

EXPLORING THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ELECTION

Why is Divine Election Important?

John Piper lists 10 points of personal testimony as to why the 5 Points of Calvinism (also known as the *Doctrines of Grace*) are so important to him (see John Piper, *Five Points: Toward a Deeper Experience of God's Grace*, Christian Focus, 2013, pp. 77-84)

- 1) These truths make me stand in awe of God and lead me into the depth of true God-centered worship (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14; Rom. 11:36).
- 2) These truths help protect me from trifling with divine things.
- 3) These truths make me marvel at my own salvation (Eph. 1:18-19).
- 4) These truths make me alert to man-centered substitutes that pose as good news (1 Tim. 3:15).
- 5) These truths make me groan over the indescribable disease of our secular, God-belittling culture.
- 6) These truths make me confident that the work which God planned and began, he will finish—both globally and personally (Jer. 32:40; Isa. 41:10; cf. Phil. 1:6).
- 7) These truths make me see everything in the light of God's sovereign purposes—that from him and through him and to him are all things, to him be glory forever and ever (Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 10:31; Eph. 1:11).
- 8) These truths make me hopeful that God has the will, the right, and the power to answer prayer that people be changed (Matt. 6:9; 2 Thess. 3:1; Ezek. 11:19; 36:27; 2 Tim. 2:25-26; Acts 16:14).
- 9) These truths remind me that evangelism is absolutely essential for people to come to Christ and be saved, and that there is great hope for success in leading people to faith, but that conversion is not finally dependent on me or limited by the hardness of the believer (1 Cor. 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:23, 25; Rom. 1:16; Eph. 2:1-6; Matt. 19:26; John 10:16).
- 10) These truths make me sure that God will triumph in the end (Isa. 46:9-10; Psa. 33:11).

The Issues at Stake

- 1) What is your view of God? Is he big or small? Is God's sovereignty limited? Is he dependent on us in any way?
- 2) What is your view of humanity? Are we born good, indifferent (neutral), or depraved? Are we mostly sinful or wholly sinful? Do we have any island of righteousness to which we can cling?
- 3) What is your view of saving grace?
Is it (A) *monergistic*? This means 'one' (*mono-*) agent (God) 'working' (*ergon*) through his grace to save.
Or is it (B) *synergistic*? This means multiple agents (God + man) 'working' (*ergon*) 'with' (*syn-*) one another to make saving grace effective.
- 4) What about free will? Do humans have unfettered power over their wills to act any way they choose? Is God's sovereignty limited by human willing? Is man's will free or in bondage?

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BASIC BELIEFS OF THE HISTORIC POSITIONS ON GOD AND HUMANITY

The Pelagian-Arminian strand of theology places a premium on two important beliefs. First, there is an emphasis on divine love as the controlling attribute of God in terms of how he relates to humanity. Divine love in this regard must be equally displayed toward all, otherwise love cannot be love. Secondly, humanity must have unfettered free will otherwise we cannot be held responsible for our decisions nor could any love we have for God have any value. The result of this emphasis is that Pelagianism-Arminianism tends (in one degree or another) to make God more human-like and to make humans more God-like. The Creator-creature distinction comes close to being erased. In the Augustinian-Calvinism strand of theology, the emphasis is upon the all-consuming God-ness of God. There can be no divine attribute emphasized above another. God's being is said by theologians to be "*simple*" which means all the attributes of God *are* God. They are all fully on display in who he *is* and in what he does. God's purpose in creating was to express his own independent freedom to magnify his glory before his creation. Thus, creation and human history is oriented toward the magnification of God's glory not man's happiness or sense of autonomy. In other words, it is God-centered not man-centered.

	Pelagianism	Semi-Pelagianism Arminianism	Augustinianism Calvinism
View of Divine Sovereignty	God is not sovereign over the affairs of humanity.	God limits His sovereignty over the affairs of humanity.	God is fully sovereign over the affairs of humanity.
View of Divine Grace	God's grace is helpful, but it is not necessary for our salvation.	God's grace is necessary for our salvation but not sufficient.	God's grace is necessary and wholly sufficient for our salvation.
View of Humanity's Spiritual Condition	Humans are alive and well (no inherent sinful corruption) and able to cultivate spiritual vitality.	Humans are alive but sick, needing God's grace to help them cultivate spiritual vitality.	Humans are dead in sin, needing God to bring them alive in order to cultivate spiritual vitality.
View of Human Freedom	Humans are free to sin or to do good.	Humans are in bondage to sin but free to escape it by cooperating with God's grace.	Humans are in bondage to sin and unable to escape it without God's sufficient grace.

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HISTORIC CALVINISM VS. ARMINIANISM

The traditional 5 points of Calvinism represent the response of 84 international delegates that met for 6 months at the Dutch *Synod of Dort* (1618-19) to the 5 points of doctrine drawn up by the Arminian 'Remonstrants' in 1610 in Holland (i.e., *The Remonstrance of 1610*). The doctrinal clarification of the *Synod of Dort* became part of the '3 Forms of Unity' that included the *Belgic Confession* (1561) and the *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563). From 1643 to 1648, the Westminster Assembly (consisting of 151 'divines' – that is, pastors and scholars) met in London to produce the most important and detailed confession of faith in church history known as the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. It relied on the '3 Forms of Unity.'

The 5 Points of Calvinism (TULIP)	The 5 Points of Arminianism
<p>Total (Thorough) Depravity Sin has enslaved every person and corrupted every aspect of their being. Humans are spiritually dead. They are unable and unwilling to obey, believe, or repent.</p>	<p>Depraved but Free Sin has infected every person, but their will remains free. Humans are spiritually sick. However, they are able and may become willing to obey, believe, or repent.</p>
<p>Unconditional Election God chose the elect solely on the basis of His freedom and grace, not for anything seen in sinners. God has extended a special love for the elect and has left the rest of humanity to their willful rebellion and just condemnation.</p>	<p>Conditional Election God chose the elect on the basis of their foreseen faith that is freely exercised if they so choose. God loves all humans equally and gives all of them an equal opportunity to accept or reject Christ.</p>
<p>Limited (Definite) Atonement God purposed Christ to provide redemption for a particular people (the elect) by his atoning death which definitively pays the price for their sin and guarantees their salvation.</p>	<p>Universal (Unlimited) Atonement God purposed Christ to be the Savior of the world. His death is a provisional atonement for the sins of the whole world which makes salvation possible for all but guaranteed for none.</p>
<p>Irresistible (Efficacious) Grace Saving grace is irresistible and efficaciously works to save the elect. The Holy Spirit regenerates the hearts of the elect (causes them to be born again), thus wholly enabling them to willingly act in faith and repentance for their salvation.</p>	<p>Resistible (Provisional) Grace Saving grace is necessary but not sufficient to save sinners. The Holy Spirit's gracious efforts can be resisted and must be cooperated with by the free will of sinners. The freely exercised faith and repentance of the sinner results in becoming born again.</p>
<p>Perseverance of the Saints God's grace preserves the elect and ensures they will (causes them to) persevere in faith and obedience till the end. None of the elect will finally fall away from the faith.</p>	<p>Uncertain Perseverance of the Saints God's grace cannot guarantee that believers will not use their free will to fall away from the faith. Not all will cooperate with God's grace to persevere in faith and obedience.</p>

