universal fact of sin. "All we like sheep have gone astray."

And the second "all" speaks of an atonement that is offered to everyone" and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

This creates confusion for the Calvinist.  
He accepts the normal definition of all for the first "all" but not the second.

Not only did He bear the sins of us all, but the Bible plainly teaches that He died for the whole world.

The Bible says His death was for every man; "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste **death for every man**" (Heb. 2:9).

Nothing could be plainer than the fact that Jesus Christ died for every man  
Romans 8:32 "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up **for us all**, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

We see one clear statement after another:  
"that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man"; "Who gave himself a ransom for all";  
"delivered him up for us all."

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

Jesus died for the whole world. He suffered Hell for every man who has ever lived or ever will live.  
And no man will look out of Hell and say, "I wanted to be saved, but Jesus did not die for me."

In Paul's letters, the word 'world' occurs 69 times, but never means 'elect.'  
In I John, the word 'world' occurs 23 times and never means 'elect'.

The Bible is clear that Jesus even died for those who will be in hell.

**2Pe 2:1** But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even **denying the Lord that bought them**, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

Some argue that if Jesus died for the whole world, the whole world would be saved.

NO! The death of Jesus Christ on the cross was **sufficient** for all, but it is **efficient** only to those who believe.

The death of Jesus Christ on the cross made it possible for every man everywhere to be saved.

But only those who believe that He died to pay their sin debt and who trust Him completely for salvation will be saved.

John 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. . . ." Everybody is potentially saved, but everybody is not actually saved until he recognises that he is a sinner, believes that Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay the sin debt, and trusts Him completely for salvation.

The atonement is available for anyone who will come to God by faith.

#### **IV. Irresistible Grace**

The fourth point of Calvinism is irresistible grace.

The Calvinist teaching is that man is so completely dead in his sins that he could never seek God, even if the Scriptures were spoken to him. Thus God has to choose who will get saved – electing them to salvation. Jesus then died on the cross only for those that He had chosen. And now by irresistible grace, He **forces** those He elected, and those Jesus Christ died for to be saved.

At the appropriate time God then regenerates the lost man, giving him new life. He then pulls that man to Himself. This grace is irresistible. It is impossible for the sinner to resist or refuse. The man is now pulled so that he will come in repentance and faith whether he wants to or not.

What is wrong with this teaching?  
There is no such thing in the Bible as “irresistible grace.”  
Never in the Bible do we find the word “irresistible” connected with the word “grace”.  
It is a vain philosophy that was created in the imagination of John Calvin and his followers.

Grace means “God’s unmerited favour”.  
Grace is an attitude, not a power.  
God does not force people to be saved with an imaginary “irresistible grace.”

If this were correct then we would see a teasing and mean streak in God.  
Christians are commanded to "invite them in" but, by their teaching, they cannot accept that invitation. Jesus didn't even die for them.  
While we are promising salvation to **all** who repent and believe, we are supposed to know that many of them can't and are not supposed to repent and believe.

Boettner says that:

*As the bird with a broken wing is "free" to fly but not able, so the natural man is free to come to God but not able.*  
Lorraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, 62.

Sproul says:

*Fallen man is still **free to choose** what he desires, but because his desires are only wicked he lacks the moral ability to come to Christ. As long as he remains... unregenerate, he will never choose Christ*  
R.C. Sproul, *Chosen by God*, 75.

The question is now, what does the Bible say.  
The Scriptures show that men do resist and reject God.

Proverbs 1:24-26 "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh."

Here the Bible plainly says, "I have called, and ye have refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof."

That doesn't sound like irresistible grace. God calls, and men refuse.

The Bible makes it plain that some men do reject Christ, that they refuse His call.

John 5:40 "Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life."

That verse plainly teaches that men can and do resist God and refuse to come to Him.

Acts 7, Stephen preached. He says in verse 51, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."

To these Jewish leaders, Stephen said, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost."

Not only were these Jewish leaders resisting the Holy Ghost, but their fathers before them had also resisted the Holy Spirit.

God offers salvation to all men.

Titus 1:11 "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men."

But man must make his own choice.

He must either receive or reject Christ .

John 1:12 says. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

(Notice that regeneration comes after we have believed.)

When Jesus wept over Jerusalem, he said, Matt. 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, **and ye would not!**"

Here again the Bible clearly indicates that **God would have** gathered them together as a hen gathers her chickens, **but they would not.**

That certainly shows that they could reject and resist Christ.

That means that those who are not saved could have been saved. Those who have rejected Christ could have accepted Him.

God offers salvation to those who will have it, but does not force it upon anyone who doesn't want it.

## **V. Perseverance of the Saints**

Sometimes you will hear someone say, "I am a one point Calvinist."

By this they usually mean that they believe in eternal security.

The only problem with this is that the perseverance of the saints does not mean the same as what we mean when we speak of the fact that we are eternally secure.

The Bible teaches, and I believe in, the eternal security of the born-again believer. The man who has trusted Jesus Christ has everlasting life and will never perish.

But the eternal security of the believer does not depend on his perseverance.

We are never told to **persevere** in order to keep our salvation, but many times we are told that we are **preserved** in Christ.

Perseverance is one thing. Preservation is another.

The saints do not persevere; they are preserved.

The Bible states in Jude 1 "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ..."

I Thessalonians 5:23 "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole spirit and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Bible makes it plain that the believer **is kept. He does not keep himself.**

First Peter 1:4,5 "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

The Bible says in John 10:27-29: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Fathers hand."

That is not perseverance of the sheep or the saints.

The sheep are in the Father's hand, and they are safe - not because they persevere, but because they are in the Fathers hand.

In Ephesians 4:30, we see that we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption.

At the moment that I believed I was sealed and set apart for Heaven.

One great problem with perseverance is that you can never have assurance of your salvation.

You cannot know for sure that you are one of the elect until you make it to the end.

Perseverance also makes your salvation reliant on your **works**.

I did not do work in order to be saved and I do not work to keep myself saved.

Actually, the Calvinist and Armenian views of perseverance are indistinguishable.

The Calvinist says that if you do not persevere unto the end, you were never saved.

The Arminian says that if you do not persevere to the end, you will lose your salvation.

But neither can simply accept the record of Scripture that if you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be saved.

Both, in effect, say that you must believe and must do the right works.

For these reasons I disagree with all five points of Calvinism.

I am neither Arminian nor Calvinist.

I believe in salvation by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ.

I believe in the eternal security of the believer.

I believe that Jesus Christ died for all men, and I believe what the Bible says, "That whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

In order to believe in Calvinism I would need to be willing to redefine the meanings of words in selected verses that are commonly understood everywhere else in Scripture (all, world, whosoever), change foreknowledge into foreordination, have regeneration before faith.

No one has a right to change the salvation that God describes in His Word.