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HISTORICAL PERSONS ASSOCIATED WITH DIFFERENT VIEWS ON ELECTION

Augustinian-Calvinism Strand

***Augustine of Hippo** (354-430)

Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109)
Thomas Aquinas (1225-74)
John Wycliffe (1328-84)
***Martin Luther** (1483-1546)
William Tyndale (1494-1536)
***John Calvin** (1509-64)
John Knox (1513-72)
Theodore Beza (1519-1605)
William Perkins (1568-1602)
William Bradford (1590-1657)
John Eliot (1604-90)
***John Owen** (1616-83)
John Bunyan (1628-88)
Cotton Mather (1663-1728)
Isaac Watts (1674-1748)
***Jonathan Edwards** (1703-58)
David Brainerd (1718-47)
George Whitefield (1714-70)
John Newton (1725-1807)
William Wilberforce (1759-1833)
William Carey (1761-1834)
Adoniram Judson (1788-1850)
***Charles Hodge** (1797-1878)
George Mueller (1805-98)
David Livingston (1813-73)
Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920)
B. B. Warfield (1851-1921)
***Charles Spurgeon** (1856-1903)
J. Gersham Machen (1881-1937)
A. W. Pink (1886-1952)
***Martyn Lloyd-Jones** (1899-1981)
Francis Shaeffer (1912-84)
S. Lewis Johnson (1915-2004)
***J. I. Packer** (1926-2020)
D. James Kennedy (1930-2007)
James Montgomery Boice (1938-2000)
***R. C. Sproul** (1939-2017)
***John MacArthur** (1939-)
***John Piper** (1946-)
Wayne Grudem (1948-)
***Tim Keller** (1950-)
Alastair Begg (1952-)
***Albert Mohler** (1959-)

Amyraldian/ 4-Point Strand

James Ussher (1581-1656)
***Moses Amyraut** (1596-1664)

Richard Baxter (1615-91)

J. C. Ryle (1816-1900)
A. H. Strong (1836-1921)

***Lewis Sperry Chafer**
(1871-1952)

***Charles Ryrie** (1925-2016)

***Norman Geisler** (1932-2019)??
Charles Swindoll (1934-)??
David Jeremiah (1941-)??

Pelagian-Arminian Strand

***Pelagius** (354-418)
John Cassian (360-435)

Desiderius Erasmus (1469-1536)
***Philip Melancthon**
(1497-1560)

***Jacob Arminius** (1560-1609)

***John Wesley** (1703-91)
Charles Wesley (1707-88)

Francis Asbury (1745-1816)
Thomas Coke (1747-1814)

***Charles Finney** (1792-1875)

Andrew Murray (1828-1917)
***Dwight Moody** (1837-99)
R. A. Torrey (1856-1928)
Billy Sunday (1862-1935)
***Bob Jones, Sr.** (1883-1968)
A. W. Tozer (1897-1963)
***C. S. Lewis** (1898-1963)
***Billy Graham** (1918-2018)
***Chuck Smith** (1927-2013)
Adrian Rogers (1931-2005)
Charles Stanley (1932-)
Jerry Falwell (1933-2007)
James Dobson (1936-)
Ravi Zacharias (1946-2020)
Greg Laurie (1952-)
Lee Strobel (1952-)
Rick Warren (1954-)
Max Lucado (1955-)

*Indicates an important figure (in **bold**) whose views have been especially influential

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UNDERSTANDING THE GREATNESS OF GOD

Perfect Being

God is a being “than-which-a-greater-cannot-be thought” (Anselm - 1033-1109). God is marked by unassailable and immutable supreme perfection in all His attributes. There is none like God. No one who is equal to Him. He subsists within a category all by Himself. See Isa. 40:21-26; 41:4; 43:10-13; 44:6-8; 45:5-7, 14, 18, 22-24; 46:5, 9-11.

“O LORD, our Lord,
How majestic is Your name in all the earth,
Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens!” (Psa. 8:1)

Divine Transcendence (Holiness)

God’s holiness speaks not just to His perfect righteousness, but to His transcendent *otherness*. He stands apart from *all else* (i.e., creation). By necessity, He is unlike anything He has created.

God “dwells in unapproachable light” (1 Tim. 6:16). See also 2 Chron. 2:6; Job 11:7-9.

- 1) **Incommunicable Attributes:** Whatever is true of God that is not true of his creatures (e.g., omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, eternity, immutability, etc.)
- 2) **Communicable Attributes:** Any overlapping features that are true of God and His creatures, but are incomprehensibly greater in God than the creature (e.g., knowledge, wisdom, goodness, love, justice, etc.)
- 3) **Divine Incomprehensibility:** God is knowable but beyond our finite ability to fully comprehend. See Isa. 55:8-9; Rom. 11:33-36; 1 Cor. 13:12.

Divine Aseity

Aseity comes from the Latin *a se*, meaning “from one’s self.” God is eternal, uncreated, self-existent, self-sufficient, self-satisfied, and wholly independent of *all else*—that which He has created from nothing. God reveals Himself to Moses as the great I AM (Exod. 3:14; cf. John 8:58). God is *being* itself. *All else* is dependent on God for *everything*. See Acts 17:25, 28.

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Divine Lordship

Divine Lordship encompasses God as:

- 1) **Creator** of all. God is under no obligation to create anything since he needs nothing. His act of creation proceeds from His unfettered freedom and the desire to share the magnificence of Himself to the creation and thereby magnify His glory. See Gen. 1:1; John 1:3; Col. 1:16.
- 2) **Sustainer** of all. God is the infinite, all-encompassing wellspring of life and existence: of matter, space, spirit, time, motion, power, energy, thought, order, design, beauty, virtue, and purpose. See Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3.
- 3) **Possessor** of all. As Creator, God necessarily owns all that He has created. Everything belongs to Him and owes its existence and allegiance to Him. See Psa. 24:1.
- 4) Cosmic **Judge** of all. God is Himself the moral standard by which all moral creatures are accountable, qualifying Him as their only rightful Judge. See Rom. 1:18, 28, 32; 2:12-16.

Subsequently, God is the:

- 5) **Authoritative** and **Sovereign Lord** of all. See Pss. 103:19; 115:3; 135:6; Matt. 28:18; cf. John 19:10-11

Divine Sovereignty

Loraine Boettner defines and places the sovereignty of God in the context of His transcendent holiness: "The world as a whole and in all its parts and movements and changes was brought about into unity by the governing, all-pervading, all-harmonizing activity of the divine will, and its purpose was to manifest the divine glory" (*The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, p. 14).

God's sovereignty can be broken down into 3 important components:

- 1) **God's Decree**. The Westminster Confession of Faith 3.1 defines the divine decree as: "God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass." We could call this God's *sovereign will*. He is the architect of history and plans everything down to the most meticulous detail. See Psa. 33:11; Isa. 14:27; 46:9-11; Eph. 1:11 (cf. 3:11).

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- 2) **God's Providence.** God not only plans history as its *architect*, but he ensures that plan is executed in time and space as its *builder*. The Heidelberg Catechism defines divine providence as “the almighty and ever present power of God by which God upholds, as with his hand, heaven and earth and all creatures, and so rules them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty—all things, in fact, come to us not by chance but by his fatherly hand” (Lord’s Day 10: Q&A 27). See Psa. 33:8-9; Isa. 46:9-11; Dan. 2:21; 4:34-35. Note that just as God’s sovereign plan for history is meticulously laid out, so its execution is meticulously carried out. See 1 Sam. 2:6-7; Job 36:32; Prov. 16:33; Matt. 6:26, 28-30; 10:29; Eph. 4:6.

God’s providence can be further broken down into 3 components:

- a. **Government.** God’s specific guidance of creation and the events of history.
 - b. **Preservation.** God’s sustaining power behind what we call the laws of nature.
 - c. **Concurrence.** God’s normative use of secondary causes (means) to achieve his purposes. This includes the immediate effects of the laws of nature and human choices. Note this only applies to what is called His “ordinary providence.” Occasionally God exercises His “extraordinary providence” whereby He bypasses secondary means and acts directly and usually supernaturally to achieve his purposes (e.g., as in the case of miracles or direct answers to prayer).
- 3) **God’s Omnipotence.** In order for God’s decree and providential actions in creation and history to be maintained, He must possess all the requisite powers to ensure His plan is executed. God’s all-encompassing power is not an absolute power, otherwise God would be capricious. Rather, God’s omnipotence conforms to (1) all things that are **logically possible**, and (2) all things that otherwise **do not contradict** His other **attributes**. Without these two qualifications, God’s character would be utterly maligned. One could not distinguish him as righteous or unrighteous, just or unjust, loving or hating, wise or foolish, good or evil. He would be nothing but unqualified raw power with an unfettered and arbitrary freedom.

Job understood the immensity and incomprehensibility of God’s power when describing his cosmic actions in the heavens and on earth (Job 26:5-13), and then he goes on to declare: “These are just the beginning of all that he does, merely a whisper of his power. Who, then, can comprehend the thunder of his power?” (Job 26:14 NLT). See also 2 Chron. 20:6; Isa. 40:21-26; 50:2.

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Divine Sovereignty Over Evil

If God is truly the supremely perfect, transcendent, and sovereign God he has revealed Himself to be in Scripture, then this must include His sovereignty over evil. But of course, God is also supremely and absolutely good (see Pss. 34:8; 145:7, 9). In his essence, He is love (1 John 4:8); He is kindness (Psa. 145:17); He is faithfulness (Psa. 36:5); He is eternally merciful and gracious (Lam. 3:22). He is free of any taint of evil (Deut. 32:4; Job 34:10). “God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all” (1 Tim. 6:16). His “eyes are too pure to approve evil.” He cannot “look on wickedness with favor” (Hab. 1:13; cf. Psa. 5:4).

Given these two realities, we must conclude that God ordains evil for some supremely good and wise purpose that is not always apparent to us. Jonathan Edwards said it is far better that “the good and evil which happens in God's world, should be ordered, regulated, bounded and determined by the good pleasure of an infinitely wise Being” than by impersonal, chance or the unpredictable and futile machinations of men’s free will (*Freedom of the Will*, YaleUP, p. 405).

Ordainer of Light and Darkness, Good and Evil

See Isaiah 45:5-7. Note this passage must be seen in light of Isa. 46:9-11. Both passages place God’s sovereignty within the context of His incomprehensibly holy transcendence.

Verse 7: Note contrast between: “light” and “darkness”
“well-being” and “calamity”

The term for “calamity” is the standard Hebrew word for “evil” (*ra’*). Note also the word for “create” (*bara*, used twice in vs. 7) before “darkness” and “calamity” is a term used exclusively in the Old Testament for God as the sole source of creative activity (see Gen. 1:1). God is indicating He is the ultimate cause of natural and moral evil. This means He is the **primary**, but **remote** cause. He is not the **efficient** cause. He has no evil will, He does not act in any directly evil manner as this would be impossible due to His supreme and unassailable goodness.

See also: Lam. 3:37-38; Job 1-2; 42; Acts 2:22-23; 4:27-28.

God as Transcendent Author, Moral Culpability, and Intentions of the Heart

The best model of God’s sovereign decree and providential actions in the world envisions him like a transcendent author, much like Shakespeare as the author of *Macbeth*. Shakespeare writes his plot such that he plans for Macbeth to kill Duncan, and he assumes a world in which this action is regarded as evil, but Shakespeare is not regarded as the *doer* of the evil or even the *instigator* of it. As the author, he seeks to teach a moral lesson. In other words, the plot is meant to highlight good and evil; showing the *evilness* of evil and the *goodness* of good.

NOTE! Moral culpability is **always** tied to the intentions of the heart. While man’s intentions are always tainted by evil (see Gen. 6:5; Matt. 15:19; 12:33-35; cf. Prov. 16:2; Jer. 17:9-10), God’s intentions for the same evil He ordains is **always** good. See Gen. 50:20; Isa. 10:5-19.

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TOTAL DEPRAVITY

The 5 Points of Calvinism (TULIP)	The 5 Points of Arminianism
<p>Total (Thorough) Depravity Sin has <u>enslaved</u> every person and corrupted every aspect of their being. Humans are spiritually <u>dead</u>. They are <u>unable</u> and <u>unwilling</u> to obey, believe, or repent.</p>	<p>Depraved but Free Sin has <u>infected</u> every person, but their will remains free. Humans are spiritually <u>sick</u>. However, they are <u>able</u> and may become <u>willing</u> to obey, believe, or repent.</p>

1. **Original Sin.** Both Calvinists and Arminians hold to the doctrine of Original Sin. Adam and Eve’s sin brought a curse to subsequent mankind such that all humans inherit a sin nature from Adam (see Gen. 3:14-19; Rom. 5:12, 18-19; cf. 6:5; Gen. 8:21; Psa. 51:5; Eccl. 9:3). Each person is born with a predisposition toward sin. David says, “The wicked are estranged from the womb; these who speak lies go astray from birth” (Psa. 58:3).

Arminianism teaches that the effects of Original Sin are mitigated by ‘Prevenient Grace’ which restores mankind’s free will: the ability to equally choose good or evil. Thus, when the gospel is presented to unbelieving sinners, this grace enables them with the power to embrace or resist the message of salvation. While this divine grace is necessary for salvation, it is not sufficient. The choice in the end rests with them alone, not God.

2. **Defining Total Depravity.** The doctrine is meant to convey the *extent* of sin’s influence not it’s *degree*. Sin is all-pervasive, extending to every aspect of our being. We are never as bad as we could be, however, no aspect of our being remains untouched by sin and corruption. There are no islands of righteousness in the vast ocean of our souls (Rom. 7:18). Total Depravity is not total *saturation* by sin, rather total *distribution* of its effects.

Areas Corrupted by Sin (note how John 3:19-20 encompasses most of these areas)

- a. **Bodies Corrupted.** Our bodily senses (“flesh”) easily succumb to what is evil and false (Rom. 6:6; 7:24; Eph. 2:3; 4:22).
- b. **Hearts Corrupted.** We desire what is evil and false (Prov. 6:14; 21:10; Jer. 17:9; Matt. 15:18-19; Rom. 1:21).
- c. **Minds Corrupted.** We don’t believe what is good and true (Prov. 15:26; Rom. 1:18, 22, 28; 1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 4:17-19; 1 Tim. 6:5; 2 Tim. 3:8; Titus 1:15).
- d. **Affections (Emotions) Corrupted.** We find pleasure in what is evil and false (Prov. 2:14; Isa. 66:3; Rom. 1:32; 1 Thess. 2:12).
- e. **Consciences Corrupted.** We can’t discern between good and evil, false and true (Isa. 5:20; Rom. 1:32; 1 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:15; Heb. 10:22).
- f. **Wills Corrupted.** We want to choose what is evil and false, and we don’t want to choose what is good and true (Prov. 21:10; John 1:13; 8:34; Rom. 3:11-12; 8:7).

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3. **Bondage to Sin.** Total Depravity indicates total inability to do good; a bondage to sin, a bondage of our wills which are held captive by our sin nature. The unregenerate person (i.e., one who lacks spiritual life) has a *moral inability* to do anything truly good and righteous. This is the thrust of Paul’s indictment of sinners in Romans 3:9-18. See also Jer. 13:23; Matt. 7:17-19; 12:33; 15:18-19; John 8:34; Rom. 6:16-18; 8:7, 2 Pet. 2:19.

4. **Bondage to Satan.** Sinners are in double trouble. Not only are they held captive by their own willful and corrupt natures, but they are also held captive by Satanic forces. See John 8:44; Eph. 2:1-2; 2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:25-26; 1 John 3:10; 5:19. We could also say sinners are held captive to ‘the world, the flesh, and the devil’ (See Eph. 2:1-3).

5. **Spiritual Death.** The metaphor of spiritual death is one of the most telling descriptors of the state of sinners under the curse of sin. See Eph. 2:1-2, 5; Col. 2:13. Note the image of regeneration pictures one moving from death to new life by the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit (see John 3:3-8; 6:63; Titus 3:5). Baptism also pictures this movement from spiritual death to spiritual life (Rom. 6:1-11) which also alludes to our union with Christ in his death and resurrection (cf. Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:5-6; Col. 2:12-13; 3:1-3).

<p>Pelagianism <i>Man is alive and well.</i> He is spiritually neutral; able to pursue what is good.</p>	<p>Arminianism <i>Man is spiritually sick.</i> He needs the help of a physician to assist him.</p>	<p>Calvinism <i>Man is spiritually dead.</i> He is utterly helpless and needs a divine miracle.</p>
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Note: Death means separation. Spiritual death means separation from the life and blessing of God. See Isa. 59:2. This means we cannot know Him. We cannot have fellowship with Him. We cannot see His beauty. “Eternal life” is described as knowing the one true God (John 17:3). This makes Matthew 7:23 all the more terrifying.

6. **Defining Good.** Romans 3:12 says “no one does good.” Sin and righteousness are not merely about external actions (words and deeds), but our internal condition. Depravity is not confined to the periphery of our being but extends to the core. Our very nature (“inner man”) is corrupted (see Matt. 5:21-22, 27-28; 15:17-18). One may act in a good way externally, but apart from the heart being regenerated, our motivations will always be corrupted (our righteousness is like “filthy rags” – Isa. 64:4). God demands heart obedience (1 Sam. 16:7; Isa. 29:3). Sin at its root does not exhibit a desire to truly glorify God (Rom. 3:23) but the self (See Gen. 3:5-6).

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THE QUESTION OF FREE WILL

We cannot discuss God's sovereignty without addressing the question of free will. Free will has historically been understood by the average believer to be something Arminians affirm and Calvinists deny. That over-simplifies the issue. Both Arminians and Calvinists affirm that humans have free agency and that some form of human freedom is necessary for human responsibility. However, how each understands the nature of human freedom radically differs. Arminianism affirms a more unfettered brand of free will, whereas Calvinism affirms a more nuanced understanding. The Arminian view is often called "libertarian free will." The Calvinist view is sometimes known as "compatibilism" because it says human freedom is compatible with God's all-encompassing (meticulous) sovereignty from which no human decision escapes.

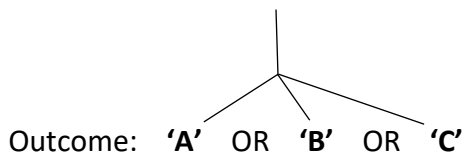
Defining Free Will

1. **Arminianism.** Free will embraces two important components. To be free is to have (a) equally alternative choices available to the individual such that (b) no particular choice is necessitated by prior circumstances. This means nothing can decisively determine one's choices, including God himself. The choosing agent alone determines whatever choice is to be made, and that person could have ALWAYS made an alternate choice no matter what the circumstances are. No particular choice is guaranteed. Choices are uncertain.
2. **Calvinism.** This position also embraces two important components. To be free is to (a) voluntarily choose according to one's most compelling desires, so long as those choices are made in an unhindered way; nonetheless, (b) all choices are compatible with God having determined what those choices will be. Thus, God's sovereignty and human freedom are compatible. God never exercises His sovereignty in a way that violates human freedom or directly coerces a person to act in a way that they did not desire to. There is no such thing as luck or chance. Our choices are guaranteed and certain.

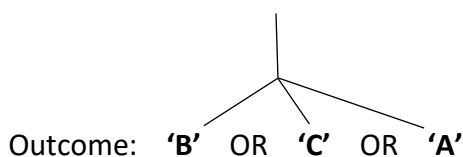
Furthermore, a person's moral and spiritual choices are ALWAYS conditioned upon one's base nature, whether good or evil (i.e., regenerate or unregenerate). In this sense, one is either in bondage to their sin nature as an unregenerate person or they are freed by a new spiritual nature to make God's glorifying choices (see Luke 6:43-45).

Arminian Freedom of Will

Circumstances 'A' can lead to:

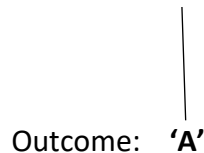


Circumstances 'B' can lead to:

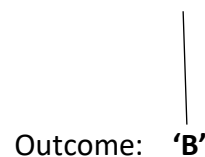


Calvinist Freedom of Will

Circumstances 'A' can ONLY lead to:



Circumstances 'B' can ONLY lead to:



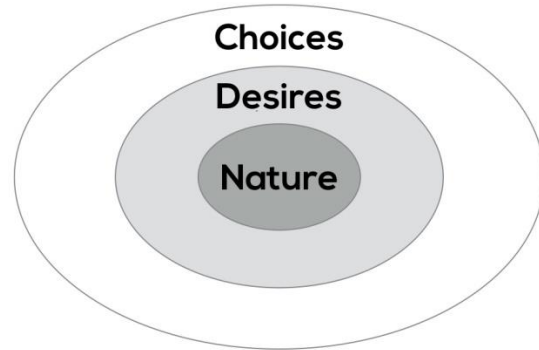
EXPLORING THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ELECTION

Understanding the Nature of Choosing

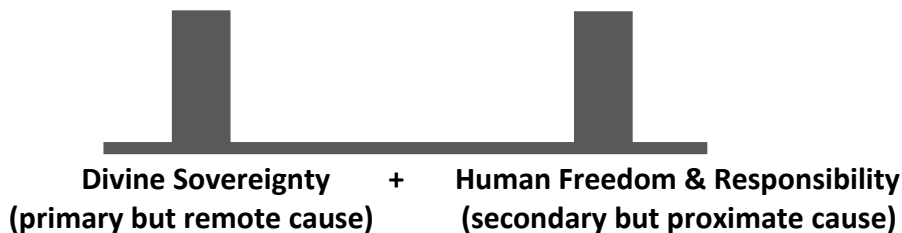
Choices – We choose what we most *want* to choose and we can do no other.

Desires – What we want to choose corresponds to our strongest desires which in turn corresponds to what we perceive to be in our best interest.

Nature – The moral dimension of our desires and choices are dictated by our nature whether we are dead in sins (Eph. 2:1) or have been made alive in Christ (Eph. 2:5).



The Twin Towers in Scripture



- *God decrees & man freely plans* (Prov. 19:21; cf. Prov. 16:1, 9).
- *God ensures rescue & sailors must stay put* (Acts 27:22-26, 31, 34). God's providential promises do not undermine common sense decision making. Calvinism is not fatalism.
- *God reveals His Word & Paul freely preaches it* (Gal. 1:11-12). Who wrote the books of the Bible? The human authors or God?
- *God gives & sinners freely come* (John 6:35, 44-45).
- *God appoints & sinners freely believe* (Acts 13:48).
- *God opens hearts & sinners must listen and respond* (Acts 16:14)
- *God's grace & Paul's hard work* (1 Cor. 15:10).
- *God's work & our work in sanctification* (Phil. 2:12-13; cf. Phil. 1:6). God's grace does not trump or erase our effort, rather it is the very fuel that empowers it.
- *God's power & our faith* (1 Pet. 1:5). God is the master sculptor, and our faith is the chisel he uses to perfect us.
- *God sends Joseph & Joseph's brothers send Joseph* (Gen. 45:5, 7-8).
- *God intends good & sinners intend evil* (Gen. 50:20).
- *God avenges & sinners won't listen* (1 Sam. 2:25).
- *God hardens Pharaoh's heart & Pharaoh freely complies* (Exod. 10:27).
- *God judges & evil rulers freely comply* (Isa. 10:5-19).
- *God ordains Jesus' death & evil people freely comply* (Acts 2:22-23; 4:27-28).

EXPLORING THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ELECTION

UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

The 5 Points of Calvinism (TULIP)	The 5 Points of Arminianism
Unconditional Election God chose the elect solely on the basis of His freedom and grace, not for anything seen in sinners. God has extended a special love for the elect and has left the rest of humanity to their willful rebellion and just condemnation.	Conditional Election God chose the elect on the basis of their foreseen faith that is freely exercised if they so choose. God loves all humans equally and gives all of them an equal opportunity to accept or reject Christ.

1. **Arminian View (Conditional Election).** God’s election of sinners is conditional. This means he will elect sinners to salvation upon the condition that they first exercise faith in Christ. God has chosen Christ as the means of saving others via His *antecedent* will, and then he ratifies the free decision of the sinner to believe in Christ (which He foresees will happen) through His *consequent* will. In this view of election, there is no pre-destination or pre-ordination of sinners to salvation. The real election or choosing is that of the sinner. As one Arminian put it: “God casts one vote for you. Satan casts one vote against you. You then get to cast the deciding vote.”
2. **Problems with Arminian View (Conditional Election)**
 - a) **God’s Will is Frustrated.** God wills for all humans to be saved and provided an atonement for all in his antecedent will. On the other hand, God only wills that those who exercise faith, thus triggering his consequent will, are actually saved. Thus, His consequent will frustrates his antecedent will. The creature’s freedom undermines the Creator’s freedom and renders his antecedent will ineffectual. Furthermore, God knows beforehand many will not meet the conditions of salvation which begs the question, why did he allow them to be born knowing they would never be saved?
 - b) **God’s Grace is Powerless.** Grace is also rendered powerless. Yes, it is necessary in order for the sinner to be saved, but in the end, it has no power to effect the final decision of the sinner. Would we rather trust the lost person’s feeble faith or the unfailing gracious power of God to guarantee success in the salvation of souls? If salvation is wholly dependent on feeble faith, what prevents the loss of such faith? Unbelief is a fatal barrier to the saving benefits of Christ, and ironically, it would appear that His atoning sacrifice is unable to expunge the power of unbelief.
 - c) **God’s Foreknowledge is Undermined.** God’s exhaustive foreknowledge and sovereign decree are mutually linked together. If the Arminian brand of free will is true (libertarian free will), then it is not possible for God to know the future choices of His creatures. It is always possible that a person could choose otherwise and thus fool God. God could only know the future if the future has already been pre-ordained. Furthermore, only God can ordain what happens in the future.

EXPLORING THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ELECTION

3. **Calvinist View (Unconditional Election).** God elects certain sinners purely on the basis of His sovereign freedom and grace. Grace cannot be merited in any way, otherwise it is not grace. God's moral will (instructive/ preceptive will) is that all humans should be saved (1 Tim. 2:4) and that none should be lost (2 Pet. 3:9). See the commands in Isaiah 45:22; Acts 17:30. However, His sovereign will (decretive will) is that only those whom He has graciously chosen will be saved (Eph. 1:4-5, 8, 11).

4. Scriptural Support

- Romans 8:28-33
- Ephesians 1:3-14
- Romans 9:1-29
- John 6:35-45, 65
- John 10:14-18; 26-30
- See also Matt. 20:1-16; Mark 4:11-12; Acts 13:48; 1 Thess. 1:4-5; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 2 Tim. 1:9; 2:10; 1 Cor. 1:26-31

5. Objections to the Calvinist View (Unconditional Election)

- a) **Election is Unloving.** The assumption here is subtle, but it supposes that grace is an obligation on God's part. It also imports some hidden notion of merit in definition of grace/ God's display of love. The only reason God would be obligated to extend saving grace to all is because somehow, we deserve it. But the objection is also a double-edged sword: Is it unloving for God to send people to hell?
- b) **Election is Unfair.** All the assumptions of (a) apply here as well. A further assumption here is that sinners *want* to be saved and are somehow being prevented. If conditional (Arminian) election were true to this notion of fairness, then God would have to create an absolutely level playing field for every single human being so that no one would have an unfair advantage at the opportunity for salvation. Furthermore, He could not interfere in anyway with the unhindered exercise of free will. This thinking undermines our prayers for the lost and our efforts in evangelism.

Note the difference between: (a) justice, (b) injustice, and (c) non-justice. Divine grace fits in the category of (c) non-justice. God is not free to violate his justice, but He is entirely free to act graciously/ mercifully or not (Rom. 9:15-16, 18).

EXPLORING THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ELECTION

LIMITED ATONEMENT

The 5 Points of Calvinism (TULIP)	The 5 Points of Arminianism
Limited (Definite) Atonement God purposed Christ to provide redemption for a particular people (the elect) by his atoning death which definitively pays the price for their sin and guarantees their salvation.	Universal (Unlimited) Atonement God purposed Christ to be the Savior of the world. His death is a provisional atonement for the sins of the whole world which makes salvation possible for all but guaranteed for none.

For Whom Did Christ Die?

1. **Christ died to take away *all* the sins of *all* people.** This is the view of Arminianism. If Christ paid the debt for sin in full, satisfying God's justice against sin, then on what basis does God send people to hell whose sins have already been paid for by Christ? The answer usually given is: only those who do not believe in Christ go to hell. However, has not Christ paid for the sin of unbelief (Rom. 14:23; 1 John 3:23)? This view suggests that the price for sin exacts a double payment rendering most of Christ's suffering in vain.
2. **Christ died to take away *some* sins of *all* people.** The logic of the Arminian view really suggests this view. Christ's death did not pay for persistent unbelief. However, this means there are some sins for which Christ's death has no power to take away. Unbelief has the power to dismantle the atoning effectiveness of Christ's death. However, note that some unbelief is in fact paid for, but only if those who exercise belief can overcome their previous unbelief. But this turns faith into a self-generated work of righteousness, eviscerating the foundation of divine grace for *all* of salvation. See Ephesians 2:8-10.
3. **Christ died to take away *all* the sins of *some* people.** This is the view of Calvinism. Christ's death paid the debt for every single sin in full for every single person who believes in Christ (Col. 2:13-14) and has been graciously elected to salvation. Christ's atoning sacrifice is wholly effective in securing and redeeming a people for God. Nothing about his suffering and death was in vain. It accomplished all God designed it to.

The Nature of the Atonement

The Arminian view of Christ's atoning sacrifice is that it is a general atonement that has universal value for all people but does not pay for anyone's sins in particular. Christ's death provides a vast storehouse of gifts of salvation with no one in particular in mind. In this regard, it is an impersonal sacrifice for which most people will not avail themselves. It is a universal atonement but does not provide universal salvation. In contrast, Calvinism holds that Christ's atoning sacrifice was specifically designed and intended for specific people whom God set his particular love upon. Salvation is a gift that God personally delivers to real people in real situations of their own spiritual need. Christ laid down his life for His sheep (John 10:11, 14-17, 25-29); His bride (Eph. 5:25-27). It is very personal as Paul indicates in Galatians 2:20.

EXPLORING THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ELECTION

Penal Substitutionary Atonement (see Isaiah 53)

1. **Substitutionary.** Christ's death acted in place of actual sinners.
2. **Penal.** Christ suffered a penalty (a ransom price—Mark 10:45; 1 Tim. 2:6) that was due to each person for whom Christ acted as a substitute. The payment of this ransom price frees (redeems) them from the *penalty* and *power* of sin (Rom. 6:20-23; Gal. 4:4-7). It is the death of Christ that frees us from sin's power and penalty not our faith. Faith is part of the gift of salvation. Grace is the ground of salvation *and* saving faith (Eph. 2:8-9).
3. **Atonement.** An atonement is something that satisfies the just wrath of God that condemns rebellious sinners in order to reconcile those sinners to God. "Propitiation" (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10) means Christ's atoning sacrifice (1) diverts God's wrath away from the sinner to Christ the substitute, thus favorably disposing God toward the sinner; furthermore, (2) the guilt and subsequent penalty of sin is removed (i.e., forgiven) from the sinner—at *the cross!*

The Triumph of Atonement

Note the definitive and triumphal nature Christ's atoning sacrifice as indicated in Scripture (John 12:31-33; Rom. 5:6-11; Gal. 1:4-5; Eph. 1:7-14; Col. 1:13-14, 20; 2:10-15; Heb. 1:3; 2:10-17; 1 John 3:8; Rev. 5:9-10; 12:10-11). This is not a potential atonement only actualized by the faith of the sinner. It is a real and effectual atonement that God planned and executed to perfection, and with absolute success. Christ "entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12). Jesus' earthly mission had no risk of failure. This is clearly indicated when Christ cried out triumphantly on the cross, "It is finished!" (John 19:30). Salvation does not rest on faith but on God's unfailing grace.

United in Christ's Death and Resurrection

Union with Christ is the key to how all the benefits of God's plan of salvation accrue to the believer. We were elected "in Christ" before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:3-4). Furthermore, somehow in the mystery of God's providence, every believer was present (in the mind of the timelessly eternal God) "with Christ" in His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:1-11; Eph. 2:4-7; Col. 2:10-14; 3:1-3).

Christ Died Specifically to Redeem God's Chosen People

Note the "all" (e.g., 1 Tim. 2:4, 6; 2 Pet. 3:9) and "world" (e.g., John 1:29; 3:16) passages do not indicate all people in the world without *exception*, but all people in the world without *distinction*; not just Jews, but also pagan Gentiles from "every tribe, tongue, people, and nation" (Rev.5:9).

- Matthew 1:21
- Mark 10:45 (cf. Heb. 9:28)
- John 10:11, 14-17, 25-29 (cf. 17:9)
- Romans 8:32-34 (cf. vss. 28-31)
- Ephesians 5:25-27
- Titus 2:14 (cf. 1 Pet. 2:9; Acts 20:28; Rev. 5:9)

EXPLORING THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ELECTION

IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

The 5 Points of Calvinism (TULIP)	The 5 Points of Arminianism
<p>Irresistible (Efficacious) Grace</p> <p>Saving grace is irresistible and efficaciously works to save the elect. The Holy Spirit regenerates the hearts of the elect (causes them to be born again), thus wholly enabling them to willingly act in faith and repentance for their salvation.</p>	<p>Resistible (Provisional) Grace</p> <p>Saving grace is necessary but not sufficient to save sinners. The Holy Spirit's gracious efforts can be resisted and must be cooperated with by the free will of sinners. The freely exercised faith and repentance of the sinner results in becoming born again.</p>

Salvation is a Work of the Trinity

Father – Plans redemption, elects sinners, sends the Son (*Unconditional Election*)

Son – Accomplishes redemption, becomes Shepherd, secures sheep (*Limited Atonement*)

Holy Spirit – Applies redemption, regenerates sinners, calls to the Son (*Irresistible Grace*)

The Nature of Saving Grace

1. It presupposes the sin and guilt of the sinner before the holy God who dispenses it.
2. It is utterly a matter of God's unconditional freedom as to who its recipients are.
3. All the power grace has to save is found in God alone who dispenses it.
4. It is the foundation of all other saving actions of God toward sinners including: election, effectual calling, regeneration, adoption, justification, reconciliation, pardon, union with Christ, sanctification, and glorification.
5. It comes not to those who are undeserving (this term is often misunderstood as those who are morally neutral), but to those who are *ill-deserving*. Sinners are hostile to God (Rom. 8:7); rebels who do not honor or fear Him (Rom. 1:21; 3:18).
6. It does not depend on the merit or demerit of its recipients.
 - a) Grace ceases to be grace if God is obligated to extend it due to even the slightest merit (righteousness) in us which God's justice would demand He honor.
 - b) Grace ceases to be grace if God is obligated to remove it due to any demerit in us.
7. It is utterly opposed to works. If works are added to or cooperate with grace in any way, shape, or form whatsoever, then grace ceases to be grace. If grace needs any of our cooperation (e.g., by our faith or willingness) to save us, then it ceases to be grace.
8. It cannot incur any debt from the recipient whatsoever which must be repaid.

The General (Outward) Call and the Effectual (Inward) Call

"Many are called but few are chosen" (Matt. 22:14).

- **General Call** – Made freely, indiscriminately, and explicitly by human communicators to any and all who hear as an open invitation to respond positively to the gospel. This call, more often than not, is resisted or rejected (Acts 7:51; 26:14; cf. John 3:19) by those who hear. See Isa. 55:1-3, 6-7; Matt. 11:28-30; John 6:35; 7:37-38.

EXPLORING THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ELECTION

- **Effectual Call** – Made specifically (discriminately) and secretly by the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 1:5) only to those whom God has elected (Rom. 8:30). This call cannot be resisted. Rather it overcomes all previous resistance to the gospel. It is 100% effective in drawing the sinner to trust Christ freely and willingly for salvation.
 - John 6:44-45; 63, 65 (cf. Jer. 31:3)
 - 1 Corinthians 1:23-24
 - Galatians 1:15-16
 - 1 Peter 2:9 (cf. Col. 1:13)

Regeneration

Regeneration and effectual calling are part of the same work of the Holy Spirit. Regeneration is the giving of new life to dead spiritual natures (Eph. 2:1-5) that are unwilling and unable to do anything that pleases God (Rom. 8:7-8). The effectual call is likened the voice of Jesus calling Lazarus to rise from the dead (John 11:43-44), thus giving him new life (regenerating him) whereby he willingly and joyfully responds. Regeneration causes the mind to understand and assent to the truth of the gospel and generates new affections of the heart that suddenly become inclined to embrace Christ and act in ways that now please and honor God.

- John 1:12-13
- John 3:3-8 (cf. Jer. 24:7; Ezek. 36:26-27); 5:21
- Titus 3:5
- 1 John 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18
- 1 Peter 1:3, 23 (cf. James 1:18)

Faith & Repentance Are Gifts of Grace

If salvation is entirely a work of efficacious grace, then that means the ability to act with a faith that (a) understands the gospel, (b) assents to its truth, (c) turns away from the awfulness of sin (repents), and (d) embraces Christ with whole-hearted affection could only be gifts of grace. We could not generate these God-pleasing actions from an unregenerate nature. See Matt. 13:11; Acts 5:31; 11:18; 13:48; 1 Cor. 4:7; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil 1:29; 2 Tim. 2:25-26; 2 Pet. 1:1.

EXPLORING THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ELECTION

PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

The 5 Points of Calvinism (TULIP)	The 5 Points of Arminianism
Perseverance of the Saints God's grace preserves the elect and ensures they will (causes them to) persevere in faith and obedience till the end. None of the elect will finally fall away from the faith.	Uncertain Perseverance of the Saints God's grace cannot guarantee that believers will not use their free will to fall away from the faith. Not all will cooperate with God's grace to persevere in faith and obedience.

Can Believers Lose Their Salvation?

The consistent view of Arminianism is that believers can lose their salvation. Since faith, as exercised by one's free will, must cooperate with divine grace in order to be initially saved at conversion, so also, that faith must continue to cooperate with divine grace in order to persevere in one's salvation. Egregious sins or loss of faith can result in loss of salvation. In this scenario, salvation is secured and maintained by feeble human faith and the uncertainty of free will instead of the certainty of God's promises and His unfailing grace.

However, some Arminians believe the dictum, "Once saved, always saved." This is inconsistent because those same Arminians would say that one could have rejected every last vestige of saving grace in order to be saved in the first place. Why suddenly is their free will bound and unable to reject God's continuing (sustaining) grace afterwards? It would seem that their free will after conversion is taken away. They have no choice but to remain a Christian even if it goes against their will to continue as one. Thus, inconsistent Arminianism has a very weak foundation for grounding the eternal security of the believer. Calvinism rests upon a much surer foundation.

The Preservation of the Saints

One cannot talk about the *perseverance* of the saints until we first understand the *preservation* of the saints by God. Every believer chosen by God is kept by God's gracious promise and power so that they can never finally fall away from the faith, rather they are preserved forever because "the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Rom. 11:29). The grace that saves us is the same grace that sustains us until we are glorified and conformed to Christ (Rom. 8:29-30; Titus 2:11-12).

- 1 Peter 1:1-9 (see also Jude 1:24-25; Psa. 121:3, 7-8)
- John 10:27-30 (see also John 5:24; 6:37-40; 17:11-12)
- Romans 8:1, 29-30, 35-39 (see also Isa. 54:10)
- Ephesians 1:13-14
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 (see also Heb. 10:14)

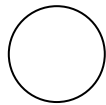
EXPLORING THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ELECTION

The Perseverance of the Saints

Even though believers are elected before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4) and effectually called by the Spirit in due time (Gal. 1:15-16), we are summoned to “be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you” (2 Pet. 1:10). Paul says, “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test?” (2 Cor. 13:5). There are many false converts who are not truly chosen and regenerated by the Spirit. John says such people, “went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us” (1 John 2:19).

- Final salvation is conditioned on persevering in the faith. Without “sanctification...no one will see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). See John 8:31 (cf. John 15:1-11); 1 Cor. 15:1-2; Col. 1:21-23; 2 Tim. 2:11-12 (see also Mark 13:13; Rev. 2:7, 17, 25-26; 3:5, 11-12, 21).
- The active perseverance of believers is guaranteed by the internal enabling grace of God. See Jer. 24:7; 32:40; 1 Cor. 15:10; Eph. 3:20; Phil. 1:6; 2:12-13; Col. 1:29; 2:6-7; Heb. 13:20-21; Jude 1:21, 24.

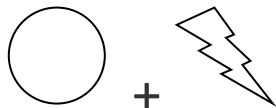
Models of Sanctification:



1) Me alone (Bootstrap Sanctification)



2) God alone (Let Go and Let God Sanctification)



3) Me plus God (God is my Co-pilot Sanctification)



4) God in Me (God Empowered Sanctification)

EXPLORING THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ELECTION

Passages on Perseverance in the Faith

Key passages are in *italics*. Note some key terms in these passages: perseverance, endure, hold fast, stand firm, abide, faithful, steadfastness, overcomes, established.

Passages commanding perseverance:

Acts 13:43
Rom. 11:20
1 Cor. 15:58; 16:13
Gal. 5:1
Eph. 6:10-14
Phil. 1:27-28; 4:1
Col. 2:6-7
2 Thess. 2:13-15
1 Tim. 4:16; 6:11
Titus 2:2
Heb. 6:9-12; 10:23, 35-39; 12:1-3
James 1:3-4; 5:8
1 Pet. 2:1-3; 5:9, 12
2 Pet. 1:5-11
1 John 2:24, 28
Jude 1:21
Rev. 2:10, 25-26

Passages indicating perseverance as a condition of [final] salvation:

Prov. 11:19
Matt. 10:22; 24:13
Luke 8:15
John 8:31; 15:1-8
1 Cor. 15:1-2
Col. 1:22-23
2 Tim. 2:12
Heb. 3:6, 14; 6:9-12
James 1:12
1 John 2:19
2 John 1:9
Rev. 2:10, 17, 26; 3:5, 10, 12, 21

Passages warning against falling away:

Heb. 2:1; 3:12; 4:1, 11; 6:4-8; 10:26-31; *12:14-15*; 25
Rom. 2:5-8
1 Cor. 10:12
2 Cor. 6:1
1 Tim. 4:1
2 Pet. 2:21; 3:17-18
Rev. 2:5

Passages declaring or praising perseverance:

Prov. 11:19
Matt. 25:21, 23
Luke 16:10-12
Rom. 5:1-5; 8:25; 15:4
Gal. 5:22

Eph. 1:1
Phil. 2:14-16
Col. 1:2
1 Thess. 3:8
2 Thess. 1:4
1 Pet. 1:3-9; 4:18
Heb. 12:14
Rev. 1:9; 2:2, 3, 19; 3:10; 13:10; 14:12; 17:14; 21:7

Prayers for perseverance:

Col. 1:9-12; 4:12
1 Thess. 5:23-24
2 Thess. 3:5

God's work of preserving us in the faith:

John 6:39; 10:27-29; 17:11-12, 15
Rom. 8:29-30, 35-39; 14:4; *15:4-6*
1 Cor. 1:6-9; 15:10
2 Cor. 1:20-22
Gal. 2:20
Eph. 1:4, 11-14, 19; 3:20
Phil. 1:6; 2:12-13; 4:13
Col. 1:29
1 Thess. 5:23-24
2 Thess. 3:3-5
2 Tim. 4:18
1 Pet. 1:3-9
Jude 1:24-25
Rev. 14:4

Passages focused on present/ future salvation:

Matt. 10:22; 19:29; 24:13; 25:46
Luke 21:28
Rom. 5:9, 10; 8:23-25, 30; 13:11
1 Cor. 1:18; 3:15; 5:5; 15:1-2
2 Cor. 2:15
Gal. 6:8
Eph. 1:13-14
Phil. 1:27-28; 2:12-13
1 Thess. 5:8-9
2 Thess. 2:13
1 Tim. 4:16
2 Tim. 4:18
Titus 3:7
Heb. 1:14; 5:9; 6:9, 11-12; 7:25; 9:28
James 1:21
1 Pet. 1:4, 5, 9; 2:1-3; 3:21; 4:18
2 Pet. 1:10-11
Jude 1:21
Rev. 21:7

EXPLORING THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ELECTION

Questions for Assessing Assurance of Salvation from 1 John

Adapted from Donald Whitney, *How Can I Be Sure I'm a Christian?* (NavPress, 1994)

Read the passages for each question and then circle where you fit between 1 and 10: where 1 represents "never" and 10 represents "all the time."

Score of 125-150: You may be overestimating your assurance.

Score of 85-125: Healthy believers should be in this range.

Score of 60-85: Struggling believers are in this range.

Score of 15-60: You should probably see a pastor or your shepherding elder at KBC.

- 1) Do you share (walk in) the truth (light) of the Christian life with other believers? (1 John 1:6-7)?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 2) Do you have a deep awareness of your sin against the Word and love of God? (1 John 1:8, 10)?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 3) Do you experience God's forgiveness through confession and repentance of sin (1 John 1:9)?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 4) Do you live in conscious obedience to the Word of God? (1 John 2:3-5; 3:24)?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 5) Do you love God (and Christ) with a desire to draw near to Him (1 John 4:7-10, 19-21)?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 6) Do you love other Christians sacrificially and want to be with them (1 John 3:14; 4:7-8)?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 7) Do you despise the world and its ways (1 John 2:15)?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 8) Do you long for the return of Christ and to be made righteous like Him (1 John 3:2-3)?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 9) Do you habitually do what is right more and sin less (1 John 2:29; 3:7-10)?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 10) Do you discern the presence (fruit) of the Holy Spirit within (1 John 3:24; 4:13; see Gal. 5:22-23)?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 11) Do you enjoy listening to and learning from Biblical teaching (1 John 4:6)?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 12) Do you understand and believe what the Bible teaches about Jesus Christ (1 John 5:1)?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 13) Do you overcome the influences of the world by continuing faith in Christ (1 John 5:4-5)?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 14) Do you entrust yourself to the Son of God as the only source of eternal life (1 John 5:13)?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
- 15) Do you experience power over Satan's temptations by the power of God (1 John 5:18-19)?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

EXPLORING THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ELECTION

The Character of Genuine Saving Faith

(From *The MacArthur Study Bible*)

1 Corinthians 13:5 - Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you-- unless indeed you fail the test?

I. Evidences that neither Prove nor Disprove One's Faith

- A. Visible Morality – Matt. 19:16-21; 23:27
- B. Intellectual Knowledge – Rom. 1:21; 2:17ff.
- C. Religious Involvement – Matt. 25:1-10
- D. Active Ministry – Matt. 7:21-24
- E. Conviction of Sin – Acts 24:25
- F. Assurance – Matt. 23
- G. Time of Decision – Luke 8:13, 14

II. The Fruit (Proofs) of Authentic (True) Christianity

- A. Love for God – Psa. 42:1ff; 73:25; Luke 10:27; Rom. 8:7
- B. Repentance from Sin – Psa. 32:5; Prov. 28:13; Rom. 7:14ff; 2 Cor. 7:10; 1 John 1:8-10
- C. Genuine Humility – Psa. 51:17; Matt. 5:1-12; James 4:6, 9ff.
- D. Devotion to God's Glory – Psa. 105:3; 115:1; Isa. 43:7; 48:10ff; Jer. 9:23-24; 1 Cor. 10:31
- E. Continual Prayer – Luke 18:1; Eph. 6:18ff; Phil. 4:6ff; 1 Tim. 2:1-4; James 5:16-18
- F. Selfless Love – 1 John 2:9ff; 3:14; 4:7ff.
- G. Separation from the World – 1 Cor. 2:12; James 4:14ff; 1 John 2:15-17; 5:5
- H. Spiritual Growth – Luke 8:15; John 15:1-6; Eph. 4:12-16
- I. Obedient Living – Matt. 7:21; John 15:14ff; Rom. 16:26; 1 Pet. 1:2, 22; 1 John 2:3-5
- J. Hunger for God's Word – 1 Pet. 2:1-3
- K. Transformation of Life – 2 Cor. 5:17

If list I is true of a person and list II is false, there is cause to question the validity of one's profession of faith. Yet if List II is true, then the top list will be also.

III. The Conduct of the Gospel

- A. Proclaim it – Matt. 4:23
- B. Defend it – Jude 3
- C. Demonstrate it – Phil. 1:27
- D. Share it – Phil. 1:5
- E. Suffer for it – 2 Tim. 1:8
- F. Don't Hinder it – 1 Cor. 9:12
- G. Be not Ashamed – Rom. 1:16
- H. Preach it – 1 Cor. 9:16
- I. Be Empowered – 1 Thess. 1:5
- J. Guard it – Gal. 1:6-8

EXPLORING THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ELECTION

COMPARING JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

JUSTIFICATION

SANCTIFICATION

<p>God's Objective Act For us Declaring us Righteous Legally with a Righteousness Not Our Own but that of Christ and Not Works we do (Isa. 53:11; John 15:3; Rom. 3:20-26; 4:1-25; 5:1-2, 16-21; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 2:16)</p>	<p>God's Subjective Work Through us Making us Righteous Practically with a Righteousness Our Own of Works we do (John 15:1-5; Rom. 8:29; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 2:12-13; Col. 1:28-29; 2:6-7; 2 Thess. 2:13; James 2:22)</p>
<p>Immediate and Complete At the moment of Conversion (Rom. 5:1, 9-10; 8:1, 30; 1 Cor. 6:11; Titus 3:5-7)</p>	<p>Progressive and Ongoing From the moment of Conversion (Rom. 6:1-23; 8:11-14; Eph. 4:13; Phil. 2:12-13; Col. 1:28; Titus 3:8; Heb. 2:11; 13:12)</p>
<p>The Same for All believers Regardless of circumstances and attended by No Tangible Signs.</p>	<p>Greater in Some believers than others Depending on circumstances and attended by Tangible Signs manifested by righteous thoughts, motives, speech and actions (Gal. 6:1; Eph. 4:13, 20-24; 1 Tim. 4:7-8)</p>
<p>Perfect and Complete in this life (Heb. 10:14)</p>	<p>Not Perfect and Incomplete in this life (Rom. 7:24; Phil. 3:12-14; 1 John 1:8-10)</p>
<p>Our Eternal Position "in Christ" that involves a change in our Status but not our Nature (Rom. 8:29-30; 1 Cor. 1:30)</p>	<p>Our Temporal Practice "in Christ" that involves a transformation of our Behavior due to the impartation of a New Nature at the moment of our Regeneration which is first evidenced in our Conversion and then subsequent Sanctification (1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10)</p>
<p>The Past dimension of Salvation freeing us from the Penalty of Sin and Giving us Title to Heaven (Rom. 4:7-8; 5:9-10; 8:30; 18; 8:1-2; Titus 3:7)</p>	<p>The Present dimension of Salvation freeing us from the Power of Sin and Making us Fit for Heaven (Rom. 6:1-23; 8:2-4; Heb. 12:14)</p> <p>GLORIFICATION</p> <p>The Future dimension of Salvation freeing us from the very Presence of Sin when we will be fully conformed in our Practice to our Position "in Christ" and which Consummates our Entrance into Heaven (Rom. 8:29-30; 1 Cor. 15:50-58; Eph. 1:13-14; 4:13; 5:27; Phil. 1:6; 3:21; Col. 1:28; 1 Thess. 1:10; 5:23; Heb. 2:10; 1 John 3:2)</p>

EXPLORING THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ELECTION

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Jim Scott Orrick, *Mere Calvinism* (P&R Publications, 2019), 224pp. This is the single best introduction to the doctrine of election and the 5 Points of Calvinism. It is clear and simple, and a pleasure to read. It is careful and practical theology without a lot of academic jargon. If you buy one book on the subject, this is it.
2. R. C. Sproul, *Chosen by God* (Tyndale House Publishers, 1986), 213pp. Sproul was a one-of-a-kind theologian for the lay person. He was a brilliant thinker but a down to earth communicator. He writes with a unique flare and teaches you with memorable illustrations to make his points. This is a classic treatment of divine election and worth the read simply because Sproul always brings his unique perspective to the issues.
3. Sam Storms, *Chosen for Life: The Case for Divine Election* (Crossway Books, 2007), 237pp. Storms is also a careful thinker. This book is similar to Orrick's *Mere Calvinism* but he goes a bit deeper. While he spends time on the other 4 points of Calvinism, Storms especially focuses his attention on the 'U' (Unconditional Election) in the TULIP acronym. He also uses memorable illustrations.
4. Richard D. Phillips, *What's So Great About the Doctrines of Grace?* (Reformation Trust, 2008), 112pp. This is the simplest and most straightforward examination of the 5 points on my list. If you want a basic introduction to the issues, this is probably the best one.
5. John Piper, *Five Points: Towards a Deeper Experience of God's Grace* (Christian Focus, 2013), 94pp. This is the briefest introduction to the 5 points on my list. While it is not as good as Orrick's *Mere Calvinism*, it is still a very good introduction to the topic for those who want a shorter treatment.
6. Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination* (P&R Publications, 1932, reprint), 592pp. This is *THE* classic modern treatment of the doctrine of election (predestination). It is a little deeper than most of the other titles but is not too difficult to understand. Again, Boettner was a brilliant theologian yet a clear communicator. This was the first book I read on the topic many years ago and is still one of the best treatments.
7. Curt Daniel, *The History & Theology of Calvinism* (Evangelical Press, 2019), 903pp. This book was decades in the making. At 903 pages(!), it is one of the most thorough treatments of the topic available for the more serious student. It includes not only a very detailed examination of the 5 points of Calvinism, but it also devotes attention to other issues. It includes about 180 pages to the development of the doctrine of election throughout church history which is very important to understand. There is another 115 pages devoted to other doctrinal distinctives of Calvinism. Plus, it has a very extensive bibliography (135 pages) on various topics related to Calvinism. This sounds like a daunting book, but it is very well written and easy to understand. Daniel leaves no stone unturned in his treatment of all the issues related to divine election. It is a great reference guide for the subject.

EXPLORING THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ELECTION

8. Steven J. Lawson, *Foundations of Grace (A Long Line of Godly Men)* (Reformation Trust, 2016), 534pp. This is unique among the other books listed. It is a near exhaustive treatment of God's sovereign grace and election as traced chronologically through the Old and New Testaments. Thus, it does not treat the topic in a strict systematic fashion (i.e., walking thru each of the 5 points of Calvinism), rather it shows how the unfolding of Scripture fits with the 5 points and related issues underlining Calvinism. This is not only a very readable book, but also very pastoral and encouraging as one sees God's sovereign grace on every page of the Bible.
9. J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (InterVarsity Press, 1961), 126pp. This is another classic treatment of election, focusing particularly on the issue of evangelism. If God chooses who will be saved, then why bother to preach to or pray for the lost? Why should we encourage faith in Christ and repentance from sin? Packer, like Sproul, was a master communicator and pithy theologian for the lay person. A must-read book.
10. Scott Christensen, *What about Free Will? Reconciling Our Choices with God's Sovereignty* (P&R Publications, 2016), 284pp. My book does not focus on the doctrine of election per se, but rather on one of the thorniest topics related to the doctrine—that of free will. This is a more challenging book than the others on my list. While it is not an academic treatment, it does delve into matters of the divine and human will most people have not normally grappled with in much depth. I try to draw out some practical applications of a proper view of divine sovereignty on the one hand and human freedom and responsibility on the other.
11. Matthew Barrett, *Salvation by Grace: The Case for Effectual Call and Regeneration* (P&R Publications, 2013), 388pp. As the title suggests, this is a thorough treatment of God's sovereign grace as it works in the actual conversion of sinners. In this regard, its primary focus is on the 'I' (Irresistible Grace) in the TULIP acronym. This takes the reader a little deeper into this issue than the other titles do, nonetheless, it is still a readable and very profitable volume.
12. Kevin DeYoung, *Grace Defined and Defended: What a 400-Year-Old Confession Teaches Us about Sin, Salvation, and the Sovereignty of God* (Crossway, 2019), 141pp. Understanding the history behind the debate between Calvinism and Arminianism is important when grappling with the doctrine of election. DeYoung shows how the Synod of Dort brought all the issues between these two theologies into sharp focus. He explains the Canons of Dort and why they are so important to a proper understanding of the doctrines of grace. Also, Kevin DeYoung is another clear and compelling writer. If you want to dig into the history of the debate, this is the best introduction.